

Dave Summers: Welcome to AMA Edgewise. I'm Dave Summers. AMA Edgewise is brought to you by the American Management Association. On today's program we've got Jennifer B. Kahnweiler, PhD. I, uh, do I have to call you Dr. Jennifer now?

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: No.

Dave Summers: Okay, good. Jennifer's a certified speaking professional. She's an international speaker and executive coach specializing in developing introverted leaders. Her clients include GE, NASA and the CDC. She's the author of the bestseller *The Introverted Leader*. You can follow her on Twitter Jenn Kahnweiler, J-E-N-N K-A-H-N-W-E-I-L-E-R, and she's got a new web site jenniferkahnweiler.com.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Right as long as you can spell it you can find me.

Dave Summers: Good luck with that Kahnweiler stuff.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Right.

Dave Summers: Welcome to Edgewise, Jennifer. Obviously, Jennifer's a, a friend of the program. She's been on a few other times before, and we've done other programs with her. This new book that you have out, it's entitled *The Quiet Influence, The Introvert's Guide to Making a Difference*. So it's kind of a handbook, yes?

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Yes, it's very practical. That's what I, my intention was in writing the book, Dave, to give people tools in maneuvering through the workplace as an introvert and using the strengths that they already have. So it is very practical in nature and, and that's I believe in, in putting, uh, some theory in there but it's a lot more sharing the lessons –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – of people who have been quiet influencers –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – and have, uh, made a real difference –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – to many.

Dave Summers: I notice that the endorsement you have on the top of the cover page here is from Susan Cain, author of the book Quiet. Uh, are you struck, I would say by the, the recent spotlight? I know you've doing this for a while, and you've established –

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Yes.

Dave Summers: – quite a reputation in this space of course.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Thank you.

Dave Summers: But what are your thoughts about the new spotlight that is being placed on, uh, the idea of introverts stepping up and being who they are and whether it's a book or a, a show on a, on a business network or something like that or obviously the great work that you do. What do you attribute this new discovery to? Was it just that the introverts they are, are mad as hell, and they're just not gonna take it anymore or –

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Yeah.

Dave Summers: – I mean what is it? What's –

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Well –

Dave Summers: – what's so new about it?

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – yeah thank you for, for bringing that up, uh, Dave. It is, it's the, I call it the rise of the introverts. I mean there is, it's a phenomenon now like many other movements where we have a lot more awareness, and I'm not sure exactly the reason for it but I think the time has come. Part of it to me is the influence of the new wave of leadership where people are not command and control anymore and there's more research coming out that says the people that are more humble, more quiet, more calm tend to get more results without a lot of noise, those loud rattling of the sabers –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – is not the way leadership is going now.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: And there are other factors as well. You know global organizations now require us to flex in many different ways –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – and not just have one way of leading, particularly in areas like Asia where an extroverted leader or somebody really out there is really the person that gets the thing done.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: So I think there's so many factors now and I, I actually couldn't be happier to see, uh –

Dave Summers: Of course not. This is great, this is great stuff.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler:– to see that. And it's not just, not just for me and my book sales which I'm of course happy about but you know when I talk about introversion now even up to as recently as four years ago –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – I would sometimes still get that deer in the headlights. But no more.

Dave Summers: An important part of the Quiet Influence book is a model you've put together which I believe you described as the quiet influence process. Could you walk us through that a little bit?

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Sure, Dave, I'm happy to. You know, it starts really where the introverts shine the most, where the light shines most brightly and that's taking quiet time. And there are six key strengths that build on that, and I have a picture in there of, uh, are ripples in the pond.

You know if you think about that, that quiet time is the source of innovation, of the source of real provocative deep thought and strategy. Before we go out there, we need to recharge our batteries or even charge our batteries to begin with. And so that's really where it begins. Then we move to what introverts do so well is to prepare. And when they focus on getting those points ready for the next meeting or thinking about the personality they're about to engage with, the effectiveness is just phenomenal. So preparation is just another key sweet spot that I found in all my interviews and, and research and work with introverts through the years. The next thing that builds on that is really the idea then okay let me start listening to –

Dave Summers: Mm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – to the people around me, to the situations around me so when we talk about introverts being really great observers and being the people everybody wants to go to to share their thoughts and ideas, well that's where they oftentimes formulate their plans and their strategies. It happens in those engaged listening times. You know we think about, for instance, reporters as an example on the, on the Internet. One of the things they didn't do a few years ago was even use a tool like Twitter.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: You know that was too much out there. Well most reporters you talk to now will say that they get their stories through that medium and that's the listening that they're doing to hear about trends and what's happening out there. The next step that in, introverts tend to or the quiet influencers that I found work in really effectively that's engaging with other people in what I call focused conversations. So two people sharing in, in a more in-depth way, not in a superficial way –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – about a problem that they're having let's say on a project. It's not just through email. It's those having those conversations where you've taken what you've heard through listening and then putting forth your position.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: 'Cause it's not just the taking in. It's also having to share and taking a stand. So that's why much of the time, you know, folks who were quieter can also be very effective at sales –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler:– because they've done that listening and their, their due diligence and then they can put forth a plan and a proposal that builds on that research –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – that they've done through those other steps. And then we have another strength in I would say skill and real comfort area for introverts and that is writing. You know I, I sometimes chuckle and I say to people if you really want to know what, if you have a quiet influencer you're working with, take a look at their email. Is it a short line or two in your dialogue back and forth or is it more well thought out.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: A little bit even longer in length where they've, they've given you a logical sequence of points that tends to put forth their position.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Asks questions, puts together a project plan or a process using the written word and even using it very creatively thinking through their own thoughts and getting clearer on their own ideas and insights. It happens when all of us put the pen to paper or the, the hand to the keyboard.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: So writing is really critical. And then connected with that is, is the, the last area that's called the thoughtful use of social media.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: And what I found in most of my observation and, and work with quiet influencers is that they select a social media platform, they use that conscientiously, thoughtfully, and they use it also to gain visibility for themselves and their ideas –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – but also again to use that learning about the situation or the, the challenges that they're having whether they write a blog like a woman who believes in girls and women getting into the stem field. She created a blog. She's real introverted –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – and got the word out. Millions of hits, uh, afterwards.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: She's now finding that her combination of writing and social media –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – made the difference.

Dave Summers: If you don't mind, I'm gonna dig in here a little bit on one of these –

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Sure. Mm hmm.

Dave Summers: – writing. Writing in some people's minds is, I don't want to call it a vanishing skill, and I mean you've got a lot of bloggers out there, and you got a lot of people who are doing I think some good work in this space here. But, but what is your advice for people who aren't comfortable writing or who, uh, go into it with an attitude of I'm, I'm, I'm just not good at it? But you're saying it's something they really should be doing if they're not doing it. Is that correct?

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Yeah absolutely and, and I find, you know, you don't have to be a perfectionist about, about your writing that you have to be the greatest writer ever. But it depends on what kind of writing you're doing.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: If you're doing writing for work, one of the things you want to make sure of is that you're writing doesn't have errors in it.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: And so there's no excuse really for that anymore. We have a lot of aids online.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: And we can look up a word in a second. You know we can use a thesaurus online to do that but even more importantly, we also have people in our world who can take a look at our paper, our teammate –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – or our email –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – before we present it to another department.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: So it's really important that we can get the mechanics down right –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – when we are putting ourselves out there 'cause perception is, is created that way and how we're viewed. But I find that that's not typically an issue for the quieter influencers that I work with. If they know where to go for the skills and the, and the resources and support to help them write a, a logical and persuasive piece.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: One other thing to think about is that there's processes when you do your writing, and one of them is to consider the WIFM that we talk about at AMA –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – and some of the classes there, the what's in it for me, and it's not necessarily me the writer but when we're writing an influential piece, we want to think about who's reading it, what's their style like, what's the benefit. That's really the key, what's in it for them –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – when I'm creating a proposal or I want them to listen to my idea.

Dave Summers: Right.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: It's not self-absorbed but it's outer absorbed.

Dave Summers: Thoughtful use of social media lately there have been just so many horror stories of social media run amok, things that should've not been tweeted, you know what I mean?

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Yes, yes.

Dave Summers: Arguably things that should have been tweeted, whatever, these days, Facebook posts –

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Mm hmm.

Dave Summers: – photograph, Instagram.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: It's the privacy issue a lot that's come up too.

Dave Summers: Well it's a, it's a privacy issue but I would argue almost sometimes it almost seems like a cultural issue. You've got reality TV, and you got this all sort of smash mouth I'm out there, things are public, you know that –

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Right.

Dave Summers: – that kind of thing. How, how, you know people really need to be careful about this, and I love your use of the, of the phrase thoughtful use of social media.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Well, I think, uh, we look at it that way like I want to also think of have us reframe it in a sense and say you know social media yes if, if we're not careful about what we post –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – we really can get into trouble. And so being obviously being very cautious about putting a lot of private things up there, it doesn't tend to be an issue too much for the introverts I work with.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: 'Cause they're really focused on privacy, Dave.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: You know that's, that's really key.

Dave Summers: The challenge is getting them to even approach it at all.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: To even, to even approach it.

Dave Summers: Right.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: And I say ten minutes a day just start to ru, to look at one platform. You know start the, get yourself on, on LinkedIn 'cause there's a downside of not getting involved.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: And one of my biennial colleagues just, just made this point to me recently. He said, Jennifer, if we're, we get a new boss for instance in our department, and we go to Google that person and they have no presence whatsoever on social media, they don't have anything written about them, they haven't posted even a comment on a blog.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: He said we tend to dis that person or discount them.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: So it, there's many reasons why now we need to have some kind of a, of a presence out there.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: But what I found for instance there was a young man that I interviewed, Cela Abrams in the book, and you may have ready about. He was one of the cases in the book and, and Cela is, is a very retiring, not in-your-face person who has a day job if you will as an, as an audio engineer, he was very committed to having more young people become involved in the political process in Atlanta, Georgia where I live.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: And what Cela did in a very thoughtful, methodical way was reach out to people through forming a LinkedIn group and, uh, use that as the platform or as the, uh, the real springboard –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – to connect with young people. As a result, fast forward, he developed a very thriving chapter through several classes that have now graduated –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – through this organization called the New Leaders Council which he started actually the chapter in Atlanta, we've now seen people placed in the mayor's offices and in many very critical positions. That's just one young man who used a, a very, very strategic way, thoughtful social media.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Didn't feel the need to have a lot of face to face although that's a part of the equation as well. But that's just one example. I, I think social media if we start to look at it as how can we get our cause heard, how can we start to get a little more recognition for our own accomplishments which tends to be a challenge for quieter, introverted folks in organizations where they get overlooked and ignored oftentimes because guess who was talking a lot about their accomplishments.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: Might it be the extroverts? Yeah.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: So it's a really good way to sort of get the name out there –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – and to connect with other people, to network, to give information is really critical. Just like when you're, we talk about networking in the real world.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: You don't want to be a taker. You want to be a giver.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: For every four or five tweets let's say you put out there, only one should be about something you've done and four or five really should be about what you're sharing from the AMA, AMAnet.org, whatever else you find is an interesting piece that you want to, uh, get out to people and then you become seen as many of my quiet influencer interviewees were as a person of real importance, substance and in effect, you're creating your own brand.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm. Jennifer, what is the quiet influence quotient or the QIQ?

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: In writing the book, uh, I felt it was important for the reader to just take stock as I felt for myself to do when I, when I'm engaging in new learning. And so it's a way for us to see how effective we are at using the six key strengths that I mentioned, the, including the writing and the thoughtful use of social media, all six of them and considering of that in the light of an influencing challenge that we're facing right now in our lives either personally but more likely professionally. And it's a way to gauge that and then we actually have one online which is connected with the book through the, my publisher Barret Kohler, where what, you can go back at least five times and take it and start to use in small increments, I talk about poco, a poco, the strengths and some of the specific action items that are listed on the QIQ, the quiet influence question, and just see what kind of effectiveness you're having. So it allows you to measure progress and keep making that as you go forward.

Dave Summers: So it's an online tool that if folks did go to, I guess the Barret Kohler web site?

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: The Barret Kohler web site.

Dave Summers: Okay.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: And it's connected on my web site as well –

Dave Summers: Okay.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – Jennifer Kahnweiler so you can take a look in the book in either of the editions through the, uh, the E book edition online or –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – on the paperback edition. You'll see the actual QIQ assessment in there.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: But if let's say you want to take it with your team or if you want to go back to it se, uh, sequential times, the QIQ is there. So we all want to raise our QIQ whether we're introverts or extroverts. These key six strengths are so important for all of us to use. In fact, I've had just as much interest in, from the talkers out there, from the people who are energized by the outside world, the extroverts than I have from the introverts 'cause they know that they're really gonna be their best when they can tap into these ripples –

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: – that then make a difference to so many.

Dave Summers: Jennifer, your previous book The Introverted Leader spent a fair amount of time giving advice to coaching and supporting leaders, introverted leaders who found themselves out in front of a team or an organization or whatever, does quiet influence brush up against the leadership space at all or is it more about self-actualization. How would you dif –

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: How would I differentiate the two, yeah.

Dave Summers: – well, how would you differentiate the two books and what do they have in common and how are they different?

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: So both books really work together very well, Dave. The Quiet Influence book really is a addressed to even a broader

audience, people who don't consider themselves in quote unquote leaders who might be in admin or might be a customer service salesperson and we know that to be effective in an organization. It's really not so much the position power.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: But it's the influence without authority. So all the people out there who are tryin' to figure out how do I make a difference using these strengths that the quiet influencers use, how can I see change happen for myself, for my team, for my organization, this book makes a difference. I think it goes very well with the Introverted Leader which really focuses more on management and leadership scenarios.

Dave Summers: Mm hmm.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: This really affects all kinds of situations we might be faced with in the workplace.

Dave Summers: We've been speaking to Jennifer Kahnweiler, executive coach, speaker, consultant and author of the great new book Quiet Influence, the Introvert's Guide to Making a Difference. Jennifer, thanks so much for being with us today.

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler: It's a pleasure as it always is, Dave. Thank you.

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