

The Introverted Leader

BUILDING ON
YOUR QUIET STRENGTH

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler, PhD
Bestselling author of *Quiet Influence*

Foreword by Douglas R. Conant,
Former President and CEO of Campbell Soup Company



More Praise for *The Introverted Leader*

“Many of the most effective leaders are self-contained ‘inner processors’ who are nonetheless extremely capable of getting results. This book shows you how to get the most out of yourself and others whose management style is different.”

—Brian Tracy, author of *The 100 Absolutely Unbreakable Laws of Business Success* and *Eat That Frog!*

“Kahnweiler believes that we must recognize the many thoughtful, inwardly focused, quiet ‘gems’ within our midst. If you count yourself as introverted some or all of the time, this book is a must-read.”

—Liliana de Kerorguen, Vice President, Strategy and Business Development, Adams and Royer, Paris, France

“Introverts are often understated overachievers. Their quality and contributions may not be discovered and rewarded. If you are an introverted manager who finds public speaking intimidating and being around people draining, this book provides practical guidance that will help you embrace and control uncomfortable situations. It will enable you to be more effective.”

—Ping Fu, President and CEO, Geomagic, and author of *Bend, Not Break*

“Jennifer B. Kahnweiler shows that she understands the challenges and opportunities introverted leaders face daily in a global marketplace. If you are an introverted leader or a manager of introverts — or both! — read this book. Kahnweiler delivers a proven four-part process drawn from her work in the trenches. Yes, introverted leaders can win!

—Fabrice Egros, President, UCB Pharma Inc.

“Does the thought of working a room make you want to run from the room? The good news is, you don’t have to be the life of the party to be a successful leader. This book teaches people skills you can use to lead with confident, compassionate authority so you command the respect, loyalty, and results you want, need, and deserve. Read it and reap.”

—Sam Horn, author of *POP!* and *Tongue Fu!*

“*The Introverted Leader* shows how to enhance your natural temperament and claim your place as an extraordinarily confident introverted leader in today’s demanding workplace. Jennifer’s strong track record of coaching the more reticent types among us shines through in this highly engaging and practical book.”

—Dr. Tony Alessandra, coauthor of *The New Art of Managing People*
and *The Platinum Rule*

“I’ve been an executive coach for more than fifteen years and only wish I’d had this book sooner for my many introverted clients. Jennifer’s four-step process—clear, concrete, and centered on results—helps ‘not-so-noisy’ leaders avoid career derailment and achieve success. If you’re an introvert—or you coach, mentor, or manage one—this is the book you’ve been waiting for. Buy it, read it, and put it to work!”

—Sharon Jordan-Evans, executive coach and coauthor of *Love ‘Em or Lose ‘Em*

“This is an important book for introverts and extroverts alike. Extroverts will benefit by gaining deeper insight into the mind of the introvert. Introverts will learn to embrace their introversion and the true value that they bring to the organizations they serve. The tips and tools that Kahnweiler introduces will help introverts navigate an extroverted corporate world. Shhh. Hear that? It’s the sound of your confidence growing!”

—Bill Treasurer, founder of Giant Leap Consulting and author of *Courage Goes to Work*

“Jennifer B. Kahnweiler’s experience with numerous high-level organizations speaks loud and clear in this first-of-its-kind book for introverted leaders. Those who are reluctant to step out of the shadows will learn to do so while keeping their personality intact.”

—Tom Darrow, founder and Principal, Talent Connections, LLC

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Quiet Strength**

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler, Ph.D.



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The Introverted Leader

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***To Lucille and Alvin Boretz,
parents extraordinaire,
who taught me the meaning
of love and laughter***

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Foreword

by **Douglas R. Conant**

Every time I've taken a Myers-Briggs test, I've scored high on the introversion scale. As an introvert, I get energy from being by myself. I sometimes feel drained if I have to be in front of large groups of people I don't know for an extended period of time. And, as addressed in this book, people exhaustion takes its toll. After I've been in a social situation—including a long day at work—I need quiet time to be alone with my thoughts, reflect on the day, and recharge.

But as CEO of Campbell Soup Company, a company with nearly twenty thousand employees, I found myself particularly challenged because so much of my work required me to be “out there” in front of others. Not only that, I was also challenged to reverse a precipitous decline in market value—in a hurry. Over the course of my tenure, we succeeded in dramatically transforming the global leadership team, reconfiguring the portfolio, cutting costs, and making strategic investments in Campbell's products, marketing programs, innovation pipeline, and infrastructure. As a result, the company was able to deliver cumulative shareholder returns in the top tier of the global food industry.

Now, as founder and CEO of ConantLeadership, I have perhaps an even less introverted job. To help improve the quality of

leadership in the twenty-first century, I often stand in front of a roomful of people and talk about how they, too, can be effective leaders in their organizations. One might ask how an introvert, like myself, makes this happen. Good question.

I'd be lying if I said that there wasn't a point in my life when I didn't aspire to be more outgoing, but it's just not in my nature. When I was nearly fifty, I began to realize that the best thing for me to do was to tell everyone with whom I worked the simple truth—I'm just shy. I realized that people are not mind readers—I needed to let them know what I was thinking and how I was feeling. Eventually, I developed this little talk, affectionately known as the “DRC Orientation,” in which I shared with people the essence of who I was and what I was trying to do. I would tell it to new employees right off the bat. I did this so all the people with whom I worked would have a clear idea of who I am, where I come from, and what I expect everyone to do in order to succeed. I found that “declaring” my introversion was a very freeing exercise—more preferred than going through painful contortions in attempting to adapt to other people's styles. I have pursued this practice for well over ten years, and it really has helped me build strong relationships and quickly get beyond all the little superficial dances people do when they first start working with each other.

I have found that you need to make a conscious effort to develop your skill set. At one point in my career, the CEO of Nabisco wanted me to be president of the sales organization. I said, “You have got to be kidding me: (a) I'm an introvert, and (b) I can't play golf.” Still, I ultimately accepted that position. I had to step even further out of my comfort zone, what Jennifer describes as the “push” component of her 4 P's Process. Emotionally, it was by far the most challenging job I've ever had, but I had to step up to the challenge. Making this stretch was necessary for me to grow as an effective leader and was very helpful in preparing me to become a CEO.

The Introverted Leader respects and honors the strengths introverts bring to the table and also offers a process whereby introverts gets results. Jennifer's 4 P's Process (preparation, pres-

ence, push, and practice) has been proven based on the tangible lessons she has gleaned from working with thousands of successful introverted leaders. This process provides introverts with a practical application for many challenging scenarios, from public speaking and networking to running a Fortune 500 company.

Both introverts and extroverts can learn from reading this book. Undoubtedly, introverts exist in all types of organizations. You simply can't overlook this entire group of contributors. Most people think of leaders as being outgoing, very visible, and charismatic people. I find that perspective to be overly narrow. You might just find that you have introverts embedded in your organization and, undoubtedly, some of them are natural-born leaders. The key challenge for leaders today is to get beyond the surface and unlock the full potential of all their colleagues. At times, extroverts may get to leadership positions faster, but for us introverts, it's all about working at our own pace and, at the end of the day, performing in a full way. Introverts can absolutely be extremely effective leaders; the landscape is full of excellent examples.

This book shows you how to increase your awareness and effectiveness in the workplace. If you are an extrovert, you will better understand and appreciate what your introverted teammates have to offer. If you are an introvert, you will gain insights and practical steps to build on your quiet strength. Ultimately, what helps all of us most is to embrace and fully leverage who we are in order to make the most substantial contributions possible. This book shows you how to do just that.

Douglas R. Conant

Former President and CEO of Campbell Soup Company

Founder and CEO, ConantLeadership

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Preface

You talk when you cease to be at peace with your thoughts; And when you can no longer dwell in the solitude of your heart you live in your lips, and sound is a diversion and a past time.¹

Kahlil Gibran

Someone said that work would be great, if it weren't for the people. Who hasn't felt that way at one time or another? Yet, workplace success is based on more than how much you know. It is equally about relationships with people. If you are an extrovert you are probably stimulated by the interpersonal interactions that build these relationships. However, in our outgoing, Type-A business culture, if you are an introvert who is more quiet in temperament, you may feel excluded, overlooked, or misunderstood. Your reticence might be mistaken for reluctance, arrogance, or even lack of intelligence. And perhaps you have found that your inconsistent people skills have caused your career to plateau. You're losing out on the career benefits that workplace relationships can provide. Your organization is also losing out on tremendous talent and expertise.

Yet, there is good news. Introversion can be managed. You can capitalize on a quieter, reflective demeanor and still adapt to a culture that rewards being "out there" and on stage. This book will show you how millions of people have succeeded in doing just that.

Who This Book Is For

Are you a mid-level or aspiring manager who has to influence others to get results? Perhaps you lead projects. Maybe you desire more responsibility and challenge in your role as an individual contributor. If you are a professional in a technical, scientific, or financial field, there is a strong likelihood that you have a quieter temperament. It is also probable that you have not been exposed to focused training in people skills like your counterparts in sales or management. You may be a woman in a male-dominated field or someone in a company who faces particular challenges in being heard.

You may view yourself as occasionally introverted. There are degrees of introversion, and occasions when even the “talkers” among us may be at a loss as to how to handle uncomfortable people situations. As a manager, of people or projects, it is likely you have introverts on your team. This book will help you learn to understand them, coach them, and maximize their contributions.

My Background

I confess. I am a strong extrovert. I talk out my thoughts, and I am the person many of you reading this may find “crazy making” at times. So, you ask, what would this “babbling brook” know about the world of introverts? Let me share a little background.

I have been a corporate consultant, speaker, and coach for more than 25 years. I have trained and counseled thousands of leaders across many organizations, and I have found introverted clients particularly receptive to the tools I share in this book. Many have followed up with specific examples of how they used techniques to get tangible results for themselves and their organizations. I am all for results.

As workplace columnist for *AARP The Magazine*, *The Society of Human Resources*, and the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* blog I have done extensive research on leadership success, including introverted leaders. In addition, the comments and questions I have received from readers deepened my understanding of the challenges and successes of quieter leaders.

And, finally, through my 35-year marriage to an introverted leader, I have developed empathy and admiration. I have learned to gain an appreciation for my husband Bill's quiet demeanor and his view of life. Looking through that lens has taught me so much about the value of quiet reflection.

The Approach

Tom was referred to me by a colleague. He was a twenty-something marketing manager who was interested in my research. He made a suggestion that I took to heart: "Don't listen to some loud mouth who is going to tell you to be like him because they don't know what it is like to be like me, do they? Motivational speaking is a billion dollar industry built on confident and extroverted people molding people into thinking they are wrong for being the way they are. Get advice from people who have dealt with the same problem." I decided to take his advice, so I personally interviewed and collected data from more than 100 introverted professionals across a wide range of industries. Some of these interviews were structured with set questions. Others were hallway conversations in client companies or conversations with interested airplane seatmates.

Wearing my journalist's hat, I observed team meetings, seminar discussions, and coaching sessions, looking for specific examples of how quieter leaders took charge. I filled notebooks with observations that were then incorporated into this book.

I found that posing specific questions on social networking sites also yielded rich responses. Many people preferred to communicate with me in writing. Their advice was rich and varied. *The Introverted Leader* also draws upon the unique perspectives of leading academics and business thinkers.

Book Overview

This book organizes information from all of these sources into a practical structure. Chapter 1, Four Key Challenges, lays out the challenges you face when you let yourself be ruled by ineffective introvert