Harness Your Personality to Become a More Productive Writer

By Hayley Michaels

"It is not enough to do your best; you must know what to do, and then do your best."
— W. Edwards Deming

Have you ever read an article about productivity hoping to get some great advice, only to try it for a week and find you fail?

Your productivity style is as unique as you are, so you can't apply a one-size-fits-all approach to productivity.

It also means you can stop beating yourself up when a productivity method just doesn't seem to work for you.

To be truly productive, you need to be both effective and efficient. That means doing the right things and doing them the right way. You need to discover what the right way is for you and your unique personality.
To help you do this, you need to identify an important aspect of your personality — whether you’re an extrovert or an introvert. From there you'll be better able to understand your strengths and weaknesses and use them to your advantage.

**Extrovert vs. Introvert – Where Do You Get Your Energy From?**

Being extroverted or introverted is a significant part of your personality. Your general attitude, how you focus your attention, and where you get your energy all stem from it.

Understanding what fuels your energy or drains it is vital to your productivity. The more energy you have, the more productive you'll be.

Once you know how you’re energized, you can set up your work schedule and environment in a way that helps feed your productivity.

Most people are a blend of extrovert and introvert, but tend more toward one or the other.

**Extroverts**

If you’re an extrovert, you get energized by your surroundings and the outside world. Being around people and interacting with them gives you energy.

Because writing is a solitary pursuit, you might think it isn't a good fit for extroverts, but that's not the case. As an extrovert, you have a lot going for you as a writer. It's just a matter of how to apply your extrovert attitude and energy.

Extroverts like to be busy and enjoy taking action. This, along with interacting with others, spurs your creativity, gives you ideas, and fuels your energy.

**How Can You Be a Productive Extrovert?**

Knowing yourself is the key to getting things done. If you’re an extrovert, keep these things in mind to optimize your performance:

Work in the right environment.
When your environment supports your personality, you keep your energy and productivity levels high and work from a position of strength.

For your home office, choose bright, energizing colors and play appealing music in the background. Consider spending some time each week, working in a coffee shop or at the library — somewhere you can people watch.

**Group work is important.**

Because extroverts like to be around people, you work well in groups and organizations.

If you're a freelance writer, brainstorm your ideas with others. Get out and interview people for your research, and have a writing group or accountability partner whom you can meet with regularly to discuss your projects.

**Think out loud.**

Extroverts like to talk things through … even when they're alone. You understand a problem or situation better when you talk about it. Even better, if you have someone to talk it over with. This is another good reason for you to meet with people to discuss and review your projects.

Even a short conversation can give you the ideas and inspiration you need for the next step in your project.

**Handle distractions ahead of time.**

Working with others and being sociable can also be distracting, so be prepared to manage your distractions. Set deadlines for yourself. Set agendas for meetings. Communicate these things clearly to those around you.

You'll also find plenty of distractions online. When you need to focus, use blockers and turn off notifications.

**Reflect and review — it's necessary.**

Because extroverts like to be busy, it's easy to get so caught up in your activities and projects that you lose sight of your purpose and goals. For this reason, you need to set aside time for reflection. Remind yourself of the purpose of your work and your goals. Review your methods of work and systems. If they're not working, figure out why and make any needed changes.
Schedule solitary time and social time.

Extraverts may struggle with the more solitary aspects of their work, such as reflecting, drafting, sitting down to write, revising and editing. But they're necessary and important parts of your work, and they demand concentration.

Set task-oriented goals each day and reward yourself when you complete them — meet someone for lunch or chat with a friend on the phone.

Remember, extraverts lose energy and motivation when they work alone for too long. If you're a freelancer working on your own, make time to be social. Just having people and activity around you can make you feel less isolated and more energized and motivated to work.

Introverts

Introverts are more at home in their inner world of thoughts, ideas, images and feelings. Unlike extraverts, who gain energy from social interaction, introverts feel drained when they spend too much time in social situations.

As an introverted writer, you have a lot going for you:

- Introverts like to spend a lot of time reading and researching, reflecting and processing, to come up with ideas and to better understand their subject matter.
- Introverts usually have powerful listening and observational skills. Your attention to detail is an asset that fuels your creativity and deepens your understanding and insight into the projects you're working on.
- You like to understand and see connections between information you're dealing with.
- Introverts enjoy working independently; you're happy to jump in and tackle tasks on your own.
- You have tremendous powers of concentration, which lets you dig deep and work happily in solitude for long periods. When it's quiet and you're not interrupted, you're more productive.
- Working in isolation lets your creativity come out to play.

How Can You Be a Productive Introvert?
Writing is a natural fit for many introverts, but it can still be helpful to keep a few things in mind that will boost both your productivity and creativity:

**Your environment must support you.**

Introverts are easily distracted by noisy, stimulating environments. The more distracted you are, the more drained you become. You get more done and enjoy it more when you work in a quiet, tranquil environment.

**Avoid "analysis paralysis."**

Introverts tend to be cautious and approach tasks with great thought and consideration. The benefit of this is you understand the needs of your project and the resources required. In turn, you're able to come up with a thorough plan, and you're clear on the purpose of your work.

But, if you're not careful, you can fall into an "analysis paralysis" trap. You can spend so much time researching, considering all your options, and planning that you fail to get started when you need to.

If you find yourself falling into this trap, set yourself a time limit for the planning stages of any project. After a set amount of time, make a decision about how to move forward and get to work.

**Distractions are toxic to your productivity.**

Constant distractions scatter your thoughts, erode your concentration, and drain your productivity.

Working in a noisy space, having too many people around you, and being interrupted by telephone calls and people popping into your office will leave you feeling frazzled. With each interruption, your energy drops a little, and you struggle to regain your focus and work productively.

You need to be aware of all the ways you can be distracted and have systems in place for dealing with them. These tips will help you deal with distraction before they damage your productivity:

- Find a quiet space to work.
- Schedule longer periods of time to work to allow your concentration to flow.
- If there are people around, give them a sign so they know not to disturb you. It could be closing your door, a sign on the door, speaking to them or wearing your "Busy: Do not disturb" hat.
• Turn off your phone and all notifications from your computer, and the internet.

• Have set times during the day to check voice messages and emails.

• Create a system for capturing ideas as they pop into your mind. Thinking about a new idea or worrying you'll forget it interrupts your work flow.

**Protect yourself from information overload.**

The web, emails, phone calls, television and radio are all clamoring for your attention. And there's so much information to sift through.

It's wonderful for introverts to have infinite information at their fingertips, but you're more sensitive to stimuli and can quickly become overwhelmed.

Approach your day thoughtfully, especially when it comes to using all the tools and devices available to you. Be selective about what you use, what information you expose yourself to, and how often. This way you'll keep your mind clear and calm, avoid information overload, and accomplish great things.

**Have a plan when you work with others.**

Introverts are usually happier working on their own. But there are times when you need to work with others, and it's good for you.

Your interactions with colleagues will give you new insights and different perspectives. And those will give you fodder for producing better ideas.

To make sure you don’t feel drained when working with others, use the following principles:

• Either work one-on-one with someone or in a small group.

• When you need feedback, try to work with someone you trust.

• When you know you have to spend time working with others, make sure you have time on your own both before and after. Then you'll be able to enter the meeting fully charged, and afterwards you'll be able to reflect and replenish yourself.

• Understand the purpose of your interaction and have a goal. This way you can approach your work with focus and a positive attitude, so you don't feel scattered and drained.
Whether you're an extrovert or an introvert, if you use the strengths of your personality to benefit your work, you'll be more productive. You'll find the process more rewarding. You'll feel inspired and motivated. And that, in itself, is a powerful tool for improving your productivity and creativity.

Are you an extrovert or an introvert? Do you have a favorite tip for improving your productivity? Please share it with us in the comments section below.

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2 Responses to "Harness Your Personality to Become
Hayley, I am more of an introvert than I am an extrovert, which interprets to being both, and it is shared by most people, either they are aware of it or not...It is the call of nature, that is to say it is in our gene from creation or birth. Naturally, one tends to be more extrovert in a familiar environment, than in an unfamiliar place. The show on TV "It is good to be in a place where people know your name" buttresses the point that I am making. Sometime people may connote introvert to be loneliness which is not only not true but also a misconception.

clement ajomo – November 16, 2017 at 12:10 pm

I personally have to look at the way most of my thoughts have a very identifying way of exposing themselves to me, specifically when there is an exciting or different circumstance surrounding that particular space in time. Yet introvertive writing is what I have to do in order to successfully find the the proper results. I guess that makes me an introvert, because I truly adore The Loud Silence of writing....

Wow-i81 – February 27, 2018 at 5:05 pm