

Are You an Ambivert?

Most people are familiar with the labels of introvert and extrovert. Until recently, I thought those were the only options. However, it turns out there is a third choice - ambivert.

My business partner, David E. Smith, and I have had lengthy discussions about introversion and extroversion. He is a devout introvert. As partners in our firm, we both have responsibility for generating revenue, which involves selling our firm's services.

For me, that means going out to events and meeting people. I strategically identify people I **want to meet and find connections to get introduced. In the past, I'd tell Dave, the president and founder of E·A·S·I·Consult®, about the people I'd met at events and** the business development opportunities that might result, but I never heard him talk about attending similar types of events. At one point, I asked him what he was doing with regard to business development. He said that his approach was to wait for people he knew to call or to call people he knew.

That didn't sit too well with me, but I was open to different approaches as long as they were effective.

Fast forward a couple years, and Dave and I are attending a national conference of psychologists, most of who work inside Fortune 500 companies and represent prospects for our type of work. There are presentations during the day on different topics and then social events every evening starting at 5 p.m. There are typically two or three events to attend each evening. Our company also hosted an event for our employees, customers and prospective customers one night.

At some of these events, I felt very energized and comfortable. Others were more of a challenge, and I felt myself holding back and observing. For my partner, though, these events felt like work, even though he did enjoy meeting some of the people and talking about what our firm did. As the evening wore on, I could see his batteries run down. He needed to be alone to recharge.

People have called me an extrovert for years. I willingly accepted the label especially if the alternative was to be called an introvert. But I did feel there was something about the label **"extrovert" that didn't quite fit me, until I heard the term ambivert. As soon as I heard the label I knew it was me.**

I first heard Elizabeth Bernstein talk about ambiverts during an interview on the CBS Morning Show. After that segment I Googled her, and was taken to an article she wrote for the *Wall Street Journal* entitled, “[Not an Introvert, Not an Extrovert? You May Be An Ambivert.](#)” Elizabeth says that ambiverts have both introverted and extroverted traits, but neither trait is dominant. These folks have more balanced personalities. They move between being social and solitary. Bernstein cites noted author Daniel Pink as describing ambiverts as “bilingual.” They can speak and act in the ways of introverts and extroverts with equal facility.

Bernstein goes on to cite speaker and author Beth Buelow’s description of ambiverts as:

- Socially flexible; comfortable being alone or with others
- Knowing when to talk and when to listen
- Neither too expressive or too reserved
- Able to change their approach to fit the situation

So what are you and why does that matter? I used to think that people were either expressive or inward. This new information told me that there is a middle ground. The center of this continuum is fairly large and people, although **they’re in the middle, may “favor” one end of the continuum over the other.**

Knowing some of your characteristics or tendencies can help you better understand why you do some of the things you do. It can also help you understand why people you interact with do what they do. One way is not right and the other wrong. If you are an extrovert and think **things through by saying them aloud and want an introvert’s opinion, you may need to give** them time to think things out and get back to you.

Something else about ambiverts: they tend to be very good at sales. They can be outgoing, **but they don’t need to take center stage. They are also very good listeners and know when** to talk and when to listen. That’s not always the strength of either introverts or extroverts. So what are you?

About the Author

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