

HELP! MY CHILD IS AN INTROVERTED

By Elmari Botha



As a parent you want only the best for your child, but with society's stigmas and judgments it can sometimes become extremely challenging. One of the many stigmas surrounding a child's personality traits is that being an introvert and not a "confident" extrovert is a problem. But what exactly is an introvert and an extrovert? According to *The Free Dictionary*, introversion is the direction of, or tendency to direct one's thoughts and feelings towards oneself. Whereas extroversion is an interest in, or behaviour towards others or one's environment rather than oneself. Therefore some people enjoy solitary activities like reading, while others would rather enjoy activities involving people.

BUSTING THE MYTHS

A common misunderstanding is that people think introverts are shy individuals, but even though some introverts might be shy, introversion has nothing to do with nervousness and anxiety. An introvert is therefore a person who feels energized by solitary activities, and who feels drained in activities which involves constantly interacting with others - just as an extrovert gets frustrated when having to sit alone in an office in front of a computer, without any

interaction with others. Another misconception is that you are either an extrovert or an introvert. These traits are in fact scored on a scale of one to ten (1-10). Meaning that a person who scores a one is an extreme introvert, whereas a person, who scores a ten, is an extreme extrovert. There is also a large part of our society who score between one and ten and fall somewhere in the middle. These people are normally the individuals who can't determine if they are an introvert or an extrovert, feeling that at some times they want to spend their time with others and at other times on their own.

INTROVERTED OR LOW SELF-ESTEEM?

If you are worried about your child's introverted personality the first thing to do would be to determine if your concern is based on your child being less social or if your child has low self-esteem. If your concern is based on these aspects it's a different issue, and has nothing to do with introversion. If you do have an introverted child, judging the child or pressurising the child to interact in situations that might make him or her uncomfortable, could cause more damage and may make the child feel inadequate. How can you support your child and help them to become truly who they are (as God intended for him/her to be), if you are secretly disappointed?

UNLOCKING YOUR CHILD'S POTENTIAL

If your child is introverted here are some aspects to remember to support your child:

- Accept the child for who he/she is.
- Do not try to change your child into an extrovert.
- Give your child space and privacy. Introverts like to spend time by themselves.
- Keep social activities to the minimum without judging the child. Rather expose

your child to children that also have a tendency to be introverted.

- When asking an introverted child a question give him/her enough time to answer rather than rushing it. They enjoy really thinking about things before answering.
- Remember introverted children hear and observe more than extroverted children do. Therefore they might portray what they are observing in a social setting, don't underestimate them.

Jesus, said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"

(Matthew 19:14 NIV). Jesus' invite seemed like a warm non-judgmental welcome. It was as if he said "Do not hinder the children; send them children as they are. There is no need to change them - they are perfect just as they are!"

When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God (Genesis 5:1 NIV). Remember that every child is unique and is made in the likeness of God. Accept your child for who they are and try to see the gifts that God has given them. 🇷🇺

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