

Introduction

“I think many of us are dynamic. We just make less fuss and noise about being dynamic than some extraverts. Our energy and enthusiasm is often hidden from the external world.”

Dr. Judy Curson¹

What is a dynamic introvert? Is a dynamic introvert an oxymoron, two words that seemingly contradict one another (think jumbo shrimp) or can introverts really be dynamic?

As I began to explore what it meant to be an introvert I discovered that these individuals identify themselves in surprisingly different ways. There are self-described social introverts, extroverted introverts, quiet introverts, conscious introverts, fearless introverts and accessible introverts.

In contrast, a quick look at the thesaurus suggests that introverts are cool, collected, introspective, bashful, with- drawn, and solitary. More often than not it is these words that we associate with introverted behaviour. I also believe that we see what we want or expect to see so it is no wonder that we only see the quiet, reserved introverts in our lives. We tend to overlook the more dynamic introverts among us, perhaps believing that the more social of us are really extroverts and not introverts at all.

My leadership journey began many years ago. As a child I loved building forts in our basement and in the rafters of the car port. I also loved exploring on my own. For a time when I was 8 years old we lived in a rural area and I would disappear for hours by myself. We had farmland and a peat bog behind us and the Fraser River across the road in front of our house so I had lots of places to investigate. One of my favourite memories involves spending time on my own quietly exploring the peat bog in winter. The land between the farm I lived on and the bog was populated with large evergreen trees and when it snowed I would spend hours staying dry under the trees hidden away from the world.

Looking back I realize that I was fearless in my solo explorations but my courage vanished once I was in school. You see I was terrified of being called upon by my teachers to answer questions in front of other students. At that age, I had no idea that I was an introvert.