

34. ENERGY IN CRISES - PERSONALITY 1

*Introverts seek solitude to
recharge their energy after
socializing.*

#NCSAMENTALHEALTHDEVOTIONS

ENERGY IN CRISES - PERSONALITY 1

Isaiah 40:29: "He gives strength to the weary and to him who lacks might, He increases power."

Have you ever felt that your 'spirit' has been exhausted and overtaxed? Perhaps you are feeling drained right now? This probably just means that you need to **recharge**. We do this in different ways, depending on our personality type. Because we are living with various personality types in our homes, I will discuss the different personality types and how each type is recharged. It is good to know and to understand each other so that we can navigate these differences in a crisis. The classification of personality types comes from the Myers-Briggs Indicator (MBT). There are four different types of personalities (or let me call it choices to make) in terms of who people are and how they live life.

The **first** type is how people get **energised**. Most people are energised through either spending time alone or spending time with people. This is referred to as an *introvert* verses an *extrovert*. Energy is gained in different ways, being an introvert or an extrovert.

The **second** one is how people **receive information**. We receive information in different ways. Some people like to stick with the facts while others like to go with their gut. This is referred to as a *sensing* person verses a person who uses his/her *intuition*.

The **third** is how they **make choices**. Some people sit and think things through, they look at all the facts.

HOW YOU GET ENERGISED, HOW
YOU RECIEVE INFORMATION, HOW
YOU MAKE CHOICES, AND HOW
YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON
YOUR PERSONALITY.

Then there are others who go on their feelings – they make choices based on how they feel. This is the *thinking* group versus the *feeling* group.

The **fourth** choice is how people **live their lives**. Do they live their lives through careful planning and executing their plans or are they more of a happy go lucky, go with the flow type of person? We call these two categories the *judging* type and the *perceiving* type.

You have probably already identified with one or more of these. We will explore each of these types in the next four presentations. For this presentation I am going to focus on the aspect of **gaining energy**. How does your personality type gain energy? Are you getting your energy through extroversion or through introversion actions?

Your personality type is formed through preference. You can also combine the four that I've mentioned and that then forms your specific personality type. You may be an extrovert who goes with your gut and you make choices based on your feelings and you like planning. Or you may be an introvert who likes to use the facts but you go with your thinking and you use judging, or planning to live your life. That's a different personality type.

The four basic types of personalities (i.e. gaining energy, receiving information, making choices and planning your life), have 16 different combinations. In other words, 16 different personality types that you can combine in order to be you. Your personality type is formed through your preferences. We need to understand that we are not so moulded in cement that we cannot change. We **can** change. As a matter of fact, circumstances sometimes change us. Other times we **want** to change.

**ARE YOU GETTING YOUR ENERGY
THROUGH EXTROVERSION OR
THROUGH INTROVERSION ACTIONS?**

The personality type you are functioning in right now, is your preference. It is your choice. It is the place where you feel most comfortable. Let me demonstrate what a preference is. Where you are sitting right now, please cross your arms. You've crossed your arms in a very specific way. Now try to cross your arms in any other way. Does it feel a bit strange? You can do it but it is not so easy. There is no right or wrong way of folding your arms, but you prefer to fold your arms the way that is more comfortable or easier or natural for you. This is a preference. It doesn't feel so natural when you do it the other way, but you can do it the other way.

The different personality types are established because you have a preference to something which feels comfortable and you are naturally inclined to do it that way. But it is not impossible to learn to do it the other way, you can learn it. There are two reasons why you need to understand personality types. Why is it important to understand where you are and what your preference is versus some of your family members and what their preferences are?

The **first** reason is that it will help you to **understand more about yourself**. It will help you to know more about the things that come easily to you versus the things which are a little more difficult, which are going to take a little more effort out of you.

The **second** reason is for you to **understand others**. To realise that the other people are not trying to be spiteful, but they just think about life differently. It will help you to understand that the other person in your life, your family member or whoever, is not trying to drive you nuts on purpose. They just think, feel and act differently towards you because of their personality preferences.

**THE PERSONALITY TYPE YOU ARE
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How the world looks to them and how they feel they should act and what feels more appropriate and easier for them in certain circumstances could be much different from yours.

We are focusing on where you get your energy from in terms of where you are right now, in lockdown and under pressure because of COVID-19. The place where people get their energy from, is either from being alone, or being with people. In other words some people are introverts and others are extroverts. You may have already identified where your preference is in terms of gaining your energy. Is it by being alone (introvert) or is it by being with people (extrovert)?

If COVID-19 has stressed you out and depleted your battery pack, where do you go to recharge your battery pack? Where will you get the physical energy for your body, the psychological energy for your mind, your emotional energy and your spiritual energy from? It depends on whether you are an introvert or an extrovert. These two personality types receive energy from different sources. Different situations will either recharge you or deplete you even further. This is extremely important to understand if you live in a family with introverts and extroverts.

The place where the **introverts** feel most charged, where they feel rejuvenated and refreshed and feeling better, is when they focus inwardly – when they spend time alone with their thoughts, thinking things through, doing things in their own time and in their own way, alone. They are naturally stimulated by their inner thoughts, their feelings and their ideas. They seek solitude and aloneness to recharge their energy after they've been socialising and interacting with the outside world for long periods of time. The outside world for the introvert is a place that saps and depletes their energy.

**THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE GET
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WITH PEOPLE.**

Extroverts on the other hand, gain their energy from focusing outwardly. They are fuelled by the outside world and by meeting other people and socialising with people – talking, chatting and sharing ideas. They become drained if they spend too much time alone. They almost suffer from a type of withdrawal symptom when they are alone for too long. They need to see their friends and other people to recharge.

See how these two types are completely different? When you live in a home where you have an introvert and an extrovert, you can clash with one another because the one person needs the other one's attention all the time to be recharged, while the other needs time alone. If you are in each other's company all the time, one is going to be depleted. When one person withdraws all the time, the other one is not going to be energised. You need to compromise if you want to gain energy for both people within the home. You need to spend time together and you need to spend time apart. It is like a charger. Extroverts get charged by sharing and interacting with others while introverts get charged when they are in their own thoughts doing their own thing in their own space.

When a crisis arises, your battery tends to drain faster because you will be spending more energy on solving problems and working harder at solutions. Taking care of your own pressing needs and the needs of those around you are going to drain your battery faster. It is like when you use your phone a lot, the battery doesn't last long. I've been telling my husband that my phone's battery does not last as long as I am used to because lately I've been using my phone for my research and my recordings and everything else that I am doing.

**INTROVERTS & EXTROVERTS IN
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It is exactly the same with you during a time of crisis. You have to think more. You feel more. Your emotions are heightened. You have to do more in order to maintain everything with the result that your battery is going to drain quicker and you need to charge it more often.

Now be aware, if you are an extrovert and you are living with an introvert, it means that you recharge differently. In a crisis, the introvert may isolate and withdraw more and speak even less than what they usually do. This may cause a lot of distress inside you, the extrovert. You may think that the other person is angry with you, or planning to dump you or do not love you anymore. And if you ask them for attention or smother them by trying to get their attention back, they are going to withdraw even more. Please be careful of this. Allow them time to recharge and let them come back in their own time. If it takes too long, you can remind them about your need to recharge by spending some time together.

When you are the introvert, be aware of the extrovert within your home. After you've recharged in your alone time, take time to go out and socialise with your family. Don't overcharge. Spend time with the extroverts of the home, so that they can recharge and gain energy again and to prevent them from freaking out because they think you are not interested in them or you don't love them anymore.

A classic example of an introvert in the Bible comes from the book of **Job**. I believe Job was an **introvert**. When crises hit Job's life, what did he do? When he became sick, he left his home.

EXTROVERTS GET CHARGED BY
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He went outside to the city's trash heap and there he sat, alone in the dust, tearing his clothes, scratching himself with a shard. Job didn't go to his friends or his family for consolation. He sat alone on the ash heap and talked to God. This is often what introverts do and we may not understand what is happening to them and why they are doing that. Then we may follow them just like Job's friends did. They followed him and they overwhelmed him and they spoke to him for hours and hours on end, thinking that their talking was going to give him energy. Maybe they were extroverts gaining energy from talking to people and being encouraged by them and being around them. It was just the complete opposite of what Job needed, because after all their talking he was really irritated. As a matter of fact, after they talked his ears red with advice and criticism, Job eventually said to them: "If only you could be silent! That's the wisest thing that you could do" (Job 13:5). This may seem rude on Job's part, but he had been so overwhelmed and drained, that he just told them to leave him alone so that he could recharge. Job's reaction of: "I don't need your advice. I don't need your presence. I just need to be alone here on this ash heap with my Lord and talk to my God and sort things out in my head", is the typical reaction of an introvert.

Another classical example of an **introvert** is Moses. As **Moses** fulfilled such a big leadership role, you may doubt whether he was an introvert. In the beginning of his leadership, Moses was totally dependent on his sister Miriam and his brother Aaron.

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When God called him through the burning bush and asked him to go back to Egypt and speak to Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, Moses replied that he couldn't. He used all kinds of excuses not to go to Egypt. This sounds like a classical introvert who says he cannot talk in front of the church – stage fright type of thing. This is not social distancing, but introverts prefer being on their own. They don't like big crowds, or speaking in front of big crowds, unless they've done their research well, of course.

In crises, extroverts may end up acting in a different way. While an introvert isolates and spends more time inwardly, an extrovert needs to become more social and talkative and they may even act out and say silly things. Their need to be social has increased because their energy is also sapped.

There are examples of **extroverts** in the Bible. We can also learn from their actions when they experienced a crisis. Look at how **Peter** acted, whether it was good or bad. When Jesus predicted that one of the disciples was going to betray and leave Him, Peter immediately jumped up and said he will never betray Him. He turned to the other disciples and said maybe one of them would, but he would never betray Jesus. An immediate, irrational response from Peter, where he tried to talk himself out of the situation. He tried to come up with a solution by turning on the others and pointing to them as betrayers. Finally, when they were in the Garden of Gethsemane and the people arrested Jesus, Peter did the classical extrovert thing.

FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING, IN YOUR HOME JOB IS SITTING ON A TRASH HEAD AND HE JUST WANTS TO BE LEFT ALONE AND ON THE OTHER HAND PETER WANTS TO TRY AND ANSWER EVERYTHING AND DO EVERYTHING TO FIX THE PROBLEM IN A TYPE OF COMMUNAL WAY.

Not only did he talk immediately, he also acted quickly and took out his sword and chopped off the High Priest's servant's ear. It can happen that you end up in a house with introverts during lockdown. While you need that social interaction as an extrovert, you tend to talk more and sometimes not talk very good things. You tend to act more and do more things and try getting others involved and rally the troops and maybe the troops don't want to be rallied. Figuratively speaking, in your home Job is sitting on a trash heap and he just wants to be left alone and on the other hand Peter wants to try and answer everything and do everything to fix the problem in a type of communal way.

If you have a Job in your house, or if you have a Peter in your house, how is that working out for you? Are you able to understand each other's differences in recharging and do you give each other the needed space, or the needed social interaction?

There's a joke on Facebook where they say introverts must please check on their extrovert friends or family members during lockdown, because they're not okay. It is not really funny, it actually is the truth because during the lockdown extroverts are not able to socially interact with their friends and colleagues. Under normal circumstances they used to speak to their friends and their colleagues at work, even with the lady at the till. But now they are not under normal circumstances. They cannot go out and get their energy from those other people anymore, so guess where they will try to get their energy from? From you...! You are at home with them and they are going to expect you to spend more time with them. If you are an introvert it is going to drain you more.

**SADLY IN THE WESTERNISED
CULTURE, EXTROVERTS ARE
PROMOTED, APPLAUDED AND SEEN
AS THE BETTER CHOICE THAN
BEING AN INTROVERT.**

Be aware of these differences. Try to navigate through these differences during the time of crisis. If you are an extrovert and you are stuck at home with somebody who prefers introversion, this is going to be a difficult time. Please understand that introversion and extroversion are preferences. It is a safety in which the person feels most comfortable during times of panic and distress. You want those within your home to feel comfortable and you will have to understand that they are not being rude or all of a sudden not interested in you anymore. Introverts are going to want to take time to be alone, to think and reflect and sort through the problems. Extroverts are going to want to talk and be around people and sort through the problems together, to get feedback, to see that you are listening and to know you are there to help them work through the problem in a communal type of way.

This can become problematic. Silences or empty spaces are places for extroverts to fill. For introverts, silence is a space to be cherished. There is such a big difference between them and neither is right or wrong. Just be aware of one another's differences. Talk about how you feel. This will help you to get a sense of where you all are. Extroverts are going to talk and that helps them to work through things and make sense of it. Introverts are going to think about how they feel and usually sort it out internally and then has little need to talk about it later. They may want to talk about it once they have cleared it for themselves. Because we each have a specific preference, we need to be aware of the fact that we can make others around us feel like they are wrong, or not good enough, or cause feelings of guilt.

**IF YOU ARE AN EXTROVERT AND
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BUT POSSIBLE.**

We may try to force them to be more extroverted or more introverted. Accept each other's preferences but don't neglect the other possibility.

Preferences are also different in the different cultures. In the westernised culture, extroverts are promoted, applauded and seen as the better choice. The introvert is often acquainted with strange, sometimes even judgmental glances because they prefer to spend time alone, to stay inside and to enjoy a book rather than going out to a party. Because of this cultural bias that naturally exists within us, we tend to love the extrovert and shun the introvert. The introvert will then feel pressured to conform to the standard of the perfect personality type, the extrovert.

Because God made each personality type, be careful of calling the extrovert the better personality type and the introvert the not so good personality type. Each type has its strengths and its weaknesses. One of the weaknesses of extroverts is that they can be very cruel to introverts in telling them that they are wrong and horrible and they must come out of their shell. Please be careful not to do this. The one is not right and the other one wrong. When these two personality types get to know each other, they can help one another to become better people.

There is a verse in the Bible that says: "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens the other" (Proverbs 27:17). I believe this means as you live together in a home where you are not the same, you can sometimes challenge one another, even in a crisis, to learn from each other how to recharge.

I believe you have both personality types within you, you just tend to like the one side more than the other.

**I BELIEVE WE ALL HAVE BOTH
PERSONALITY TYPES WITHIN US,
WE JUST TEND TO LIKE THE ONE
SIDE MORE THAN THE OTHER.**

You may prefer introversion to extroversion or extroversion to introversion, but you could get some skills in the non-preferred area because that may help you to be flexible in your thoughts, feelings and your actions and to be able to, from time to time, accommodate others in their needs so that they can also recharge.

Your preference will not work in every life situation, especially not in a home where you live with various preferences. So it is good to learn to adapt. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:22: *“I have become all things for all people.”* I think Paul referred to a social setting, where he was among people of different preferences. When he was with the introverts, he might have spoken slower and be calmer; and when he was with the extroverts, he might have given them more hugs and be all around them and talked louder and faster. So, he learnt to adapt, depending on who he was interacting with. Can you do the same? Does that mean Paul stopped being Paul? I don't know whether Paul was an introvert or an extrovert, but he said in 1 Corinthians 15:10 that he was still himself. He adapted, but he was still Paul: *“But by the grace of God I am what I am.”* Beautiful isn't it?

Looking at the life of all the characters in the Bible, we will notice that as much as they had a preference, they did not stay the same. They were able to adapt through the hardships of life. They learnt that sometimes it was necessary to learn the skills of the other side. Job went and sat on the ash heap, but he eventually went back to his home, to his wife.

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Peter, who always had something to say, although it wasn't always good what he said, improved later. He became more cautious with his words when he spoke. He became more reliable, where before he was unreliable. He was an impetuous hothead. He was boastful, he lacked humility and he was unstable. In his extroversion, he also had some good traits with the bad ones. He was a generous man. He was warm, outgoing and enthusiastic. He was a man of very strong emotions and a natural leader. He was very devoted to Jesus. But he had to learn some lessons of humility and submission to God in being ready to suffer for the sake of God. And clearly he learnt those things as we see him in the end suffering for Christ and even martyred for the sake of the gospel. He learned to use his tongue wisely, to rather boast in the Lord than to boast in himself.

Just because you are an extrovert, doesn't mean you know how to be a good extrovert. You still need to be refined. If you are a circle, you still need to cut away on those rough edges and you still need to learn some of the finer things in life. Some of those introversion skills may not be a bad idea to be learned. To be a little bit quieter and think before you run with your natural thing of just talking and acting without thinking.

Moses who could not speak well, didn't stay that way either. He lifted himself up. He overcame many difficulties in his introverted personality. I am not saying wrong characteristics, but he learned that after he took some time in thinking and planning, he could also go out and speak to the people and be the mighty man he was.

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He became a mighty leader and later Aaron didn't talk on his behalf anymore, Moses talked for himself. He didn't leave his introversion personality, he simply acquired new skills, so that he could adapt in certain situations. I still believe Moses sometimes left the crowd and went inside his tent to pray to God alone. He recharged on his own after the Israelites had sapped his energy.

I ask myself whether the one type is right and the other one wrong? We can get the answer to this question from the life of Jesus. Was Jesus an introvert or an extrovert? The words 'follow Me' were often on Jesus's lips. Whenever He spoke, He drew large crowds to follow Him. Jesus would also break away from the masses to be alone on the mountain to pray. On other occasions, Jesus sent His disciples across the Sea of Galilee and He stayed behind. After He dispersed the crowd, He went up the mountain and He prayed. If you ask the question whether Jesus was an introvert or an extrovert, I believe it is safe to say that He was both, just like you and I have both inside us. I believe He learned to navigate the introversion and extroversion at the appropriate times and how to somehow find that balance. We must learn how to grow and be flexible and be able to jump between the two if the occasion calls for it. Yes, we do have a default where we find our safety and maybe find our recharge and we should go there. It will not hurt us though, to come out from time to time and acquire those extra skills so that we can use them one day when we need them.

We need to learn to adapt. I am right-handed, but when I was in grade five, I heard using my right hand only develops the left side of my brain.

**IF YOU ASK THE QUESTION
WHETHER JESUS WAS AN
INTROVERT OR AN EXTROVERT, I
BELIEVE IT IS SAFE TO SAY THAT
HE WAS BOTH, JUST LIKE YOU
AND I HAVE BOTH INSIDE US.**

In my young girl's mind I didn't want to be lopsided and have one side of my brain developed only and the other side not. So I started using my left hand. I started drawing with my left hand. I started writing with my left hand. As an adult I even added doing other activities with my left hand. I started brushing my teeth with my left hand. I use my right and my left hand, by the way. I started playing pool with my left and my right hand. I started learning how to play cricket with my left and my right hand. I can bat with left and right, I can throw with left and right. My mind still struggles and it hasn't become as natural as it is with my right hand, but if the occasion calls for it, I can use my left hand. I cut food with my left, I squeeze lemons with my left and my right hand. With some activities, I find it easier to use my left hand. But for other activities, when I don't concentrate, I use my right hand. I've noticed that from time to time, without thinking about it or making a conscious choice, I ended up using my left hand. I can easily swop between the two, but I fall back on my good old faithful right hand and there's nothing wrong with that.

I think that is exactly how it works with our temperaments or our personalities. In using my right and my left hand, I have become what we call ambidextrous. ("Ambi" means "both ways".) I believe Jesus was not ambidextrous, but ambivert. Therefore He maintained the balance between being an extrovert and being an introvert. I know you too can become ambiverts, but you will still go back to your preference of being an introvert or an extrovert. Being an ambivert you can call on the other type if need be. You can learn to be an ambivert, not because society makes you feel insufficient or unwanted or unloved or pressurised into being the one instead of the other, but because you are neither introverted nor extroverted.

**WE MUST LEARN HOW TO GROW
AND BE FLEXIBLE AND BE ABLE
TO JUMP BETWEEN THE TWO IF THE
OCCASION CALLS FOR IT.**

You are both, the one is just stronger than the other. You can develop the other side to be stronger as well. It will never be exactly like the preferred one, I think, unless God comes and helps you. He is always at our disposal.

You need to learn to balance the two like Jesus. It is good to be balanced, so that you can have harmony within your home, so that you can be there for the needs of others and understand their needs and be accommodative to them when they are in a crisis.

Our personalities need to be submitted to God so that the Holy Spirit can work in us to produce the fruit of the Spirit. Allow Jesus to work in you and through you to perfect the combination of the two preferences so that God can bring about the desired life He has planned for you.

**ALLOW JESUS TO WORK IN YOU
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