

"This important book offers organizations the keys to introvert inclusion."
—Susan Cain, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Quiet*

Creating Introvert- Friendly Workplaces

JENNIFER B. KAHNWEILER, PhD

Bestselling author of *The Introverted Leader*
and *Quiet Influence*

How to Unleash
Everyone's Talent
and Performance



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Preface

I was teaching a week-long leadership class for 30 engineers from different companies when I noticed that one of the participants, who I will call Sean, hadn't been very vocal. At a break I asked him how the class was going for him. Sean hesitated and then said, "Well, Jennifer, I think the material is interesting, and I may be able to use some of it. However, I know I will never be a manager at my company."

"Why do you sound so certain?" I asked.

"Because the managers in my workplace talk really loudly and move so fast. That's not me," Sean replied.

I tried to provide the usual encouraging words like "Don't give up!" and "You have so many strengths!" but I could tell that Sean wasn't buying my seasoned pep talk.

In my previous books, *The Introverted Leader* (2018), *Quiet Influence* (2013), and *The Genius of Opposites* (2015), I made the case for how introverts can own their quiet strengths and use them to achieve results and make an impact.

In that moment of talking to Sean, however, I realized that my work with introverts had to be part of a broader movement, one in which organizations also worked to harness introvert power.

How can we tap into the potential of introverts like Sean *and*

support their working styles in our traditional extroverted workplace cultures? That is the question I attempt to answer in this book.

I believe if we don't factor introvert strengths and personalities into how we run our organizations, we risk missing out on the talents and skills of millions and the huge positive impact they can have on our businesses. If introverts like Sean are continually told that they need to change who they are and to be more vocal and outgoing, they will eventually hit a wall. They will check out, taking with them their ideas, creativity, and unique perspectives. And what then becomes of our workplaces? Our cultures become less vibrant, our solutions become more homogenous, and we lose our competitive edges.

TABLE I **Common Characteristics of Introverts and Extroverts**

<i>Introverts</i>	<i>Extroverts</i>
Energized by solitude—must have breaks	Energized by other people—breaks are nice but not required
Reserved	Enthusiastic
Express thoughts after reflection	Express thoughts immediately
Private at first	Share openly
Low-key facial expression	Expressive face
Prefer writing	Prefer talking
Like small group, one-on-one focused conversations	Prefer larger groups where they can move fast and change topics
Humble	Talk about their accomplishments
Need time to prepare	Wing it
Calm	Excited

Why I Wrote This Book

I am an extrovert. I get my energy from the outside world, and I feed off of other people. I have shared this in my books, and I say it often from the stage. But still some people scratch their heads. Why would I spend over 15 years of my life on a quest to create a world where introverts, who are the opposite of me, are celebrated and valued?

So, let me explain what led me to this niche, introvert champion role. My spouse, Bill, a proud introvert (and frequent curmudgeon) with a heart of gold, was the original impetus for my fascination with introverts. His yin balanced my yang—though we can still drive each other crazy when our introvert-extrovert differences don't jive.

Learning about how that introvert I married functioned helped me tremendously with my introverted clients as I pursued my career in counseling, consulting, and training. My work became less about changing the temperaments of those clients and more about helping them to appreciate and maximize their own quiet superpowers. Their resulting successes made me realize that people and the business world at large need to get educated about what introversion is and isn't. I want others to discover, as I did, how introvert awareness and inclusion can open up the possibilities for more flexible workplaces.

Second, I come from a family that believes you should do work that you love *and* that enables you to make a difference. I was fortunate to find that type of work, and now I try to help others not waste their days pursuing work that takes away their joy. When many of my career counseling and seminar clients learned they were introverts and embraced their style, they became

lighter, gained more self-acceptance, and often found the right career path and work situation to support their whole selves. That is how I work to make a difference.

The third influence behind why I am a champion for introverts and specifically why I wrote this book has to do with the role of ally. Fortunately, we are seeing more people who are members of dominant groups step up and speak up for those who have a hard time being heard. Because I and others are from the dominant extroverted group, we can speak up for introverts and make sure they are recognized and heard. Just as men speak up for women and straight and cis people advocate for those in the LGBTQIA community, extroverts like me can manage their own airtime and make room for their introverted peers to be heard and emerge as true leaders.

The Next Phase of the Introvert Revolution

I believe that as the diversity, equity, and inclusion wave widens and deepens its reach, introversion can and should be a natural part of that movement. In this next phase of the introvert revolution, there is a groundswell of interest from introverts and their allies about how to create cultures where introverts thrive—and everyone benefits.

I have witnessed much change at the individual level in embracing introversion and acknowledging the value of introverts. But it is going to take a lot more to change the direction of an entire work culture. There is still so much work to be done to get our type A, extrovert-centric workplaces to be more inclusive of

introverts. People need a roadmap to help guide their organizations on this transition toward tangible systemic change.

As with my previous books on introversion, I hope this book will break ground and create fissures in the landscape of traditional organizations. I hope it will serve as a stimulus for real-time action-oriented conversations about how organizations can shift to realize the value of their introverted employees. Here are some of the key conversations that I hope this book will spark:

1. How can we catch up? When cultures stay stagnant, they are at a competitive disadvantage. And as introverted workers begin to step into their strengths, an introvert-friendly culture is becoming an increasingly important factor in where this half of the population chooses to work. This book addresses both the systemic and cultural shifts that organizations must make in order to be more inclusive of introverts.

2. Who is leading the way on introvert inclusion, and what can we learn from them? A number of organizations are implementing intentional, corporate-wide solutions like job redesign, mandatory distraction-free focused time, and employee user manuals to get the best from their introverted employees. In this book you will learn more about these emerging best practices and their effectiveness.

3. What should our introvert-inclusion strategy be? While small changes like remote work and flexible open offices with private spaces are positive moves, most organizations lack a cohesive strategy for harnessing the strengths of introverts and keeping them engaged. By not addressing

this situation *holistically*, they risk losing the contributions of 40 to 60 percent of their teams, which is detrimental to innovation and growth. This book goes over the seven key areas organizations need to address in order to support their introverted employees. It also includes a quiz to assess where you are in each of these areas and how far you need to go.

My Approach

I often consider myself a journalist, doing in-depth interviews to uncover trends and themes. I seek out best practices and I also use stories and examples from my work as a keynote speaker, trainer, and consultant to companies and associations. I mention several colleagues and clients whom I interviewed throughout the book. They have all agreed to have their names used.

My approach this time was similar but with one major difference. This time I designed and conducted an Introvert-Friendly Organization Survey (which is included in the Appendix) to gather more information about the challenges introverts are facing at work. The results were very helpful in shaping a picture of the current state of affairs. I received over 240 responses on the Workplace Survey and multiple, helpful comments that shaped many of my interview research questions. For instance, introverted respondents were quite vocal about their dislike for traditional open-space office plans. Their comments led to questions and an in-depth interview with a major design firm that creates workspaces for introverts.

Who Is This Book For?

I wrote this book to help organizations tap into the potential and engage the productivity of their hidden 50 percent (i.e., the introverts). The target audience is HR, diversity, inclusion, and equity professionals, organizational development leaders, chief learning officers, and trainers. *Creating Introvert-Friendly Workplaces* is designed to be used as a stimulus for discussion in conferences, forums, panels, training sessions, interviews with senior leaders, and town-hall-style meetings.

I believe the book will also be of interest to those involved with designing workspaces and to leaders at all levels who are looking to harness the potential of all their team members. In fact, anyone who is interested in being a change agent for introverts in their workplace will benefit from this book's practical and actionable advice on how organizations can be more introvert-friendly. Regardless of your position or level in your organization, I hope this book will help you to open up the conversation around introversion in the workplace and how your organization can begin to make positive changes toward increased inclusion.

How the Book Is Organized

After an introduction that lays out the case for introvert-friendly workplaces, there is a quiz that will help you begin to assess how well your organization embraces introverts. It will create a baseline to determine how your organization is doing in addressing the seven key areas outlined in the book.

Then we get right to practical solutions in those seven key

organizational areas that affect introverts. We first take a look at the foundational elements of a work culture: how we hire, lead, and communicate. Building on those fundamentals, you will learn about the challenges of open offices and effective workplace design. Remote work and flexible work options are also explored, all from the point of view of serving introvert and extrovert needs. Chapters on team dynamics and learning and development that consider introverted learning styles are the final key parts of the puzzle.

You Have Taken the First Step

My speaking audiences and my readers have always revealed my next book topic. That proved true this time around as well. Individuals and organizations are asking questions about what they can do to be more inclusive of introverts. This book is one answer and a place to begin. Thank you for choosing to pick it up, download the e-book, or listen to the audio version. Anyone can be an agent of change in the introvert-friendly workplace culture movement. By picking up this book, you have already taken the first step in the movement for a more equitable, inclusive workplace.

Introduction

Harnessing Introvert Power in Your Organization

It was 1985. I was the director of a college career and placement office on a large university campus in the Midwest. Each spring the engineering and business graduates lined up for a day of interviews with companies like IBM, GE, and the Big (then) Eight accounting firms that came to recruit fresh hires. The candidates looked pretty similar. White, male, and from the same geographical area. The rare woman was sprinkled in.

I remember one day in particular: A long-haired, blue-jean-clad company recruiter from the San Francisco Bay Area walked in, and he was all anyone could talk about. Our students felt uncomfortably overdressed in their IBM-appropriate uniform of blue suits and red ties. Then we learned he was representing a new technology company with the name of fruit, Apple.

The Apple rep's unique appearance was actually a peek into the future, a future in which the traditional rules of the workplace were being upended in more ways than dress alone. Blue jeans and long hair (on men) were one form of self-expression that took hold in workplaces. Many other forms of diversity followed.

We now all know that to perform at the highest levels, large and small organizations must diversify their workforces to mirror the diverse categories of people whom they are attempting to serve: women, people of color, LGBTQIA, and those with disabilities are some of the most obvious groups. Fortunately, more organizations are now also considering an expanded definition of diversity, categories like “lifestyles, personality characteristics, perspectives, opinions, family composition [and] education level or tenure,” according to the Gallup organization.¹ In their research, Gallup learned what much of the current literature on diversity already espouses:

Employees in inclusive environments feel appreciated for their unique characteristics and therefore comfortable sharing their ideas and other aspects of their true and authentic selves. And this connects to the productivity of the organization as they capture more ideas, creativity and many perspectives.

Strengthening the argument for diverse workforces that reflect the real world, founder of LinkedIn Reid Hoffman has warned of the danger of companies becoming “monocultures” and “echo chambers of uniformity.”

“Here’s the danger of a monoculture,” he said in an episode about blind spots for his podcast *Masters of Scale*. “It starts telling itself self-reinforcing stories that can diverge from reality.”²

Thankfully, the business and ethical case for diversity is no longer in question. However, there is one area of diversity that is not being talked about enough. This aspect of diversity, which falls under the umbrella category of neurodiversity, is temperament, and it includes introversion and extroversion. Neurodiversity

refers to the different ways the brain can work and interpret information. It highlights that people naturally think about things differently. We have different interests and motivations and are naturally better at some things and poorer at others.³

What Is an Introvert?

Psychologist Carl Jung first defined introversion as energy coming from within. Think of personal energy as if it were a battery. Extroverts charge their batteries by being with people, while introverts draw their power from going within. That is, an introvert is someone who is energized by quiet, alone time and, conversely, feels drained by social engagement. By the way, did you know that almost half of the population identifies as introverts?⁴

Below are the most common traits of people who identify as introverted (also see Table 1, which highlights the common differences between introverts and extroverts):

- ◆ Seems private and reserved—at least at first
- ◆ Exhibits low-key emotional expression
- ◆ Comes across as calm and humble
- ◆ Requires quiet time for reflection
- ◆ Prefers advanced preparation rather than being put on the spot
- ◆ Prefers written over verbal communications
- ◆ Is an engaged listener
- ◆ Prefers focused conversations with small groups or one-on-one interactions over large group events
- ◆ Is comfortable with silence

The Introvert-Extrovert Spectrum

Think of introversion as falling on a bell curve. There are outliers, or people at each extreme end of the curve. These are the friends, family members, and teammates we refer to on the extrovert side as “social butterflies” or on the introvert side as “hermits.”

Most people fall somewhere in the middle range of the introvert-extrovert spectrum, leaning slightly toward one side or the other, and we all possess different qualities that fall into both camps. Introverts use extroverted traits, and extroverts use introverted traits sometimes.

Similar to *ambidextrous*, which describes people who can use either hand to write, the term *ambivert* describes those of us who effortlessly shift between introversion and extroversion. An example of a group required to move back and forth between the two temperaments is salespeople. They must listen deeply (an introvert strength) and also be able to talk enthusiastically about their products (an extrovert strength). While I do find some people identify with being ambiverts, in my experience, most find they connect more with the terms *introvert* and *extrovert* than the term *ambivert*.

Here’s my litmus test question to determine whether someone is more introverted or extroverted: *Do you absolutely have to have quiet, recharging time after being with people?*

If you answered yes, then you likely are an introvert. If your answer is more along the lines of “I like to take breaks, enjoy quiet and slowing down” but breaks are “nice to have,” not “must haves,” you are most likely an extrovert.

The Difference between Shyness and Introversion

One of the greatest and most damaging myths about introversion is that it equates to shyness. It does not. Shyness is driven by social or psychological anxiety, and it can be debilitating. According to the American Psychological Association, shyness can “keep people from interacting with others even when they want or need to—leading to problems in relationships and at work.”⁵

While shyness and introversion sometimes overlap, they are not the same. And the problem with equating the two is that being introverted gets painted with the same negative brush as being shy. Unlike shyness, introversion is not a problem, flaw, or something to overcome. It is simply how some people are naturally wired. It is an asset and it deserves to be embraced.

Validating Introvert Strengths

I often ask for volunteers in my primarily introverted audiences to call out the strengths of introverts. After a slight pause, there is no shortage of answers as people let their words land. Starting like a light rain shower, they say, “Observers, listeners.” And then a torrent emerges: “Writers, humorists, reflectors, calm, resilient, deep connectors,” and so it goes. You can see people sit up straighter as the list of introvert talents and contributions grows and as they acknowledge their many strengths. There is no denying the powerful influence of these descriptors.

Take a look at Table 1, a comparison chart of introverts and extroverts. Which set of traits does your organization value

more? If you said the ones on the right, then perhaps you are beginning to see why I am so passionate about helping organizations to acknowledge and eliminate their anti-introvert bias. We are missing a great number of contributions if we are passing over people with the tremendous qualities on the left.

What Anti-Introvert Bias Looks Like

It was 2010, the year the first edition of my book *The Introverted Leader* came out. I received a call from a well-respected business reporter at *The Wall Street Journal*. She was writing a story about introverted CEOs and revealed that she was having a great deal of trouble finding anyone who would talk “on the record.” Though she had identified people who appeared to be introverted, they refused to publicly disclose any challenges and triumphs related to their introverted natures.

Fast-forward to a few years later. I was near the end of a roll-out of a training program on introverted leadership and awareness for a division of a Fortune 100 consumer products company. Just as we were about to kick off the pilot, the program’s executive sponsor—an introvert himself—nixed the word *introvert* in the course title. He wanted to replace it with a watered-down title about personality type. His reason? *Introvert*, he said, was a negative term. Despite being an introverted leader and the sponsor of a program on introverted leadership and awareness, he was still sufficiently biased against introverts that he didn’t want to even use the word!

Cut to today. There is observable change in the air of workplaces. Movements like #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo, and LGBTQIA rights are marching past the picket lines into the

halls of corporate America. And while some say the changes are merely lip service, others are encouraged by new corporate funding for diversity, equity and inclusion training, employee resource groups, and training and development programs where little existed in the past.

Yet there is still little strategic planning around crafting more introvert-friendly workplaces. Isolated changes within introvert-inclusive teams or even departments are a step in the right direction, but without a greater organization-wide strategy, they rarely lead to systemic change. Furthermore, most organizations are not open to addressing introvert-related issues at this higher level. And even if they are discussed, ideas remain mostly at the discussion stage without significant changes being made.

Hidden Pockets of Introvert-Friendly Excellence

The good news is that several prominent organizations, like NASA, Bosch, and Merck, have implemented intentional strategies to harness “introvert power.” These strategies include practices like job redesign, executives publicly sharing their introverted-leadership journeys, the creation of spaces for communal solitude, and the development of alternative meeting processes that honor introvert preferences. Open discussions and training about introversion and extroversion as a component of diversity are also becoming more prevalent.

But even as these encouraging practices are being implemented globally, little is known about their effectiveness. There is a great need to understand more about these cutting-edge initiatives and bring them to light. I believe that this is how we help the

workplace catch up with employees who are shedding their own introvert biases and bringing introversion into the light.

I have found hidden pockets of excellence where people at all levels of the organization are driving positive changes that bring out the best in introverts. In this book, you will read about these courageous employees who have brought tangible actions forward to combat introvert bias. You will learn about Joe Sjostrom, who created an introvert-friendly open-space plan that improved collaboration among his team members. You will hear from Caroline McGregor, vice president in pharmaceutical research at Merck, for whom learning about introversion was transformational. She now inspires others to embrace their introvert powers as she has. You will also learn creative introvert-friendly workplace best practices like having employees create their own “user manuals” to help their coworkers understand how to best work with them.

But these are just tiny nooks of inclusion in a landscape of anti-introvert-biased workplaces. Most of our organizations are still stuck in traditional cultures that reward the loudest voices in the room, equate performance with “face time,” and use hiring and promotion practices that favor affability over job fit. The result? The introverted employees that make up half our workforce become disengaged or jump ship to new organizations that value their quiet contributions.

Seven Areas Organizations Should Address to Become More Introvert-Friendly

In this book, we identify seven key functions that organizations should address to create more introvert-inclusive cultures and work practices. They are where the pain points are for introverts

and where organizations are unintentionally limiting introverts from contributing more fully:

1. **Bringing on great introvert talent** Shallow first impressions and personality biases that favor extroverts often play too large a role in hiring and promotion decisions.
2. **Leading introverts** Leaders must open up the conversation around introversion, including checking their unconscious biases about their quieter team members.
3. **Communicating with introverts** Given the time and space to communicate on their own terms, introverts have much more than you think to contribute to the conversation.
4. **Designing workplace settings** Office plans must allow for the smooth flow of collaborating, socializing, *and* doing the focused work that introverts thrive on.
5. **Creating remote work that works** Remote working can offer the increased autonomy and distraction-free solo time introverts require to do their best work.
6. **Building teams** Teams should be made up of diverse members and allow for all to contribute, not just the loudest voices.
7. **Enhancing learning and development** Adapting training design to accommodate introvert preferences like breaks for reflection will increase its effectiveness for all employee groups.

As someone who has been tracking and championing introverts for over 15 years, I believe that now, more than ever, is

the time to create introvert-friendly workplaces that will unleash everyone's talents and performance—and addressing these key areas is the way to do it.

My hope for you is that the solutions and ideas in this book will help you to spark the seeds of change no matter what level of the organization you find yourself in.

Anyone Can Be a Change Agent

Whether you are an introvert, extrovert, senior leader, or someone just starting out in your career, you can take on a role as a change agent. This book will present you with many examples of how introverts are overlooked so that you can be conscious of when this happens. You will also learn about pockets of inclusion that can serve as powerful benchmarks. There are *five key ways* you can create an introvert-friendly workplace, and in the Conclusion we will break these down further.

- 1. Be a voice for the quiet** Raise the issue of introvert awareness and inclusion in meetings, training sessions, and other conversations.
- 2. Intentionally address the needs of introverts** Thoughtfully examine your practices in the seven key functions to ensure that introvert concerns are addressed.
- 3. Involve introverts in your research** Ask them how to create more inclusive workplaces.
- 4. Encourage teams to address introversion** Facilitate discussions about individual team members' work preferences.

5. Bring senior leadership into the conversation This will ensure that introvert inclusion becomes an organizational priority.

If you believe, as I do, that introversion is to be valued and nurtured, you can be the catalyst for change and move your organization toward a workplace where introverts feel like they belong. Let this book be your guide.

Chapter 3

Leading Introverts

I wish that our executive director would take time to talk to me. With him it's all about who yells the loudest. I am not like that. I feel very ostracized here because I am quiet and do things differently.

—2019 Workplace Survey respondent

I was preparing for a program on introverted leadership by interviewing research scientists at a Fortune 100 pharmaceutical company when a new “word” caught my ear.

“Did you say ‘loudership’?” I asked a seasoned manager.

Yes, he had. He went on to tell me that *loudership* was a company-wide code word for what it meant to be a strong leader. You have to speak loudly, act brashly, and be seen as someone who can audibly overpower the next person, he said.

I took a deep breath as I realized the challenge I had before me. How was I going to communicate the value of being a quietly powerful leader, someone who doesn’t use volume to get their point across, when the company culture openly promoted a diametrically opposed brand of leadership?

The good news was that the program was very well received. The specific group that invited me to speak comprised introverted leaders and introvert champions who wanted to change

the culture. They were setting the stage by having me there to demonstrate the benefits of quiet and calm. They wanted to open up the internal dialogue around introversion and help find its place in this competitive landscape.

In this chapter we will look at the deep dive leaders must take to be inclusive and how they can bring out the best in their introverted employees. The first step? Talking about introversion.

Open Up the Conversation around Introversion

Many introverts have carried around a negative view of introversion for their entire lives. Often, they were labeled “shy.” It starts early. I was in my granddaughter’s prekindergarten class recently when I overheard the teacher talking to a dad of one of the boys in the class—his son was apparently good at listening to instructions but not contributing much in the large group. “This will be a problem as he moves through school,” the teacher told his father. The teacher’s comments, based on a lack of understanding of how introverted children thrive (e.g., in smaller groups), were potentially conveying lasting negative messages to both the child and his parents.

Author Morra Aarons-Mele had such negative associations with introversion that she never acknowledged her own introverted tendencies. Morra is a successful entrepreneur, the founder of Women Online and author of *Hiding in the Bathroom: An Introvert’s Roadmap to Getting Out There (When You’d Rather Stay Home)*.¹⁶

“I thought, ‘I have to be an extrovert.’ I want to be really successful. I want to be a mogul. And I learned not that long ago I’m

an extreme introvert. I'm actually sort of reclusive. I need two hours a day of alone time. I call myself a 'hermit entrepreneur.'"

Too often, we leaders focus on the work at hand. We talk about the tasks, project milestones, deadlines, roles, and responsibilities, but rarely do we discuss the people and personalities that make up our teams and that are key to getting the work done. Opening up the conversation around the benefits of introversion is one important way that you as a leader, whether introverted, extroverted, or ambiverted, can empower the introverts on your team to feel comfortable in their own skin and embrace their quiet strengths.

Here are some structured ways to get the conversation going:

1. Conduct a team-building session where everyone uses a self-assessment tool like the StrengthsFinder or Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. After people share their preferences, you can highlight the team's profile to look for where you may need to bring in other viewpoints or styles. You can also bring in a simple icebreaker like Two Truths and a Lie, where everyone writes down their answers and then guesses who belongs to the untruths. Use this time as a chance to model self-disclosure, and encourage team members to share information about themselves, including how they like to communicate, their strengths, and their areas of development. Consider inviting a member of your human resources, organizational development, or diversity team to the session to help facilitate.
2. Set up a series of training sessions and discussions on introverted leadership to demonstrate how introverts leverage their strengths to lead. Also address how introverts and

extroverts can get the best out of each other as what I like to call “genius opposites.”¹⁷ See *A Guide to Conducting Book Discussions* for how to run these sessions and also some sample questions you can use.

3. In your one-on-ones with team members disclose your own communication style preferences and give examples. Use stories and listen—more on this later in the chapter. Focus on the introverted strengths that will help them succeed in their roles.
4. Analyze how your team composition is balanced (or unbalanced) in terms of introversion and extroversion, and explore how you can work toward greater diversity. Higher levels of innovation, creativity, and performance will result.

Our research on introvert-friendly workplaces shows that there is not a great deal of recognition that introversion even exists. In addition, about 50 percent of respondents in our 2019 Workplace Survey did not feel that “introverts were consulted when relevant company initiatives were launched,” and of those who responded that introverts *were* consulted, only 15 out of 116 said those efforts were effective. This would include such important changes as office moves and company reorganizations.

But there is hope for a change. The following email is just one of many messages I have received over the last decade from people freeing themselves from seeing their introversion as something to overcome and instead embracing who they are. Karl, a chemical engineer wrote:

As an introvert my whole life, I have often felt like I've had to conform to an extroverted business world. I now feel like I have been given permission to cultivate my introverted leadership style and for that, I am so grateful.

In the organizations you will read about below, introverted leaders are actively integrating the topic of introversion into their conversations, with great results. They may describe themselves as introverted or mention an approach that is helpful to them as introverts. They own their introverted preferences by noticing when things are tilting in an extroverted direction. And they use their power to create more inclusive workplaces where introverts are motivated to do their best work.

Share Stories

Talking about who we are, and our likes and dislikes, deepens our connections and understanding of each other so we can work together more effectively. Research tells us that the best way to share who you are is through stories—stories are remembered 22 times more than facts alone.¹⁸ Sharing stories about oneself can humanize a leader, creating connections between them and their followers that increase feelings of trust and intimacy. In an organizational context, it promotes a readiness to work collaboratively to reach mutual task goals.¹⁹

In our 2019 Workplace Survey, approximately 50 percent of respondents said that “some leaders talk openly about being introverted.” Caroline McGregor is one of those leaders, and she shares her story every chance she gets.

I met Caroline, vice president in pharmaceutical research at

Merck, when I was invited to speak at a highly selective retreat she sponsored for the research chemists at the company. More than any other aspect of her identity, *introversion* is what she identifies with the most.

“It’s who I am and the most significant way that I feel different,” she told me. “Introversion informs my approach to leadership and self-awareness, and leveraging an introvert’s strengths have made me a better leader.”

Caroline takes her story to employee resource groups and other departments throughout the company so that she can role model the strong yet vulnerable senior introverted leader. In a hard-driving culture, she shows courage and a willingness to be who she truly is. By doing so, others who see themselves in her feel inspired to achieve more.

One quiet young scientist told me how moved and motivated he was after hearing Caroline’s story. He told me leaders like Caroline who are willing to share their struggles and successes with introversion in a type-A culture make others realize it is possible to achieve great heights with this personality type.

Leaders who embrace their introversion can be great spokespeople for their introverted employees and catalysts for creating a more inclusive workplace for introverts. But you don’t have to be an introvert to share your experiences and connect with your introverted employees. When I talk about my introverted spouse, Bill, and our various communication challenges, I see a sea of nods from both introverted and extroverted audience members who identify with either Bill or me. And even if you’re not an introvert, you may have some introverted tendencies, like preferring email communications rather than phone calls.

Share those preferences with the introverts on your team to establish common ground and develop mutually beneficial ways of collaborating.

Slow Down and Listen

I had a T-shirt printed from a slogan contest we ran for extroverts. The winning phrase?

Please don't talk while I am interrupting.

The truth is that extroverts like me often don't realize that introverts have not finished their thoughts when they pause. Listen to two extroverts in conversation and it becomes apparent that interrupting each other is a natural part of how they connect. But for introverts, it is different. Cutting off their thoughts and feelings can throw off their thinking process, shut down communication, and make it a one-sided experience.

Extroverts can learn to pause and give others the space to respond thoughtfully, though it is often challenging because they are energized by their words and thinking aloud. But consider this: according to my colleague, speech coach Patricia Fripp, "a pause isn't a moment of nothing. Used strategically, it is a tool that helps you build intellectual and emotional connection with your audience."

Here are some practical tips to help leaders with pausing and creating "safe spaces" for introverts to feel comfortable opening up:

- ◆ Use your mute button when speaking on the phone. This will help you listen for the pause.

- ◆ Practice active listening by paraphrasing what the other person says and asking open-ended questions.
- ◆ If someone seems reserved or quiet, don't ask, "What's wrong?" Most likely, nothing is wrong, and they will feel misunderstood. They are simply in their heads.
- ◆ In a live or virtual meeting, wait for three to five people to speak before you offer your input.

I was so impressed by Fariz, a technical salesperson who shared what was a big step for him in allowing more time and space for introverts to enter conversations:

I typically am the first person to pipe up at our weekly global conference calls. When I realized that none of the introverts were sharing, I decided to wait for at least five comments to be made before I spoke up. It was hard. . . . I literally had to sit on my hands. But what happened was so worth it. . .

We heard several new voices in the room. It also forced me to carefully think about my own contributions versus winging it. I found that I learned by listening with more intent. I plan on making this a regular practice!

Speaking of meetings and conference calls, over 90 percent of our 2019 Workplace Survey respondents said that small meetings were the most effective. That makes sense—fewer people will inevitably lead to fewer interruptions and more of the pauses that fuel introverts' thinking processes. A recent Microsoft study also found that one of the strongest predictors of success for middle managers was that they held frequent one-on-one meetings with the people who reported to them.²⁰ This was opposed to the

typical large meetings that I frequently hear about with groans from many of my clients.

Another popular technique for small group or one-on-one meetings I've discussed in my other books is called the "walking meeting." Not only does the physical activity serve as an energy boost and facilitate the flow of ideas, walking side by side is a nonthreatening, egalitarian way for both introverts and extroverts to connect.²¹ In fact, professionals all across the introvert-extrovert spectrum report it to be very productive and satisfying. For more on inclusive meetings that promote introvert collaboration, please see Chapter 7 on Building Teams.

Be a Champion for Introverts

After the first edition of my book *The Introverted Leader* came out, I was invited to speak at a university commencement in Asunción, Paraguay. On our planning call, the psychologist and astute program leader Richar Ruiz explained that his country was emerging from years of political repression and he felt that most people had emerged very introverted from this experience.

Richar was committed to bringing knowledge of introversion to the students and community members in Paraguay who, he felt, could benefit from understanding more about how to confidently step into their roles as introverted leaders. This is where I came in. He brought new ideas and the validation of introversion as a positive quality. We had a series of great dialogues, presentations, and meetings with community and business leaders.

Richar continues to be a champion and change agent by running a successful training and leadership coaching company that

emphasizes the importance of understanding different leadership and communication styles.



As the head of diversity for a large bank corporation and an introvert herself, Stephanie Roemer was sensitive to the many introverted financial managers who were feeling “not heard” and unclear on how to move ahead in their careers.

“Extroverted skills are more valued; it’s the world we live in,” Roemer said. “Sometimes it’s hard to navigate the corporate culture that values the extrovert. You need tools and tips to help establish yourself in the organization if you’re looking to be on the rise.”

Roemer set out to help these financial managers—as well as managers across the organization—to understand the value introverts bring to the organization.²² She had employees take personality assessments, created small-group discussions and leadership courses for introverts, and hosted a Genius of Opposites seminar where each introvert was asked to invite one extroverted colleague they wanted to collaborate more effectively with.

Unfortunately, introvert champions like Richar and Stephanie are the exceptions within the leadership landscape. The results from our survey show that there remain many opportunities for champions of introverts up and down the corporate ladder to step up. Here’s how.

Coach Managers on Introversion

Through coaching, Sheryl Bruff is helping her managers develop an understanding of the different layers of diversity, including introversion.

“One of the things we try to do is, first of all, get [leaders] to pay attention a little bit. We do some training with them to queue them up . . . and help them see how using questions can be a way to open up conversation,” she told me.

Sheryl is human resources branch chief at the Space Telescope Research Institute, a division of NASA. She is also a keen observer of the intersectionality of identities, which describes how different aspects of social and political identities overlap.^{23, 24} One of her ongoing missions is to bring the value of introversion into the light. Some of her scientist leaders struggle with people who have different personality types and styles, and through interventions like training and coaching, she is making a real difference in their introversion awareness and empathy. Over the past 10 years, she has witnessed a tremendous improvement in how her organization’s managers move through difficult conversations with introverted team members.

Coach Introverts on Leveraging Their Strengths

One of the greatest strengths of introverts is how well they prepare. When they are given some time to answer a question, solve a problem, or consider an agenda item, their answers are more comprehensive than when they are forced to “wing it.” As a leader, you can use guided questions to help introverts prepare so they can put their best foot forward in meetings, presentations, and interviews. Set them up to succeed by giving them a heads-up about what you want to discuss before the actual conversation by sending them a note in an email or text. Help them leverage this strength by asking them to consider how preparation has helped them recently.

A young man who attended one of my talks said he so appreciated it when his boss would let him know beforehand that he would be asking him to share a project update during the staff meeting. It gave him a chance to organize his thinking beforehand and contribute more significantly.

And here's a great suggestion from a 2019 Workplace Survey respondent on how to further support introverts in this way:

I would love to implement a one day a week meeting day, so introverts (and everyone else) can plan and prep ahead of time versus standing meetings that have to happen in person.

Of course, all professionals, extroverted and introverted, must speak impromptu at times. But even for these unexpected requests, preparation can help. First, help your introvert team members identify opportunities when they might be called on to present (e.g., staff meetings). Second, encourage introverts to plan for upcoming leadership and people scenarios by asking them, “What can you do to prepare now?” By helping them to think through situations where “on the fly” responses are likely, they will feel more confident about contributing when the time comes.

Showing Up as Ourselves

*Who we are is how we lead.*²⁵

—Brene Brown

In her book *How to Be an Inclusive Leader*, Jennifer Brown writes, “Many talented employees all over the world tell us

through focus groups that they don't feel comfortable bringing their whole selves to work. They are getting by every day and they are leaving their true talents and deepest passions elsewhere. In any organization where that is true, you can bet the bottom line is affected."²⁶ When leaders first take the step of showing up as themselves, people feel motivated to connect with them, to in turn bring all of their true talents and passions to their work. When leaders can model their understanding of differences like introversion and acceptance of everyone on their team, it gives employees the permission to reach their full potential.

Let's take a look at how we can find our voices as enlightened leaders of introverts by coming to terms with our own biases around introversion and gaining a greater understanding of the introvert experience.

Facing Our Bias about Introverts

One of a leader's major blind spots can be the introvert myths they buy into. There is a great deal of discussion in the diversity and inclusion world about unconscious bias, the social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their conscious awareness. Unconscious bias happens outside of our control. It occurs automatically and is triggered by our brain making a quick judgment.²⁷

The idea is that we can't erase unconscious bias, but we can surface it so that we better understand what is driving our actions. For example, if we think that because a team member doesn't talk, they have nothing to say, we are more likely to overlook them and miss out on their potentially valuable con-

tributions. But if we realize we have a bias against our more silent team members, we will be less likely to overlook them and perhaps give them more opportunities to share in a manner that suits their communication style.

Have you ever taken an assessment like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) or DiSC Personality Test? Did you use your test results as a lens to understand yourself and your team? Did it deepen your insights around effective ways to communicate with and motivate each other? Similarly, Howard Ross, diversity expert and author of *Everyday Bias*, says it's important to invite people into the conversation about their own bias.²⁸ "By understanding [unconscious bias] we can learn to work with it and reduce its ability to dominate our decision-making," he explains in his book.

Myths of Introversion

Here are a few biases against introverts that I have heard leaders express.

Introverts²⁹

- ◆ Don't like to talk.
- ◆ Are slow and indecisive.
- ◆ Are antisocial and wallflowers.
- ◆ Want to be alone all the time.
- ◆ Are angry, bored, and stuck-up (based on their low-key facial expressions).
- ◆ Are unhappy.
- ◆ Don't like people.

I have been privileged to witness many conversations about introverts at work in rooms across the world, and the conversations are always stimulating and often mind-expanding. And the process, like learning a new language, keeps evolving. What I have learned is that each person on a team and organization is unique—even the introverts.

“Introverts come in so many different forms,” explains *Hiding in the Bathroom* author Morra Aarons-Mele. “We’re not all quiet. We’re not all shy. We’re not all wallflowers. Barack Obama’s an introvert. Some of our most famous comedians, actors, public figures are extremely introverted.”

I once led a week-long training program on introverted leadership in Berlin, Germany. One of the students, Anna, an outgoing extrovert and seasoned executive coach, questioned the entire idea of introversion and argued vehemently against labeling and “pigeonholing” people, as she called it. But then she returned the next day after having reflected on people she knew, and she had a look of satisfaction on her face. Some of the puzzle pieces were fitting together as she thought about one client in particular whom she had been frustrated with because of his low-key personality and slow responses. Realizing he was probably an introvert and she was an extrovert, she made a commitment to show more empathy and suspend her judgments. This newfound knowledge started moving her to more of a connection with her client.

Conclusion

Successful leaders are the ones who are willing to grow, change, and flex to the needs of their employees. I believe that leaders

who are self-aware, look at their own biases honestly, and by making every attempt to keep learning and opening up, they will create highly successful teams now and in the future.

The Bottom Line: Leaders must take the temperature of the people they lead and modify their approaches accordingly. It starts with opening up the conversation around differences like introversion.

Top Five Considerations for Leading Introverts

1. Recognize that there may be introverts on your team. Ask them about their work style and communication preferences so they feel acknowledged and supported.
2. Share stories about your own introvert tendencies or experiences with other introverts to deepen your connections and provide a base for moving forward together.
3. Give the introverts on your team the time and space to contribute; set them up for success by giving them time to prepare beforehand.
4. Provide training to other managers and team members on the value that introverts bring to the table and how to bring them out.
5. Confront your own negative biases around introversion so that they have less of a hold on your decision-making as a leader.

Chapter 6

Creating Remote Work That Works

I love working from home and now wouldn't take a role that had me in an office every day, especially [one] with an open office plan. I think more and more companies need to implement flexible work weeks.

—2019 Workplace Survey respondent

Many of us—over 30 million of us, in fact—have laughed at the BBC viral video of the dad doing a TV interview in his home office. You know, the one where in the middle of the interview, his bespectacled toddler bursts into the room dancing, followed by her unexpectedly mobile baby brother in a wheeled walker and their frantic mother trying (and failing) to keep the kids from interrupting their dad.⁵⁵ The fact that we can laugh at this situation and not judge it as “inappropriate” or “unprofessional” shows how many people can relate to the challenges of working from home. It also shows just how fluid a concept “the workplace” has become in this digital age.

It is now common for each of us to connect with people professionally without knowing whether they are in an office, at the local coffee shop, or in the car driving their kids to soccer practice. Over 64 percent of respondents on our workplace sur-

vey said that working remotely is an accepted practice at their organizations. One-third of workers in the United States often work remotely, and the number of remote workers has gone up 115 percent in the past decade.⁵⁶

Of course, some professions, for example, healthcare workers and first responders, can't take advantage of remote work. But where it is possible to offer your introverted team members a chance for more flexibility and focus, why not explore this option?

Key Reasons to Consider Remote Work for Introverts

A fully or partially remote workforce comes with its own brand of challenges, which we will discuss later on, but for the introverts in your organization it can make *all* the difference in their retention as well as their performance. Many introverted team members to whom I've spoken say that although remote work takes some getting used to, now they don't see going back. Here's why you should include working from home as a viable option for your employees, especially your introverts.

Productivity

With fewer office distractions and greater control over noise, it follows that introverts who prefer a more quiet, focused environment in which to work will be more productive being away from the office. A Stanford University study of 500 remote workers at a large Chinese travel agency showed an astounding productivity boost of 24 percent compared with those who stayed in the office. It seems as though that time spent commuting as well as being

interrupted by others really added up. Additionally, the study found that employee attrition decreased by 50 percent among remote workers, who also “took shorter breaks, had fewer sick days, and took less time off.”⁵⁷ The company estimated a \$2000 savings per employee from saving on rent alone.

Introverts thrive when they can think without numerous interruptions from their office mates, and they often take longer to get resituated after an interruption. Considering this, a distraction-free work-from-home option would likely have an even more significant effect on introverts and their performance and job satisfaction than shown in the Stanford study, which was made up of a variety of personality types.

Recruiting and Retention

Speaking of job satisfaction, when people across the introvert-extrovert spectrum are allowed *even one day a week to work from home*, their happiness increases.⁵⁸ Diane Baldwin, associate vice president of Sponsored Programs at Boston University, found that her one-day-a-week-from-home program “changed people’s lives.”

“To even have one day where they don’t have to commute, where they can work in their pajamas, it is a retention strategy,” she told me. I have asked numerous clients about this, and they all confirm Diane’s statement.

A medical center employee interviewed for a Ladders article on remote work explained the benefit to her of her company’s “work-at-home Wednesdays” policy. “Although I am working, my day is so much more relaxed, not to mention two hours shorter [due to her 45-mile commute each way], it’s like a mini-weekend.”⁵⁹

For many introverts who have tasted the freedom of working from home, it is a perk they are not likely to give up. But companies can think of remote work options as not only a retention, but also a recruiting strategy. As one of our 2019 Workplace Survey respondents noted:

Workplace flexibility can mean your organization is no longer bound by geography to find the best candidate for a specific position.

Making Remote Work Work for Your Introverts

Q: What are the three biggest competitors to remote work?

A: The TV, the bed, and the fridge.

—Nicholas Bloom, 2017 TEDx talk

With this new freedom over *where* we work come big, important choices about *how* and *when* we work. A lot has been written about what to do to maximize success when implementing a remote work program in your company and ensure remote working doesn't lead to employees "remotely working."⁶⁰ A valuable resource for what to consider when implementing a remote work program is the Remote Work Institute. Here we will cover some of the issues specific to keeping your introverted employee population and everyone else engaged and in the loop when they are working out of the office.

The Risks of Being Alone Too Much

The challenge companies may face with a remote work option, particularly for introverts, is that some employees can take it

too far, using it as an excuse to avoid the office entirely or reduce communication with their coworkers to an unproductive minimum.

Creative paralysis Too much alone time can result in a lack of motivation. Our energy batteries need only a certain amount of alone time to recharge, and any time past the point of full charge becomes self-defeating and yields no positive effects. Even though each introvert needs a different amount of quiet time, most agree that overuse of this strategy ends up depleting their energy. It leads to isolation, which is never a good thing.

When studying quiet influencers—those introverts who create change, inspire others, and challenge the status quo—we found that isolation can result in a form of creative paralysis.⁶¹ When introverts are left *too* alone with their thoughts, it can become increasingly difficult to move from idea to action. Millions of books remain unwritten and innovations continue to be untapped because their originators kept their thoughts to themselves and did not take the step of sharing them with others who could help bring their ideas to life.

We also found that introverts who spend too much time alone suffer from a loss of perspective. They end up second-guessing themselves, questioning their abilities, and delaying action. Getting stuck in self-analysis can plant introverts too firmly in the act of dredging up the past or overthinking the future, actions that rarely help them move on to productive action.

Becoming disconnected Another key challenge of introverts becoming too isolated is their loss of connections to other team members. Employees gain power when they can make their talents visible to their boss, coworkers, and others, a task that

is much harder to accomplish without face-to-face time.⁶² Plus, when people don't see each other for long periods of time, they can fail to see each other as more than just an icon in a chat group and can lose the ability to leverage each other's creativity.

Too much alone time can also result in team members losing sight of the larger mission of the company because of what Kevin Eikenberry and Wayne Turmel call a "lack of environmental cues, slogans and messages that are part of the fabric of an organization and its culture."⁶³ Instead, they become overly focused on individual projects over team and company goals.

Now that you are aware of the risks of having introverts work remotely, let's discuss the ways to circumvent and keep these issues to a minimum, namely through setting clear expectations, maintaining accountability, communicating regularly, and building relationships.

Set Clear Expectations

Consider creating a remote-working agreement with guidelines that employees sign. Introverts often feel more comfortable with written communication and putting guidelines in writing makes it clear what is expected when they work out of the office, with respect to availability and deliverables, as well as the amount of required in-office time.

For example, the agreement may state that on the days employees work from home, they are available for conference calls during certain hours. Or as a company you can decide that team members are required to come in on a certain day for in-person meetings. Another stipulation can be a report on work completed at the end of each week to ensure accountability (see more on accountability in the next section).

Maintain Accountability

Remote-working options place more responsibility on the employee to track their own work and how effectively they are performing. This bodes well for the organization on all fronts. When employees are responsible for documenting their own work and goal progress, leaders don't have to micromanage and are free to do more of the necessary big picture thinking that moves organizations forward. In addition, the introverts and other employees in your company will greatly appreciate having the space to work and do their best deep, reflective work without frequent interruptions.

Knowing about the accomplishments of employees and appreciating them is key. To prevent this from falling by the wayside when workers are remote, many leaders get creative. For instance, global project manager Laura Davidson, who has worked with a number of Fortune 100 companies, makes sure to bring up the individual and group successes of her team members whenever they are on a call. This helps them each be aware of how everyone is contributing to overall goals. Laura reinforces their work and value to the organization by specifically calling out their "wins" to others. It has the added benefit of spreading awareness and gratitude throughout the team.

"The saying 'People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care' applies doubly when it is easy to be out of sight and out of mind," Laura explained.

Communicate Regularly

While this may not be part of your remote-working agreement, as it can vary by team and employee, setting expectations on

how you will communicate when not in the office is key to keeping your introverted employees engaged.

How often will you check in with them? Will you use the company intranet, text, email, or phone? What times will you and your team be accessible? Do you want a no-weekend-or-evening-hours communication policy? These considerations are critical when your team or certain members are sight unseen.

As a leader, you must also strike the right balance between overcommunication and allowing employees to slide into isolation. You don't want your team to feel micromanaged. And after all, the value of a distraction-free remote work environment diminishes if an employee (or manager) is constantly being pinged and expected to immediately respond at all hours. You have to find your comfort level—and theirs. And as with any new initiative, it is important to assess how the program is going by checking in with each other regularly. What can be tweaked to make your communication even smoother? Be flexible. (For more on introvert-friendly communication practices and policies, please see Chapter 4.)

Build Relationships

Organizational psychologist and author Edgar Schein says that we all need to become “better acquainted and get more personal with each other across the hierarchy of organizations...and abandon the bureaucratic distance role relationship and substitute real relationships to communicate.”⁶⁴ But when employees are off-site, such “real relationships” are harder to cultivate. So, it takes intentional work to get to know each other.

No one wants to be surprised by an unexpected video or phone call “visit” when they're working from home, particularly not introverts who like to prepare. So, consider options

like scheduling regular in-person one-on-one and team meetings with remote workers as well as more casual “visits” like breakfasts or lunches to strengthen personal as well as professional connections. We know introverts will thrive in these scheduled one-on-one conversations where they can ask questions and listen, and extroverts will appreciate having a personal connection and chance to talk out their thoughts. These more intimate meetings are also ideal for updating employees on any changes in the company mission, vision, and values so they can stay on track with their own work and see where it fits into the organization’s larger mission, vision, and strategy.

Remote work expert Wayne Turmel was recently interviewed for a *Manage This* podcast on virtual teams. His advice in considering when to meet remotely and when everyone needs to come together was, “We need to go back to first principles, which is what’s the job that needs to be done, and what’s the best way to do it?”⁶⁵

Your team will appreciate any manager who gives careful thought and planning to questions like how and when people are brought together.

The Value of Coworking Spaces

Coworking spaces are shared workplaces used by different sorts of professionals as their primary or even secondary places of work. Touted for their ability to provide an environment that fosters innovation, collaboration, and productivity, coworking has become “the new normal” for many remote workers.⁶⁶

The explosion of coworking spaces across the world has grown out of a need for workplace flexibility *and* real human connection. More organizations seem to be open to supporting

these kinds of spaces for their remote employees when it makes sense. Several remote employees told me they are now making coworking space membership part of their negotiation discussion when taking a new job or promotion.

Coworking spaces are often made up of entrepreneurs and corporate folks craving the “communal solitude” that allows for focus while diminishing isolation.⁶⁷ Even light small talk at the coworking coffee station can break up the isolation that remote workers feel when being at home all day.

Roam, the coworking space I have been a member of for the last four years in Atlanta, offers much more to me and my fellow members than office space for rent. One of the space’s stated core values is to “develop impactful ways to renew our communities and restore life-giving and purposeful work while celebrating, championing and encouraging our community.”

Through spontaneous conversations, connections have organically developed, and I have personally enjoyed learning about the diversity of industries my work acquaintances belong to, from healthcare technology to nonprofit consulting. My introverted colleagues tell me they also appreciate this aspect of membership and like the ability to manage how and when they engage in these dialogues.

As coworking spaces expand, they are also focusing on themes. The Wing is one such space, expanding to different cities, which gathers women together for events and also offers working spaces. The Assembly, another women-centered coworking space in San Francisco, is billed as a well-being club that in addition to workspace offers fitness classes and a wide range of self-care programming. Perhaps one day, introverts will claim their own coworking spaces too.

Conclusion

Implementing a remote-working option can feel overwhelming—how do you maintain control of your employees and their output? On the flip side, giving people the freedom to achieve their goals in an environment of their choosing can provide a real boost to productivity as well as being an attractive option in recruiting and then retaining employees. And think of the cost savings! Fewer dedicated workspaces can mean smaller office spaces and lower rents.⁶⁸

For introverts in particular, remote working can offer the increased autonomy and distraction-free focused time they require to do their best work. However, too much time out of the office can lead to isolation and a loss of productivity in this population. Therefore, well-thought-through parameters around accessibility, communication, and accountability are needed to keep these employees connected and on track to achieve company goals.

The Bottom Line: Reducing the amount of time introverts spend working in the office should not reduce the quality and regularity of communication with their teams.

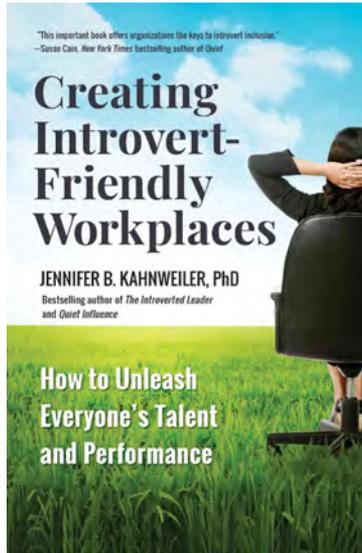
Top Five Considerations for Making Remote Work Options Work for Introverts

1. Create a remote-working agreement with guidelines around accessibility, in-office time, and accountability that employees must sign.
2. Be intentional about how and when you communicate with remote employees. The biggest challenge we have

found for organizations is in preventing alone time from becoming ineffective isolation.

3. Schedule regular in-person one-on-one and team meetings as well as more casual “visits” like breakfasts or lunches to strengthen personal as well as professional connections.
4. Place the responsibility on remote employees to track their own work. The introverts in your company will particularly appreciate having the space to work and do their deep, reflective thinking without frequent interruptions.
5. In team and individual meetings, call out individual and group successes to bring visibility to the work of remote employees.

We hope you enjoyed this excerpt from Jennifer Kahnweiler's
Creating Introvert-Friendly Workplaces



You can order the book at the following online retailers or at
your favorite local bookstore.

[Amazon](#)
[Barnes and Noble](#)
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other books, such as *The Introverted Leader*, and more!