

Book Club Kit Discussion Guide
Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking
By Susan Cain

Author:

Susan Cain is an American writer and lecturer, and author of the 2012 non-fiction book *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, which argues that modern Western culture misunderstands and undervalues the traits and capabilities of introverted people

Cain graduated from Princeton University and Harvard Law School. She worked first as an attorney, and then as a negotiations consultant as owner and principal of The Negotiation Company. Cain has been a fellow and a faculty/staff member of the Woodhull Institute for Ethical Leadership, an educational non-profit organization.

Cain left her careers in corporate law and consulting, for a quieter life of writing at home with her family. She later wrote that she looks back on her years as a Wall Street lawyer "as time spent in a foreign country."

Summary:

At least one-third of the people we know are introverts. They are the ones who prefer listening to speaking, reading to partying; who invent and create but prefer not to pitch their own ideas; who favor working on their own over brainstorming in teams. Although they are often labeled "quiet," it is to introverts we owe many of the great contributions to society—from Van Gogh's sunflowers to the invention of the personal computer.

Passionately argued, impressively researched, and filled with the indelible stories of real people, *Quiet* shows how dramatically we undervalue introverts, and how much we lose in doing so. Susan Cain charts the rise of "the extrovert ideal" over the twentieth century and explores its far-reaching effects—how it helps to determine everything from how parishioners worship to who excels at Harvard Business School.

And she draws on cutting-edge research on the biology and psychology of temperament to reveal how introverts can modulate their personalities according to circumstance, how to empower an introverted child, and how companies can harness the natural talents of introverts. This extraordinary book has the power to permanently change how we see introverts and, equally important, how they see themselves. (*From the publisher.*)

Questions:

1. Based on the quiz in the book, do you think you're an introvert, an extrovert, or an ambivert? Are you an introvert in some situations and an extrovert in others?
2. What about the important people in your lives—your partner, your friends, your kids?
3. Which parts of *Quiet* resonated most strongly with you? Were there parts you disagreed with—and if so, why?
4. Can you think of a time in your life when being an introvert proved to be an advantage?
5. Who are your favorite introverted role models?
6. Do you agree with the author that introverts can be good leaders? What role do you think charisma plays in leadership? Can introverts be charismatic?
7. If you're an introvert, what do you find most challenging about working with extroverts?
8. If you're an extrovert, what do you find most challenging about working with introverts?
9. *Quiet* explains how Western society evolved from a Culture of Character to a Culture of Personality. Are there enclaves in our society where a Culture of Character still holds sway? What would a twenty-first-century Culture of Character look like?
10. *Quiet* talks about the New Groupthink, the value system holding that creativity and productivity emerge from group work rather than individual thought. Have you experienced this in your own workplace?
11. Do you think your job suits your temperament? If not, what could you do to change things?
12. If you have children, how does your temperament compare to theirs? How do you handle areas in which you're not temperamentally compatible?

13. If you're in a relationship, how does your temperament compare to that of your partner? How do you handle areas in which you're not compatible?

14. Do you enjoy social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and do you think this has something to do with your temperament?

15. *Quiet* talks about "restorative niches," the places introverts go or the things they do to recharge their batteries. What are your favorite restorative niches?

16. Susan Cain calls for a Quiet Revolution. Would you like to see this kind of a movement take place, and if so, what is the number-one change you'd like to see happen?

(Questions issued by publisher.)