

Are you an introvert or extrovert?

Who does the stress monster like more? Introverts or Extroverts?

Keep reading to find out. If you are a regular reader of this column, you know about the Stress Monster. It's big and ugly with jagged teeth and claws and attacks you when you're down. It loves to creep in at night in the darkness, sowing seeds of worry and depression. But don't call the Chatham County Sheriff or Animal Control to drag the monster away, because it can't be controlled so easily.

So let's talk about introverts and extroverts. If you enjoy spending time alone, if you look for deep relationships in friends, if you are a good listener, if you appear calm and self-contained, if you usually think before speaking or acting and if you often feel drained after a lot of socializing, then you may be considered an introvert. If you enjoy talking, even to strangers, if you know lots of people and consider many people your friends, if you like activity and variety, if you feel energized rather than tired by social activities, and if you often speak or act before thinking, or think while speaking, you may be considered an extrovert. The difference is a personality characteristic which is considered to be stable over time and not easily altered. All people have some introverted and some extroverted characteristics, although most can be classified in one or the other personality dimension.

A caveat. It's important to realize that introversion/extroversion is only one part of your personality. The totality of an individual's personality is much more complex than this dimension by itself. Nevertheless, this characteristic is important because its effects can be seen in social, work and public settings and it is related to career success. The "life of the party" will usually be an extrovert. When an introvert attends parties, he or she may more often be found conversing one-on-one. Think of a politician or a salesman and you will be usually thinking of an extrovert. Think of an artist or a writer, and you will usually be thinking of an introvert. Don't be misled by stereotypes, however, as other personality characteristics or skills may be responsible for what you observe. Many actors, for example, are often introverts although their professional skills certainly suggest extroversion.

Which personality type is rewarded in our society? Usually the extrovert whose public presence may seem more friendly, outgoing or sociable while the introvert may appear more quiet, reserved or even withdrawn. Don't spend too much time reading media articles about these

Advice Line

by
Dr. Betty Phillips



personality types as the information is often very superficial and at times demeaning, especially to the introvert. If you rounded up the adjectives used to describe these personality types, there are more negative judgments and critical adjectives applied to introverts. It's important to realize that introversion has nothing to do with shyness, social anxiety, neuroticism, depression, antisocial isolation or aloofness. The introvert may like social activities as much as the extrovert, although their social interactions may be more personal and reflective. Both orientations have been unfairly judged, however. Extroverts have been criticized as superficial or narcissistic or even less intelligent when they talk before they think. If you want additional information and reading about introversion and extroversion, check out the Advice Line section of my website. (You might even find out if I'm an introvert or an extrovert.)

So who does the stress monster prey on more? The stress monster loves them both. Neither personality type is immune from the current stress epidemic. Additionally, both suffer when placed in situations or jobs more suited to the other personality type. The extrovert suffers from boredom and discomfort when restricted from social activities and when placed in situations where reflection and deep thinking are prioritized. Introverts suffer from criticism that they are social isolates or have unfriendly personalities when they avoid coffee room conversations or parties.

What is my conclusion? Let's be kind to both introverts and extroverts, realizing that these are just differences in personality not reflective of moral, intellectual or social deficiencies. No matter whether you are an introvert or extrovert, applaud your personal gifts and don't worry about the differences. A very wise man, Shakespeare, offered this advice, as worthy today as when he wrote these words, "To thine own self be true."

Need advice?

Send Dr. Betty Phillips questions about individual, relationship, marriage or family issues to BettyPhillips@BellSouth.net or 466 Eagle Point Road, Pittsboro 27312. Questions can be anonymous. Betty looks forward to hearing from you!



PAPERBACKS PLUS!

or "How I lost my mind and bought a bookstore"

By Pat Dawson

The last issue of Chatham County Line contained an introduction to several businesses and artists in the revitalized downtown area of Siler City. This issue spotlights Paperbacks Plus!, the first one of those businesses that you would see on Raleigh Street.

I have owned, or been owned, by Paperbacks Plus for the past 14 years. The store was originally owned by Teresa Phillips who kept it for three years. When she decided to close the store, she held a going out of business sale. During the last week of the sale my husband Jim and I drove by, saw the sale sign, went inside, and bought books ... lots of books. Driving home Jim, the smart guy, said "You should have just bought the whole store". I immediately replied, "Okay", drove home, called Teresa, and bought the store over the phone.

Over the next few days I arrived at my store ready and willing to go to work — without a clue as to what should be done. I wondered where I would get more books, how much I should pay, where I would find customers, and how much to charge. Without a manual I just made up the rules. Learning customers' tastes and tailoring the stock to meet those tastes was an understanding that I developed — and continue to develop.

Now, as then, customers come to browse, chat, discuss world affairs (we have solved every problem known to man), eat lunch, have an occasional glass of wine, and find that perfect book. I love the delight I see on new customers' faces when they discover the wide range of genres we stock. Normal everyday books, the newest best sellers,

obscure books read as children — I have them or can order them. I keep a list of books, my famous "black book", in which I keep track of every book customers have requested but that I do not have. That book goes everywhere with me as I never know where I will stumble across one of the books. When I find one, a phone call alerts the customer to come pick

up their treasure.

The stock ranges from mystery, romance, sci-fi/fantasy, children's, military, westerns, novels, religious, and non-fiction to new books by local authors. Almost all books are priced at half the original cover price. One quarter of the cover price is given as trade credit when a book is returned or when any book, no matter where purchased, is brought to us.

The stock is constantly changing as books are traded in, found in my daily journeys, or purchased from many sources. I attend several large book sales each year, roam through yard sales, thrift stores, and even homes if invited. I may buy from customers who do not want trade credit if I know their books will resell. Any book that I cannot use and that the customer does not want back is stored to be later donated to a good cause such as the Boy Scout auction, Rotary Bazaar, church auctions or Woof-A-Palooza.

I host multiple book signings through out the year and will gladly add you to my email list if you would like to be notified when one is scheduled. I am also open during the Third Friday Art Walks, often with a special event. For example, last year the store hosted a wine tasting with chocolate and cheesecakes, a Southern Gospel group with Angel Food and Devil's Food Cake, and several special sales. One of our most popular events was at Christmas when Santa stopped by to visit and entertain the children — and, course, listen to their toy requests.

Recently I have begun talking with people about restarting the Friends of the Library for Siler City. If you would be interested in helping please let me know.

Today someone asked me if I enjoyed working in the bookstore. I can honestly say it is the best thing I have ever done. I look forward to coming to work every-day because I don't feel that running the book store is a job. The chance to be around books, talk to friends all day, and read is like being on vacation. Sometimes I even remember to sell a book!



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