



Writer Susan Cain Presents the Power of Introverts

Susan Cain is a popular writer and lecturer from the USA. She is most famous for her 2012 non-fiction book *“Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking”*, which argues that Western culture fails to understand and value the capabilities of introverts.

A proud introvert herself, she later co-founded “Quiet Revolution”, a company which has launched several initiatives for more introverted children and adults in the workplace. Her 2016 follow-up book, *“Quiet Power: The Secret Strengths of Introverts”*, focused on what educators and parents can do to help introverted children and teenagers to thrive.

This video is a TED Talk presentation with some complex vocabulary and ideas. Answer the questions below with a summary of points that Susan Cain makes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0NtU2j0TM4>

Vocabulary to check before answering the questions:

summer camp - A camp for children to do activities during the school holidays.

rowdy - noisy and disorderly

to roam - To move around in no particular direction

to be passed up for something - to be rejected, turned down

to put your stamp on something - to change something in a significant way

a profound epiphany - a deep moment of sudden realization (often religious)

unassuming - not arrogant in any way, modest

1. **(00:00-00:30)** What was the main group activity that Susan Cain’s family did when she was a child?
2. **(00:30-00:43)** Why was this an ideal activity for her family?
3. **(00:43-00:56)** What was Susan Cain’s main misconception about how summer camps were going to be?
4. **(00:56-01:22)** What did Susan Cain have to do every day at summer camp, and why?
5. **(01:22-01:36)** What 2 things did Susan Cain not understand about this activity?

BONUS QUESTION: **(02:35-02:58)** What are the exact words that Susan Cain says during these 30 seconds?

6. **(03:00-03:22)** What job did Susan Cain decide to do, and why?

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7. **(04:08-04:35)** What is introversion according to Susan Cain, and what is it not?
8. **(04:35-04:56)** What is the key to maximising our talents as introverts or extroverts, and why is this problematic for introverts?
9. **(06:04-06:20)** What 2 disadvantages do introverts face in the workplace?
10. **(06:20-06:51)** Why do introverted leaders sometimes deliver better results than extroverted leaders?
11. **(06:51-07:25)** What does Susan Cain suggest about the special power of some of history's most iconic introverted leaders?
12. **(09:49-10:15)** What connection do the world's major religions have to introversion?
13. **(10:15-11:06)** What argument does Susan Cain give regarding group collaboration and generating ideas, what reasons does she give for this?
14. **(11:06-11:33)** What kind of culture did we live in in the past, and what characteristics were valued?
15. **(11:33-12:00)** What culture did we enter into in the 20th century, and what characteristics are valued today?



Answers

1. (00:00-00:30) What was the main group activity that Susan Cain's family did when she was a child?

They read books

2. (00:30-00:43) Why was this an ideal activity for her family?

Because you had the 'animal warmth' of your family sitting next to you, but you were also free to 'go roaming around the adventure land' in your mind, meaning that you could go into your own imagination.

3. (00:43-00:56) What was Susan Cain's main misconception about how summer camp was going to be?

She thought that a summer camp environment would be just as quiet as her family environment. She had a vision of 10 girls quietly sitting reading books in matching nightgowns.

4. (00:56-01:22) What did Susan Cain have to do every day at summer camp and why?

She had to recite a cheer in order to instil camp spirit.

5. (01:22-01:36) What 2 things did Susan Cain not understand about this activity?

She couldn't understand why they had to be so rowdy and why they had to spend the word 'rowdy' incorrectly.

BONUS QUESTION: (02:35-02:58) What are the exact words that Susan Cain says during these 30 seconds?

[see page 5 for a mini-transcript and accent guide]

6. (03:00-03:22) What job did Susan Cain decide to do, and why?

She decided to become a Wall Street lawyer partly because she needed to prove to herself that she could be bold, courageous/brave) and assertive just like extroverts.

7. (04:08-04:35) What is introversion according to Susan Cain, and what is it not?

It is not the same as being shy - being shy is the fear of being judged socially. Being introverted is about how you respond to stimulation, including social stimulation. So extroverts crave large amounts of stimulation, whereas introverts respond much better to, more low-key environments.

8. (05:00-05:15) What is the key to maximising our talents as introverts or extroverts, and why is this so problematic for introverts?

The key is to put ourselves into a 'zone of stimulation' that is right for us. The problem for introverts is that schools and workplaces are designed mainly for extroverts.

9. (06:04-06:20) What 2 disadvantages do introverts face in the workplace?

Workplaces today are mainly open-plan offices without walls, so we are subject to the constant noise and gaze of our co-workers. Thus, the office environment is mainly set up to suit extroverts. Also, introverts are often 'passed up' for leadership roles, meaning that they are often not considered to leadership positions.



Answers

10. (06:20-06:51) Why do introverted leaders sometimes deliver better results than extroverted leaders?

Introverted leaders are much more likely to let more proactive employees 'run with their ideas', meaning that they allow proactive employees to suggest ideas and then test them out. Extroverts, however can unknowingly get so excited about things that they start to 'put their own stamp on things', meaning to bring in their own opinions and incorporate them. This could make it more difficult for other people's ideas 'bubble up' to the surface.

11. (06:51-07:25) What does Susan Cain suggest about the special power of some of history's most iconic introverted leaders?

She says that some of the most iconic introverted leaders in history took up leadership roles despite not wanting to. She states that this is a special power all its own, because people could feel that these leaders were at the helm (leading) not because they enjoyed directing others and wanted to be seen, suggesting that some extroverts may want to lead in order to be noticed. These introverts were leading purely from the drive to do what they thought was right.

12. (09:49-10:15) What connection do the world's major religions have to introversion?

The leaders of most major religions went off alone into the wilderness where they had profound epiphanies, meaning deep revelations and ideas, that they brought back to the rest of the community.

13. (10:15-11:06) What argument does Susan Cain give regarding group collaboration and generating ideas, what reasons does she give for this?

She says that it is better for people to generate ideas on their own and then come together as a team to talk them through in a well-managed environment. She says that when we are in a group of people we instinctively mirror their opinions and beliefs without realising it. She also says that groups famously follow the opinions of the most dominant or charismatic person in the room, even though there is no evidence to suggest that they have the best ideas.

14. (11:06-11:43) What kind of culture did we live in in the past, and what characteristics were valued?

We lived in a 'culture of character', where people were valued for their inner selves and their virtues. The models were praised for being modest and unassuming.

15. (12:02-12:43) What culture did we enter into in the 20th century, and what characteristics are valued today?

In the 20th century, we entered a 'culture of personality'. What happened is we had evolved from an agricultural economy to a world of big business, and people were working more with crowds of strangers in the city. Qualities such as magnetism and charisma are considered much more important, and salesmen are considered as great role models.



Answer to Bonus Question and Guide to Some Features of US English Accent

Transcript of the video (02:35-02:58)

Key - Some features of Standard American English:

Red text	'Flapping': 't' sounds sound like a 'd' sound when they are between a stressed and unstressed vowel This is a classic feature of US accents. Between a stressed and unstressed vowel, the tongue lightly taps the top of the mouth where a 't' sound is made. This produces a very soft 'd' sound. One classic example is 'water = waader'.
Blue text	'a' sounds as in 'can' and 'camp' are 'raised' before 'm' and 'n' sounds This sounds more like an 'e'+a' sound, written in the transcript as 'ea'
Green text	Words such as 'all', 'talk', 'cause' are pronounced with an 'a' sound This is the main distinctive vowel sound in Standard American English.
Orange text	Sounds in words such as 'word', 'turn', 'girl', 'introvert' are pronounced with a really deep 'urr' sound, with the 'r' also strongly pronounced This is written in the transcript below as 'urr'
Bold Text	All 'r' sounds are pronounced fully in US English Unlike many other forms of English, US English is known as a 'rhotic' accent, which means all 'r's are pronounced in all positions. This is one of the clearest differences between US English and most other forms of British English, Australian English and New Zealand English. This can potentially make US English seem slightly slower than many other English accents.
Small text	'filler' words such as 'are / to / a / an / of / for / from' are sometimes reduced to very quick sounds which are hard to hear. Each of these words contains some form of 'schwa' sound, which is a kind of lazy 'uh' sound. This occurs in all accents, including US accents. This general reduction of smaller words is also used in formal and professional settings, and it is in fact essential in maintaining the natural rhythm of the English language.
Grey text	The real transcript of the video

Now, I tell you this story about summer **ca**mp. I could **v** told you 50 others just like it...**a**all the times
Now, I tell you this story about summer camp. I could have told you 50 others just like it...all the times

thad **d** that somehow my quiet **n** intro**urr**ted style **v** being **wz** not necessarily **the**
that **d** that somehow my quiet and introverted style of being was not necessarily the

right way to go **n** thad **d** I should be trying **te** pass as more **v** **en** extro**urr**t. an.. I always sensed deep
right way to go and that I should be trying to pass as more of an extrovert. And I always sensed deep

down **tht** this **wz** wrong and that intro**urr**ts **wurr** pretty excellent just **ez** they **wurr**. But **fer** years I
down that this was wrong and that introverts were pretty excellent just as they were. But for years I

denied this intuition
denied this intuition