



# Introversion: The Largest Neurodiversity Category In Sourcing, Recruiting, Diversity & Inclusion

Glen Cathey

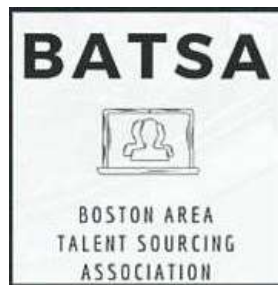
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Avature



# About me



## Professional

- 20+ years in sourcing/recruiting and leadership
- SVP Digital Strategy & Innovation @ Randstad Global
- Currently working on ethical AI in sourcing solutions
- Blogger & keynote speaker (LinkedIn 10X, SourceCon 10X)

## Personal

- INTJ (Introversion, Intuition, Thinking, Judgment)
- Grew up on a farm
- Psychology degree from University of Maryland
- Single father to 2 awesome girls
- #GoT | #TWD | #LoTR | #Matrix | #Marvel

belonging



Pat Wadors

Chief Talent Officer, ServiceNow  
Former SVP Global Talent,  
LinkedIn



# Brené Brown

Research professor at the University of Houston, focusing on shame, vulnerability, empathy and courage



Ted Talk  
The power of vulnerability  
<https://bit.ly/1lJtLD1>

glen cathey

Hello  
my name is

# Introvert

## A Manifesto for Introversion in Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

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Leader: Sourcing, Recruiting, Strategy, HR Tech, Innovation, Ethical AI, Diversity & In... [See more](#)  
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570



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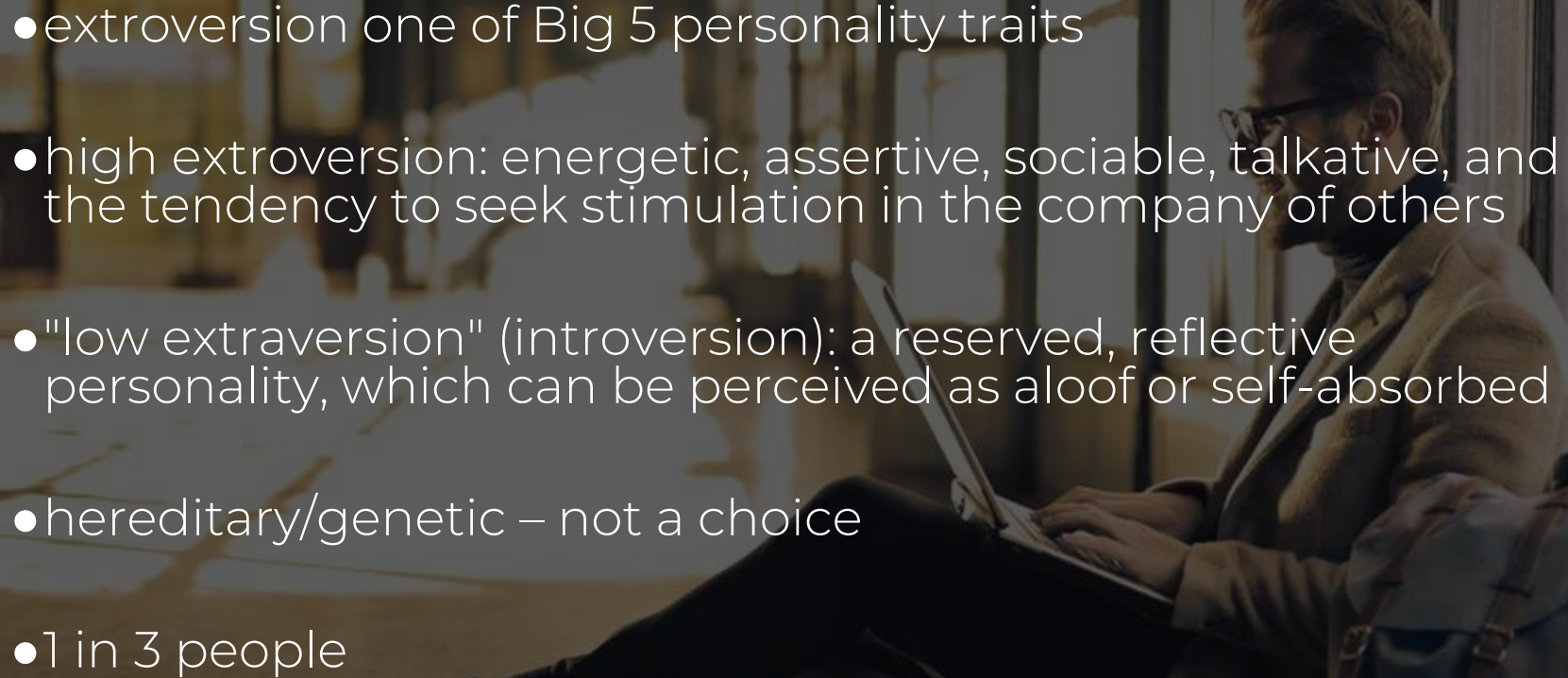
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First, this is a long post. I know many people prefer short articles and I considered chopping

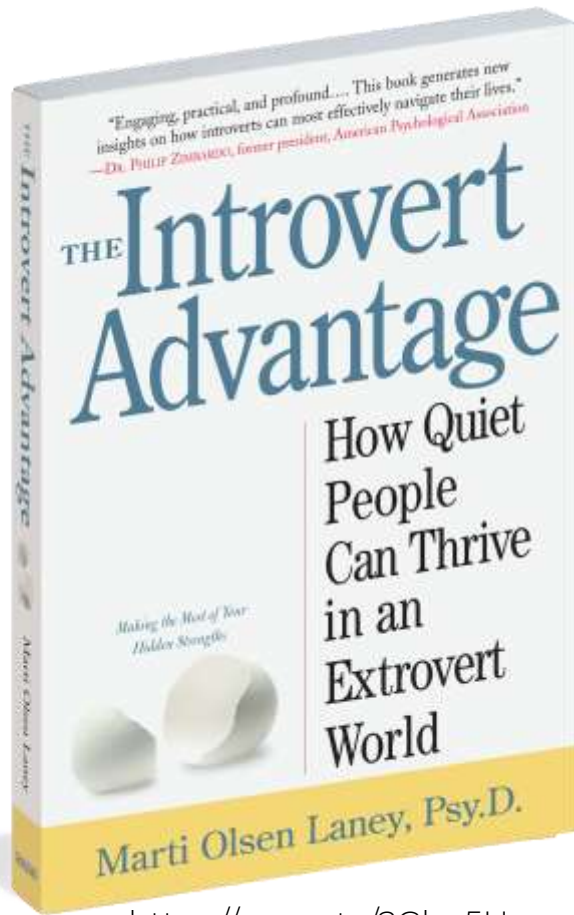
<https://bit.ly/2VJpG5w>



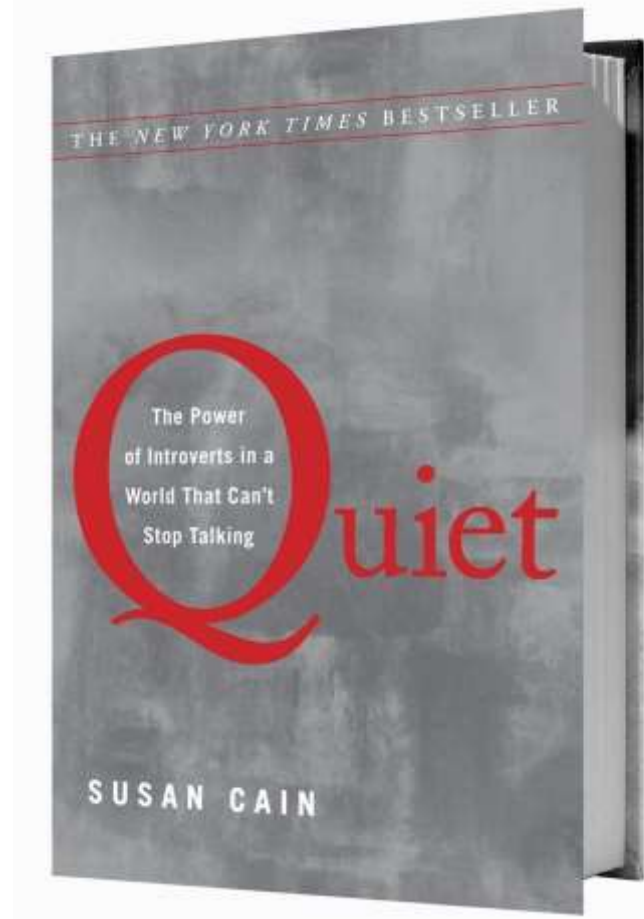
what is introversion?

- 
- extroversion one of Big 5 personality traits
  - high extroversion: energetic, assertive, sociable, talkative, and the tendency to seek stimulation in the company of others
  - "low extraversion" (introversion): a reserved, reflective personality, which can be perceived as aloof or self-absorbed
  - hereditary/genetic – not a choice
  - 1 in 3 people

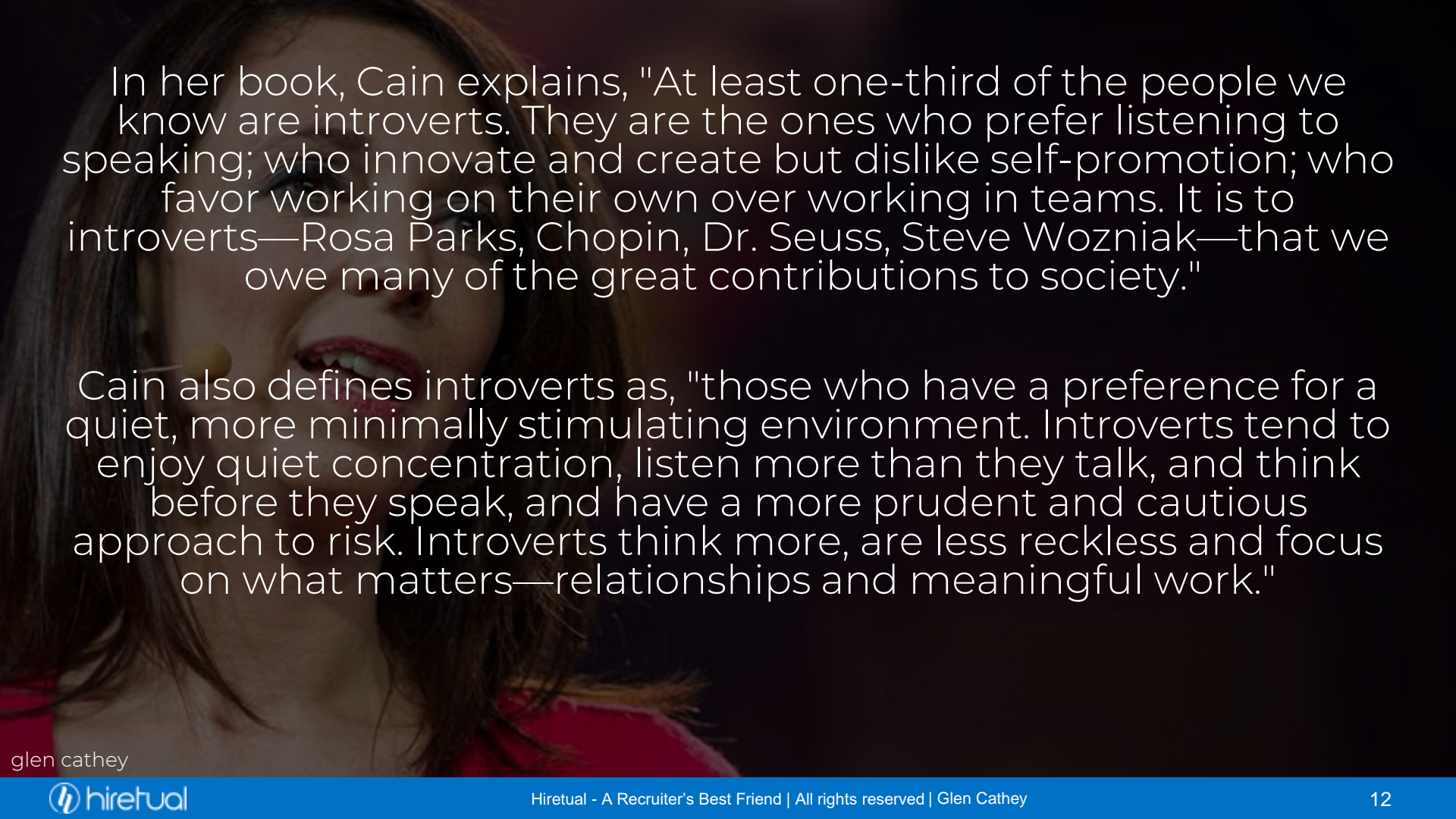
"If a crowded cocktail party feels like a holding cell to you, even as you gamely keep up your end of the chatter, chances are you're an introvert. Introverts are drained by social encounters and energized by solitary, often creative pursuits. Their disposition is frequently misconstrued as shyness, social phobia, or even avoidant personality disorder, but many introverts socialize easily; they just strongly prefer not to."



<https://amzn.to/2Gbq5Hp>



<https://amzn.to/2aNaLk9>



In her book, Cain explains, "At least one-third of the people we know are introverts. They are the ones who prefer listening to speaking; who innovate and create but dislike self-promotion; who favor working on their own over working in teams. It is to introverts—Rosa Parks, Chopin, Dr. Seuss, Steve Wozniak—that we owe many of the great contributions to society."

Cain also defines introverts as, "those who have a preference for a quiet, more minimally stimulating environment. Introverts tend to enjoy quiet concentration, listen more than they talk, and think before they speak, and have a more prudent and cautious approach to risk. Introverts think more, are less reckless and focus on what matters—relationships and meaningful work."



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Susan Cain | TED2012

# The power of introverts



18:57





# 4 shades of introversion

*social*: a preference for socializing with small groups instead of large ones, or solitude

*thinking*: introspective, thoughtful, and self-reflective

*anxious*: anxious introverts may seek out solitude because they feel awkward and painfully self-conscious around other people

*restrained*: seem to operate at a slightly slower pace, preferring to think before they speak or act

# you might be an introvert if

- people often describe you as quiet, reserved, serious and aloof, and may find it difficult to approach and get to know you
- some people interpret your behavior as anti-social
- you loathe small talk – it feels fake
- deep and meaningful conversations are your preference

# you might be an introvert if

- being social and around lots of people drains your energy
- after a day of interacting with others, you often feel the need to be alone to recharge
- you enjoy solitude - in fact, it often energizes you
- you find open office environments are draining and distracting

# you might be an introvert if

- you typically don't raise your hand when someone asks for something from a group
- in group settings, you don't like to fight for the opportunity to speak over others and would prefer to be asked for your input
- even when you are free to answer an unexpected call from a friend or family member, you often choose not to – you'd rather call back when you're ready to talk

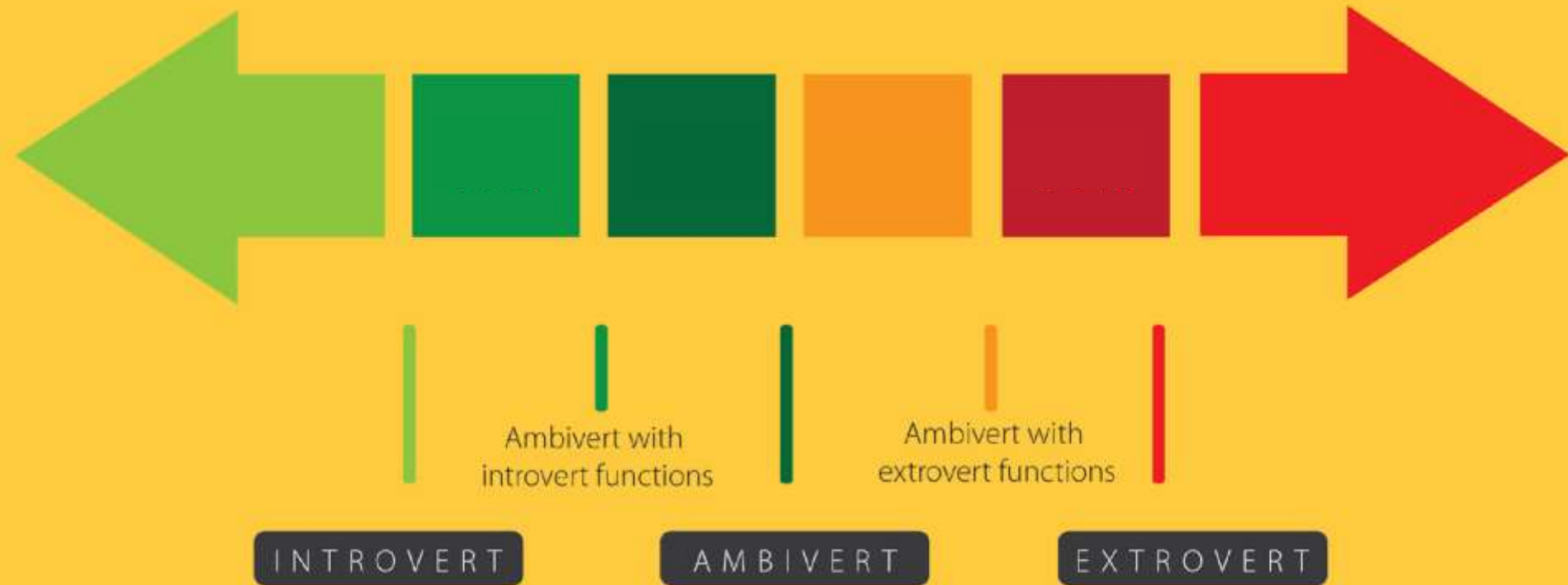
# you might be an introvert if

- your best thinking often occurs when you are alone
- you are very self-aware
- you tend to think and process information more slowly than extroverts
- you often feel like you can express yourself better through writing than talking

# you might be an introvert if

- you find it difficult to strike up conversations with people you don't know
- you tend to listen and observe more than you talk, and you notice details in conversations and interactions that others seem to miss
- you have above average empathy and can often read other people well

# introversion / extroversion spectrum





### People also ask

What is an introverted person like?



What does it mean when a person is an introvert?



How do I know I am an introvert?



Is it OK to be an introvert?



Are introverts weird?



How do I stop being an introvert?



*Feedback*



Psychology today mentions that "introversion is often perceived as less socially desirable" than extroversion

in Dr. Marti Olsen Laney's research for her Introvert Advantage book, 98% of the introverts she interviewed felt as if they had been reproached and maligned for being the way they were

# comments on Susan Cain's YouTube video

"I'm an introvert and we really are repressed in the workplace. People think if you don't talk enough you're incompetent. I hate it so much."

"I really needed to hear this. All my life, I've been told by teachers & even family members, that I'm "too quiet" and need to "speak more." I always felt like I was in the wrong, so this helped boost my confidence. Thank you."

"Problem introverts have with society...Society : be who you are. Do whatever you think makes you happy. Introvert: sure. Society: No, not that way. Like this. It's only like this."

# indeed forum: discrimination against introverts

"As an introvert I totally get what it feels like to be misunderstood by some who mistake this way of being as not out there enough, or not as loud and/or vocal, or not interested in being the center of attention. I don't need a flashing neon sign to prove that my thought processes, ideas and creativity add value."

"Yes, I have encountered this before, several times in fact. One manager went so far to tell me that my personality was "wrong"."

"I was just told at my workplace of eleven years that I will never be a good manager because I'm introverted and will never be promoted until I become more assertive. I know there's things I need to work on, but I've never felt as hopeless as now."



people are wired to seek connection and belonging – it's how we survive and thrive

neuroscience research has indicated that social needs are managed by the same neural networks as primary survival needs such as food and water

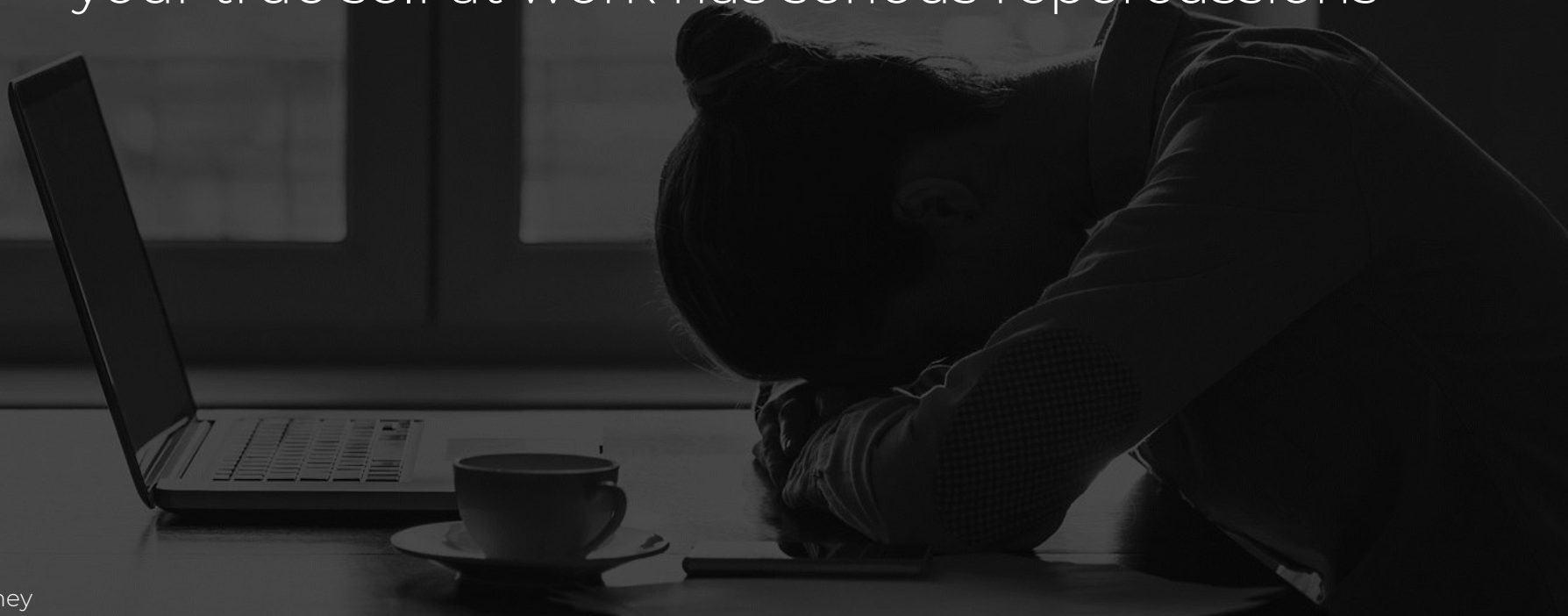
other studies show that belonging and attachment to a group of coworkers is a better motivator for some employees than money



Bring your talent and just  
be you

LGBTQ inclusion in the workplace

when you do not feel safe and comfortable being your authentic self at work, you can feel pressure to try appearing as someone you're not, and not feeling free to be your true self at work has serious repercussions



# Deloitte study

- 61% of workers said they faced pressure to "cover" in some way (downplay their differences)
- 66% said it significantly undermined their sense of self
- 51% said it affected their view of opportunities within the organization
- 50% indicated that they diminished their sense of commitment

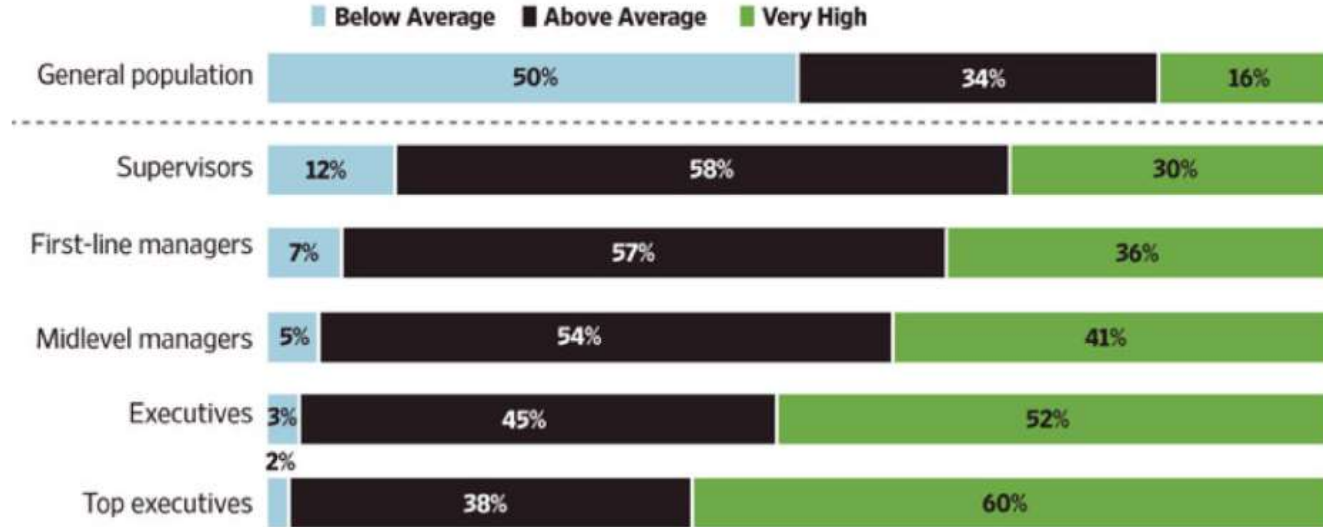


research has shown  
that when introverts  
try to act more  
extroverted, they  
report elevated  
fatigue, feelings of  
inauthenticity, and  
negative emotions

# a study of > 4,000 managers

## How Outgoing Are We?

Levels of extroversion in the general population, as well as among corporate managers



Source: a study of more than 4,000 managers who completed personality assessments, conducted by Deniz S. Ones and Stephan Dilchert, published in Industrial Psychology (2009)

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

How outgoing are we? The Wall Street Journal

# introverted women face a "double whammy"

"We know that women are less likely to be promoted to leadership positions, and there is research evidence to show a considerable bias against introverts in the workplace," says Crane. "Women are up against a male model of leadership, a flawed model of 'successful' human beings – male introverts suffer from this reality, too. There are hidden leaders in every organization; they're just not being recognized."



# extroverts out-earn introverts



by as much as  
\$500,000!



neurodiversity

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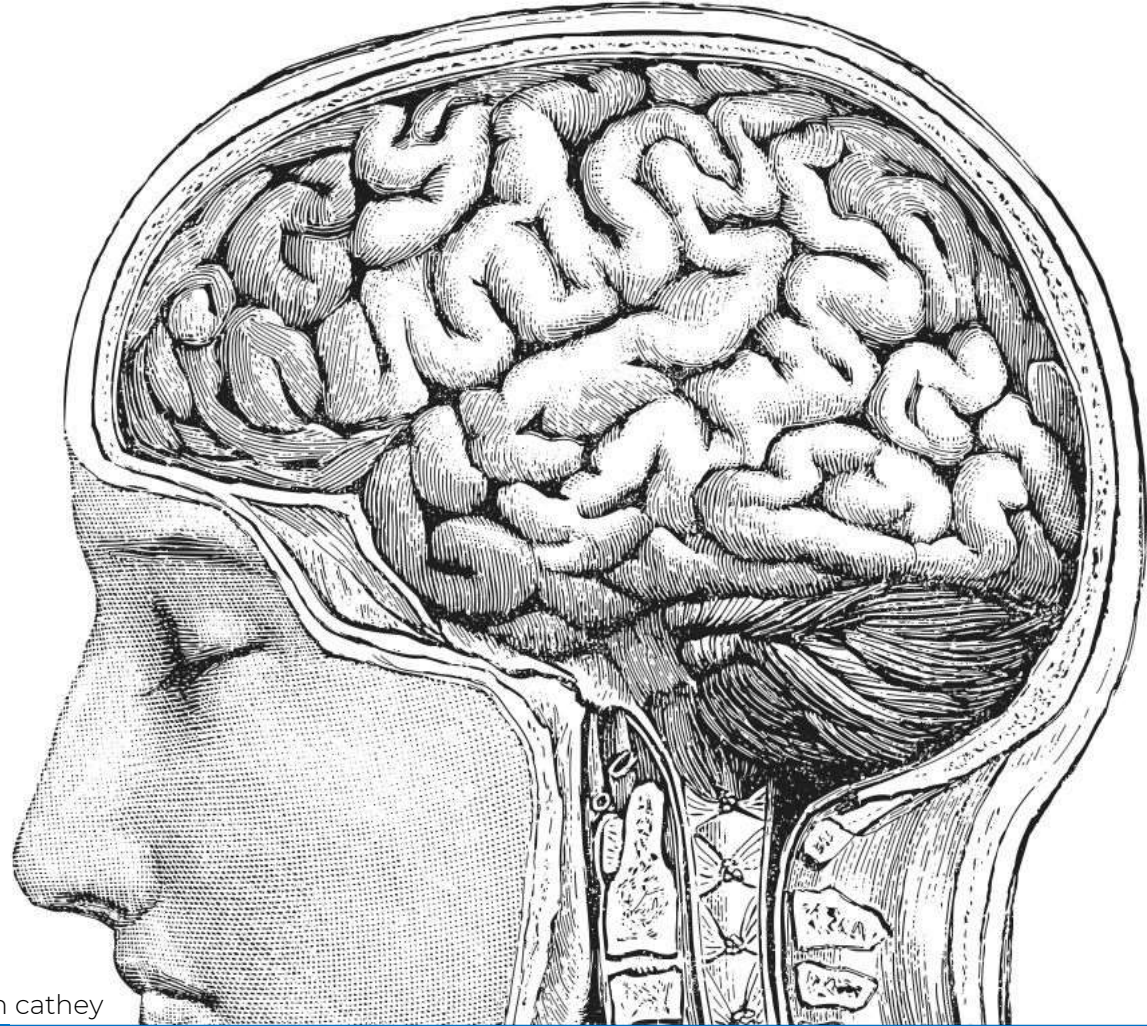
# neurodiversity

a portmanteau of "neurological" and "diversity" that originated in the late 1990's as a challenge to prevailing views of certain neurological conditions as being inherently pathological, instead asserting that neurological differences should be recognized and respected as a social category on par with gender, ethnicity, sexual identity and orientation

while introverts and extroverts are considered neurotypical (not displaying or characterized by autistic or other neurologically atypical patterns of thought or behavior), introverts' brains are different from extroverts



a study published in  
the Journal of  
Neuroscience in 2012  
showed that introverts  
typically have thicker,  
larger gray matter in  
the prefrontal cortex, a  
brain region  
associated with  
decision-making and  
abstract thought



a study by Dr. Debra Johnson using positron emission tomography (PET) showed differences in blood flow between introvert and extrovert brains: <https://bit.ly/2IRs1I1>

longer, more complex path  
acetylcholine neurotransmitter

shorter, less complicated path  
dopamine neurotransmitter

introvert

extrovert

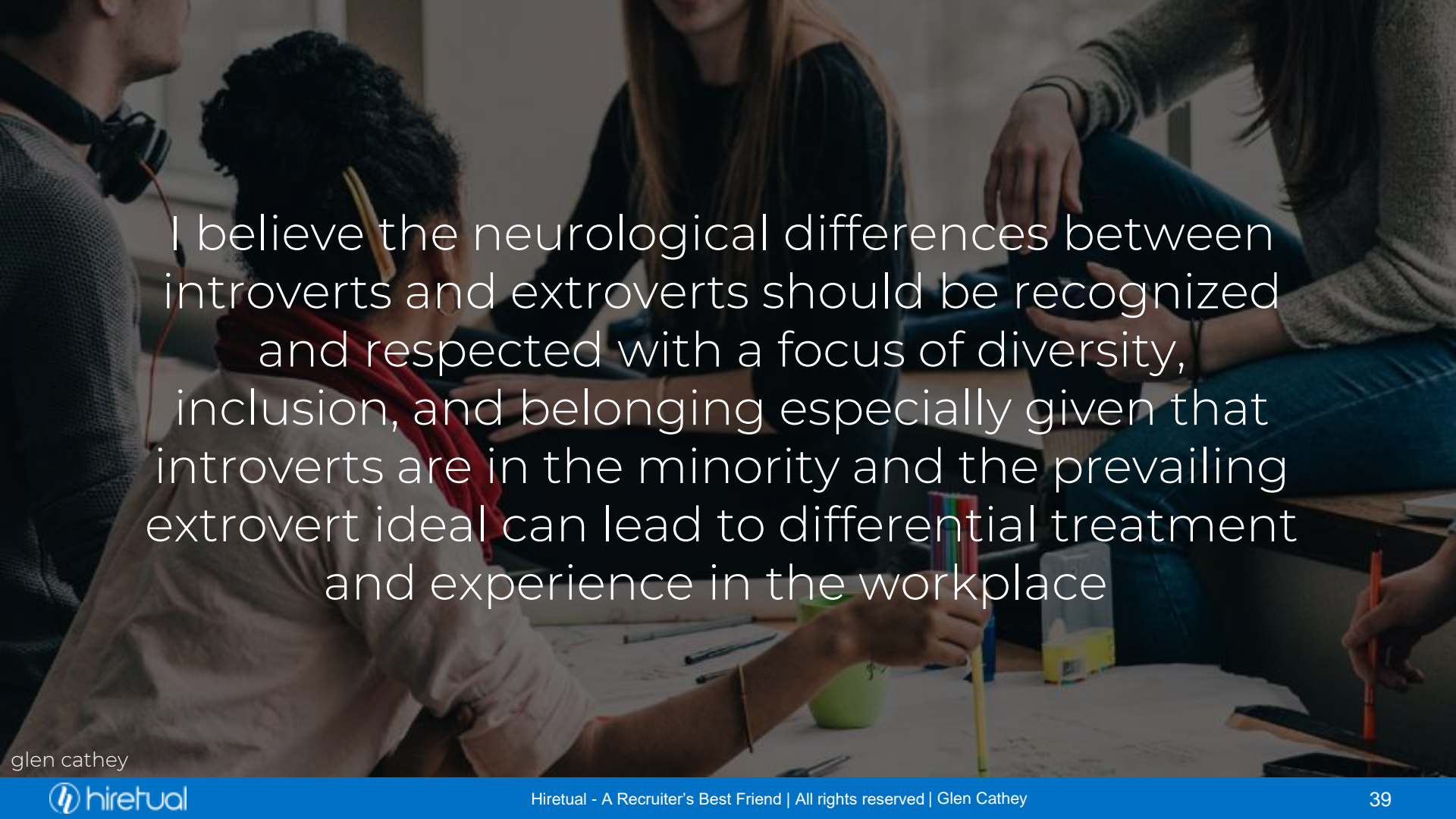
remembering,  
solving  
problems and  
planning

visual, auditory,  
touch, and taste  
processing

images: Mariëlle van Aart-Coppes  
magicaldaydream.com <https://bit.ly/1rILP0x>

these neurological  
differences between  
introverts and  
extroverts manifest  
in differences in how  
they think and  
behave





I believe the neurological differences between introverts and extroverts should be recognized and respected with a focus of diversity, inclusion, and belonging especially given that introverts are in the minority and the prevailing extrovert ideal can lead to differential treatment and experience in the workplace

# strengths of introverts

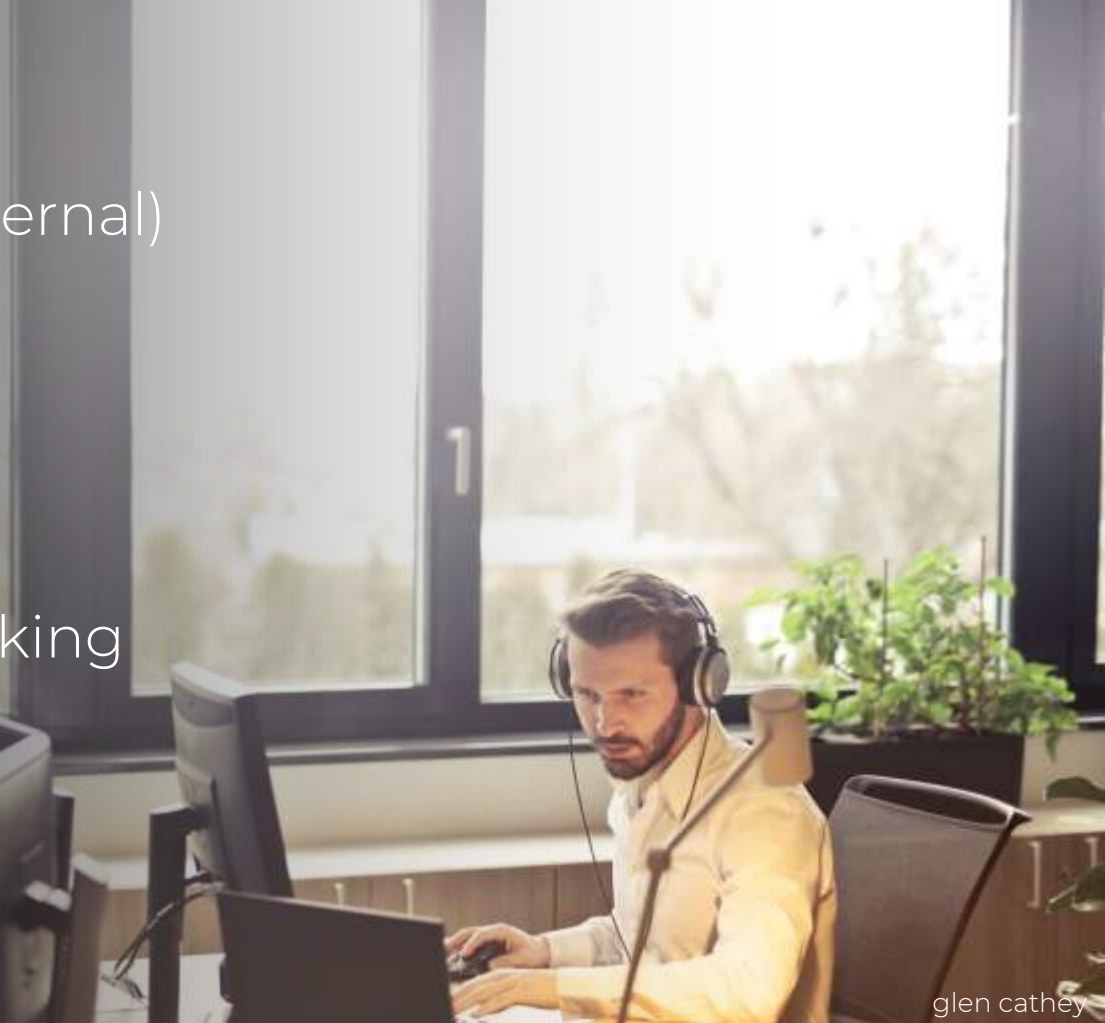


Emily Hu

Triple World Record Holding Powerlifter  
Benches 275 lbs @ 123 lbs

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empathy & inclusion  
observation (internal & external)  
listening  
focus  
creativity  
critical & "big picture" thinking  
writing (social media!)  
teamwork  
self motivation



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# sourcing

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# recruiting | sales

an analysis of 35 studies, encompassing nearly 4,000 salespeople, determined that there is virtually no correlation between extroversion and sales success.

a study conducted by Adam Grant found that ambiverts outperformed introverts and extroverts in call center sales by 24% - 70%!

# leadership

A woman with dark hair, wearing a black top and a light-colored blazer, stands in the center of a meeting room, smiling and looking towards a group of four people seated around a table. The seated individuals, two men and two women, are also smiling and looking at her. They are in a modern office setting with large windows in the background showing a cityscape. Several laptops are open on the table.

studies performed by Adam Grant, Francesca Gino and David A. Hofmann have shown that introvert leaders outperform their extrovert peers, particularly in dynamic, unpredictable environments and with proactive employees - introverted leaders tend to listen more carefully and show greater receptivity to suggestions, making them more effective leaders of vocal teams

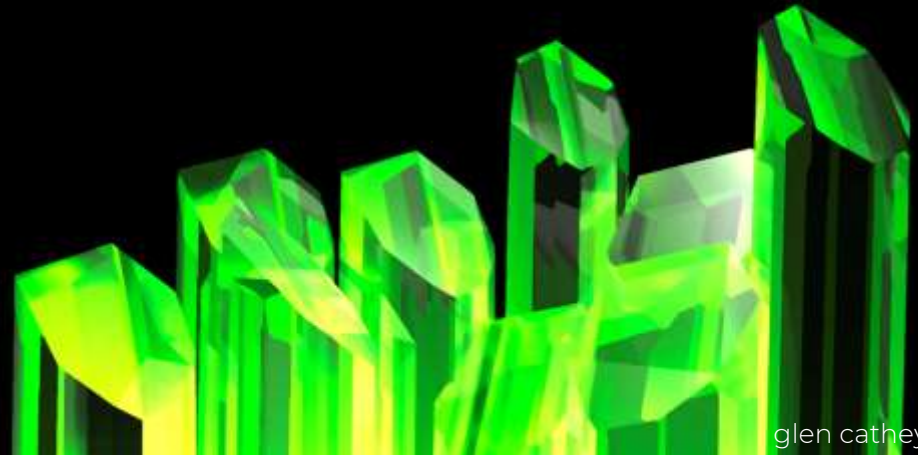
A man with a beard and long hair, wearing a dark blue and grey hooded jacket, stands with his arms crossed. He is looking down. The background is a dark, textured surface with two large, white, chalk-drawn muscular arms flexing on either side of him. The text "weaknesses of introverts" is written in white at the bottom.

# weaknesses of introverts

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small talk  
schmoozing\*  
speaking up & advocating  
often perceived as aloof/antisocial  
"slow" thinking  
being put on the spot  
meeting & social fatigue  
open office environments  
external stimuli (distracting)  
organizing team events

\*to chat in a friendly and persuasive manner especially so as to gain favor



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# if you're an introvert

- choose your workplace with care
- look for indicators of introvert friendly work environments
  - are there opportunities for remote work?
  - are there spaces to work alone?
- schedule alone time into your calendar
- seek leaders who are "givers" and not "takers"



# meetings



when employees at a large global bank were asked “When you have a contribution to make in a meeting, how often are you able to do so?” - only 35% said they felt able to make a contribution all the time

A background image showing four people (three men and one woman) sitting around a table in a meeting. They are all smiling and looking towards the right. One man on the right is wearing headphones. The image has a blue and orange color overlay.

# meetings

- allow everyone to speak
- ensure no one dominates the time & conversation
- call on those who haven't spoken yet
- don't call on people and ask questions on content they haven't been able to fully absorb yet
- proactively give introverts the floor

# meetings

- don't allow people to interrupt and don't force attendees to have to interrupt people in order to share
- send out pre-reads so people can absorb the material and have time to think about it so they are better prepared to contribute to a discussion
- send out a meeting summary afterwards eliciting ideas that may have come to mind after the meeting



# group work

allow time for brainwriting in silence before the group discusses and shares ideas

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<http://bit.ly/2WqG0IU>

A photograph of two men in business suits sitting at a table, smiling and talking. The man on the right is looking towards the man on the left, who is partially visible in profile. They appear to be in a professional setting, possibly an office or a meeting room.

"Today, almost every single company conducts interviews that favor extroverted candidates and dismiss their introverted counterparts, effectively eliminating a third to a half of the talent pool.

The hiring process typically places tremendous emphasis on interview performance, rewarding confidence, charisma, and fast-talking—all classic traits of the extrovert."

# sourcing | interviewing

- don't judge people based on how social or awkward you think they are
  - being good at small talk makes people likable, but are you hiring for small talk skills?
  - this applies to all interactions (phone, in-person)
- be aware that introverts tend to break eye contact when speaking
  - in-person and via video interviews
- prep hiring managers

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# interviewing

- level the playing field by sending some or all interview questions in advance
  - this gives introverts the chance to process the questions & enables them to give their best answers
  - are you trying to assess the person's ability to interview or their ability to do the job?
- be patient and allow interviewees to take time with their answers
  - the belief that "smart people think on their feet" is an unfair bias against introverts

# actions

- include personality and neurodiversity as core elements within your DIBs efforts
- introversion/extroversion training for:
  - sourcers, recruiters and hiring managers/teams
  - leaders to tackle affinity bias
- recognize and understand that required after work activities can be stressful for introverts
- consider voluntary sharing of Myers-Briggs profiles

introversion isn't a choice

while invisible,  
introversion cuts across  
all employees, including  
other diversity groups

extroverts outnumber  
introverts 2:1

extroverts get promoted  
more and earn more than  
introverts and dominate  
leadership positions

introvert brains are different  
than extrovert brains

personality and  
neurodiversity must be a  
part of DIBs

ensure your workplace,  
meetings, activities,  
recruiting, interviews,  
hiring and promotions are  
inclusive of introverts

seek introvert friendly  
companies and leaders



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Hiretual seeks nominations from sourcers who would like to participate. What we need:

- Strong interest in this topic (or some aspect of it)
- Strong research ability (primary and secondary)
- Ability to write clearly (boil down a potentially complex topic into layman's language)
- Your topic doesn't have to be Hiretual-related but should point people towards real insights of Intelligence Driven Talent Acquisition.

Interesting articles to ponder & explore the topic:

- [Why 2019 is when TA makes this shift](#) (Forbes)
- [How AI makes recruiting more human](#) (Forbes)

Email [ninhtran@hiretual.com](mailto:ninhtran@hiretual.com) if interested/questions

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# Thank You!