

# Ep #1: Why Being an Introvert Is a Superpower



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Rachel Cannon**

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## Ep #1: Why Being an Introvert Is a Superpower

Welcome to *Loudmouth Introvert*, a podcast for helping creative introverted entrepreneurs thrive, despite living in a world that's designed for extroverts to succeed. If you're ready to make more money and build the creative business you've been dreaming of, you're in the right place. I'm your host Rachel Cannon.

Hey, introverts. I'm so excited that you're here. This is the first ever episode of my podcast and I am just thrilled to be doing this finally. It's something that I've thought about doing for years really and it's finally happening and I'm just so happy that you're here and that you chose to listen today.

Now, over the course of our time together, we will cover a lot of ground. And this podcast is really designed for me to help other introverted creative entrepreneurs find success in their businesses. But I feel like the first thing I need to do is introduce myself.

So, I'm Rachel, and it's really, really nice to have you here. If this were real life and you had told me your name, I would have immediately forgotten it, not because I'm a jerk, but because my short-term memory is really awful. You maybe know me from Instagram. You may have followed me for a while and seen my interior design business, or maybe you found me because I've been doing a keto diet and I've been recording myself cooking in my kitchen with my friends. Or maybe you even found me interviewing some of my friends on Instagram. But I feel like most of you are probably here through Instagram.

It's possible you may have heard me from some other podcasts where I've talked about my story and how I've built my business. What else? Well, I'm an accidental cat owner, so I have cats and it's not anything I ever saw myself doing as a young person. In fact, I hated cats. But I do have four cats now. I know it's a lot. I swear I'm not a crazy cat lady. Two of them are mine, two I sort of just inherited by default, and we can get into that later.

I feel like, really, the thing you need to know about me most though is that I'm an introvert. And I've met probably some of you when I've been, like, at High Point Market or other industry events. And it's always interesting to

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me whenever I meet people because they assume that I am an extrovert because I'm not shy, I'm not socially awkward, I'm not a shrinking violet. And really, that's interesting to me because these are all words that I've heard use as synonyms for introversion, and I'm here to set the record straight.

So, number one, introverts are not shy. We're not socially awkward. I mean, I had a whole Facebook debate the other day with someone who completely misunderstood the meaning of an article I shared about introverts in the workplace and how they can contribute and how our bosses or our employers need to understand that we may not be the type of person who can freeball ideas right off the top of our heads, but we can contribute in meaningful ways if we're given an opportunity to maybe digest information and brainstorm on our own and come back.

And this person immediately sort of lit into me about how I don't understand how introverts can be useful in the workplace because if you're socially awkward and blah, blah, blah... And I'm like, "Dude, we're not socially awkward. You're completely misunderstanding."

We're not saying people are crippled with fear because they can't lean into the table and contribute. It just means if you're basing work performance off of someone's ability to just, off the top of their head, give amazing information, you're not going to get that from introverts. You're still going to get amazing information, but you're not going to get it off the top of our heads. We need time to think.

So yeah, we need time to process information. We need time to achieve deep focus so we can do our best work. And really, that's the main thing that I want people to understand about us as a people, my people, introverts, introverts and creatives.

So for me, that really means quiet time to process my day or process information that's taken place during a meeting, maybe with a client. I need time to gather my thoughts. But that doesn't mean that I'm not also opinionated, funny, powerful, magnetic. I'm a lot of fun.

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And I think there's this misunderstanding or sort of a misconstrued idea that introverts are sort of weirdoes. We're not, I promise. I mean, maybe some of us are, but the ones I know and love are not.

So, we just spend a lot of time being introspective. So what does that mean, to be introspective? Well, if I'm going to be honest with you, I legit have an inner dialogue running 24 hours a day in my mind. And that can often mean that I'm getting drowned out by extroverted voices.

But if you ever want to know what's going on with an introvert or why they seem like they're in another place or that we're lost in thought, it's because we are. And it is all the time. It's constant. It is constant.

So, I've thought, from time to time, that our world is generally sort of, for better or for worse, set up for extroverts to succeed. And so what do I mean by that?

Well, for example, in my line of work, we see it most often with open floor plans. Literally, they are the bane of my design existence. I don't know when we as a society decided that walls were a bad thing. I mean, so many of my clients have open floor plans where there's a television and there's gaming and homework and cooking and all of these activities are happening in a single shared space. And they wonder why they're exhausted and they can't remember anything on their to-do lists and their house like a complete wreck.

Well, hello, it's because too many activities are taking place in one part of your home and it's all open and it's an echo chamber and there's nowhere to put things. So I am on the anti-open floor plan bandwagon. And if you've seen me on Instagram for any amount of time, you've probably heard me say this before, but I am here to establish that walls are a good thing.

Walls are great. Some of us, like yours truly, really need them. We really, really need them. We need to be able to go into a room, close the door, collect ourselves, gather our thoughts, and decompress.

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Another example might be something like group projects. I mean, I used to absolutely hate group projects when I was in school. Number one, because it seemed like the teacher would always assign the groups and I never got to be with my friends. But number two, it was because I was always the one that got stuck doing the work while the other kids, the extroverts, chatted it up and socialized.

I mean, I have, to this day, I can remember a group project I did when I was a junior in high school where we were literally at one girl's house after school working on the project and I have this mental picture of me sitting at their dining room table doing the project while she and the other two people in the group were in her living room, I want to say practicing cheer moves or something, I'm not really sure. But yeah, that's basically always how it was.

And then, for example, like the one I said earlier, brainstorming sessions – I mean, if you want to see me morph into a dark cloud, suggest a freestyling brainstorming session. I mean, nothing will absolutely immobilize me more than when I can't think. And I can't think when other people are talking. So I feel like I can't ever give my best ideas on the spot. I'm not. I know I'm not.

What about – this is a familiar one for all of us, I'm sure – participation points when you were in school. Why? Why? Teachers, why? Why aren't test grades good enough? As if that's not hard enough, kids have to also be sure to speak up and raise their hand in order to show that they grasp the concept.

Now, I don't know about you, but if I don't grasp a concept, trust me, I'll have a million questions. You will hear from me. Otherwise, I mean, keep it moving. I don't need to be graded on how many times I raise my hand in class. That is just – I hated it.

Now, I did have a small problem with talking in class, mainly because I had a good sense of humor and I was an easy audience for a lot of the kids around me, but that's a different story.

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Now, the one that comes to mind that's maybe a little more nuanced and probably not something that you've considered before, but what about reality competition shows? This literally combines all of my worst fears. So, thinking on the fly, having to perform on the spot, competing for others to win a prize, having limited resources, and then, on top of that, setting it all to a timer. So, any of those Design Star type shows, I mean, I honestly cannot think of an instance in real life where my best work was produced under those kinds of circumstances.

So it may not even be that clear of an example, but sometimes it's just that extroverts naturally draw people to them because they've always got something going on. I mean, they're completely fine with being out there and being the center of attention and their message just seems to reach more people because they are literally, and figuratively, louder than we are.

And I know I've heard from so many of you recently about how maybe marketing is sort of your worst fear or you're confused about how to use Instagram or social media because you just hate the idea of talking about yourself, and then there's Instagram stories and you feel like, oh my god, as much as I hate to talk about myself, I hate to be on camera even more.

And it seems like there are people just cruising right by, completely comfortable on camera talking about themselves all the time and you're thinking, oh my god, that's not me. Like, if that's what it's going to take to succeed, it's not going to happen.

So we can feel drowned out by our extroverted counterparts. We can feel drowned out by the world in general and it can absolutely feel like our message is reaching no one. And that's because we feel like we aren't making enough noise. And that is where we fall into a trap; the trap of trying to be an extrovert.

Now, let me tell you something; that is a plan that will never work. Mark it down. Write it down right now. You, as an introvert, cannot attempt to function as an extrovert in the world. You have to keep it real.

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People can absolutely sniff out when someone is faking it. They can. And on top of that, the fact that you are an introverted creative business owner, you are going to burn yourself out so quickly by trying to function as an extrovert, be everywhere at all times, answer everyone's questions, answer everyone's text messages, answer everyone's emails. I mean, you just can't do it all.

And so I'm here to tell you, I found the most success in my business and in my relationships when I finally decided that I was going to allow myself to be an introvert. And that meant showing that I'm imperfect. Because here's a great secret for all of us to just live by; imperfection is relatable and it's likable. No matter how hard we try, we will not succeed by trying to deny our nature and be someone else. It's just not going to work.

So, like I said, your audience will see through it eventually. They will. And second of all, especially our creative introverts, you're going to attract a clientele that doesn't naturally fit with the way you work. And I'm going to give you some examples in a second, but think about this; we, as introverts, don't come with a button we can press when we need to get excited about something.

So, for example, how many times has someone tried to give you a pep-talk and you didn't feel any more pumped up after it than you were before? I mean, it's almost embarrassing. Like, I've had that experience before where people are like, "You're the best, you're the greatest, oh my gosh. You're going to do so great."

And I feel like, "Yeah, but you don't know what's going on in my head. You don't know what I'm thinking about all the time." And so we need to understand that when we think we have this ability to, "Turn it on or turn it off," at will, we don't. We really, really don't.

We can't, "Extrovert," at will. So when I have something big coming up, it takes me days – days. I mean, honestly, sometimes it takes me weeks of planning and envisioning what it will be like and how I want it to go, and

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after it's over, it takes me some time to replay everything that's happened and process it before I can even go to sleep that night.

And I mean, I'm really talking about everything from client presentations to social events. For example, I'm going to a social event tonight and I have been imagining what this event will be like all week leading up to the event. And then, when I get home, I'll be so energized by it that I won't even be able to go to sleep until I can go through my mind, replay every event from the night, think about what I would have said differently, close that tab in my brain, and then eventually shut out that chapter of the book and go to bed. I mean really, that's the truth.

Now, I know this about myself. And because I know it about myself, I feel completely comfortable asking for what I need. So time to decompress before going to the next big thing is a big one. And knowing that I'm an introvert and allowing myself to be me, I've found that people are honestly totally cool with it and it's opened up so many opportunities that I would have limited if I hadn't just said, "This is me, take it or leave it."

People are completely fine with me saying, "Hey, I don't know, I've got to think about that. I'll get back to you." I mean, for so long, I operated on this idea that I needed to be able to give an answer the minute the question was asked. And honestly, in business, I don't like to feel like that because what if I say the wrong thing and then I have time to think about it and then I have to go back to my client and say, "Hey, that thing I told you, I don't think that's the thing you do. On second thought, I think you need to do this." You can't build a business on second thought.

So, there are some things I want you to keep in mind as you lean into your introverted nature. And please keep in mind too that all of these things will only benefit you as a creative and as an entrepreneur.

So, all of us in creative industries, anything from interior design, like my industry, landscape architecture, photography, anywhere where you are providing a service that is a creative industry, here's your permission slip to



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stop focusing on what everyone else is doing. And I know this is hard, believe me, I really do.

So what I mean is put your head down, put your blinders on. If you see someone else on social media, on Instagram stories every day, you don't have to be on Instagram stories every day. You don't. You really don't. If it makes you uncomfortable, in fact, I'd rather you not do it because there's literally nothing more cringe-worthy than watching someone who feels uncomfortable on camera try to be comfortable on camera, and you know what I'm talking about.

Instead, I would so much rather you deliberately and thoughtfully find ways to take your business and your brand to places that no one has thought to go. There is absolutely room for you in the larger scope of what you do and there are absolutely people who want you and nobody else because of the unique things you bring to the table, so be you. Part of what makes you unique is that you are an introvert. And I want you to be able to feel comfortable leaning into that.

So if you're like me and you have trouble determining what that might be, ask your friends, ask your clients, ask your colleagues, what are the things that make me unique?

I remember, I had to do this exercise with some business coaches and it was horrible. I mean, I remember, I sat with a blank piece of paper in front of me for hours because I was like, "I don't know. I don't know." And I really didn't.

But guess what – your friends know what makes you unique. Your favorite clients will be thrilled when you ask them, "Hey, what did you like about working with me? Is there something specific that you can tell me that maybe made me a little bit different from other people that you've worked with in the past?"

Your colleagues – I have a wonderful colleague here in Baton Rouge that she is a communicator on a level that I just have never experienced in my

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life. Like, I want to take lessons from her. So my feedback with her is always that she is a fantastic communicator.

There are things that make you special and one of a kind, and those are the things you take for granted. So there are people who don't have your same talents and qualities who think what you're doing is absolutely mind-blowing. So, be deliberate about how you make your business different from others and don't try to emulate anyone else because your business is yours and you don't want to run anyone else's business but your own.

Now, my second thought is – now I know this is going to be a tough one for a lot of us because of social media, but instead of pursuing perfection, pursue contentment. Now, I realize that that sounds crazy because, as a business owner, you're like, "I mean, I can't not do a good job." And I'm not saying don't do a good job; absolutely do your best.

But perfection is really something that is unattainable and it's something that we, as introverts, really, really struggle with. Now, I know that just by being virtue of an introvert, you have played scenarios over so many times in your head that you almost feel like anything other than what you've imagined the outcome to be is essentially a failure. But trust me, that's just not true. Not to mention, when we are observing what other people are doing, we can get distracted and start feeling like we're not doing enough, or worse, we take it out on our clients by blaming them for not giving us enough creative control.

So again, I'm big on examples. So let me tell you what I mean by this. I have felt this way sometimes when a design client doesn't go for, like, the most out-of-the-box design element that, in my opinion, is going to be the thing that takes that project to the next level because, in my mind, I've made this one thing the linchpin that holds the entire design together and I have staked everything on that one design element.

But I can tell you right now, as I sit here, I can't even think of or name a single one of those things, the linchpins, that I thought would be the crowning jewel on any one of my projects. I can't. Like, not a single one.

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And at the end of the day, if my client is happy with what I've done and they love their home and I'm overall proud of the work, what is the big deal? I could absolutely spend time obsessing over those rejected design elements and work myself into a creative hissy fit, but that only builds resentment for your client and ultimately tension for me. And as creatives, we can't give 100% under those conditions.

So contentment is entirely more valuable in the long run than perfection is. And it's something we're going to have to work really hard to overcome, I know, trust me, it really is, especially because social media – I mean, we just see these beautiful images on a daily basis. We are bombarded with them from every angle and we think, "Oh my god, if I go back and look at my feed, it's not that perfect and she must have a staff of people just taking her picture every single day and when does she find time to do all of this?"

Listen, contentment is more than that. It really, really is. So perfection is one thing and you can strive for it. But I would venture to say, even the people that we think have the most picture-perfect lives are really not as content as we think they are. I mean, really.

So, give yourself some grace. Understand that whatever you've worked up in your head as being the perfect outcome is probably not going to happen and be okay with being content with whatever the outcome is, as long as you've done a good job and as long as your clients are happy.

Now, this is another one that's really difficult for us to grasp, but success does not mean that we have won over the hearts and minds of every person on the planet, okay. So just think about that for a minute because, again, this really does relate back to social media and how we're just bombarded with this 24/7 information age that we live in.

We feel like, because what we see in front of us all the time is fans, followers, people getting thousands and thousands of likes on things that they post, and we feel like, okay we haven't won over that many people and so success is just not attainable for us. But here's the thing, y'all; as

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introverts, what we want more than anything is to form a deep connection when we interact with people.

But on social media, how many deep connections are we really making? I mean, I would imagine not many. And we've come to believe that this means that we must have hundreds of thousands of followers who are waiting to watch our every move and now we're faced with the dilemma of not liking to be out in front of people or talking about ourselves and needing to grow a following and build a wider audience because we want clients, right?

So instead of obsessing over your follower count, allow yourself to be an introvert on social media. I mean it. I know that this is radical, but what I mean is focus your effort on forming deep relationships with fewer people, rather than shallow relationships with a ton of people.

So I only have, at the time of this recording, I think 12,000 followers. That's not a giant followership. It's really not. I mean, I have friends who have hundreds of thousands of followers and then there are celebrities that have millions of followers.

But think about who you interact with on social media and who you feel like you actually have a relationship with. I would so much rather be talking to my people, introverted creative entrepreneurs, I mean, you're my people, and have what I say really resound with you, as opposed to just sounding like a clanging bell to anybody who comes across my feed.

So we will be successful when we can create deep relationships. So I'm not concerned about my follower count. If it grows, it grows. If it doesn't, it's fine. As long as I know that the people I'm talking to understand what I'm saying and it's meaningful to them.

So, focus on the people who understand you. And I mean this in social media, I mean it in life, I mean it in your business. You don't need to worry about making sure everyone gets what you're doing. And that includes your

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clients. I mean, if they don't get it, then they're probably not your client anyway.

So assume that your audience already gets it and is here for it. There are people who will benefit from what you have to offer, and that goes back to understanding what's unique about you and how you deliver your talents in a way that's different from others who basically appear to do the same thing that you do.

So think, for example, in my city, there are so many interior designers here. There are so many wedding photographers. There are so many portrait photographers. There are so many landscape architects. There are so many people doing the same thing. And in creative industries, we can't all be lumped into the same category. That's not how our clients are going to find us.

They're going to find us because the way we deliver our talent and our service, it solves a problem that they have. So your audience and your clients see the benefit in having you be their guide. Don't neglect the people that support you. I mean, really, I really mean this.

So sometimes, we as introverts, can forget to say thank you to the people who've been there for us. And again, we're not jerks, we're just truly focused on the next thing. And I also celebrate with celebrating milestones. I mean, my business's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary was this month and we really didn't do anything.

I mean, I think I made an announcement on Instagram, but really, that was it. And that's because I always feel like it's such a task to stop everything I'm doing and celebrate when there's work to be done.

So focusing on the people who have supported you all along will not only build strong relationships, but it makes them feel needed and important, and that's where you're going to find raving fans who will tell so many people about you, even if they have never actually worked with you because we all want to feel needed and important.

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So, is the world set up for extroverts to succeed? I still say yes. Now, it might be in small subtle ways that we don't even pick up on, but I do think they have the upper hand in a lot of ways. The examples I gave earlier from open floor plans, not even just at home but at work, to brainstorming sessions at work, to group projects at school, to participation points at school.

I mean, there are so many examples of where extroverts are given the upper hand because it's just how we're naturally inclined as a people, as a culture. It's just a culture of extrovert equals good, introvert equals bad.

But, we know that's not true. We do. As introverts, we know it's not bad to be an introvert. In fact, I love being an introvert. I love that I don't feel like I have to go 90 miles an hour every day of the week. I love that there are weekends that I get home on a Friday and I literally don't go outside until Monday morning. Y'all, it's happened, I'm not going to lie. It's happened. I've done it.

So I in no way mean, by saying that the world is set up for extroverts to succeed, that we, as introverts, can't be successful because of the circumstances that we're surrounded with on a daily basis. So I really feel like being an introvert is my superpower. I really do. And I think it's because I've gotten so much great feedback from clients over the years where they've told me, you know, we hired you because of your reputation, we've hired because you follow a linear process. These are all things that are tied to me being an introvert.

So I hope that while we spend some time together on the *Loudmouth Introvert* podcast, that eventually you will feel that way too because I truly think that it is a superpower.

If you love the show and you find it useful, I would really appreciate it if you would leave me a rating and a review on Apple Podcasts, or iTunes if you're an Android or Windows user. Your feedback helps other creative introverted entrepreneurs find the show and it helps me create an awesome show that provides tons of value.

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