

5 Common Social Situations Introverts Can't Stand

by Steven Bancarz

Introverts are people who primarily look inward, paying close attention to their thoughts and emotions. They do a lot of internal processing. It's not that they are incapable of paying attention to what is going on around them, they just don't really see a point in doing that.

Introverts are known to be quiet and reclusive individuals. This isn't because they're shy, it's because they don't see a point in saying words that aren't worth saying. They aren't anti-social, they are just selectively social and carefully choose who they spend their time and energy with. They aren't nerds or geeks, they would just rather stay inside than be out all night on the weekends.

As an introvert, I know what it's like to have to deal with all of the social struggles introverts typically go through. I have also learned a great deal of coping strategies to help navigate social situations as an introvert, which will be covered in a future article. But for now, here are 5 common social situations that introverts can't stand.

First we will look at the social situation, and then the thought processes that go through the introverts mind during the social situation:

1) Introductions

Introductions are awkward for introverts. Meeting new people isn't something that comes naturally for them, and quite frankly it's not something that's very important to them. When introverts meet new people naturally, it happens smoothly and unfolds how it needs to. But when introductions are forced, it always results in anxiety, stress, and discomfort.

Thought processes: "Now I have to pretend to care about meeting this person. How do I keep a conversation going? What do I do when it gets awkward? Smile more, pretend you're more excited to meet them. Make eye contact. Ok the energy of the conversation is dying off a bit, this looks like a good time to abort. I'll just say I need to use the washroom."

2) Parties & Events

Introverts typically hate parties and social events. Too much energy. Too much noise. Any too many people that they have nothing in common with. An introverts favourite part of partying is sitting outside with a small group of friends and talking, or having a deep conversation with someone about life. Sometimes, even small social gatherings are enough to make introverts feel uncomfortable, because then they feel like the people around them expect them to contribute to the conversation.

Thought processes: "I can't wait to go home and be in bed. I wish I was watching Netflix right now. Don't make eye contact with John across the room. You don't have much in common and haven't talked since highschool. Aside from "hi", you have nothing to say to him. A conversation with him would be

shallow and awkward. I'm just going to say I feel sick and take a cab home. At least I made an appearance."

3) Elevators

Elevators are fine, as long as there is nobody else in it with them. Introverts will hope that the elevator is empty, and have a brief moment of suspense as the elevator door opens. Once they are stuck inside with someone, they will either take out their phone, or try to distract themselves from the awkward energy. Small talk in situations like this is so pointless, but for some reason it's still expected of society.

Thought processes: "Please don't say anything about the weather. What floor are they going to? Oh good, they'll be off soon. I feel like they want me to say hi but I don't want to. Just another 30 seconds to kill. I'll just pretend to text someone so they think I'm busy."

4) Family Gatherings & Reunions

For introverts, family gatherings are usually fine when it is with their immediate family that they grew up with. The deeper you start going into the family tree, the more uncomfortable introverts begin to feel. Aunts and uncles are fine sometimes, but hanging out in a room full of their moms second cousins and their families is almost unbearable. Thank god for the cool uncle who likes to talk about conspiracies and spirituality with you.

Thought processes: "Do you really want a hug from me? We are hardly related and I don't even know you. How can I make it seem like I am happy to be around these people. Am I even blood-related to these people? Just because you are my dad's step-brother's wife's sister doesn't mean I want to hear about your life. Thank God my brother is here or I would feel so uncomfortable."

5) Job interviews

For introverts, interviews are a time where they have to reach deep inside themselves and pretend like they are actually social. They have to make a conscious effort to be outgoing and happy in order to make an impression, and this is a hefty task for introverts.

Thought processes: "Smile, laugh when he makes a joke. Was that a joke? Do a light chuckle anyways. Say that you love interacting with people so he thinks you'll make a good employee. Don't forget to shake his hand at the end. Just keep acting, you're almost done."

If you are reading this as an extrovert or as only a partial introvert, this may seem like introverts are rude or mean. In reality, introverts just want to be accepted for who they are, without societal expectations being forced upon them.

Life for introverts is not easy. Society expects a lot and tends to call introverts anti-social, cranial, depressed, or shy when all they want is some quiet time to themselves. Who wrote the rules saying we have to enjoy partying in our 20's, or have to like talking with or children's friends parents in our 40's?

If you're an introvert and you are struggling with these kinds of situations, the key is to stop caring that people expect you to behave a certain way. Be comfortable being yourself. If the people around you don't approve, that's their problem.