

Quality Education News

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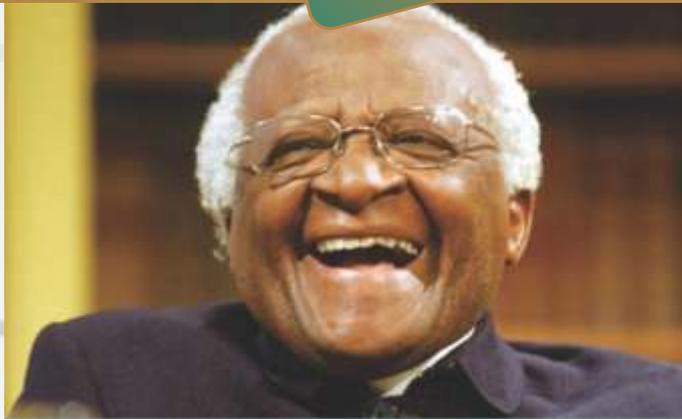
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Bill Gates: introspective and quiet leadership



Desmond Tutu: extroverted and exuberant leadership

Dear Supporter of Quality Education

It's not all doom and gloom in South African education. There are undoubtedly outstanding public schools in our country. Last year I was invited to such a school. It was their annual Prize-Giving ceremony – an occasion filled with decorum, sense of occasion but also quiet pride. The learners had excelled in so many areas of school life; they were destined for further achievements in their tertiary education. In the principal's address to the audience, a comment was made that made everyone think.

Here was this fine school being superbly led and the principal made a personal statement about her leadership. The audience was told that the principal was an introvert. Yes, the principal was a most eloquent speaker and very visible in the school community. Yet by nature - the principal claimed - the leadership was that displayed by an introverted personality. (You might like to do the quiz on page two of this newsletter to sense where you fit in on the extrovert-introvert spectrum.)

So often leaders are seen as having the extrovert personality. They're meant to be outgoing, gregarious and easy mixers in social settings. They're confident and they even enjoy dealing with conflict. It's all seen as part of the assertive personality.

Our introverted principal told the audience about a book titled *Quiet* by Susan Cain. The sub-title of the book was: *The power of introverts in a world that can't stop talking*. Perhaps the sub-title was a subtle dig at those who do most of the talking!

In her book, Cain reminds readers of famous introverts such as Frédéric Chopin, Albert Einstein, Bill Gates, Sir Isaac Newton, JK Rowling, Steven Spielberg and Vincent van Gogh. According

to North American research studies, about a third to half of a population are introverted by nature. Cain makes the wry comment that if you're not an introvert yourself, you're surely raising, managing, married to or coupled with one.

Do our schools give the introverts a fair chance to get leadership positions? When staff appointments are made – especially at senior management level – is there a bias towards what Cain describes as the Extrovert Ideal? What happens when leadership selections are made amongst the learners? Are the quiet ones given equal opportunities? Is there a recognition that leadership also belongs to those who are reflective, who like quiet time and who think deeply before they say anything? Exceptional leadership can be very quiet.

Our Proteas cricket test team has recently had a change of captaincy. Graeme Smith has retired after more than a decade as a dynamic and sometimes, in-your-face leader. Hashim Amla has stepped quietly and almost unobtrusively into the role. In his first six tests, Amla hasn't lost a game. Two fine captains of the game have gone about their leadership roles in distinctly different ways.

We need leaders wherever they are in the school or education system who display fine qualities of mind and values. That they're either extroverts or introverts is unimportant.

Sincerely

Richard Hayward



This newsletter is edited by SAQI and distributed to those schools benefiting from their participation in the MySchool programme. MySchool acts as a conduit which raises and delivers essential funding for education and social development on a sustainable basis. This enables members of the community to participate in the future development of our nation.



MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet
EVERY SWIPE COUNTS

Are you an extrovert or an introvert?



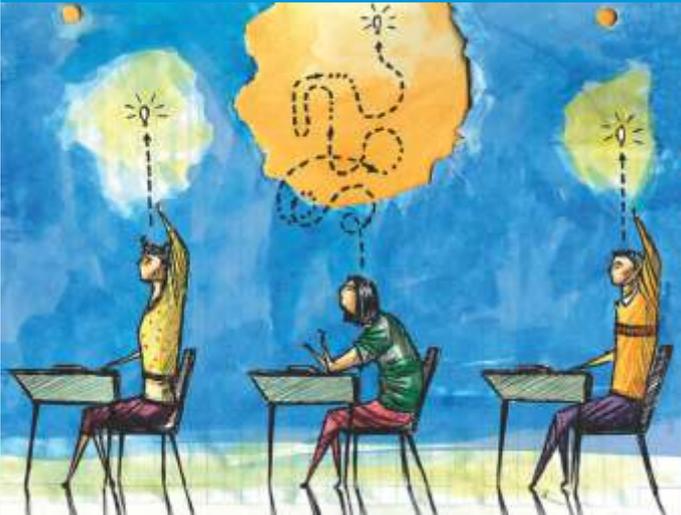
It was in 1921 that Carl Jung, the famous Swiss psychiatrist, wrote about a person being either an 'extrovert' or an 'introvert'. Today those two terms are often used in everyday speech to describe a person's behaviour. Here is an informal extrovert-introvert quiz based on present-day research. Please note that the quiz is not a scientifically-validated one.

Answer each statement below as either 'true' or 'false' as most describing you.		True	False
1	I prefer one-on-one conversations to group activities.		
2	I often prefer to express myself in writing.		
3	I enjoy solitude.		
4	I seem to care less than my peers about wealth, fame and status.		
5	I dislike small talk but I enjoy talking in depth about topics that matter to me.		
6	People tell me that I'm a good listener.		
7	I'm not a big risk-taker.		
8	I enjoy work that allows me to 'dive in' with few interruptions.		
9	I like to celebrate birthdays on a small scale, with only one or two close friends or family members.		
10	People describe me as 'soft-spoken' or 'mellow.'		
11	I prefer not to show or discuss my work with others until it's finished.		
12	I dislike conflict.		
13	I do my best work on my own.		
14	I tend to think before I speak.		
15	I feel drained after being out and about, even if I've enjoyed myself.		
16	I often let calls go through to voice mail.		
17	If I had to choose, I'd prefer a weekend with absolutely nothing to do rather than one with too many things scheduled.		
18	I can concentrate easily.		
19	I don't enjoy multitasking.		
20	In classroom situations, I prefer lectures to seminars.		

(Acknowledgement: Cain, S 2014. *Quiet*. Penguin: London, pages 12-13.)

The more statements that you indicated as 'true' about you, the more you lean towards being an introvert. If you found yourself giving yourself an equal number of 'true' and 'false' answers, then you might be an ambivert. Yes, there is such a word! Whether you're more of an ambivert, extrovert or introvert doesn't matter. What's important though is to fully accept your unique personality. Be yourself!

Helping our introverted learners blossom



Imagine that it's break time at a school. Learners walk excitedly out of classrooms and run onto the school grounds. Pent-up energy explodes in loud talking and shouting. Teachers retreat to the staffroom for a cup of tea and hopefully to be in a quiet place to gently gather their thoughts. Yet not all the learners are glad that it's playtime. There are those learners who realise that they're moving from a busy, often crowded and somewhat noisy classroom to another loud environment. Such learners are often the introverts.

In a way, schools are designed for the extroverts. Big groups of learners are confined in small places; there's a hubbub of activity and if you don't speak out and up, you'll 'fall below the radar'. You might not be noticed not only by fellow learners but also the teachers.

Quality schools are sensitive to this situation and take proactive action. The school leadership strives to figuratively give every child a place in the sun.

There's a Johannesburg school which has an enrolment of about a thousand learners. At break-time the noise on the sports fields is at a level becoming hundreds of happy exuberant children. However, there are little alcoves of quietness around the school. In one of them there are benches and a gently trickling water fountain. A few children are chatting quietly together and two are sitting apart deeply absorbed in reading their books.

What can we do to make the quiet learners feel welcome and sense that they belong? Obviously, a quiet playground area as just mentioned, is a good start. In the classroom the teachers can arrange for quiet times too. There can be silent reading sessions where the only sound heard is that of pages being turned and the odd cough. Written work can be assigned where there's absolute silence which includes not asking the teacher a single question. If the introvert enjoys such a work environment, it's pleasing to note how the so-called extroverts enjoy it too. An added bonus is that often the learners' actual work performance goes up.

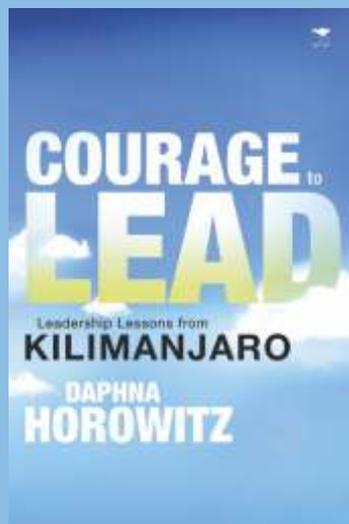
Sue Cain makes the point that introversion should not be seen as something that needs to be cured. There's nothing wrong in wanting to work on one's own or in a small group; there's nothing wrong if – on occasion – a learner simply wants to be an avid listener during a class discussion. When an encouraging and supportive classroom climate is created, the introvert will feel confident enough to make the odd comment if they so wish. Their remarks are often the end result of deep thinking and insight!

Often introverts have deep interests in a few areas. Their interests might be somewhat different to their peers. Cain observes (page 255):

Sometimes they're made to feel freaky for the force of these passions, when in fact studies show that this sort of intensity is a prerequisite to talent development. Praise these kids for their interests, encourage them, and help them find like-minded friends, if not in the classroom, then outside it.

Tips for peak leadership performance

BOOK REVIEW



Publisher: Stonebridge
Price: R185
Tel: 011 628 3200
ISBN 978-1-920292-28-7

Daphna Horowitz's book begins in an eye-catching and unusual way. Spread across two full pages is a photo of snow-tipped Mt Kilimanjaro. Alongside the photo are her astute words about leadership:

*There is a leader within each and every one of us;
all that required to be awakened is the courage to take one step.*

The author climbed Kilimanjaro as part of a team of women climbers. She has used the challenge of reaching the top of the mountain as a metaphor for leadership. Her book is an absorbing account of the many challenges that she overcame to get to the summit. Yet it's also an account of the leadership lessons to be learnt before standing on top of the highest mountain in Africa.

Each chapter has a story about an aspect of the climb. That's followed by a discussion of a leadership principle. The chapter ends with a

Leadership Challenge for the reader. There's an invitation to reflect and answer questions about one's own leadership style.

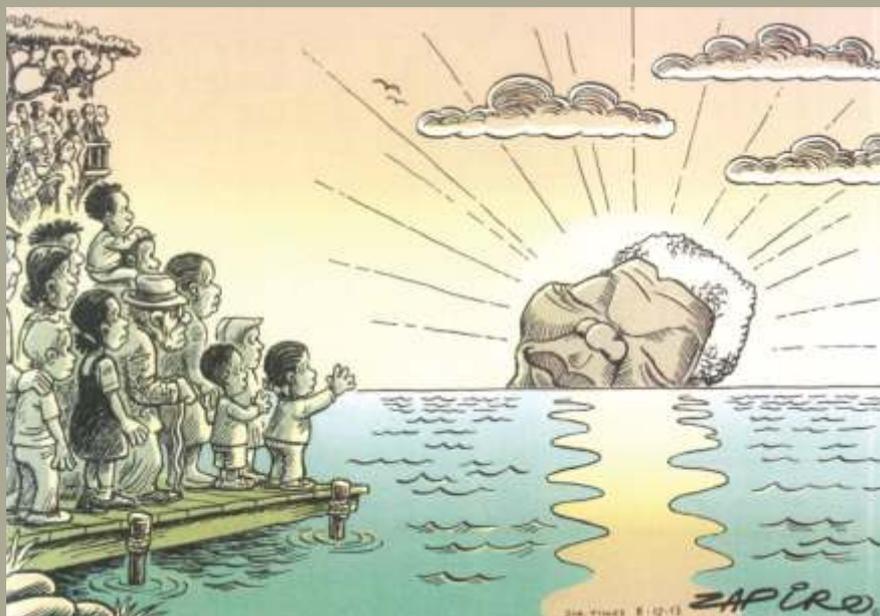
This book is written by someone who has a sound grasp of leadership principles and practices but who gives the theory a 'light touch'. Amongst the topics covered are: authenticity, change, courage, empowerment and ubuntu. There's also a chapter on women in leadership positions and how to deal with biases and prejudices against them.

Who in a school would enjoy and benefit from the book? Every staff member takes on leadership roles in different situations. Staff members responsible for learner leadership camps and workshops would find the book invaluable. Their learners would benefit from having their copies too. This book is a buy for anyone aspiring to a leadership role or who is already in one. It's also a definite buy for both the school and staffroom libraries.

It's a little over a year since the passing away of Nelson Mandela. Many schools and teachers want to keep his legacy alive.

SACE has recently endorsed a workshop titled **Growing Madiba's values in our school** which is presented by the South African Quality Institute (SAQI). The programme gives a short historical sketch and then discusses ten of his core values. How these same values can become part of the daily life inside any classroom and school are then shared. The endorsement earns five Professional Development points.

Richard Hayward does the workshop under the aegis of SAQI. For more details of this and other programmes done by him – including six other endorsed programmes – kindly contact him on 011 888 3262 or rpdayward@yahoo.com Otherwise, go to www.saqi.co.za and click on 'Quality Education' for details.



Acknowledgement: Shapiro, J 2014. *It's code red* Auckland Park: Jacana.



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