



Personal and Professional Style, Introverts versus Extroverts

Perhaps you have given some thought to your style, either as a mentor or as a protégé. Introverts tend to gather strength, identify problems and find solutions by thinking things through on their own. Extroverts, on the other hand, prefer to be around people, to go back and forth with others about problems and solutions.

Personally, we can be successful as either introverts or extroverts. Professionally, however, we might have to move more to the middle of the introvert-extrovert continuum, with the “quiet” ones being noisy enough to be heard and the “loud” ones calming down enough to hear others and take others’ opinions into consideration.

An extroverted mentor might be too much for an introverted protégé and the opposite (introverted mentor; extroverted protégé) might also be too difficult for a successful professional relationship. Each person in the mentor-protégé dyad needs to think about their own style and how the relationship can move forward successfully given each other’s styles.

An introverted protégé might “need” a little pushiness from the extroverted mentor. An extroverted protégé might “need” a little calming down from the introverted mentor. Honest, open communication is necessary at all times.

Another style characteristic is how we make decisions. Research has shown that men generally make decisions quickly and make decisions for another person when that person is slow to decide something. Research has also shown that women generally prefer to talk things over, to think things over, and to estimate possible consequences before making a decision.

If you as the mentor tend to put things off, to procrastinate on decisions, that could be quite frustrating for your protégé. If you as the protégé then to make decisions too quickly, without considering the consequences, you could spoil your relationship with your mentor as she finds she has to “make things right” too often.

As with the introvert-extrovert styles, whichever end of the decision-procrastination continuum you are on, your mentor-protégé relationship will be much more successful if you come to the middle of the continuum.

Think before you act; meet your deadlines on time and with a job well-done.