

Introverts and Personality Tests: Why We Love Them

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SPEAKERS

Lisa, Sharon

Lisa 00:06

Welcome to the Introvert Sisters, the podcast by introverts, for introverts, hosted by Sharon and Lisa, to INFJs with a lot to see.

Sharon 00:22

Hi, I'm Sharon.

Lisa 00:23

And I'm Lisa. And together were the introverts. Sisters.

Sharon 00:28

Welcome to the podcast. Now today we want to talk about something that is near and dear to our hearts. We want to talk about personality tests. Yeah, as you know, one of the taglines for this show, one of the early taglines for this show was to INFJs with a lot to say, right. And of course, that comes out of the Myers Briggs Personality Type test, whatever it is, yeah, Type Indicator. MBTI MBTI. Right. Right

Lisa 00:57

indicators.

Sharon 00:58

It comes out of that. And you know, we, we both identify as INFJs. Yes. So you want to talk about this Lisa, say a little bit more to this.

Lisa 01:12

Well. Yeah. Um, I, I'm trying to remember actually, I'm going to toss it back to you. But do you remember when you first did a Myers Briggs test by any chance?

Sharon 01:23

It's been quite a while. I mean, here, it might have been 10, 12 years ago. It was a long, long time ago. I'm pretty sure it was, after I became a freelancer. Yes. Yeah. That gives that gives me a window. Yes, yes. Yeah, it gives me a window. What about you?

Lisa 01:36

Yeah, it definitely, more than a decade ago as well. Yes. And, for me, it was I was kind of like, excited to do personality tests. You know, I say nobody, you know, it was not something personality was not something that that one really discussed. On the job. No, no. But then somehow it became a thing. I did a test and test it as INFJ did the Myers Briggs test. Every other time that I've done that test or any other kind of test? I score 100,000 million percent on on the introverted side of things.

Sharon 02:13

Yeah, me too. Me too. I mean, doing the Myers Briggs itself. Yes. Doing the 16 personalities version, which is basically the same thing. Yes. My Myers Briggs with colors. Yes. True. We like to color like colors. Yes, Enneagram. I've done others as well. I remember a friend and I did. I can't even remember the name of the test. And we were we were kind of competing to see how introverted we were. And you know, I basically came out she said, I'm so introverted I got 90%. I said, Well, I can beat that. I'm at 99. Yeah, right. Right. Yeah. And so

Lisa 02:47

I always an interesting, and I always score more introverted than you, which is interesting, because I think that people perceive me as being more extroverted than you are. But the truth is that you are actually not by much, but you're actually a bit more extroverted than I am, is not by not by much, not by much. I mean, there might be a five 5% differential.

Sharon 03:11

Yeah. So, you know, for me, it was always interest also interesting. I mean, you know, it's around the same time as we started talking more about the language of introversion. I don't know when the book Quiet by Susan Cain, which you talk about a lot. Yeah. Okay.

Lisa 03:23

One of my favorite books

Sharon 03:25

But you know, all of a sudden, there was a word for what I was, yes, there was language. There was language, and then you know, and so the personality tests kind of helped, you know, help me understand myself. Yeah, in a sense,

Lisa 03:39

Helped me understand why I don't like people. No, just kidding. No, but help me understand. It's not a question of not liking people, but helping helping me understand why so often felt drained after interacting with people exactly. Even in cases where sometimes it was I mean, crowds are definitely a

no, no, but even in cases where it might be a one on one interaction, helping me to understand why I was more drained around some people than others, yes. Which I, you know, then came to discover, oh, this versus extroverted. And so this is why, basically, your energies are not in alignment. Exactly. Nothing is wrong with them. Nothing is wrong with me. And they're, you know, we're both perfectly nice people. It's just our energies don't align and that's okay.

Sharon 04:23

And that is absolutely fine. And, you know, just just having that language that, that vocabulary to talk about what was going on inside. Right. And to understand it that understand that it wasn't a negative thing. Yes. You know, yes. You know, it's not Oh, she's so shy. Yeah. You know, or it's not, oh, she's hiding in a corner. It's all you know, she has a rich inner world. Yes. You know, she relishes deep thought. Yes. You know, she's, she's a great researcher. You know, she's a great synthesizer of information, right.

Lisa 04:55

She's a deep thinker.

Sharon 04:56

Yeah, exactly. You know, all of those things and understanding the positives that went along with this, this personality type this INFJ

Lisa 05:04

and also feeling less alone!

Sharon 05:06

And yes, because of course, they're, you know, there are loads of us millions, there are millions all around the world and you know, and so in a way, it was good to feel part of, in some ways part of a community, you know, not this isolated, isolated, isolated, isolated, shy person in

Lisa 05:24

isolated, isolated, full of light,

Sharon 05:28

and a group of extroverts badass, but someone that had an acknowledged and recognized personality type and understanding what that meant.

Lisa 05:36

Yeah, you know, and it's interesting, because actually, the INFJ type, and you know, I should have researched this properly, but I know that it is supposed to be the least common. Yes, right. It's the most it's the most rare type. Yes, um, you know, some might say, Okay, does that mean that you're the weirdest people? Not necessarily? Maybe? Not, you know, but definitely, definitely, it is a rare personality type. But that also helped me understand why because I basically never feel even to this day, I rarely feel like I fit in anywhere. I always feel kind of like, you know, like an outsider. And like, you know, I just can't quite like, yes, you know,

Sharon 06:16

very known whether that related to the personality type, or just the fact that we moved around a lot or what it was over, it's a combination of intersectionality, intersectionalities, okay. You know, so it is probably a combination is probably a combination. I

Lisa 06:31

mean, I definitely if you move around a lot, yeah. It? Well, one thing is that you're kind of able to at least appear as if you can, you can make it appear, like you're fitting in, you get, it mean that you feel that you feel like you're fitting in No, you can definitely do what needs to be done. Yeah, you know, jump in, make friends, go to social events, you know, do the cocktail party talk, you can do all of that. Yes.

Sharon 06:56

But at the same time, you also feel like, Oh, this is so shallow. This is not right, what I really want to be doing right, you know, where are my people?

Lisa 07:03

I don't know, these people were my people. And so INFJs are my people are INFJs are definitely my people, you know? Yes. And so which brings me to a question. No, do you think this is as much as what science says? We're going to use the science for today's our opinion. But do you think that the tests, these personality tests are reliable?

Sharon 07:28

Well, you know, here's the thing about personality tests, yes. Like all kinds of other tests, you know, SATs, IQ tests, and all these kinds of things. They were developed at a time, you know, they were developed by pale, stale, males, as I like to call them. Right. Right. Right. So, you know, they didn't necessarily take into account the fullness of people like you and me, that's what I would say. Right? Right. So I think you have to take all these things with a grain of salt and realize that they might not fully represent you. Having said that, for me, personally, the The MBTI, the INFJ personality type, right? Seems to accurately accurately portray my you my personality,

Lisa 08:12

you as you know, yourself to be be.

Sharon 08:14

As I know myself to be right. Right. Does that, is that the same for everybody? Would that be the same for every INFJ? I would very much doubt it. Right? Because, as we know, you know, there are problems with the way many of these things were developed. Yes, there were problems with, you know, the so called science that went into them, right. There were problems with the the expectations. So, you know, it's most likely that they were based on a subset of, you know, white people, probably white men actually given given the era of a certain age or a certain stage and they use that, you know, does that represent a black woman in the 21st Century?

Lisa 08:50

Probably not,

Sharon 08:51

Maybe not entirely. Right, right. Maybe not entirely. What about you? Do you how do you feel?

Lisa 08:54

Okay, so, um, I do want to quote, Disability Justice Advocate, Lydia Z. Brown, who says that personality tests are by and large constructed to be ablest racist, sexist, and classes. Right. Okay. And which kind of ties in essentially with what you were just saying. So, you know, there is that and that does need to be considered, right, that the foundation of these, of these tests, and whether it is these standardized tests, or in fact, any standardized test? I mean, if you really want to expand it, right, so, yes, basically, all of the tests are fundamentally flawed. Yes. That being said, you know, life goes on, you can't fight everything, right. Because right, twice a day, a broken clock is right. Right. And so for me, do I think they are reliable? They are reliable in that based on how they were constructed. Yeah, they are reliable because for me, my results come up consistent every single time. Yes. And I think that there's something no matter what kind of personality test I take, I come out as extremely introverted. And if there's a HSP aspect to it as well, I come out as HSP. I come out as having some elements of autism. Right. Right, which I've never been tested for. But, you know, well, when I say I've never been tested by a medical professional, but in terms of doing these online tests every single time, so it's consistent and reliable. And reliable for me. Yeah, right. But yes, I do agree that there, it's probably, they are probably, generally speaking fundamentally flawed. Again, we can't solve everything. Part of it, for me also is a little bit of entertainment. So I find them entertaining. I find your personality test entertaining. Let's see if I'm gonna come out as an introvert again. Haha, exactly. Yes. Big surprise. Yes, I

Sharon 10:53

did. Yes, I did. Oh, let's read let's you know, let's read the, the recap at the end and see what new things I might learn about.

Lisa 11:00

And about you. Because of course, I think I think there was one time I once I tested, I tested this, INTJ instead,

Sharon 11:11

me to

Lisa 11:12

Right! Once, only once. And then yeah, and so I think we must have shared that time, probably because we were both so shocked. Yeah. So it's also good, because I feel you know, you and I had the same, though we don't have the same personality. We have a personality type,

Sharon 11:27

which is kind of interesting. When you're very interested in you think about it. Right. When you think about it. Yeah. You know, I always enjoy reading the little recap, looking at where does that have parallels with my life?

Lisa 11:36

Yes.

Sharon 11:37

You know, I think I come out on the 16 personalities also as an advocate.

Lisa 11:41

Yes, yes. Yeah. You just interesting considering the work that you do, because you literally do advocacy? Yes. That is literally Yes.

Sharon 11:48

I find it weird, because, you know, the very first time I did that, I thought that looked good. Okay, because at the time, I wasn't doing any of this kind of work. Yeah, right. But I have grown into that. Yeah, over time, which is something I hadn't even thought about before we started recording this. But you know, it's interesting, right?

Lisa 12:05

It is very, very interesting. You know, I just, I find it fascinating. And it can be useful in learning, again, learning about yourself learning about people that you're close to, we will get to discussing how it plays out. It can play out in the workplace. Yeah, we'll get there. But um, another nuance that I want to ask is, do you think they're specifically and explicitly racist?

Sharon 12:33

I think, no, I don't know specifically who? Well, I mean, I know who developed the test. Yeah. Right. But, you know, I think that they were, you know, they were developed in an era when eugenics was all the rage. Right? Quite possibly. Right? I would have to double check my thoughts on this. Please. Please don't hold me to this people.

Lisa 12:51

Yes, yes, yes. Yes, I think so too.

Sharon 12:53

I feel I'd seem to have like the 1940s. So some eugenicist thing floating around? Yeah. And therefore, it is entirely possible that they are racist. And they will not intended for you and me. And they were intended, like IQ testing. Yes. To actually prove that white people were superior.

Lisa 13:14

That white people were superior.

Sharon 13:14

So you know, there is that, there is, you know, the fact that I'm now using it, even though it was not intended for me, it's a whole other story. Yes. But yeah, you know, there's a strong possibility. Yeah,

Lisa 13:25

but you know, everything, listen, almost everything. Everything is racist,

Sharon 13:29

Everything is racist.

Lisa 13:31

Everything is racist. That's it, you know, you know, where I was going, because it's been around for so long. It's been, you know, racism, and everything that falls out of it, you know, has been around for hundreds of years. White supremacy is the water, not the shark, exactly. As they say, and we are swimming in the water. I'm assuming it. So

Sharon 13:50

you know, all of these things were developed in an era when it was considered that the white man was supreme? Yes. You know, yes. And therefore everything helps to reinforce that right, you know, and, you know, there was there, you know, there were times when the data didn't support it. Well, you know, let's find other data. Yeah, right. Absolutely. Okay. So this, so yes, there is a strong possibility that there is a racist element. You know, but yeah, no, but that still does not mean that when I look at the results of that particular test, I don't see myself reflected,

Lisa 14:23

I feel seen I do. I do, you know, because and it definitely, you know, whether it has a racist foundation or not, again, it's hard to escape from that. Yes, right. But I have found I have found the test to be useful and instructive. And like I said before, at times entertaining, and, you know, if we were to remember some time discussing with someone, you know, talking about watching movies, and whatever, whatever. And, you know, almost every movie is problematic, if you think of it in terms of terms of you know, racism and white supremacy and

Sharon 14:58

gender roles,

Lisa 14:59

gender roles. It's like, okay, if I were to dissect every movie, I couldn't watch anything I could like, there's not a solitary show that I could watch. Yes. Right. Because then then you know, because then even like the black shows, then you get into the colorism. Yes. No. Yeah. Why? Why is the romantic heroine always, you know,

Sharon 15:18

some of them still support those white supremacist roles. Yes, yes.

Lisa 15:21

Yeah. Right. And also, you can't, you can't like, just remove everything from your life and

Sharon 15:26

you throw out everything that's racist, there will be nothing, there'll be nothing left. Right. It'll be nothing. I would be interested actually, to see one day, if some black scientists develop personality type, a personality test? Yes. That reflected, you know, current current norms. And and people like us, right. I don't know if that work is

Lisa 15:48

grounded in diversity. And ableism, right. Yes, yes, yes. Anti-ablesim

Sharon 15:55

Yes. You know, that's what, that's what I would like to see. You know, I don't know if any work like that is happening. But you know, if it were to be happening, I mean, I'd be down to take that test. Absolutely. You know, so I have a question for you sis. So have you ever experienced a time when a personality test was weaponized?

Lisa 16:16

Yes. Well, this is something that some some people, I've seen some some writings and articles about this where jobs will, which I'm sure is 100% illegal, right. But jobs will use personality tests as part of their hiring process, right on performance reviews, performance reviews, and so on and so forth. And, you know, I definitely have had times where, sort of an informal sense, my being an introvert has worked against me. And I know that it has therefore affected my, my performance review, it has therefore affected emotion prospects and prospects and so on. Yeah, I do remember a time specifically where one job we, I was not Myers Briggs that we did. It was something with a bunch of colors. I don't remember the name of it. Okay. But I do remember that one of the people that I was reporting to was an orange, let's say this person was an orange. I was a blue. Yeah, right. Again, how that worked out basically was orange was, you know, very, very extrovert, you know, loud, extroverted, was very aggressive. And blue was the opposite, right? And I remember but, you know, this person was also a bully and a narcissist. Right, more and more, so not even actually as much of the narcissist stuff, but definitely heavy on the bullies. And so, you know, I definitely was being bullied. And I say, bullied. I mean, like, literally yelled out in public in front of everyone. And it was just, it was just a bad situation. I remember once, it was so bad, that I went to my boss at the time, who was you know, no, you know, there was no love lost between the two of us, but I was like, Okay, let's see if this plea for help works. Of course, it didn't. So I said, you know,

Sharon 18:05

I might have my article why some Black people don't go to HR

Lisa 18:08

there's no point. Yeah, there's literally no point in going to HR HR is not here to help us. Right. Um, and so anyway, but I heart in hand, you know, I kind of went to my boss and because I'd been yelled at in public for the umpteenth time, right. And, but it was like, maybe a week or two after we had done this whole personality, exercise and whatever. And this person looked at me and said, Oh, this you know, this person is just excitable, and they're excitable because they're an orange. Yeah, I said, I said, Okay, I said, okay, so you're telling me that I'm basically saying that it's okay because this is just them being their authentic selves. Another, another phrase that I have a big problem with because

Sharon 18:52

wait because Why is it okay to be your authentic self as an extrovert, but not as an introvert?

Lisa 18:57

Yes, and why and why also, is your authentic self yelling at and bullying people? Okay? But it's not but but being quiet somehow is an issue, right? Because, because if you're if you're quiet, and you keep to yourself, somehow, it's a problem. And you're, you're not a team player. Yes, yada, yada, yada. I know you've heard you've heard it all before but but this person yelling and using expletives and so on. That was perfectly fine. Right? And, and then of course, it was used. The mere fact that I went, that I said, anything that I raised it, was also used against me. So yes, it can be weaponized. They can be weaponized. And often they're weaponized against whatever personality type is seen as being less desirable and less and less powerful. In many cases. That tends to be the introverts. Yes, indeed. You know, so it definitely definitely can be can be weaponized. I don't think they are in every case. No, you know, there are cases where it's I think it's great to do personalities. I don't necessarily recommend them on as part of the hiring process that seems like it is. Yeah. A violation to me. I don't know. I don't know if it's illegal,

Sharon 20:12

but it seems dodgy right?

Lisa 20:14

Seems seems a little dodgy to me. Right? But it can be instructive to find out okay. This coworker of mine needs more quiet needs more quiet or or, you know, here's the thing about introverts, a lot of introverts don't mind learning about extroverts. Extroverts, frequently are not really interested in learning about introverts because they don't have to, because the world caters to them.

Sharon 20:35

And then I can see where it is useful. In a work setting to know okay, my team has, you know, some introverts and extroverts. Let's play to their strengths, let's let the introverts come up with the proposals, and let's get the extroverts to sell, out to sell, yes, you know, do that, let's do that. I can see where that is useful. But you know, you need that, you know, there's a fine line between that and then and then saying, oh, you know, introverts are terrible people, right? Let's use this against them,

Lisa 21:01

let's use this against them or introverts are limited in some way. And therefore we're not going to, you know, we're not going to promote them, we're not going to provide them with career or career pathing and so on.

Sharon 21:05

And as you know, people, you know, our position is introverts are wonderful people with lots of skills. And they are an asset to any organization or business.

Lisa 21:23

Or friendship circle,

Sharon 21:24

or friendships circle!

Lisa 21:25

Very small friendships circle.

Sharon 21:28

Right, keep the friendship circle tight, keep it tight. Right. Okay. So, you know, while we love personality tests, we don't want to see them weaponized. We don't want to be used against people. Yeah. So you know, that's, that's basically it. That's basically it.

Lisa 21:43

personally, love personality tests. I'm always taking them I will always take them I will all because I know it's,

Sharon 21:52

Little fun quizzes. Because because I've you know, I don't know why, you know, it's, uh, you know, it's a little bit of fun.

Lisa 21:58

It's okay to just do something for fun.

Sharon 22:01

Exactly. And, you know, it never comes out any different. No. So, you know, I don't have a problem with it. But you know, Can we, can we? Would I like to see us move to a time where we have personality tests that reflect the great diversity of our world that are based on global majority perspectives? Absolutely. I would, I will be lining up to take those tests when they come out. Absolutely. 100% right. That's it for today. Thank you for listening to the Introvert Sisters podcast. Bye.

Lisa 22:42

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