



Are you an introvert or an extrovert? What your personality type says about you

You have probably heard some talk about personality types; you may have even taken an online test and learned a little more about your own personality. One of the big distinctions in these categorizations of personality, are the labels **introvert** and **extrovert**.

People often make the mistake that introverts are shy, while extroverts are outgoing. This is however an oversimplification of both of these terms.

No one is a pure introvert or extrovert; everyone has a mixture of the two tendencies. Also, the terms refer more to what a person needs to recharge their personal batteries, so to speak, than whether they are shy or outgoing. However, if you think of yourself as extremely shy, you might find that you are an introvert, and if you know you are the life of the party, you may find yourself leaning further to the extroverted end of the spectrum.

What defines an introvert and extrovert?

An **introvert** is someone who relies on time alone to recharge, and feels drained after spending too long in the company of other people. They tend to be excellent listeners who prefer to spend time in very small groups or one-on-one. They are reflective and need to be quietly alone with their thoughts, and think things over before making decisions. This can sometimes mean they take more time in planning stages and are slow to move from thinking to action.

Extroverts gain their energy by spending time with other people, and contrarily to introverts, feel depleted after spending too much time alone. They tend to “think out loud”, and like to work in groups. They love surrounding themselves with lots of different people, and feel at ease expressing themselves out loud. They can sometimes be prone to rushing into decisions without thinking them through carefully.

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Keeping in mind these differences, it can be helpful to recognize the personality-type tendencies of yourself and your colleagues. Let's take a look at how each type can uniquely contribute to the workplace, and how to work with them to bring out their best selves.

Introverts

Their best contribution: Introverts are great at problem-solving, and listening to the needs of others. They are great at seeing the small details and really spending time to think through a problem. When they are handed a project, they will spend time with it to come up with a well-thought out solution.

How to communicate with them: Introverts often prefer written communication. They likely will be more comfortable writing a long brief than making a presentation. They probably prefer to work by themselves than spend time in a long meeting. Give them space and time to think and reflect.

Extroverts

Their best contribution: Extroverts have an often infectious enthusiasm and a lot of energy. They can be great at getting big groups of people excited about an idea: these are the people you want making presentations.

How to communicate with them: They like to talk, so encourage them to think aloud and have someone take notes of their ideas. Give them space to speak, and make use of their excellent presentation skills. Allow them to work in teams and brainstorm in group settings.

When it comes to personality styles in the workplace, diversity is your best friend. Introverts and extroverts are both necessary to build a diverse and thriving work environment, as their contrasting styles actually complement each other. Pair an extrovert who is full of ideas they want to express with an introvert who can hear them and spend the time to think them through.

An understanding of your own and your colleagues' personality types is a great way to maximize efficiency in the workplace while keeping some much needed harmony.

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Social media and your coworkers: To friend or not to friend

To say that social media is now part of everyday life would be an understatement. What was once a leisurely side activity has become a veritable necessity: 60% of North Americans have at least one social media account, and are more connected with people than ever before. As social media increasingly plays a role in our lives, many questions arise about boundaries. One of the trickiest, most delicate and indeed the most important of these social media conundrums is: should and/or how to include colleagues in our social media lives. Should you accept your coworker's friend request? Should you let the people you work beside follow you on Twitter or Instagram? There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to answering these questions, but they are important questions that demand some careful thought. Here are some things to consider before a few easy clicks have you sharing more than you would like with the people you work with.

Different platforms, different rules. Different social media technologies may have different "feelings" for some people, and fit in differently to their lives. While your Twitter may be pretty simple and impersonal, your Instagram account might feel more like a diary. It is perfectly acceptable to grant your coworkers access to one while keeping the other more personal.

Sometimes it is a generational question. Millennials grew up with social media in one way or another, and as such have a different relationship to it than baby boomers or gen x'ers. Millennials are often at home in digital media and feel less of a private/public divide, allowing them to feel more comfortable sharing their online personas with their real life coworkers. If social media was something you encountered a little later in life, it may feel strange for you to share this facet of yourself with your colleagues. Respect your own boundaries, and recognize the generational differences that are at play.

Consistency is key. Inevitably we will have some coworkers who feel more like friends, and others we aren't so fond of, but if you are picking and choosing who to you will accept as a friend and who you won't, you might run into hurt feelings and awkward conversations. If you are going to implement a rule such as "no friending coworkers", stick to it across the board.

Don't post what you don't want to be seen. Despite privacy settings and whom your friend or follower list includes, always be mindful about posting complaints about your workplace, tirades about your boss, or pleas for a new place of employment. Even if your posts get personal, keep in mind that they might be seen by people you work with, and proceed accordingly.

Stay logged out when you're clocked in. Once you accept friend or follower requests, the people you work with will begin to see your online activity. Of course this sounds like common sense, but keep it in mind when you consider posting something while you are actually at work. While it is implicitly understood that most of us do check our social media accounts during work hours, it can appear unprofessional. Save those posts for your lunch break or for when the work day is done.

Social media and its many uses is still a relatively new technology, and we haven't quite caught up with it in terms of figuring out how to use it. However, there is no question that it is powerful and can [affect your mental health](#). Pay attention to how you feel and never do anything you aren't comfortable with. If you aren't sure about whether you want to make that colleague a "friend", give it time: their request will still be there next week.

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