

★ Against Conventional Wisdom

Lessons from *Quiet* and *Mastering the Art of Quitting*

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The Power
of Introverts in a
World That Can't
Stop Talking

Quiet

SUSAN CAIN

MASTERING THE ART OF

~~QUITTING~~

~~QUITTING~~

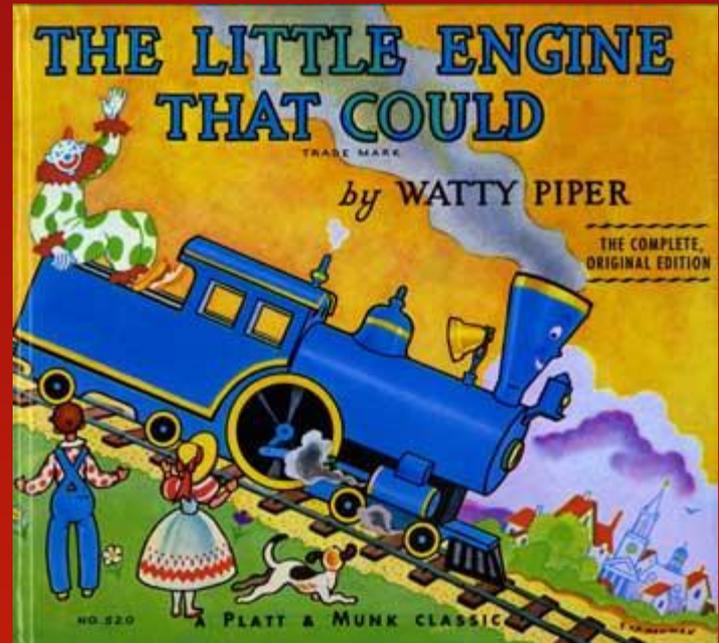
QUITTING

WHY IT MATTERS IN
LIFE, LOVE, AND WORK

PEG STREEP AND ALAN BERNSTEIN, LCSW

PET PEEVE # 114:

REALLY? WHAT ARE YOU
DOING READING? IT'S
SATURDAY NIGHT!



Cultural biases favor extroversion and persistence

★ Introvert or extrovert?

More likely to...

exercise?

commit adultery?

function well without sleep?

learn from our mistakes?

place big bets in the stock market?

delay gratification?

ask “what if?”

be a good leader?

★ Introvert or extrovert?

More likely to...

exercise?

extroverts

commit adultery?

extroverts

function well without sleep?

introverts

learn from our mistakes?

introverts

place big bets in the stock market?

extroverts

delay gratification?

introverts

ask “what if?”

introverts

be a good leader?

introverts or extroverts - depends

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Quiet

SUSAN GAIN



★ Are you an introvert or extrovert?

- 1) Circle each statement that applies to you (handout).
- 2) Add up the total number of statements that are true for you.
- 3) Find a partner and compare your introvert score. Discuss how it influences your work and how it might compare to other people in your workplace.
- 4) Discuss whether or not you think your workplace supports introverted personalities.

★ Introversion and leadership

Studies in group dynamics suggest that we perceive talkers as

- smarter
- better looking
- more likable
- as leaders

Of the talkers, *quick* talkers are perceived as

- more capable
- more appealing (Cain, p. 51)

★ Introversion and leadership

Cain references a study by management theorist Jim Collins that demonstrated that leaders of many of the best-performing companies of the late twentieth century were described as:

- quiet
- humble
- modest
- reserved
- shy
- gracious
- mild-mannered
- self-effacing
- understated

★ Introversion and leadership

Cain describes a study by management professor Adam Grant that found that introverts are uniquely good at leading initiative-takers (p. 57).

★ Introverts & the power of solitude

Cain describes a study by researcher Anders Ericsson that found that the best violinists at an elite music academy practiced in solitude for 24.3 hours per week, nearly three times the worst performers, even though they spent about the same amount of total time in music-related activity (p. 80).

★ Introverts & the power of solitude

“Most inventors and engineers I’ve met are like me---they’re shy and they live in their heads. They’re almost like artists. In fact, the very best of them are artists. And artists work best alone where they can control an invention’s design without a lot of other people designing it for marketing or some other committee. I don’t believe anything really revolutionary has been invented by committee. If you’re that rare engineer who’s an inventor and also an artist, I’m going to give you some advice that might be hard to take. That advice is: Work alone. You’re going to be best able to design revolutionary products and features if you’re working on your own. Not on a committee. Not on a team.” -Steve Wozniak, quoted by Cain on p. 73-74.

★ Rethinking workspaces

Cain mentions a 1984 experiment published by Russell G. Geen in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* that found that when introverts were asked to do a word game at the noise level preferred by the extroverts and vice-versa, both introverts and extroverts underperformed (Cain, p. 124).

★ Rethinking workspaces

Introverts should ask themselves:

Does my job allow me to spend time on in-character activities like, for example, reading, strategizing, writing, and researching? Do I have a private workspace or am I subject to the constant demands of an open office plan? If my job doesn't give me enough restorative niches, do I have enough free time on evenings and weekends to grant them to myself?

Extroverts should ask themselves:

Does my job involve enough talking, traveling, and meeting new people? Is the workspace stimulating enough? If my job isn't a perfect fit, are the hours flexible enough that I can blow off steam after work?

★ Your quitting aptitude

- 1) Circle each statement that applies to you (handout).
- 2) Add up the total number of even-numbered statements that are true for you.
- 3) Find a partner and compare your quitting aptitude score. Discuss how it influences your work and how it might compare to other people in your workplace.
- 4) What questions do you ask yourself when deciding to stay the course or disengage from a goal?

★ Quitting + new goals

“It has changed my views because quitting something is often an attempt to affirm something larger that we can’t quite grasp. And while I find it frustratingly negative to hear people phrase their decisions in terms of quitting, I now try to listen instead to the positive move they are struggling to make that they don’t yet have the words to express” (Streep and Bernstein, p. 213).

✦ Creativity

What new possibilities do we open ourselves to when we let go of the extrovert ideal and the idea that “winners never quit and quitters never win?”

★ Thank you!

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★ The books

Cain, S. (2012). *Quiet: The power of introverts in a world that can't stop talking*. New York: Crown.

Streep, P. & A. Bernstein. (2014). *Mastering the art of quitting: Why it matters in life, love and work*. Boston: Da Capo.