



Investigating & Capitalizing on Our Introverted Strengths

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“To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.” -- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Introverts and otherwise quiet advocates are well-poised to play an influential role in the legal profession through their inherent capacities for active listening, analytical thinking, thoughtful writing, empathy, and creative problem-solving (See [The Introverted Lawyer: A Seven-Step Journey Toward Authentically Empowered Advocacy](#), ABA 2017).

If you are a naturally quiet lawyer, this activity can help identify your natural gifts. With enhanced self-awareness, instead of trying to force extroversion to fit the “stereotypical gregarious lawyer” mold in our day-to-day lives, we can capitalize on our inherent strengths in being authentically empowered advocates.

- **Listening:** Are you a good listener? How do you listen? How do you physically position yourself? Where do you focus your attention? Do you maintain eye contact? How do you demonstrate to the speaker that you are listening?



- **Data-gathering:** Are you a good note-taker? How do you capture the thoughts of others, and your own thoughts, while others are speaking?
- **Perceiving:** Do you consider yourself a perceptive person? Do you notice details that your extroverted friends miss? Sights? Street signs? Landmarks? Facial expressions? Smells? Tastes? Patterns? Textures? Sounds?
- **Researching:** When you’re researching something or trying to figure out a problem, do you dig deep? If you can’t easily find an answer, are you comfortable changing tactics and trying new research angles or sources?
- **Creative thinking:** Do you consider yourself a creative person? This does not necessarily mean artistic, but instead, being innovative in your thinking. Do you come up with interesting or even wild ideas for solving problems?
- **Deep thinking:** Are you a deep thinker? Do you find yourself wrestling with problems or concepts to figure them out?
- **Writing:** Do you enjoy writing? What type of writing? It doesn’t have to be legal writing. Think about what genres of writing you enjoy: Text messaging? Creative Facebook posting? Emails? Poems? Songs? Letters?
- **Choosy speech:** Are you a person of few words? Do you like finding the right word to express a thought? Do you think about how to phrase your ideas before relaying them aloud? When you speak, are people sometimes surprised at how good your ideas are?



- **Negotiating:** When you negotiate, do you prefer a win-win effort, or a winner-takes-all competition?
- **Tolerating silence:** Are you comfortable with silence? Why or why not? With whom?
- **Modeling empathy:** Do you consider yourself an empathetic person? Are you able to listen to another person describe his or her experiences and understand that person's reactions, feelings, perceptions, and choices—even if they are different from your own? How do you convey to others that you understand their feelings or emotions?

Now, try to recall specific situations in which any of the foregoing inherent traits were beneficial in solving a problem, resolving a conflict, achieving progress in a stalled situation, or counseling another person through a difficult circumstance.

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As introverts, many of us feel pressure to try to “act extroverted,” when in reality, it is our introverted assets that make us authentically powerful legal advocates. Next time you are in an interactive lawyering scenario, consider how your introverted strengths can power you through the experience in an authentic and fulfilling manner.

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