HOW to Make Friends as an introvert

Discover Introvert-Friendly Ways TO MEET NEW PEOPLE, Improve Your Social Skills, and Make New Friends

Nate Nicholson
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By Nate Nicholson
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**Introduction**

Have you ever thought that your introversion is a huge obstacle, holding you back from enjoying your social life? Have you ever felt frustrated at yourself because you were unable to conform to the prevailing extrovert-friendly way of socializing?

Don’t despair. The book you’re about to read is going to provide you with the blueprint on how to make the most out of your social life as an introvert.

Is it a challenge for you to get to know new people? No worries. In this book you’ll learn twenty-one introvert-friendly ways to make friends – categorized in three groups for introverts of various social skills and varying levels of self-confidence.

When you discover all these ideas, you’ll no longer complain you have no idea where to meet new people as an introvert. Night clubs and parties aren’t the only places to socialize. In fact, there are so many introvert-friendly venues to make friends that you’ll be busy for a long while before you run out of ideas.

Do you find it difficult to make friends with strangers, unsure of what to say during your first conversation or how to take it from “hi” to a friendship? You no longer have to lose sleep over it.

I’ll describe a simple process on how to make friends with strangers. We’ll talk about starting the conversation and leading it to more interesting topics than weather. Even a simple encounter at a gas station can make you a new friend – soon you’ll find out how.

Does your introversion negatively affect your friendships? We’ll put an end to this together. I’ll share with you tips on how to be a good friend and how to handle common problems with more extroverted friends. We’ll also cover several behaviors that may affect your ability to develop strong friendships.

Social skills seem to be non-existent in you? Small talk kills you? We can fix that, too. It’s not as easy as 1, 2, 3, but I promise it’s not rocket science, either. We’ll go through the most important social skills every introvert should possess to enjoy a gratifying social life. You’ll also learn how to develop them in yourself.

Introversion comes with an interesting mix of strengths and weaknesses. If you learn how to maximize the benefits coming from your strengths and diminish the effects of your limitations, you too can enjoy a satisfying social life. You don’t have to sacrifice your values to make it happen. Introversion will be the rocket that will take you where you want to go, without forcing changes on your personality.
Chapter 1: How to Tell If You’re an Introvert

There are three types of personality. Everybody knows two of them: introversion and extroversion. There’s one more type of personality – ambiversion. It falls directly in the middle between introversion and extroversion.

Nobody is either a 100% extrovert or a 100% introvert. We all exhibit both introverted and extroverted behaviors. Look at the following diagram:

![Diagram showing the spectrum between extroversion and introversion with ambiversion in the middle]

Few, if any people, are exactly at either end. Most of us fall somewhere between one of the three arrows between ambiversion and extroversion or introversion.

To make the most out of this book, you should ask yourself where you fall on this diagram. Are you closer to the true introvert or closer to an ambivert? Different tips will apply to those who are okay with occasional interactions with crowds and the people who abhor any kind of participation in crowded events.

The easiest way to find out your personality type is to complete a questionnaire that will help you find your Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. There are 16 types, which are referred to by an abbreviation of four letters:

- **ESTJ**: extroversion (E), sensing (S), thinking (T), judgment (J)
- **INFP**: introversion (I), intuition (N), feeling (F), perception (P)

As you can see, this test doesn’t include ambiversion as one of the personality types. Don’t worry, though – it will still help you determine whether you’re closer to introversion or extroversion.

Here are all the possible pairings:
There are various websites where you can take the test for free. Here’s one of them I like the most: [http://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test](http://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test). Once you complete the test, it will give you detailed information about your type. Prepare for an interesting lecture.

If for any reason you can’t access this site, just search for “Myers Briggs test” in Google and you’ll find a couple good alternatives. The questions may be different on each site, but they will help you determine your type, anyway.

Now, I would be the last person to say you can sum up your entire personality by taking a simple test. However, it still gives you useful information to help you understand how your personality affects your behavior.

If you’re interested in my personality type, it’s INTJ, which supposedly forms just 0.8% of the population.

If you don’t like taking tests, here are a couple common traits of introverts:

1. You can be described as reserved, quiet or private. You are overwhelmed by too much stimulation.
2. You prefer a slower pace and time for contemplation. Spontaneity isn’t your friend.
3. You tend to think things through. There’s a never-ending inner monologue in your head.
4. You would rather observe than be the center of attention. Most introverts tend to look at things from a safe distance.
5. You prefer solitude to social activities (but you don’t necessarily fear social encounters).

If you agree with the above statements, you’re most likely introverted.
Ambiverts Can Learn from this Book, too

If you’re an ambivert, you’re moderately comfortable with groups and social interaction, but you also need some alone time.

The prime difference between you and introverts is that you cope better with crowds. In fact, you may enjoy large groups of people quite more often than introverts. What separates you from extroverts, though, is the fact that you can’t take social interaction all the time. Just like introverts, sometimes you relish time alone, away from a crowd.

If you’re more of an ambivert than an introvert, you can still benefit from this book. A huge part of this book is dedicated to everyone who struggles with socializing – whether you’re a stereotypical introvert or fall in the middle.

The key for you is balance – unlike introverts, you can’t go all the way in and only focus on introvert-friendly ways to make friends and socialize. Mix it with more extroverted activities to achieve the right combination of human interaction and getting away from the crowds.
Chapter 2: Strengths of Introverts

Each introvert has different strengths and weaknesses depending on her personality type. However, there are certain attributes shared between all introverted types. In the following chapter, we’ll explore five such qualities. In addition to describing these traits, you’ll also learn how to use them in social interactions to make your social life more satisfying.

Strength #1: Your Listening Skills

As an introvert, you have more developed listening skills than an average extrovert. Extroverts thrive as the center of attention, while you relish your role as an observer. Your ability to let the other person speak without interrupting her is a rare skill among extroverts.

Your ability to listen will encourage other people to open up and feel comfortable talking with you without feeling rushed. This ability is most prized when speaking with fellow introverts, but extroverts will enjoy it, too.

Active listening starts with acknowledging what the other person is saying and reiterating it. It builds connections while making the person you’re speaking with feel understood.

Here’s a simple example:

Friend: So yesterday I was talking with this new client and he told me the deal is off. Three weeks of negotiation, a letter of intent, and now they’re pulling out. Can you believe that?
You: I bet you felt disappointed.
Friend: Yes, exactly. And when he said the deal is off because they chose a cheaper competitor with lower-quality products, I was so pissed.
You: It makes you feel like quality is no longer appreciated, doesn’t it?
Friend: You bet.

You don’t even have to do much talking, and people will still love speaking with you. Look for the underlying feelings and reiterate them during the conversation. Try it the next time you’re chatting with someone.

Oh, and please don’t think the conversation from the example above is your typical small talk you hate so much. It may appear shallow, but the reason your friend is talking about it with you may be much deeper.

Maybe she’s frustrated by her work and is looking for support or perhaps she feels her efforts aren’t rewarded. Whatever the reason is, there’s usually something much deeper in such simple conversations. Finding the “why” can deepen your conversations and make them more satisfying.

Since introverts usually have a much better eye for details than extroverts (because they prefer observation instead of being in the middle of something), it should be easy for you to find out what emotions your friend felt when mentioning a specific situation. React to them and make your friend feel heard and understood.

If you want to learn more about how to do it, read Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life by Marshall B. Rosenberg. It depicts a simple introvert-friendly process to connect with people on a deeper level.
By putting focus on your listening skills, you’ll become a go-to person when your friends are looking for someone to lend an ear. As a result, you’ll develop stronger relationships with them.

**Strength #2: Focus on Quality**

Introverts prefer to develop deep relationships with fewer people. If you’re surrounded by extroverts who seem to have an endless number of friends, you may think it should be your modus operandi, too. Don’t fall into this trap.

Social media makes it easy to boast about the number of your friends. The ironic thing is that people who have the largest number of friends online often have no authentic friends in real life. It’s difficult to maintain close friendships if you’re constantly creating new weak links.

Maximize your preference of quality over quantity by investing in your relationships more than extroverts do. It all starts with the desire to learn more about your friend than most people do. Don’t just scratch the surface. Drill deep into the personality of your friend.

One of the key techniques to do so is to ask deep questions. Here are some questions that will help you strengthen your relationship:

**1. What would your day look like if you had a billion dollars and didn’t have to worry about money?**
You’ll learn what things your friend enjoys and values the most in her life. Don’t just settle for a shallow, funny reply such as, “I would sleep all day long and eat at the finest restaurants.” Dig deeper and learn about the biggest dreams of your friend.

**2. What scares you the most and why?**
It makes you feel vulnerable to share your deepest fears. Consequently, it builds trust. It will also help you understand what things your friend wants to avoid and why.

**3. What’s the number one thing you think is true that very few people agree with?**
Asking this question will help you learn how your friend sees the world in a different way than most people. It can also be a powerful link between you two if you both think the same while almost everyone around you thinks the contrary.

**4. What makes you smile?**
Learn what makes your friend happy and do it often for mutual enjoyment. There’s nothing that makes people happier than making other people happy.

**5. If you had a year left to live, what would you achieve over the next 12 months?**
Reminding people of death makes them think about the most important things they want to achieve before they die. Be the person to inspire your friend to do them before it’s too late.

**6. What do you consider sensitive topics that should not be joked about?**
Sensitive topics are usually things we strongly believe in or value over anything else. It helps to know what your friend doesn’t like to joke about, so you can avoid unnecessary conflicts.

**7. What do you value most in a friendship?**
We all expect different things from a friendship. Find out about the most important thing your friend looks for in a friendship and be the friend she’s looking for.
Each of these questions is open-ended and can lead to hours and hours of interesting, deep conversations that will strengthen your friendship.

Another way to benefit from your preference to have fewer friends is to be thoughtful. It can be as simple as remembering important dates (birthdays, anniversaries) or noting down important incoming dates (your friend’s job interview, trip, or key presentation at work). Not many people pay attention to such details, yet we’re all appreciative when someone does.

Last but not least, when you have fewer friends, you’re more available to each of them. Extroverts tend to have more things going on in their calendars, which makes them less accessible in case one of their friends needs their help.

As an introvert, you probably hate filling your calendar with activities. It leaves you with more alone time. Don’t make the mistake of choosing it over helping your friend, though. If she needs your help, be there for her. When your friend knows she can always rely on you, your friendship will have strong fundamentals.

Strength #3: Old Soul

Introverts are often described as old souls. Old souls have a much more mature outlook on life than the majority of people around them. They spend a lot of time alone, which makes them gravitate toward the intellectual side of life. They’re inclined to focus on spirituality and introspection.

You can turn this trait into a powerful strength in your social life. Your ability to see the bigger picture makes you a person people seek for advice. Your ability to reflect and learn from your actions and the actions of other people make you skilled at helping other people solve problems.

Don’t be afraid of sharing your wisdom and truths with other people. What is obvious to you may be the missing piece in the thought process of your friend who’s struggling with a problem in her life.

Be aware that your thoughtfulness and detachment don’t fit in well at parties or during any other social events where people gather to let off steam. Focus on one-on-one interactions and venues where your inquisitiveness is sought for, such as when learning new skills and socializing with people who share your passions.

Strength #4: Honesty

Studies show that the more reflective people are, the more honest they become. Since introverts are more reflective than extroverts, they are more likely to be honest.

Honesty is a fundamental part of every strong relationship. Use it to your advantage by being open with what you feel and giving a truthful opinion when asked. Your no-BS approach can help you escape uncomfortable social situations and make friends with straight shooters.

Follow a simple policy in life – never lie. When you develop a reputation for always telling the truth, you will enjoy strong relationships based on trust. It will also be more difficult to manipulate you. People who lie get into problems when someone threatens to
uncover their lie. By living true to yourself, you’ll avoid a lot of headaches. Your relationships will also be free from the poison of lies and secrets.

Don’t be afraid to be honest with your friends, no matter how painful the truth is. In the long term, white lies hurt people much more than telling the truth.

**Strength #5: Vast Knowledge**

Introverts spend a lot of time in solitude, either by reading books or consuming information in a different form. Consequently, they usually have vast knowledge about various topics – both related to the everyday life and to deeper issues of a spiritual nature.

Your comprehension of so many different topics can help you carry a conversation about all walks of life. Use it when getting to know new people and spending time with your friends.

Speak your opinion each time a topic you’re knowledgeable about comes up in a conversation. By steering the conversation toward things you know a lot about, you should never run out of interesting conversational topics.
Chapter 3: Weaknesses of Introverts

Most introverts suffer (unnecessarily) from the negative effect of their weaknesses on their social lives. The trick to handle your limitations is to be aware of them and respect your boundaries. In the following chapter, we’ll discuss the five most common weaknesses of introverts. You’ll learn what can negatively affect your social life and how to prevent it.

Weakness #1: You Don’t Handle Crowds Well

As an introvert, your best bet is to stay away from large groups of people. You excel in intimate settings, with one or just a couple people you know well. Bigger groups will cause you to retreat into your protective shell.

If you’re forced to spend time with a large group of people, focus on just a few people from the group instead of trying to follow the entire group. By talking with just one or two people at a time, you can build a “tribe” around you instead of trying to fit in to a large group.

If at any time you feel your energy has been completely drained, tell your friends you have to go. You’re done for the night. It’s better to do it sooner than later when your friends will start asking you the dreaded, “Why are you so quiet?” question.

Some introverts may feel tempted to try to fit in and hang out with their more extroverted friends in crowded, noisy places. While it won’t hurt you to do it from time to time, I believe it’s important to set boundaries and make a list of venues that always exhaust you.

To give you an example, I never visit night clubs. It’s just not my thing, and none of my friends ever ask me to go there. It’s a simple boundary I set to avoid what makes me uncomfortable and doesn’t contribute to my life enjoyment.

Weakness #2: You Need a Lot of Alone Time

Introverts recharge their batteries in solitude. They need quietness and little to no stimulation. It helps them focus on their inner life, which is the primary source of their energy. On the other hand, extroverts recharge their batteries when they’re around other people. They need stimulation, crowds, noise, energy. It makes them feel alive.

Research shows that introverts process rewards from the environment in a different way than extroverts. Richard A. Depue and Yu Fu conducted a study in which they gave 70 people (a mix of introverts and extroverts) Ritalin, a drug used to treat ADHD (attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder), which stimulates the release of dopamine.

Dopamine, which has been dubbed the “feel-good hormone,” plays a role in reward and motivation. The goal of the study was to find out whether extroverts process rewards in a different way than introverts.

The volunteers who took Ritalin were then asked to watch videos in a laboratory environment. Afterward, the scientists tested the participants to find out how strongly they associated the videos and the environment with the dopamine rush induced by Ritalin.

Without going too deep into the details of the study, the scientists found out that extroverts strongly associated the environment with reward while introverts showed little to
no association. In other words, extroverts need the external motivation in order to feel rewarded and motivated while introverts need the internal motivation.

This explains why extroverts seek noise, big parties and a lot of stimulation while introverts prefer reading a book at home with a cup of tea (I feel good just thinking about this image, while the extroverted idea of fun makes me jittery). As an introvert, you should stay away from crowded and noisy places – concerts, shows, large sports events, etc. All these places brim with social energy that may be too much to bear for you.

If you go to such a place and feel drained and tired of the noise afterwards, use the help of one of your best allies – nature – to recharge. Research has proven that nature improves memory and attention. It has similar effects on your mind and body as meditation.

A regular “forest bath” will help you maintain the right balance of alone time that is so important for you. If you feel extremely drained of stimulation (which happens more often to introverts living in big cities), consider a weekend hiking trip to a remote place where you won’t meet any people. Escaping from the hustle and bustle of the city can bring your energy to the levels you’ve never experienced before.

Another way to deal with this weakness is to meditate. Regular meditation will help you calm yourself down and turn inward. The inner quietness is exactly what you need after spending too much time in a noisy and highly stimulating environment.

**11 More Ways to Recharge Yourself**

Here are more ideas on how to re-energize yourself in solitude.

1. Read a book. It’s an all-time classic for introverts.
2. Write in a journal. Journaling is like socializing with yourself, but virtually any form of writing is a perfect activity for introverts.
3. Watch a movie in your own room. Noisy cinemas full of people will over-stimulate you if you need alone time.
4. Play with your pet.
5. Cook something new.
6. Create something, be it art (drawing, painting, music, stories, poems, taking photos, etc.) or something used in everyday life (carpentry, crocheting, knitting, candle or soap making, etc.).
7. Gardening. If you’re lucky to have your own garden, it’s a perfect place to recharge your batteries.
8. Yoga, the gym, bike rides, jogging, climbing, and any other sport you can practice on your own without other people.
9. Driving solo for long periods of time while listening to your favorite music. Enjoy the journey. The destination doesn’t matter. It’s one of my most favorite ways to recharge, giving me the same kind of inner solitude as meditation.
10. Clean your house. There’s something deeply satisfying when you’re done cleaning and everything is in perfect order.
11. Learn something new – either by reading books, watching videos or listening to podcasts.
Weakness #3: Overthinking

Introverts are known for overthinking and the never-ending inner monologue. Obsessing over coming up with a witty opening line (while a simple “hey” works just fine) doesn’t help you when socializing. Neither does rehearsing things you want to say. It makes you behave in an unnatural, creepy way. Trying to avoid the awkwardness makes you act in a more awkward way than doing things in the spur of the moment.

For years, I suffered from terrible shyness. One of the things that led to it was my need to have everything planned and rehearsed. I couldn’t approach a beautiful girl I saw on the street without asking myself tons of anxiety-inducing questions. What do I say when I approach her? What do I say when she replies to me? What should I say next? None of these questions led me to actually taking the action. Instead of thinking how to make everything perfect, I should have acted and accepted the way everything would turn out.

I decided to let go of these thoughts and start speaking off the cuff. Whenever I saw a beautiful girl, I just approached her and told her the first thing that came to my mind. It worked just fine, and it put an end to my overthinking. I started using it when speaking with other people, too. It made me act in a more relaxed and spontaneous way.

Try this approach the next time you find yourself looking for the perfect way to chat up someone.

Weakness #4: It’s Hard for You to Open up with Strangers

Introverts don’t connect with other people as well as extroverts do when making small talk. If you want to get to know someone on a deeper level, a conversation about the weather or mutual friends won’t cut it.

This weakness may cause introverts to appear reserved around strangers. The solution to this problem is to lead the conversation to the topics you’d like to talk about. If you settle for another boring chat about what someone did drunk or what happened in the most recent episode of a TV show, you’ll struggle to open up.

Take the initiative and ask the right questions to find similarities. During the conversation, it’s your job to find a common ground that will help you open up and let the other person get to know you better.

Weakness #5: The Inability to Say “No”

Many introverts suffer from a lack of assertiveness and say yes when they really want to say no. Later on, they usually regret it.

Let’s say you’re out with a small group of friends. One of your friends suggests going to a local bowling place, which is usually full of people. You don’t really want to go. You hate the noise and crowds and would rather prefer socializing in a quiet place. But then your friend says, “Oh, don’t be such a downer. It will be fun.”

And since you don’t want to argue with her, you go and feel miserable, promising yourself that you will never, ever say yes again when you want to say no. But you know well you will do it again because you don’t want to lose your friends.
The solution? Set boundaries. If there’s something you hate, don’t let any argument sway you to make a decision you will later regret. If your friends are the right fit for you, they’ll understand not to force you to do things you don’t enjoy.

Saying no is hard if you’ve been saying yes your whole life. There are three simple things you can do to learn how to become more assertive.

1. Take Your Time

Research conducted by Elaine N. Aron and Arthur Aron from the State University of New York at Stony Brook shows that many introverts are highly sensitive people (you can test yourself here to see if you’re a highly sensitive person: http://www.hsperson.com/test/highly-sensitive-test/). They process information in a deeper and more reflective way, and thus they do it more slowly.

Every time someone asks you to do something, don’t reply right away. Say, “Let me think about it,” and give yourself a second to ponder it. Then you’ll avoid saying your default “yes” response right away.

2. Never Agree to Anything on the Phone

The awkward silence on the phone is extremely uncomfortable. It puts a lot of pressure on you to reply quickly. Instead of making your decision over the phone, say, “Let me think about it. I’ll call/text you back.” Then ask yourself if you want to do it. Bonus tip: it’s easier to text “no” than say “no.”

3. Have a “No” Day

For one day, change your default response from “yes” to “no.” During this one day, you politely say no to everything. Consider it a “yes” day to yourself. Say no to have time only for yourself and only for the things you want to do.

You will probably be surprised how often you say yes when you want to say no. It will help you be more aware once your “no” day is over.

Don’t Make “No” Your Default Response, Either

Many introverts have a tendency to say yes when they want to say no. Others say no to virtually everything. The right approach lay between these two extremes.

If you feel a slight spark of interest or feel ambivalent about something, say yes and see what happens. If you feel like a big “no” (especially when you have already tried something in the past and you know you hate it), you should obviously say no.

However, you shouldn’t always shoot down spontaneous ideas that make you anxious. When you stick to things you already know and enjoy, you will never try new things that may turn out to be much more fun than you expect them to be.

I have a habit of trying new things from time to time, even if sometimes I don’t think I’ll enjoy them. If there’s an interesting event in my city, I may go there even though it will be noisy and crowded. What’s the worst that can happen? If I don’t enjoy it, I can always go home. And if I do enjoy it, I’ll be happy I wasn’t close-minded.
The proper approach when saying yes or no to invitations is to always give them serious consideration. By taking your friends’ suggestions into consideration, you show them you respect their ideas. Consequently, you will be able to say no while not hurting your friends.
Chapter 4: How to Meet New People

Socializing usually takes place in extrovert-friendly, noisy and crowded places, such as at parties. Consequently, a lot of introverts who avoid such venues don’t know how to meet new people. If you suffer from the same problem, let’s solve it once and for all.

The following chapter is divided into three subchapters.

The first subchapter talks about ways to meet new people that are suitable for all introverts. They don’t require any special self-confidence and are suitable for shy people, too.

The second subchapter covers ideas for introverts who are eager to try new things. Some of these tips may feel a bit awkward at first, but they will help you develop your social skills.

The third subchapter suggests ideas for introverts who already have good social skills and aren’t afraid to step outside their comfort zones. Most of the ideas listed under this subchapter require a good deal of self-confidence.

All ideas listed below are introvert-friendly. There’s no suggestion to attend a party, go to a nightclub or a pub, or do any other thing extroverts usually do to make new friends.

10 Ways to Meet New People that Require Little Self-Confidence

If you’re looking for some of the easiest ways to meet new people, this subchapter is for you. Most of the ideas listed below will lead to developing new relationships naturally, without even putting much effort into socializing.

Way #1: Make Friends with People Who Share Your Interests

Taking group classes is one of the easiest ways to meet new people who share your interests. No matter what you want to learn – whether it’s martial arts (karate, judo, jiujitsu, krav maga, etc.), dance, language, painting, or cooking – you can always find a teacher and a group of people learning it.

As an introvert, you may not enjoy spending time with large groups of people. For this reason, always ask how large the groups are. Another reason why it makes sense to choose small groups over large ones is that the teacher will have more time to spend with you, thus making the teaching process more effective.

If you want to make friends of a different gender (or in some cases even meet a lover), consider dance classes. Learning dance styles where you dance with a partner (e.g. tango) will help you become more comfortable with touching strangers. It also makes it much easier to befriend other people.

Don’t write martial arts classes off if you’re a woman. Fewer women take up martial arts classes. If you’re one of three or four women in a group of males, it’s much easier to befriend other females.

Language classes are perfect for both genders. Take up classes that focus on speaking. This way, you won’t spend hours doing boring grammar exercises, but spend it speaking with other students. Socializing will happen naturally.
Way #2: Become Healthier and Interact with Other Health-Oriented People

Would you like to become stronger, fitter, or just improve your health and meet new people at the same time? Become a regular gym-goer.

Here’s a dirty little secret of most gyms – less than 30% of people who buy gym passes actually work out regularly. Various people come and go, but there’s always a core group of the same, dedicated people working out in the same gym for years.

If you become one of the regular visitors, fellow regulars will start recognizing you and chatting with you.

If you’re afraid there will be too many people at the gym, avoid the busiest hours (usually late afternoons and evenings). If possible, go during slow hours. Ask at the reception when most people train and avoid these hours.

An easy way to get to know people at the gym is to say hi each time you meet them. Ask them how they’re doing and start your workout. During your workout, you can ask them to spot you or have a short chat after your workouts.

Be friendly with everyone – receptionists, fitness coaches, other trainees, etc. When people start greeting you by your first name, you’ll make friends with almost no effort.

Way #3: Learn New Skills Online and Make New Friends

If you want to learn new skills, online membership sites and forums are great places to hang out. They make it easy to interact with people who share your interests.

I met many of my friends online, either on forums or by reaching out to them by email. Some of them became my business partners, while other became my mentors or mentees.

If you want to make friends online, be sure to participate in the group and give more than you take. Post useful threads, help other members, and don’t be afraid to send messages to members with whom you interacted a couple times and want to get to know better.

You can start off by exchanging your email addresses or Skype usernames and take it from there later once you’re comfortable with each other. As with every way of making friends online, be cautious with sharing personal information.

Way #4: Find a Mentor and Make a Friend

Thanks to the Internet, it’s surprisingly easy to connect with well-known people in different industries. A quick email, tweet or comment on a blog can go a long way.

Just to give you an example, let’s say you love writing. Why don’t you email an indie writer whose books you enjoy and tell her how much you like her work? All authors love receiving fan mail.

If you’re a budding entrepreneur, why not email entrepreneurs whose books helped you grow your business? They will love to hear that their advice helped you.

If you love fitness, why not reach out to your favorite fitness bloggers and tell them about your results when following their advice? They might even feature you in one of their blog posts.
Once you send them one email, why not keep in touch and send them occasional emails with links to articles or books that may interest them? They may not become your friends instantly, but with time they’ll grow to love your emails (make damn sure your emails are awesome) and would like to get to know you better.

Once they get to know you quite well because you exchanged so many emails with them, why not add them on Skype or Facebook? If you live close to each other, you can also ask them to have coffee with you. If you already established trust and showed them you aren’t an Internet creep, they should have no qualms saying yes.

A simple thank you email to a renowned expert can not only lead to friendship, but possibly also mentorship – a life-changing kind of relationship.

**Way #5: People You Have Known All Your Life**

We often don’t appreciate people who are closest to us – our own family. When was the last time you had a long conversation with your mom? When was the last time you went on a bike ride with your dad? Have you ever gone on a trip with your sibling?

What about your extended family? Do you know all your cousins? When was the last time you met with your niece or nephew?

Your family members can become your best friends if you decide to open up and spend more time with them.

You can also ask your family if they know someone who shares your interests or is similar to you in any other way. Perhaps a daughter of your dad’s colleague is looking for people to join her softball team or to play ultimate Frisbee.

**Way #6: Help and Make Friends**

If you have free time, research opportunities for volunteering. You can help the homeless, tend to the animals in your local animal shelter, read aloud to kids, and so on. Type “[your city] volunteer” into Google and you’ll find numerous ways to help.

Make sure to pick an activity that sounds comfortable to you. As an introvert, you probably wouldn’t like to become a volunteer at a huge event. Choose opportunities that focus on helping individuals.

No matter what way of helping other people you choose, volunteering will make it easy to connect with others. Helping other people will also make you feel good, which will help you further in connecting with people (positive people draw other people to them).

**Way #7: Reactivate Your Old Friendships**

Did you have a great friend in high school? Why not reach out to her today and see if you can reactivate your friendship?

It’s possible you both have changed too much to be on the same page. Then again, it’s also possible you’ll greatly enjoy each other’s company and decide to renew your friendship. You’ll never find out unless you try.
Facebook makes it easy to find your high school buddies. Make a list of all your friends you haven’t spoken to for a long time and reach out to all of them. Perhaps you’ll reactivate some of your old friendships.

**Way #8: Join a Book Club**

If you’re looking for friends who are also introverts, consider joining a book club. Some book clubs advertise on Meetup.com, others can be found on Google or you can ask about them at your local library (yes, they still exist).

Book clubs are perfect groups for introverts. They’re usually pretty small and tight-knit communities of people who love reading and talking about good literature.

An additional benefit of joining a book club is that it will help you discover books you wouldn’t otherwise have read.

**Way #9: Make Friends at a Place of Worship**

If you’re a person of faith, consider getting involved in the activities of your place of worship.

Most places of worship have groups dedicated to various aspects of the faith (life purpose, Bible studies) or for various members of the community (e.g. young people, couples, groups for men, groups for women).

You can also consider volunteering for your place of worship – taking part in fundraising, helping with services and events, etc.

**Way #10: Your Friends Can Help You Make New Friends**

If one of your friends is going to hang out with her friends, why not ask her if you can join them? I met many new people because my friends introduced me to their friends.

Sometimes friends of your friends can become your great friends, too. All it takes is just to say yes when your friend invites you to hang out with her group or friends (or ask her to hang out with them).

Keep in mind that the more people you know, the easier it is to make new friends without having to actively look for them. Your friends will do all the hard work for you. Sounds good, doesn’t it?

### 7 Ways to Meet New People that Require Some Self-Confidence

If you’re eager to step outside your comfort zone, the ideas listed in this subchapter are for you. If you’re on the shier side, the seven ideas listed in this subchapter may make you too uncomfortable.

**Way #1: Use One of the Best Sites to Meet New People**

The site is… Meetup.com. Go to the Meetup.com site, set your location and look for groups in your area.

If you live in a larger city, there will be over 10-20 groups dedicated to such various things as nature walks, financial freedom, tai-chi, golf, sketching, poker, meditation, wine, small dogs, travel, and much more.
Since Meetup’s goal is to help people socialize in the real world, most of these groups organize weekly (or even more frequent) meetings. Join groups that interest you, go to a meeting, introduce yourself and start making friends.

Don’t limit yourself to your main interests only, though. Get out of your comfort zone. Attend vegan meetings even if you eat meat. Talk with people interested in entrepreneurship even if you work nine to five. Go on a nature walk even if you have never enjoyed hiking.

All of these meetings will help you discover new things and meet people you would have never otherwise met in your everyday life.

One of the major benefits of Meetup.com is that it focuses on groups instead of individuals. There’s a very low risk of meeting a creepy person on Meetup because you attend meetings with many people, and not just one person.

Before you go, find out how many people are going to attend a meeting. You probably won’t feel comfortable with a group of fifty people, so make sure it’s a small event.

**Way #2: Become a Leader and Make New Successful Friends**

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit organization with clubs all over the world whose purpose is to help its members develop their communication, public speaking and leadership skills.

People who are members of Toastmasters’ groups are usually success-oriented. Many of them are entrepreneurs, professionals and people with academic backgrounds.

There are over 300,000 Toastmasters members in the world in over 125 countries. No matter where you live, there’s probably a Toastmasters group nearby, as there are over 14,500 groups worldwide.

Before you become a member, you can usually attend a few meetings for free and see if you like them. Many of the members are former shy people who recognize the importance of being supportive toward newcomers. They will probably approach you by themselves to get to know you.

Even if your local Toastmasters group is large, the fact that these groups are so welcoming will make it much easier to feel comfortable.

**Way #3: Make Friends through Your Professional Network**

It’s easy to meet new people in a work environment. You spend eight hours together every single day, so why not take the time to get to know your colleagues better?

Start chatting with your colleagues during breaks. Find out what they like to do after work. See if you can have fun together.

Don’t limit yourself to your closest colleagues. Get to know people from other departments, speak with the secretary and janitors. Even if you don’t make friends with them, at least they will greet you by your first name.

You can also consider getting a side job to make a bit more money and meet new people at the same time. Just make sure it’s a job that requires some kind of interaction with other
people. You won’t benefit socially from doing data entry in a cubicle in the corner of the room.

Another way to meet friends through your professional network is to join a business association or check out your local chamber of commerce. These places make it easy to connect with a network of professionals in your industry. The best part? You will have numerous topics to talk about. They have similar responsibilities to yours and share your challenges at work.

**Way #4: Make Friends and Learn a New Language**

If you’re learning a new language, you can make friends with people who speak your target language in exchange for teaching them English.

There are numerous sites that facilitate looking either for a pen pal or a person to chat on Skype. Some of these sites are: Livemocha.com, SharedTalk.com and Italki.com. I made a friend in Mexico using one of these sites.

You don’t necessarily have to speak with these people online. You can also post ads online saying that you’re looking for a native speaker of X language living in your area, and that in exchange you’ll teach English.

If you’re a native English speaker, making Spanish-speaking friends this way is a breeze. There are millions of Spanish speakers who are learning English. They would love to help native English speakers speak their mother tongue in exchange for the opportunity to practice their English skills.

**Way #5: How to Make New Friends as a Freelancer or Entrepreneur**

If you’re working at home, either as a freelancer or an entrepreneur, consider working at a coworking space. These venues are popular among local freelancers and entrepreneurs – people just like you.

Getting to know fellow professionals is easy in coworking spaces. You can introduce yourself on a coffee break, attend meetings (coworking spaces usually organize weekly or monthly meetings for its members), or offer your help with easy tasks you’re knowledgeable about (e.g. give coding advice or recommend some tools).

Keep contributing to this small community, and people will start recognizing you. Friendships will happen naturally.

**Way #6: How Getting a Dog Can Help You Make New Friends**

A dog is a man’s best friend. Cliché, but true. If you want to have a lifelong friend, get a dog. But hey, wait a minute. The purpose of this book is to teach you how to make friends with people, not dogs, right? Of course I haven’t forgotten that.

There’s a huge benefit of getting a dog that can help you make new friends – it provides a great excuse to speak with other people.

You can visit dog parks and talk with other dog owners. If your dogs play together, why don’t you have a chat?
If you have a small puppy, people who love dogs will probably approach you on their own. If they frequently visit the place where you walk your dog (say, a local park), they’ll recognize you the next time you meet them. If you already spoke with them a few times, why not exchange contact information?

**Way #7: Learn from the Best in the Field and Make Lifelong Friends**

If you want to learn a new skill quickly, spending a few days being taught by a world-class expert is one of the best ways to do it.

Boot camps and seminars are usually offered by life coaches, business consultants, fitness coaches, and various experts (survival experts, language experts, business communication experts, etc.).

Since these events are usually organized for a small group of people, they can result in making lifelong friends. Most boot camps are pretty intensive. They require spending 12 hours per day with the group and the expert. Consequently, it’s easy to connect on a deeper level with fellow students.

The key, as with any other way of meeting new people, is to keep in touch after your initial contact. The nature of boot camps and seminars make it easier – keeping each other accountable is a pretty good reason to follow up and develop a friendship.

As an introvert, boot camps or seminars may be tiring for you. For this reason, only attend events for small groups. Then the constant presence of other people won’t drain you that much.

**4 Ways to Meet New People that Require More Self-Confidence**

The four ideas listed in this subchapter require more self-confidence and the willingness to try things out of the box. If it concerns you what other people think of you, you may find these ideas too uncomfortable.

**Way #1: Make Friends with Travelers, Oddballs and Other Interesting People**

If you enjoy traveling and want to connect with other travelers, join [Couchsurfing.org](http://Couchsurfing.org). Couchsurfing is a website that connects travelers with hosts from all over the world.

The idea of the site is to let travelers live like a local and enable hosts to make new friends from all over the world. People who let travelers stay in their homes have an opportunity to learn about new cultures and spend time with interesting people from all over the world.

There are three ways to make friends on Couchsurfing. You can:

- travel somewhere and find a host to spend a few days with,
- host travelers at your home,
- join local Couchsurfing groups and attend their meetings.

If you want to stay at someone’s home, find an interesting host (make sure she’s someone you’d like to get to know – read her entire profile) and send her a request to let you stay at her place.
When you’re looking for a host, make sure you’ll have your own room. Sharing a room with a stranger is a nightmare for most introverts. I don’t recommend it, even if only for a weekend.

If you want to host travelers at home, fill out your profile and let people know you can host them. If someone is interested in staying at your place, she’ll send you a request.

You should also make sure you have enough space in your house to host guests. I once lived in a small apartment (one bedroom and kitchen) and hosted some people for a few days. Two or three days later, I was so tired of their constant presence I had to decline another couchsurfer’s request to stay at my place. I still remember the overpowering relief when they finally left.

If you don’t want to travel or host travelers at your home, you can still benefit from the site. Look for local Couchsurfing groups, join them, and attend meetings they organize.

If you live in a big city, there will be various groups for people with different interests (for instance, learning languages, travelers, sports, etc.). If you live in a smaller city, there should be at least one general group.

Some groups host weekly meetings, while other groups meet spontaneously. Some groups only meet at pubs (then it may not be a good choice for you), while others also organize different meetings, like bike rides or hiking.

If you participate in the group’s discussions, some people may reach out in order to get to know you better. You can also post your own thread saying you’d like to meet new people.

As an introvert, it would be better for you to set a meeting with one person, and at most two people – unless you’re okay with a larger group of people.

**Way #2: How to Make New Friends When Traveling**

Traveling alone may sound like a nightmare even for an introvert, but in reality it’s one of the easiest ways to make new friends from all over the world (easiest if you’re brave enough, of course).

When you’re traveling with a friend, you’re in your own bubble. You don’t have to interact with locals because you have your friend. Moreover, if you’re an introvert, it can quickly get tiring to spend so much time with someone else and have little solitude.

When you’re alone, you’re forced to speak with locals. They’ll also be much more open to you since you’re just a lone traveler.

Stay in hostels (or better yet, use Couchsurfing), say yes when fellow travelers ask you to visit some tourist sites together, make sure to get contact information when you part ways and keep in touch. In no time, you’ll have friends from all over the world.

Traveling doesn’t have to be expensive. Even a quick weekend trip to a different state (or a neighboring country) can help you make new friends. Travel to places popular among backpackers from all over the world. They are the most receptive to making new friends on the road.
Way #3: Your Friends May Live Next Door to You

Have you ever taken the time to chat with your neighbors? In our busy times many people don’t even know the names of their neighbors. Stand out and start saying hi to your neighbors. Sometimes it’s enough to start a conversation and make a new friend.

It’s particularly easy to get to know your neighbors when you’re moving into a new place. Knock on their doors and introduce yourself as a new neighbor. Sound scary? Why not get out of your comfort zone and try it?

You’ll never know if your best friend is living next door unless you knock on her door and introduce yourself.

Way #4: Make Friends by Random Encounters

Random encounters are a great way to make friends with people of a completely different background than yours.

To give you an example, let’s say you’re knowledgeable about bikes. You walk down the street and see a guy who has a flat tire and no idea how to change it. Why not help him? Have a friendly chat, and if you enjoy talking with him, exchange your contact information to go on a bike ride together.

Or let’s imagine it’s late evening. You decided to grab some takeaway food from a local restaurant. Two employees bored out of their minds serve you food. Why not have a chat with them while your food is being made? You’ll definitely make their day a bit more interesting, and if you find common interests, it’s easy to exchange numbers or at least add each other on Facebook.

This method requires a bit more self-confidence, but it’s definitely worth a try if you want to become a more outgoing person.

The ability to talk with strangers comes more easily to extroverts, but even as an introvert you can still do it. I know, because I acquired this skill even though I was an extremely shy person in the past.
Chapter 5: Talking with Strangers

In the following chapter, you’ll learn how to start a conversation with a stranger and what to do during it. We’ll cover every single step from the moment you say hi to the moment you exchange contact information – including tips on how to handle small talk.

How to Start a Conversation with a Stranger

Starting a conversation with a stranger as an introvert doesn’t have to be difficult. In fact, you have a powerful advantage over extroverts. You know how to focus on other people instead of bringing the attention to yourself.

The key to starting a conversation with a stranger is to keep it simple. Instead of trying to come up with a witty way to introduce yourself, just say hi and tell the other person your name. Then ask a question related to the venue you’re in or anything else that is common for you two.

To give you an example, here’s how you can start a conversation with a stranger when attending a Meetup meeting:

You: Hey, I’m Nate. I’m new here.
Stranger: Hi, Nate, nice to meet you. I’m John.
You: Nice to meet you, too, John. How long have you been attending these meetings, John?
Stranger: Actually, I’m also new here. It’s only my second meeting.
You: Cool! What was the last meeting about?

The simple approach may seem like a boring way to start a conversation, but you don’t have to reinvent the wheel. It’s non-threatening for both you and the stranger.

Keep it simple, be friendly, ask some open-ended questions (questions that can’t be answered with a simple yes/no) and you’ll be well on your way to getting to know new people.

To give you more examples, here’s how you can start a conversation when walking your dog and meeting another dog owner.

You, while petting the dog: Good boy!
You, to the stranger: Your dog is adorable. What’s his name?
Stranger: Thank you! His name is Baxter.
You: How old is he?
Stranger: He’ll be two next month.
You: Oh, a young boy then! By the way, I’m Nate.
Stranger: Sarah. Nice to meet you, Nate.
You: Nice to meet you, too, Sarah. Hey, do you know any good places where I can take Max to throw a Frisbee?

And here’s how you can start a conversation with a clerk at the gas station.

Stranger: $35.30, please.
You: There you go. Not many clients around this hour, eh?
Stranger: Yeah.
You: I guess it must be pretty boring to sit here at the counter and have nothing to do.
Stranger: Yeah, it is. Not much to do but watch the traffic.
You: Yeah, I bet you love that! By the way, I’m Nate. What’s your name?
Stranger: Kate.
You: It was nice talking to you, Kate. See you next time! Have a great evening.
Stranger: See you! Have a great evening, too!

In this scenario, the purpose of the conversation was only to introduce yourself. The next time you’re at the station, Kate will probably recognize you (not many clients chat with clerks) and you’ll have a much easier time talking about other topics.

You don’t have to ask for contact information the first time you speak with someone if you know she’ll be at the same place next time you’re there.

You Don’t Have to Talk

Socializing isn’t always about talking. For you, as an introvert, socializing may be much more about listening to other people and getting to know their opinion instead of sharing yours.

For instance, when you’re at a Meetup meeting, you don’t have to jump right into the conversation with other people. You can simply sit close to other people and listen to their conversation.

If you have something interesting to say, say it. If not, keep listening. It’s a much better approach than sitting in the back of the room and hoping someone will approach you.

Don’t Try to Be Perfect

If you want to start a conversation with someone, don’t think about it for too long. The longer you hesitate, the more difficult it will be to take action. Once you see someone who you’d like to get to know better, start talking with her right away. Don’t stand and hope she will approach you.

Also, don’t think about a witty opening line. “Hi, I’m John” is really all you need to get to know new people. Don’t try to come up with a perfect way to start a conversation. Just do it.

Practice Every Chance You Get

The more often you start conversations with strangers, the easier it will get. Chat with your neighbors, talk for a while with a cashier at the store, and get to know friends of your flat mates. The ability of starting conversations with strangers is the same skill as any other. The more often you practice, the better you become at it.

You can set a goal to have fifty conversations with strangers in the next month or two. Knowing that each conversation brings you closer to your goal (and helps you improve your social skills), you’ll be much more likely to socialize more.

Remember First Names

Who doesn’t love hearing her first name? It makes people feel more comfortable around you and shows them you’re paying attention to what they’re saying. It’s a little thing that will make you stand out among extroverts who approach many people, but don’t remember the name of any person they approached.
I have always struggled with remembering people’s names until I started repeating their names aloud. When you’re meeting someone new and she says her name, repeat it aloud a few times – Kate, Kate, Kate, Kate, Kate!

Just kidding. I wanted to see if I still have your attention.

Do repeat the name aloud a few times every now and then, but make it natural. For instance, you can first say, “Nice to meet you, Kate.” Then you can use it when asking a question: “So, Kate, who is your favorite author?” Then, if you’re talking with a group of people, you can use it again when referring to something Kate said – “And, like Kate said, Stephen King’s early works are really scary.”

If you still have problems remembering the name, use another memorization technique – come up with an image (or a short story) in your head that is related to the name. To give you an example, if you want to remember a blonde woman whose name is Kate and who likes singing, think of Titanic and Kate Winslet. The weirder your story or image, the easier it will be to remember the name.

**Make Other People Remember Your Name**

We all have problems remembering names. Make it easier for strangers to remember your name by repeating it throughout the conversation.

For instance, you can say, “So I said to myself: Nate, are you really that stupid not to go see a doctor if something snapped in your back when doing yoga exercises?”

**How to Deal with Despised Small Talk**

Small talk is easy to deal with if you change your views about it. The purpose of small talk isn’t to keep chatting about weather for thirty minutes. Its aim is to find out what things you and the person you’re speaking with share.

The key to avoiding a long-winded and sleep-inducing chat about someone’s extended family is to ask the right questions. The way you start the conversation is the way it will unfold. If you start off with standard questions, you’ll have your standard small talk chat. If you quickly go into deeper topics, you’ll find yourself deeply interested in the conversation.

We all have canned responses to small talk questions, so by just asking different questions you will immediately make someone more interested in you.

Just to give you an example, a standard small talk question is, “What do you do for fun?” An unconventional question to ask would be, “What was the most fun thing you did in the last year?”

It’s a great question to ask because it’s upbeat (you’re asking about the most fun thing so it’s bound to bring good memories) and makes it easy to get the other person talking (who doesn’t like talking about good times?).

Moreover, you’ll learn if the stranger is someone who’s a party-goer (if she says she had most fun during a party), if he has any particular hobbies (perhaps he’s deeply passionate about something) or even how happy she is with her life.

Here’s how such a conversation can go:
You: What was the most fun thing you did the last year?
Stranger: Oh, I think it was a kayaking trip in New Hampshire with my husband. We went late summer, and the whole lake was for us. It was beautiful!
You: Wow, that sounds awesome! Is kayaking your favorite sport?
Stranger: No, but it’s definitely one of my favorite sports. My favorite sport is tennis.
You: Oh, that’s interesting. I also love tennis! When did you start playing?

And now that you’ve found a common ground, the conversation won’t feel draining to you. Small talk has served its purpose. It helped you transition from a general conversation to a conversation about something in which you’re both deeply interested.

Next time you’re having a conversation, try to ask questions that can lead to uncovering a common topic. You don’t necessarily have to start with specific questions. You can easily start a conversation about today’s culture by asking the other person about her favorite genre of music. Here’s an example:

You: What is your favorite genre of music?
Stranger: Umm, I’m not sure. I love reggae and rock.
You: Okay, then let me rephrase the question: you can only listen to one genre for the rest of your life. Which genre do you choose?
Stranger: Haha. Okay, okay. I think it’s reggae.
You: See, you can choose just one. I like reggae. Who’s your favorite artist? Bob Marley?
Stranger: Actually, I listen more to his sons’ music. Ziggy Marley is my favorite, but I also like Damian.
You: Oh, I love Ziggy’s Love Is My Religion album. Who are your other favorite reggae artists? Besides the Marleys, I’m having a hard time finding some upbeat reggae. Most people are into dancehall right now.
Stranger: Well… You can check out Alborosie or Gentleman. They aren’t Jamaicans, but they sure have the same vibe.
You: It’s funny, isn’t it? It seems that today most reggae artists come from other places than Jamaica, even though when you think of reggae, you think of Jamaica.
Stranger: Yeah, that’s what I noticed as well. Not that many Jamaicans are into reggae anymore. You can still find quality Jamaican reggae music online if you look for underground artists, though.
You: You’re right. The whole music industry today is going underground. The music I hear on the radio is horrible. I’ve been thinking recently about what will happen in the music industry over the next few years.
Stranger: Huge labels are pretty much obsolete in today’s realities. I feel that we will keep hearing more and more music from independent artists. Music contracts today ain’t what they used to be in the past.
You: Exactly. And actually, the same thing is happening in the publishing industry. And blah, blah, blah…

See, we started with a simple question about music and quickly went into a deeper topic. With practice, you’ll be able to nudge the conversation in the right direction with just one or two good questions.

As long as you keep steering the conversation in the right direction, small talk shouldn’t feel annoying to you. It’s only annoying when it doesn’t lead anywhere and serves absolutely no purpose. Give it a purpose and it won’t be such a chore. In fact, you may even start enjoying it.

A Little Known Secret of Master Conversationalists

Actually, I’m kidding. It’s no secret at all. It’s just something many people forget when speaking with other people.

The secret is to listen more than you speak (which should come pretty easy to you as an introvert). The key to listening more than you speak is to ask questions.
People love answering questions, and they especially love answering questions related to their hobbies or things they know well.

If you’re attending a Meetup group, ask other attendees about things related to their interests. How do they detail their car? What’s the best place they have ever traveled to? How long have they been practicing tai-chi and what is the most important benefit of their regular practice?

Be genuinely curious, and people will be genuinely curious about you. Keep in mind, though, that your conversation shouldn’t sound like an interrogation. Here’s how NOT to do it:

**You:** Which book about yoga do you like the most?
**Stranger:** *Light on Yoga: Yoga Dipika.* It’s the only yoga book you will ever need.
**You:** What is your favorite asana?
**Stranger:** The Lotus Position by far. It makes me very calm.
**You:** How often do you meditate?
**Stranger:** Every single day.
**You:** For how long?
**Stranger:** 15 minutes, twice a day.

I might as well replace the “you” tag with “interrogator.” Here’s how you should do it instead:

**You:** Which book about yoga do you like the most?
**Stranger:** *Light on Yoga: Yoga Dipika.* It’s the only yoga book you will ever need.
**You:** Interesting. I haven’t read it yet. Do you think it will be suitable for a beginner looking to learn the basics of yoga?
**Stranger:** Definitely. Just read the first three chapters.
**You:** Great, I’ll look into it. Oh, and by the way, do you recommend taking yoga classes or is this book enough?
**Stranger:** I would definitely start with yoga classes first. It’s hard to learn yoga from a book if you have no experience with it.
**You:** Okay, thanks. I can tell you know a lot about yoga. Can you recommend any good teachers in the area?
**Stranger:** For sure… blah, blah, blah…

In this example, you use statements (e.g. “I can tell you know a lot about yoga”) to avoid turning your conversation into an interrogation. It sounds more natural and friendlier.

When listening to other people, make sure you really listen to them, and not merely hear them. Listening is an art in itself – it’s not about listening to the words, but about listening to the words and looking for the emotions hidden underneath them. I already wrote about it in the chapter about your strengths as an introvert.

Questions will do all the hard work for you for two reasons. Firstly, by asking questions, the person you’re speaking with will do most of the talking. Secondly, asking deep questions will lead to interesting topics you’ll be glad to talk about.

Make it a game to learn as much as possible about the other person without letting your conversation sound like an interrogation.

Here’s another example how you can do it:
You: What’s your favorite vegetable?
Friend: Let me think... Broccoli and cauliflower.
You: What’s your favorite dish with broccoli? Can you give me a good recipe? I’ve been trying to start eating more broccoli, but it’s so bland to eat it without anything else.
Friend: Well, you can steam cook it, sprinkle some cheese and add your favorite spices. Then it won’t be so bland. Or try my favorite recipe – broccoli cream soup.
You: Broccoli cream soup sounds interesting. How do I make it?
Friend: Well, you start with broccoli, blah, blah, blah...

I admit it, the question is a bit random and silly, but I do ask such questions all the time, and enjoy fun conversations thanks to them. As you can see from this example, you don’t have to talk a lot. You just respond to what’s being said, and that’s what many introverts prefer anyway (when initiating a conversation, at least).

Asking interesting questions (even if they are sometimes random or silly) make you an interesting conversation partner. Most people love answering interesting questions. The more random they are, the better. It makes you stand out from other people in a good way.

An additional benefit of asking deep questions (in addition to having these questions do all the hard work of having the conversation for you) is that you’ll learn much more about other people than if you were attempting regular small talk (how was your day, how is it going at work, etc.).

Make Them Feel Appreciated

Most extroverts approach strangers thinking about ways to bring attention to themselves. You, as an introvert, probably don’t like being the center of the attention. Use it to your advantage and put a spotlight on the stranger.

Give compliments to people, ask them questions that will make them realize how much they know about a certain topic, and listen with full attention. Most of us crave the attention of others. If you can provide it to a stranger you approach, she’ll feel appreciated by you.

Please don’t use it as a manipulative technique, though. Be genuinely interested in people and only give compliments if they’re sincere. Build real relationships based on trust and sincerity, not on manipulative techniques just to get people to like you.

The One Thing You Absolutely Have to Do at the End of the Conversation

If you had an interesting conversation with a stranger you’re not likely to meet again, you have to ask her for contact information so you can keep in touch.

Don’t overcomplicate it – simply ask for the phone number or ask her to add you on Facebook.

Here’s how you can say it:

You: Listen, Jim, it was a pleasure talking with you, but I have to go. Let’s exchange phone numbers and meet up to grab some coffee together.
Stranger: Sure, why not. My number is...
You: Got it. I’ll give you a missed call... There you go.
Stranger: Cool! It was a pleasure talking with you, too, Nate. Do you have time next Tuesday?
You: Sure, I’ll be free around 2 PM. I’ll text you on Monday and we’ll take it from there, okay?
Stranger: Okay, no problem. See you.
Don’t be afraid to ask for contact information. If you both enjoyed the conversation, it only makes sense to find a way to keep in touch.

And remember – if you don’t ask, the answer is always no!
Chapter 6: Developing a Friendship

In the following chapter, you’ll get some pointers on how to develop a friendship. We’ll also talk about the most important qualities introverts should seek in a potential friend.

Since introverts don’t get their high from being in noisy and crowded places, they should focus on the quality of their interactions with other people. Selectivity will help you choose the right social activities for you and help you avoid making the wrong decisions on how to socialize and use your energy.

Let’s start with advice on how to choose the right friend.

Be Selective When Making Friends

Some introverts have a hard time making friends. If they feel desperate to make new friends, they may be tempted to befriend the wrong people. Don’t do it. Interacting with the wrong people will lead you to an unsatisfying social life.

In order to avoid befriending the wrong people, write down a description of a person who you’d love to know. For instance, some of the key qualities of a friend for me are:

1. Honest. If a person isn’t honest, I can’t trust her. Therefore, she can’t be my friend.
2. Ambitious. I want to spend my time with people who have passions in their lives and want to grow as a person. If we both have ambitions and want to make the most out of our lives, we’ll support each other in making our lives awesome.
3. Intelligent. If I can’t enjoy a deep conversation with a friend, I’ll get tired of meeting her.
4. Happy and supportive. I can’t stand negative people who put other people down, so I don’t interact with them.
5. Able to listen. I don’t have patience for people who never let other people speak. If you want to spend time with people, let them exchange thoughts with you instead of turning the dialogue into a monologue.

What are your top qualities of a friend? Make your own list. Below, I listed five traits of a person who will be a good friend for an introvert. It’s something to get you going when creating your own list of traits and brainstorming ideas for where to meet such people.

1. Non-Judgmental

A good friend for an introvert will respect her need for alone time. People who constantly tell you something isn’t right with you because you don’t want to go out will not make good friends (unless they’re open-minded enough to educate themselves about introversion).

2. Able to Carry an Intelligent Conversation

Introverts like having long conversations about complex issues. If your friend can’t talk about things other than mundane aspects of everyday life, she’s probably not going to be a good fit for you.
3. Not a Frequent Party-Goer

Introverts rarely (if ever) enjoy going out to parties. If your friend spends most of her free time socializing at parties, it will be hard for you to develop a strong relationship with her. Please keep in mind that it doesn’t mean you shouldn’t befriend extroverts at all. Many extroverts socialize in a wide variety of ways, including face-to-face time with just one person.

4. Able to Listen Attentively

Introverts can talk a lot if given an opportunity to do so. If your friend speaks all the time and doesn’t let you voice out your opinion, you’ll quickly start avoiding any conversations with her.

5. Honest

Introverts prefer honesty and a no-BS approach. If your friend beats around the bush instead of getting to the core of the subject, she’ll either bore you or frustrate you. A weak relationship with a person you can’t trust won’t satisfy you.

Once you have your list of the traits of a perfect friend, think of venues where such a person may hang out.

If you’re looking for an ambitious person, a local Toastmasters group may be a good place to find her. If you’re looking for someone fit and healthy, join a local gym. Are you seeking the artistic soul? Go to your local arts center.

One question I like to ask new people I meet is about their idea of a fun time. If they tell me they love clubbing or drinking alcohol, I know I will probably never have many common topics with them. We’re just too different. It immediately tells me they are frequent party-goers who usually socialize only with a drink in their hand. My idea of spending time together would be extremely boring for them.

This one simple question helps me avoid developing relationships with the wrong people. If they are frequent party-goers, I know they are from a completely different planet. They will either bore me or frustrate me when talking about their parties. Of course, there’s nothing wrong with what they do in their free time. To each his own. I just prefer something else, and therefore I look for a different person.

Be Selective When Choosing a Venue

The wrong venue will drain you of energy extremely quickly. For this reason, you should know beforehand how many people are going to be at a given place, how noisy it will be, how stimulating it will be, and so on.

Non-introvert-friendly venues and events include night clubs, bars, house parties, concerts and shows, sports events, restaurants during busy hours, and virtually any activity in a group of more than 3-4 people.

Please keep in mind that although all these places and events are non-introvert-friendly, you can usually turn them into more introvert-friendly ways of spending time.
To give you an example, if you’re at a house party, nobody says you have to spend time in the middle of a crowded room. Get one friend and have a conversation outside. And no, talking with the owner’s dog doesn’t count.

What about restaurants? There’s always a quieter corner in every eatery where you’ll feel a bit more intimate than at the table set in the middle of the place. The same applies to night clubs and bars.

If you aren’t ready to spend time in a noisy place, make it clear to your friends. It doesn’t make sense to agree to go to a night club if you’d rather stay at home, drink some tea and enjoy a good conversation. Instead of going with the first invitation from a friend, find a friend who’s also in the mood to spend some time socializing in a quieter manner.

Don’t forget you can make compromises with your friends. If they want to grab something to drink, you don’t have to go to a night club. A quieter bar or maybe a coffee shop can also work for them, and will be less stimulating to you. Suggest alternatives that will be a win-win for both extroverts and introverts.

**How to Develop a Friendship**

Once you meet new people and get their contact information, it’s time to follow up and set up a meeting to get to know them better. In this subchapter we’ll cover the most important aspects of developing a friendship.

**Take the Lead**

Most people are passive and wait for someone else’s initiative. If you’d had an interesting conversation with someone, exchanged contact information and she still hasn’t reached out to you, it doesn’t mean she doesn’t want to get to know you better. She may be simply waiting for your first move.

Don’t wait for another person. If you want to meet with someone, call or text her and let her know when you’re free. It can be as simple as, “Hey. I’m free on Tuesday and would love to have some coffee with you. Are you free at 6 PM?”

By taking the lead and following up with people, you make it much easier for them to get to know you. Wait for their first move, and chances are that your first conversation will be your last conversation.

Don’t assume that if someone isn’t inviting you to spend time with her, she isn’t interested in getting to know you better. Some people are busy, some people lack the initiative, and some people are just disorganized. Take the matter into your own hands.

**Do Fun Things Together**

Nightclubs and bars aren’t the only places to meet with your friends and enjoy time together. In fact, many people are already bored by them and will be surprised if you ask them if they want to play tennis with you or ride a bike.

Come up with fun and unique ways to spend time with your new friends, and they’ll look forward to every new meeting with you.
Below are some ideas on how you can socialize with your friends without going to places that drain your energy instead of giving you the feel-good emotions:

1. Have a coffee or tea together. As you already learned, introverts are great at listening and prefer quiet environments. Having a cup of coffee or tea means either visiting a quiet coffee shop or spending time at your friend’s home or your own home – perfect places for introverts.

2. Go for a walk. As I already mentioned, nature reduces stress, so spending time with your friend in a quiet park or a wild place will drain you much less than going to a bar together.

3. Go on a bike ride. A bike ride, especially if you can get away from the hustle and bustle of the city, is a perfect way to get your body moving, talk with your friend and enjoy nature.

4. Play tennis, badminton, table tennis, bowling, Frisbee or any other sport for two people. It’s ideal when you want to spend time with other people, but don’t want to talk too much.

5. Go to a swimming pool, ideally during slow hours. When swimming, you obviously won’t talk with your friend, but you will still socialize a bit during breaks.

6. Go to a sauna. Saunas are perfect at relieving tension. Find a local sauna for just two people so you can sit there with your friend and isolate yourself from the rest of the people.

7. Eat at a new restaurant. For introverts, small restaurants with just a few tables are best, as you can enjoy a conversation without too much background noise. If you don’t feel like being surrounded by lots of people, go during slow hours. You can make it a fun habit to explore with your friend one new eatery per week.

8. Do an individual sport together. Sports like skiing, snowboarding, skateboarding, rollerblading, jogging or climbing are individual sports that you can easily do with your friend.

9. Hike. Go with your friend on a weekend or a day trip to a remote place. If you plan to stay somewhere for a night, make sure you get your own room, as spending one full day with your friend may drain you quite a bit.

10. Play a board game. Many people played a lot of board games when they were young. Why not bring this tradition back and play Monopoly with your friends? It’s a perfect activity for introverts since you don’t even have to leave your home – just invite your friends over.

**Be a Good Friend**

No matter if you’re an introvert or an extrovert, you still have to exhibit behaviors that strengthen a relationship and build trust. Some of the most important qualities of a good friend are:

1. You’re always there for your friend. A good friend will come get you out of trouble in the middle of the night. If you want to enjoy a deep friendship, always be available to help and support your friend when the going gets tough. Nobody likes fair-weather friends.

2. You’re a giver. The basis of a strong friendship is selflessness and giving more than you receive. There’s a name for a person who makes friends only to use them – a sociopath. Don’t be one.
3. You’re trustworthy. You wouldn’t like to be vulnerable with a person who shares your deepest secrets with other people. In order to be comfortable talking about sensitive topics with other people, you need to know they’re trustworthy.

4. You’re accepting. A true friend won’t run away if you act weird around her or if you make a stupid mistake. The closest friendships are based on mutual acceptance – including the weirdest qualities from which some people may shun away.

5. You’re supportive. Some people enjoy having a toxic influence on their friends. Instead of cheering them, they put them down and ridicule them for their dreams and goals. A good friend is the total opposite. She will be your cheerleader, believing in you even if you’ve failed fifteen times in a row.

There’s much more that can be said about being a good friend. Instead of sharing my insights with you, I’ll point you to Dale Carnegie’s book *How to Win Friends and Influence People* – an all-time classic in how to be a good friend and make people like you.

**Preferred Forms of Communication for Introverts**

Does the mere idea of a surprise birthday party freak you out?

That’s what I thought.

Most introverts prefer scheduled or non-distracting (email, instant messenger, texting) means of communication. Unexpected phone calls are out, unless you’re an exception to the rule and they don’t bother you.

If you hate phone calls, too, don’t be afraid to tell your friends and newly met people that you don’t like receiving or making phone calls – most of the time, text them or use instant messengers instead.

**5 Reasons Why Phone Calls Suck for Introverts**

If you have a hard time explaining to other people why you don’t like phone calls, here’s a handy list of good excuses:

1. Phone calls interrupt your day flow. You can reply to emails or text messages on your schedule. It saves time and helps you give a more thoughtful reply. Moreover, if you’re not in the mood, you can always reply later. Nobody forces you to talk right here, right now as in the case of phone calls.

2. You don’t have time to think about responses. Have you ever said yes to something to which you would never have said so when given an opportunity to think about it? Welcome to the club. Introverts need time to think before talking. Phone calls don’t let you think (the awkward silence on the phone is painful, so you speak before you think).

3. Hanging up is so damn hard. Have you ever tried to end a phone call and it took you a few minutes because you didn’t want to be impolite? Oh boy, which introvert doesn’t hate saying goodbye in ten different ways?

4. Constant interruption. Introverts need to think before they say something. If you’re on the phone with an extrovert, it’s always hard to balance between awkward silence and interrupting someone.
5. Unnecessary small talk. Small talk (the purposeless kind) is always difficult for introverts, but it’s even harder on the phone. “Catching up” for five minutes before moving to the real purpose of the call feels like a complete waste of time to introverts.
Chapter 7: Social Skills You Should Master

Introversion doesn’t mean you have to be shy or socially awkward. In fact, introverts who enjoy their social lives can have the same, if not better, social skills than extroverts.

Introversion is not a good excuse for a lack of social skills. The notion that only extroverts can have good people skills is based on the wrong premise that you need to get your energy from social interactions in order to have social skills. It’s a false belief. Your social skills depend on you practicing them, not on the fact that you recharge when spending time with other people.

If you want to enjoy a satisfying social life, mastering the most important social skills is a must. Developed social skills will help you in virtually every aspect of your life, as you can’t accomplish a lot of things without help from other people.

In this chapter, we’ll talk about the most important skills you need to possess and how to acquire them. We will also discuss the importance of stepping outside your comfort zone to become better at socializing.

5 Social Skills and Qualities Every Introvert Should Master

Social skills can be learned by anyone. If you’re lacking in the social skills department, here are five things you should learn and master in order to enjoy a satisfying social life.

1. The Art of Conversation

Conversational skills are one of the most important skills you can master in your life. We already covered how to start and continue an interesting conversation. To give you a quick reminder, the key is to ask various questions related to things you’d like to talk about. Instead of talking about the most common (and boring) topics like family or weather, be the leader in the conversation and steer it in the right direction.

Before you leave your home to socialize, it’s a good idea to brainstorm for conversational topics. If you have a few questions at hand, it will be easier for you to chat someone up.

For instance, if you’re going to attend an event about yoga, think of questions you can ask people interested in it. They probably won’t be interested in talking about motorcycles, but they will probably enjoy topics related to health, fitness, and spirituality. By preparing a few questions related to these issues, you can have stress-free small talk that will quickly lead to discovering common interests.

When speaking with newly met people, pay attention to not overshare. Some introverts have a tendency to skip small talk and jump straight into deep topics. Some people may consider these issues too private to discuss with strangers.

To avoid talking about sensitive or uncomfortable topics, volunteer information first. If a person you’re talking to doesn’t share her experience, change the topic. It’s a cue the topic is too sensitive to her (or she’s just not in the mood to talk about it).

Another important conversational skill is active listening. We already covered this topic, too. Asking deep questions and reiterating what the other person said makes her feel understood. It’s the key to building relationships with strangers.
The aforementioned *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie will teach you how to have interesting conversations and get other people to like you.

The most crucial aspect of becoming a good conversationalist is to talk as often as possible with everyone you can. Use every opportunity to practice your skills – even if it’s just a brief chat with a neighbor.

2. Being Self-Confident

Self-confidence is not merely an important social skill, but also one of the most important success skills. A great deal of introverts don’t possess this skill and explain its lack due to their introverted nature. They can’t be more wrong.

There are many well-known introverts who are extremely self-confident. They may be actors, public speakers, musicians, and politicians. A lot of bestselling authors are introverts, too, yet they don’t shy away from the opportunities to promote themselves.

Introverts usually become shy because they isolate themselves from other people for long periods of time. If you never break out of your comfort zone, you’re bound to develop low self-confidence.

Self-confidence can’t be taught by reading a book. It’s the actions – facing your fears – that make you a self-assured person. The regular habit of stepping outside your comfort zone will help you become a more confident person (we’ll cover seven ways to break out of your comfort zone at the end of this chapter).

If you struggle with making new friends, make it a goal to speak with at least one stranger every single day. After fifty or so conversations with strangers, you’re bound to get much more self-confident.

If you’re afraid of public speaking, put yourself in situations where you have to speak to a group of people. Again, fifty such occasions will definitely boost your self-confidence.

I’m fully aware how difficult your first chat with a stranger or your first public speaking gig will be. It’s the necessary part of the process you can’t skip, though. No matter what a great deal of self-help authors say, growth and discomfort are two close friends.

I built my self-confidence in a mere three months by approaching fifty beautiful women on the street. Each day, my self-confidence grew by a small amount. Ninety days later, I could approach and flirt with any woman I wanted.

The result (getting the phone number) didn’t really matter. What mattered was the fact that I approached women in spite of paralyzing fear.

Bear in mind that self-confidence has to come from within you. Mastering body language and dressing well can help you feel more self-confident, but they won’t change your personality alone. Focus on your inner self-confidence, the kind that comes from the actions you take on a daily basis.
3. Being Laid-Back

People socialize for a wide variety of reasons, but most of them have one thing in common – they want to enjoy themselves. Relaxed people don’t struggle with making friends, while nobody likes a friend who takes everything seriously.

The ability to take things lightly will help you deal with rejection, which is an inherent part of socializing. By not taking anything personally, you’ll be hard to insult. It will make it easier to deal with annoying people and help you prevent unnecessary conflicts.

If you’re cool, calm, and collected, social interactions will be much easier. Newly met people will be interested in getting to know you better, and your friends will love spending time with you.

Aside from the negative health effects, caring too much about everything will turn you into a person who has a hard time letting go of negative emotions. These feelings will affect your ability to open up, enjoy yourself and present yourself to others as a fun, entertaining potential friend.

This skill needs a major mindset shift. For a long time, I was one of these people who cared too much about everything. You know the type – the ones who get ulcers before they’re thirty and have a heart attack (or two) before they’re forty.

What helped me change my mentality was to stop worrying about what other people thought of me. Someone wise (I’m sorry – I have no idea who it was) once wrote that whenever you think what others think of you, they have the exact same thought about you.

When I realized the irony of this behavior, I started reminding myself of this fact every time I caught myself obsessing what others thought of me. With enough practice, you can toss away these thoughts permanently.

Another thing that helped me become more laid-back was to stop hiding my true personality. Instead of thinking what people thought about me when I said a corny joke or did a weird thing, I just did it. People who were similar to me would react in a positive way, while others would keep away from me. I don’t know about you, but I consider it a win-win for everyone involved.

Last but not least, it’s important to prevent and let go of the negative kind of stress, called distress, as much as possible. You can do it through regular meditation, exercise, sexual intercourse (or just physical intimacy in general), listening to music and practicing other ways of releasing the feel-good hormones.

4. Being Positive

Show me a person who actively seeks out pessimists to add to her list of friends. Nobody likes a downer. If you’re one, expect the process of making friends to be much more difficult (unless you enroll in a club of grumblers or wherever negative people like to socialize).

Happiness is a state of mind everyone can develop – no matter the social status, money, race, gender, age, and so on. There are three keys to gain (and maintain) a positive outlook of the world:
1. Focus on the bright side of life. Optimists don’t spend too much time thinking about the bad things happening in the world. What’s the point? If you can’t fix it, you’re only torturing yourself. The more reasonable approach is to focus on the things that make you feel happy and grateful to be alive.

2. Be grateful. Studies confirm gratitude makes us happier and more positive toward the world. A daily habit of expressing gratitude for five things in your life will make you realize how happy you really are.

3. Think about every situation in terms of usefulness, not whether it’s positive or negative. If you seek useful lessons in everything that happens to you, you will stop complaining about the bad things. You will reframe them into life lessons.

Optimism will not only help you make new friends, but also change your life for the better. It’s cliché to say the world gives you exactly what you give to it, but it’s true, nonetheless.

Pay attention to your thoughts and words. If you find yourself frequently complaining when talking with other people, you will discourage them from interacting with you. Be positive and make friends with other positive people.

5. Empathy

The first step to develop more empathy is to become more aware of your own feelings (most women already possess this skill, while men will have to practice it). Once you can name your emotions and describe them, you’ll find it easier to tune in to the feelings of other people and react to them.

People say things to elicit a specific reaction from you. If your reaction answers their underlying emotion, they’ll be satisfied from the conversation.

To give you an example, if a friend shares with you that she wants to buy a new car and tells you about the cars she’s considering, she’s probably asking you for an opinion. Her underlying emotion is uncertainty. React to it by telling her your opinion and trying to help her make the right decision so she will no longer feel uncertain about her choice.

If someone is telling you about her day or things she wants to do tomorrow, all she wants may be some attention from other people. By simply listening to her and inquiring about her everyday life, you’ll make her feel like you care about her.

Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life by Marshall B. Rosenberg, a book I already mentioned in the second chapter, will help you understand this topic in much better detail. It’s the best book I’ve ever read about the topic of empathy, connecting with other people by using the right words and conflict resolution.

7 Ways to Break out of Your Comfort Zone to Become Better at Socializing

People who are open to new experiences get to know people they would have never otherwise met and experience things they would have otherwise never experienced.

Your comfort zone is everything that feels comfortable to you – spending time with your current friends, staying at quiet places, being alone. Things that lie outside your comfort zone
are things that make you feel uncomfortable. They are also the only things that will help you grow as a person.

Many introverts say no to everything, thinking that if they’re introverted, they should never leave their safe bubble. While I don’t necessarily ask you to constantly put yourself in uncomfortable situations, it’s wise to stretch your comfort zone at least from time to time.

The more you expand your comfort zone, the better your social life will get. Things you currently find slightly uncomfortable will become pretty easy when you start doing things way outside your comfort zone.

Just to give you an example, when I started approaching women on the street, I stopped having any problems when meeting strangers. Talking with strangers in random social situations was nothing compared to what I did when approaching women.

If you’re sold on the idea of stepping outside your comfort zone, below are seven ideas to challenge you.

1. **Go to a place that intimidates you**

   Go to a place you find scary or uncomfortable. For introverts, such places may include bars, pubs, night clubs, and all events with crowds – sports events, shows, local festivities, etc.

   The point is not to force yourself to go there and feel miserable; the point is to take up the challenge and see if you can find a way to enjoy yourself in these places. If you don’t, at least your more extroverted friends will be happy to go with you to a place that’s more suitable for their social needs.

   If you go there expecting to feel tired and annoyed, don’t go until you’re recharged and ready for a fun challenge. Maybe you’ll confirm that night clubs really intimidate you, but you’ll discover you love sports events.

2. **Try public speaking**

   Public speaking sounds like one of the worst ideas for introverts. In reality, many introverts are much better public speakers than extroverts.

   Introverts are usually great at preparation and writing: two things that help create powerful presentations to captivate the audience. Moreover, public speaking is not about you – it’s all about your message and how it can benefit your audience. When you realize people listen to you because of what you’re saying, you’ll shift your focus to the topic, not the social interaction.

   As an introvert, you have an ability to focus on the core of the issue and make a compelling case for it. Therefore, your public speaking skills may be much more powerful than the skills of extroverts. Extroverts relish the social energy of giving the presentation, but they don’t necessarily like the preparation process, which may lead them to give presentations of lower quality.

   Unless you face your fear, you will never discover how good you can actually feel when you stand in front of a group of people and everybody is listening to you without interrupting you. Take up the challenge (if you’re ready for it) and see where it takes you.
Hint: Toastmasters International will teach you how to be a great public speaker.

3. Travel

I mentioned traveling as one of the ways to meet new people and make friends from all over the world. It can also help you expand your comfort zone.

When you travel – and especially when you travel to another country – you learn new things, meet people of a completely different background and have to deal with random issues that frequently require asking someone for help (e.g. asking for directions).

All of these things will help you improve your social skills. Moreover, if you traveled to Mexico, got lost and had to somehow find a way back to your hotel without knowing a single word in Spanish, how scary is it, really, to talk with a stranger?

4. Improve your dating skills (for men)

One of the things that has tremendously helped me grow as a person and improve my social skills as an introvert was approaching women on the street. This skill may come easily to extroverts, but it sure wasn’t easy for me.

However, when I finally overcame my fear, I learned how to strike up a conversation with everyone, how to honestly say what I feel, and how to connect with random women to such an extent that they gave me – a random stranger – their (real) phone number just a few minutes after starting a conversation with them.

Once I learned how to do all these things, I realized that wherever in the world I would be, I could make friends on the same day I landed there. And I mastered all of these skills even though I was an introvert, which proves that introversion doesn’t have to hold you back.

I believe all men should learn how to approach women in broad daylight, and not only get to know them by friends or in night clubs and other similar places. Once you learn this skill, all of your social skills will improve. It’s going to be hard and way outside your comfort zone, but you’ll surely enjoy the changes it can bring, not only to your social and love life, but also to your whole personality.

5. Spend time with people from a totally different background

If you only spend time with people who are just like you, you’ll have a hard time interacting with people different from you. Spending time with people of different backgrounds will help you expand your social circle.

Where can you find people who are different from you?

You can attend Meetup meetings with people who have completely different passions than you do. You can take up an interest in developing a new hobby. You can consider attending some Couchsurfing meetings – there are some really interesting people active on this site.

The point is to spend time with people who are so different from you that you will hear fresh views, have conversations about topics new to you and also learn something new.
Introverts enjoy the conversations most when they are deep and can teach them something new. Spending time with people from a completely different world will help you bring variety into your social life.

6. Learn how to dance

I’m serious. Dancing is a physical activity, and there aren’t many things that are harder for introverts than initiating physical contact with someone they barely know. Dancing will help you feel comfortable with something that’s usually extremely uncomfortable for both introverts and extroverts (and ambiverts, too – I didn’t forget about you guys!).

Moreover, dancing is a pretty useful social skill, even if you don’t attend parties.

If you’re a woman, dancing will help you feel more feminine and sexy. It can translate to your self-confidence, which you’ll exhibit in social settings.

If you’re a man, dancing will help you become manlier by teaching you how to lead. Some introverted men may struggle with displaying manliness and dominance. Dancing will show you that you too can learn how to display your inner manly power.

7. Network

Networking is probably the second most hated word by introverts – just after small talk. In reality, introverts can excel at both networking and small talk, and neither of these activities has to feel like a chore.

Why would I recommend networking as a way to get outside your comfort zone to improve your social life? The reason is simple – networking in its purest form is just meeting new people and learning how you can help them.

As an introvert, you have an ability to listen attentively and talk in much detail about common interests. This strength can help you get to know people much more quickly than an average extrovert does. Even if you don’t really become friends with these new people, it’s still an asset for both of you – if your “weak tie” friend has a problem, she can call you – and so can you.

Don’t Try to Be Someone You Are Not

Please keep in mind that I don’t recommend pretending you’re an extrovert in any of the cases when you’re getting out of your comfort zone. It’s never okay to pretend to be someone you are not.

I suggest getting out of your comfort zone as a way to grow as an introvert, not as a way to try to somehow turn yourself into an extrovert. Stepping out of your comfort zone can help you test your boundaries and see what is really uncomfortable to you and what can be fun.
Chapter 8: Behaviors to Avoid

In the last chapter of the book, we’ll talk about some of the most common harmful behaviors of introverts. You may display some of them without even being aware you do it.

Please note that this chapter contains some tough love. However, my only motivation is to help you improve your social life and feel more at peace with other people, not to judge you.

You Think You’re Better than Extroverts

Some introverts have a tendency to act like they’re more intelligent or deeper than extroverts. If you manifest this behavior around others, it will cause them to think you’re an intellectual snob. Nobody likes spending time with a person who makes them feel stupid – whether on purpose or accidentally.

I get it. You have a deeper inner life than extroverts. You spend more time alone, so you have more time to read books and educate yourself. You’re a great observer and you notice little details most people overlook. Still, it doesn’t mean extroverts are dumb because they engage in “shallow” small talk, attend parties or like loud places.

Our society rewards extroverted behaviors, but it doesn’t mean you have to get defensive and criticize extroverts because they “have it so easy.”

Society doesn’t always understand introverts, but it doesn’t mean the world is out to get you and force you into shallow conversations at loud parties. You’re free to make your own choices. Nobody forces you to do anything.

Getting defensive will only make it harder for you to make new friends because you’ll give off a negative vibe of annoying superiority.

There are both intelligent introverts and extroverts. And believe it or not, extroverts do possess an ability to carry an intelligent conversation – if you only give them a chance.

I can see this behavior not only exhibited by fellow introverts, but also in various books about introversion. Attacking extroverts is never fine. It only leads to harmful “we/they” thinking, which prevents you from building strong and satisfying relationships with people of different personalities – including outgoing extroverts.

One of my best friends is a pure extrovert. The fact that he recharges his batteries with other people and needs more social interaction than I do doesn’t make him inferior to me. He’s also capable of carrying intelligent conversations, letting other people speak, and listening to them.

The only way to have a satisfying social life is to be able to get along with everyone – no matter whether someone is an introvert, ambivert or an extrovert. By perpetuating the stereotypes about extroverts or maintaining wrongful beliefs about them, you rob yourself of valuable relationships.

If you respect the needs of extroverts and don’t criticize their ways of spending time, they will respect your needs and won’t criticize you for spending so much time alone.
Making friends is a lot about your mindset and your thoughts. If you think extroverts are stupid idiots who are only capable of shallow conversations, it will show in the way you treat them. And antagonizing extroverts, who comprise at least 30% of our population, is not a good way to enrich your social life.

**You Use Your Introversion as an Excuse for Your Poor Social Skills**

Shyness and social anxiety are quite common problems of introverts. Some introverts have developed these conditions because they thought introverts don’t need to spend time with other people.

Guess what? You’re a social creature. Even if you don’t need as much social interaction as extroverts, you still need it for happiness (unless you’re in a small minority of people who really can survive for years without speaking to others).

You need a lot of alone time. I understand. I need it, too. But it doesn’t mean that since you prefer solitude it’s okay not to have any people skills. By using your introversion as an excuse for why you aren’t good at socializing, you only make your life harder.

The fact that you spend so much time alone doesn’t mean you need to look awkward in a new environment or struggle making small talk. As an introvert, you possess some powerful skills that can make you great at socializing. Put them to use.

Listen attentively. Ask deep questions. Make other people feel significant by noticing little details about themselves.

The ability to talk with people and make them feel comfortable around you is a skill just like any other. Learn it.

As an introvert, you probably read a lot of books and love learning as much as you can about topics that interest you. Grab some books on how to socialize with other people (*How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie is a good start – it’s so good I have to recommend it yet again) and improve your skills.

In the end, even as an introverted person, you can still get lonely and need human interaction. Some people skills may not come as naturally to you as they come to extroverts, but there are social skills extroverts find hard to master that will be easy for you.

Utilize your strengths and develop your social skills instead of thinking that your introversion somehow makes it fine to not be able to get along with other people.

Please keep in mind that this common behavior also influences your love life. This especially applies to men. The fact that you’re an introvert doesn’t mean you can’t strike up a conversation with a woman and go on a date with her. It’s the same skill as talking with strangers.

I know introverts who constantly complain they will never have a girlfriend. When I ask them why they don’t try approaching women to create opportunities to find a soul mate, they just keep complaining. Well, it seems they enjoy complaining more than having a satisfying love life. To each his own, right?
You Give off the Vibe that You Don’t Care

Some introverts unknowingly give off the vibe that they don’t care about others.

You don’t like initiating meetings, so you wait for your more extroverted friends to take action. Have you ever considered that your passivity may signify to them that you don’t care about them? Take the initiative and invite them over from time to time instead of always waiting for their invitation.

You don’t like loud and crowded places, so you never go with your friends to fun events even though they would love to go with you. Isn’t it unfair that you can always enjoy alone time and your friends can never enjoy spending time with you in a place that energizes them? Say yes from time to time and see what happens. At least your friends will feel happy you acknowledge their needs.

If you want to develop strong friendships, take the initiative. Give more, and you will receive more. Invite your friends to hang out in a place you don’t totally love, call them instead of always texting them, and go to a party occasionally if you want to be more engaged in their lives.

If your friends always call you unannounced to “catch up” and only want to go with you to parties to get drunk, then perhaps they aren’t a good fit for you. But if you can enjoy a quiet cup of coffee with your friends and have deeply satisfying conversations with them, isn’t it worth it to invest a bit more in such a wonderful relationship?

You Don’t Display Emotions

Imagine your friend telling you in a happy voice about something positive happening in her life and your reaction is a flat, “That’s nice.” There are few reactions that can deflate someone’s happiness more than such a behavior. It may sound like a little thing to you – “But I said, ‘That’s nice.’ What’s wrong?” – but it can be a harsh blow for your friend who can think you don’t care if she’s happy or not.

Some introverts don’t like displaying their emotions because they believe it to be a sign of weakness. However, being vulnerable, as difficult as it is, helps you to better connect with other people. If you’re hiding your emotions from other people, they never know what you really feel, which makes it hard for them to relate to you.

If you hide your emotions, you’ll also have a hard time learning empathy, one of the most powerful social skills. Being able to look at things from the perspective of your friend (and that includes being aware of her feelings) will help you avoid or resolve conflicts as well as strengthen your relationships.

You don’t have to grin like an idiot all the time or jump from joy whenever someone shares positive news with you. But don’t stand there stone-faced, either. Show your friend that you’re genuinely happy because of her happiness – even if it feels unnatural to you. It’s just another skill to learn that will improve your social life.
Closing Thoughts

I wrote this book to help fellow introverts understand that their introversion doesn’t have to hold them back when socializing. In fact, it can be a valuable asset and something that makes you stand out in a good way.

The first step to improve your social life as an introvert is to change your beliefs about introversion. If you start thinking of it as a gift instead of a curse, you’ll find ways to make the most out of it. Review the chapter about your strengths to learn how introversion can help you develop your social life.

The second step to improve your social life is to practice a lot. We covered all of the most important aspects of socializing. You also learned numerous ideas how to practice it. The remaining step is to pick an area to work on, close this book and put the advice to use in the real world.

To your introversion,

Nate

P.S. Before I write the last words in this book, I’d like to encourage you to sign up for my newsletter for introverts here: http://eepurl.com/bbPIn9.

As a thank you gift, you’ll get a completely free book with tips on how to be a happy introvert. If you’re willing to leave a review, you’ll also get access to all my incoming titles before I publish them.
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Books by Nate Nicholson

I write books for people who want to grow and learn about new things every single day. Some of the topics I cover in my books include introversion, happiness, and self-confidence.

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