

Ambivert: What It Means, & How to Become One

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Are you introverted or extroverted?

If you struggle with that question, it's possible that you are an ambivert.

This guide will help you find out if that's the case, what it means to you, and what are the advantages of being an ambivert.

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What's an Ambivert

An ambivert is an individual with the traits of both introversion and extroversion.

Basically, an ambivert is in the middle of the extroversion continuum.

[Carl Jung](#) was one of the first to discuss that “middle” of the road between introversion and extraversion. And albeit Jung didn't use the exact word “ambivert”, he said that ambiverts account for the majority of the population.

More recently, [Adam Grant](#) found confirmation for Jung's theory when around two-thirds of his research subjects didn't identify themselves as either introverted or extroverted.

Extroversion Is a Spectrum

Extroversion, like many other psychological traits, is a continuum.

And what Jung and Grant noted makes a lot of sense if you think about it: in most distribution curves there are more people in the middle than at the opposite ends of the spectrum.

However, numbers can be misleading here.

People who *really* are in the middle, which we could call “purebred ambiverts”, might not be the majority. Maybe around 20% of the population.

And most people will still lean more towards one end of the spectrum or the other.

That's why it's important to realize on which direction you lean the most.

Ambivert Traits

It can be frustrating to hear "it depends", right?

You're looking for answers but instead of clear cut, black and white answers, you get that annoying, noncommittal "it depends".

Welcome to the life of an ambivert.

Introverts and extroverts can clearly tell you whether a social situation is either fun or overwhelming, but for introverts, it depends.

For example:

- extroverts get energy from social settings, they want to interact with people and look forward to interacting with people.
- Introverts lose energy from social settings and prefer quiet time and solitude. They crave own time

But ambiverts?

Sometimes they crave their alone time. And if they have been alone for a long time it can get difficult for them to "warm-up" to people and social settings. But **once they warm-up, ambiverts can love social interactions.**

And they can look forward to meeting and mingling with new people.

Signs That You're an Ambivert

Here are some statements that ambiverts would agree to.

I:

- Enjoy a party, but then want to go home
- Like attention.. sometimes, depending on the context and mood
- Enjoy conversation (like extroverts) but not so much small talk (like introverts)
- Find it difficult sometimes to assert myself
- Can be very reserved in some situations
- Prefer meeting new people with people that I know around
- Can find myself in both extroversion and introversion descriptions
- Am excited about going to social events, but find it a bit intimidating in the beginning
- Enjoy lone time, but it can get too much after a few days
- Think before I speak (unlike extroverts), but don't have problems putting thoughts into words (like introverts)
- Adapt to the people around (listen with talkers and talk more with silent people)
- Can get lost in a conversation (like extrovert) as much as in my own thoughts (introverts)
- Sometimes mistrust people, but other times I can open up very easily

If you can recognize yourself with many of the above statements then, yes, chances are that you're an ambivert.

The Ambiverts Advantage

For a long time, I had considered extroverts to hold an advantage on introverts.

After all, people are essential to success, and if you love interacting with people, then it's easier for extroverts to make friends and build alliances, right?

Well, no, not really.

Ambiverts actually fare better with people.

By being in the middle of the spectrum, they have an easier time understanding, adapting and interacting with everyone.

As we saw in the guide on [how to find a perfect roommate](#), it's very easy for introverts and extroverts to end up hating each other:

Topic	Extroverts	Introverts
Eating	Want to eat together	Want to enjoy food alone
TV / Sport Events	Watch TV and sport together as a shared event	Watch the match alone (and comment it on an online forum)
Use of common spaces	Camp out on common areas (and hope roommate will come out)	Stay in the room (hoping roommate will get the fuck out so <i>they</i> can go out)
Feelings towards the other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• weird• slippery• always avoiding me• doesn't like me	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "too much"• overbearing• all over me• likes me too much

But ambiverts?

They understand and get along with everyone.

This makes it easier for them to be social chameleon and to [connect and bond with people](#).

[Larry Kim](#) indeed found that ambiverts are more adaptable and better mold the context and the situation.

Ambiverts are also more:

- **Emotionally Stable:** [Hans Eysenck](#), the psychologist who first used the "ambivert", says that they avoid the extreme hypersensitivity introverts and over-dominance of extroverts
- **Socially Intuitive:** [Daniel Pink](#) says that ambiverts have a better intuition of social intricacies such as when to speak and when to listen, when to push and when to step back
- **Resilient:** While extroverts and introverts suffer in environments that do not suit them, ambiverts can do well both in difficult social settings and in long stretches of lone time
- **Empathic:** By sitting in the middle, it's easier for them to understand both introverts and extroverts. This ability tend to make ambiverts also less judgmental

Ambiverts Sell Better

Take a profession that most people consider people-related and that, to be good at, you need to be good at

relating people.

That profession is sales.

Usually you'd think that extroverts are the best suited for a sales job. Instead, a study found out that ambiverts generated 24% more revenue than introverts and a whopping 32% more than extroverts.



Source: Adam Grant

Since I have been in sales for several years and I have seen all types of sales personalities, this is what I suspect happens: extroverts, so in love with the socialization process, end up focusing too much on *socialization* rather than on *selling*.

And extroverts' eagerness to talk makes them poorly suited at getting to know the prospect and selling to the prospect in a way that meets his needs.

So in love with their own voice, they end up monopolizing the conversation. They overwhelm the prospect, listen too little, and do not position their product in relation to the customer's needs.

The ambivert instead, says Grant, strikes a better balance between enthusiasm, assertiveness, and the inherent need of listening that a good sales process entails.

[Adam Grant](#) also conducted a meta-study on the link between extroversion and income, and the result was that there was *no* connection.

What Influences Your Ambiversion

As an ambivert, you are liable to move up and down the extroversion scale.

Some factors that will influence your extroversion levels are:

- Location
- How well you know the people
- How "socially warmed " you are
- Who is around you (you probably prefer some known people)
- How long you have been alone
- How long you have been socializing

Depending on how the situation and your mood change, you can present strong extrovert tendencies or strong introvert attitudes.



Can You Become Ambivert

Can you become an ambivert?

Sure you can.

And given that there are several advantages to ambiversion, you probably want to.

I started as an introvert and now I have moved more towards an ambivert middle.

And I'm not alone. I have read of [more people](#) going through the same development.

I still love my own time, my peace, and my quietness. But I also look forward to socializing, especially when there are some people I know in the audience and people that I like.

But, since I learned how to socialize well, I also love interacting with total strangers. As a matter of fact, I sometimes look forward to making new acquaintances and entering new social worlds.

You can also go from extroversion to ambiversion, but the following tips are more suited for introverts:

1. Increase Your Social Skills

The big secret to becoming more ambivert is to simply get better with people.

Then you will make friends more easily, you will know you can trust yourself to have a good time and you will know that you can excuse yourself at any time if you don't enjoy the interaction.

Also read:

- [Activities to get good with people](#)
- [Group conversation](#)
- [How to avoid being a social burden](#)
- [Social finessing](#)

2. Develop A Positive Social Circle

When you have people you like around you, you will love interacting with them and you will naturally start behaving like an extrovert and thinking like an extrovert.

Socialization will become more pleasurable and you will look forward to it.

Going out to meet them will be a pleasure, seeing them will be a pleasure, and meeting new people in the presence of the people you already like will become easier.

On the other hand, avoid toxic people, frenemies, and anyone who doesn't uplift you and doesn't want the best for you.

Also read:

- [How to spot frenemies](#)
- [Dealing with underminers](#)
- [Toxic people](#)
- [Signs of toxic relationships](#)

3. Pick The Right Places

There will be places and locations that you enjoy.

And there will be places and locations that you loath.

The solution?

Simple, increase the former and limit -or exclude- the latter.

If you don't like clubs and noisy bars, avoid them or you will always end up retreating in your shell and telling yourself "I'm just bad with people".

And since you're there, maybe your party friends are not the best fit for you while you're still fully on the introversion end of the spectrum.

On the other hand, if you are very much extroverted, you should probably avoid places that fit introverts best or you will always tell yourself "I need noise and people" and you'll never tone done your extrovert extremes.

4. Pick The Right Jobs

The stress-therapy of "doing the opposite of what we like to grow and adapt" is a failed one.

It's best instead to stretch ourselves with small steps.

Here are a few professions where Ambiverts perform well and that will help you gradually move towards the middle of the spectrum:

- Sales positions

As we have seen ambiverts are very good at sales. And as a salesperson I can tell you that a lot of time is spent on preparing a presentation, entering data and managing loose ends: it's not all about talking to people.

- Negotiation

Same for sales: ambiverts are good both at imposing their needs when they need to, and to listen to the other party when they have to.

Both are fundamental skills to [drive effective negotiation](#).

- Management

Bosses who talk too much and don't listen to their reports don't make for great bosses. And managers who hide behind big screens to create a barrier between them and their team are not usually the most loved and effective leaders.

The best managers know how to walk that line, and being in a managerial position while you try to be the manager you can be will stretch you towards that good middle ground.

- Teachers and educators

Teaching and education also require a mix of lone work to prepare the lessons, listening to students and speaking time. Another great profession for ambiverts.

Criticism of Ambiversion

There have also been critics of the concept of ambiversion.

Both criticisms below raise good points and, to understand yourself and gain deeper self-awareness and [emotional intelligence](#), it's important that you understand them before you're too quick to jump into the "ambivert bandwagon" (yes, it's becoming a thing :).

Love Socialization But Get Drained: Still Introvert

For example, some psychologists say that if people enjoy socialization and talking to others but do get drained and need to "recharge", then they are not ambiverts.

They are simply introverts who enjoy socializing.

Love Socialization But Get Overwhelmed: Still Extrovert

Susan Cain, in her lovely book [Quiet: The Power of Introverts](#) says that people who are very sensitive to external stimuli tend to be introverted.

However, there is a different approach to it. And the different approach says that sensibility to external stimuli and extroversion are two very different things.

Highly sensitive people get overwhelmed by external stimuli. Too much light, too loud noises, too many people... It can all get too much for them.

However, that has nothing to do with extroversion.

So you can have an extrovert who gets easily overwhelmed, but that doesn't mean that he as an "introvert touch" and that he is an ambivert.

It simply means that he is an extrovert who happens to be highly sensitive.

SUMMARY

Ambiverts sit around the middle of the extroversion continuum.

At the core of their strength is **social adaptability**. If you are an introvert, that's great news for you.

If you are not yet one, you can train yourself to take the edge off of your extremes, and your quality of life -and quality of socialization- can increase dramatically.