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Essay – 694 words

The Power of Being Quiet

I'm an introvert. I pretend I'm not, have covered up that truth pretty well over the years, often over-compensating for the quiet I love best, and keeping hidden my need for silence and alone time.

My generation were told early on in life that only the bold would succeed, pointing to the likes of Dale Carnegie and his self-improvement strategies and the empire that Tony Robbins has built on “selling” self to those introverts who think they should be extraverts. I am always suspicious of those who spout the semantics of living a “quality” life, a life tuned in to those things that matter like positive energy and the hype that goes with it, while raking in a wealth that allows Mr. Robbins to live a very extravagant existence, filled with “quantity” rather than quality.

I'm reading a book called *Quiet*, written by Susan Cain, a book that praises the beauty of the introvert, a book that tells us to be exactly the introvert we are and to be proud of the benefit of said *introvertedness* (if there is such a word, and I'm guessing not). If you have introverted tendencies and judge yourself harshly for such then I suggest you pick up this book; it's a great read.

My entire life has been spent trying to conquer the downside of being shy, or what I perceived as the downside. My self-confidence seemed mostly fragile and had somewhat of a fleeting nature. I would have fared better in life I think had I read this book twenty years ago.

While I was growing up I watched my mother come alive in crowds and parties, energized by the presence of others, while I wilted, dreamed of a secret hiding place where no one could find me, where no one could disturb the quiet, where there was no one but me. My mother loved people and people loved my mother, so surely there was something wrong with me.

Leadership roles often go to the loudest, the most self-confident, those who make snap decisions easily. But, it turns out, these individuals don't always or often make the best decisions; impulsive notions are founded on very little clear thinking. I think those in positions of hiring should be obligated to have an understanding of how the introvert mind works. I think they would be less inclined to pass over those individuals who appear anxious and a bit withdrawn for oftentimes they are the employees, the team players who truly know how to work, how to use empathy in their day to day responses to situations and who know how to go the extra mile.

Frederic Chopin, Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, Warren Buffet, Mahatma Gandhi, Rosa Parks and Eleanor Roosevelt were all introverts and they all accomplished extraordinary things. Undoubtedly, they learned not to be held back by shyness, but trusted their quiet inner voice. If you have listened to any of Chopin's music, you will surely notice the quiet, almost mournful arrangements, and the soothing sound. Only an introvert could create such magic, could write the quiet into his music.

As an introvert I am seldom slick and polished. I fear using the telephone and though I can explain it as nonsense I anguish for hours over placing a call for a hair appointment or to have my car serviced. Why? I have no idea. I ask myself the same question every time I freeze when I pick up the telephone. But since reading this book, I shall not worry about such things; I'll accept that as my own eccentricity and maybe even chuckle a little bit.

It's important we accept that we all come in different packages with a different set of hard-wiring. I would suggest that Tony Robbins stay home and donate his tremendous wealth to the poor and quit preaching about there being only one way to do things. I suggest we all strive to be the best version of ourselves without thinking we need to conform to some pre-established standard, though I think this would be better served if we all had hair like Albert Einstein; now there's a hair-do not willing to conform.

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