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PLEASE DON'T SHATTER MY DIAMOND

By Nancy R. Fenn

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What makes an introvert an introvert? We can skip some of the involved definitions and tell you three things to look for that are a dead giveaway: living in an inner world, being territorial and a strong aversion to environmental stimulants, such as noise. In an age where cell phones are proliferating, noise pollution is becoming a serious ill to many introverts. Too much noise can affect our peace of mind and our emotional and physiological well being, causing serious stress related problems such as irritability, chronic fatigue syndrome and premature aging.

Here is a statement made by Sara-Ann, an introvert in her late twenties who responded to one of the polls on the IntrovertZCoach website. Sara-Ann says, "When I was a kid, I liked to run around outside when there were too many people in the house (like the T.V. was on and someone was cooking in the kitchen and there was lots of noise). I often played by myself in my room while listening to classical music on my transistor radio starting at about 4 years old."

Sara-Ann is giving preferences few people would believe could come from a 4 year old but that is because "few people" are introverts. 70% of the people in America are extroverts and have little knowledge of how offensive noise and other environmental pollutants are to those with whom they share the planet (30% introverts).

Those brightly lit, noisy shopping malls, loud and crowded cruise ships, movie theaters with wrap around sound and network gatherings in the hundreds are designed to stimulate and thrill extroverts but are deadly to the peace of mind and physical well being of introverts who gasp for breath, grab their aching heads and sometimes even head for the bathroom with an upset stomach ... often beating themselves up in the process wondering why they "can't have fun".

Let's learn more about introversion so we can support ourselves in avoiding crowds, lights and noise without feeling bad about it. In shared public space introverts don't expect to dominate the tonal experience of the majority - or at least we have no hopes of it - but we can learn to make informed choices and we can also learn not to apologize for ourselves.

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Sometimes we can even learn to ask that exhibitionist on the cell phone to "Please, shhhhh! You're talking too loud"!

I was amazed to find this essay several weeks ago written most likely around 1800 (!) by the German philosopher Arnold Schopenhauer. Before your eyes glaze over, let me assure you it's message is succinct and cogent two hundred years later in the New Millennium.

One of Germany's greatest philosophers begins by saying that "banging and hammering and general noise-making has been a daily torment" to him all his life. "There are people," he says, "who are insensitive to noise, but these are the same people who are insensitive to argument, ideas, to poetry and works of art, in short to intellectual impressions of every kind" because of their "tough constitution" and the "firm texture" of their brain. It's pretty obvious to me he's describing the difference between

introverts and extroverts and doing this very nicely.

Schopenhauer also explains that other writers have had the same problem. He mentions Kant, Goethe and several others not well known today. I myself have a quote from Goethe which says, "My greatest wealth is the deep stillness in which I strive and grow and win what the world cannot take from me with fire or sword."

Schopenhauer continues by describing how disruptive it is when a racket occurs. Some introverts on my Sparrow Retreat Introverts Forum have described neighbors using snow blowers at 1:30 in the morning, hot tub parties til break of dawn with screaming and explicit language, working on cars over the weekend with radios blaring, squawking PA systems and, most inappropriately of all, cell phones invading every bit of privacy we have left.

As one man wrote, "Noise pollution? I think this is true. Perfect example: I'm in the bathroom at work standing at a urinal, doing my business. If someone walks in – another introvert – they will just do their business and leave. If an extrovert – like one of the sales guys – walks in – immediately conversation ensues. `How bout those Mets?' type conversation. Drives me berserk."

A woman on the Forum replied, "If you think that's bad, I've been in the women's room when someone initiates a call from the stall next to me and carries on a perky conversation with their boyfriend. That's when I start flushing the toilet so perhaps she will be ashamed when someone on the other end hears what she's doing. What has happened to people's sense of decency?"

Aside from annoyance in public places, noise can disrupt one of the things we introverts do best, contemplation. Introverts learn by turning facts into knowledge. We like to "think it over" and "connect the dots". Contrary to popular belief by suspicious extroverts, that is more than likely what we are doing in our rooms with the doors closed - thinking something over!

Schopenhauer explains beautifully what happens when noise these deep thoughts of ours. "I explain the matter as follows," he says. "as when a large diamond is broken to pieces its value is equal to only so many little diamonds, or when an army is reduced to small units it becomes ineffective, so when a great mind is interrupted, disturbed and distracted it is capable of no more than a commonplace mind,

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because its superiority consists in concentrating all its forces on one single point and object, in the same way as a concave mirror concentrates all its rays, and this is precisely what noisy interruption prevents it from doing."

Schopenhauer is referring to the fantastic ability most introverts have to focus. This is one of the reasons we get our work done at work rather than sitting around the coffee room indulging in small talk. This isn't even tempting to most of us. Most of us would rather die than small talk, truth be known. While we concentrate, we pull all our thoughts together to focus them on a point, contrast, synthesis or greater understanding. This is the way we think. This is the way we learn. When that process is interrupted, all is lost!

Schopenhauer continues, "That is why eminent minds have always been so extremely averse to every kind of disturbance, interruption and distraction, and most of all to violent interruption by noise, while the rest are not especially troubled by it." Perhaps not all introverts have "eminent" minds, and certainly few have minds like Schopenhauer; however, there is a known statistical correlation between introversion, giftedness, PhDs and Phi Beta Kappas. It would seem that the higher you go in education and IQ intelligence, the ratio of introverts to extroverts reverses itself with a majority of Rhodes

Scholars being introverts, for example.

Think of the most beautiful library you have ever seen a picture of and how soothing it is to imagine yourself sitting there reading or contemplating in "perfect" silence. Now that's what we call "fun"! Almost every introvert I know, when dragged on a cruise, spends their time in the ship's library. For us, silence can be very golden.

Last time I was in Las Vegas — extrovert Heaven — my table at breakfast permitted me to eat, drink, chit chat, watch games on TV, buy tickets, mark cards and romance the waitress all at the same time. This is extrovert Heaven. Extroverts welcome diversion, distraction and interruption. What goes on in their minds? Schopenhauer said it pretty well, "Where there is nothing to interrupt, to be sure, it will cause no especial discomfiture."

Nancy R. Fenn is the IntrovertZCoach. Her mission in life is to raise consciousness about introversion as a legitimate personality style. Visit Nancy on the web at www.theintrovertzcoach.com

Diamond Flaws And Inclusions

By Burt Cotton

Internal Diamond Flaws

When a diamond is considered to have a flaw, it is an imperfect gem stone. Something about the diamond did not form correctly, or there are tiny imperfections within the stone. Diamond flaws and inclusions are often not noticeable to the average person, and you need not worry about the small inclusions that occur in most diamonds. There are actually only very few diamonds which can be

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labeled "perfect", and if they are placed in the category of no diamond flaws and inclusions, chances are the diamond will be extremely expensive!

There are some minor inclusions which cause a diamond to appear slightly dull. The inclusion within the diamond can affect the stone's clarity because as light passes through the stone, it is intercepted by the inclusion. Many of these flaws and inclusions can be reduced or fixed with the various forms of treatment processes that gemologists and jewelers have learned to do over the years.

Other diamond flaws and inclusions may be large enough to cause weakness within the gem stone, and the stone could shatter or break much more easily than a stone without the weakness. These are the flaws you want to be careful with, since they reduce the value of your stone.

Pinpoint Inclusions

When a diamond has speckles of dark crystals in groups or scattered throughout the stone, it is said to have a form of diamond flaws and inclusions called pinpoint inclusions. If the dark crystals are all clustered together in the stone, the clarity of the diamond is effected, and it appears to have a "cloud" inside the stone. These types of diamond flaws and inclusions may cause the diamond to be worth less, as it greatly effects the appearance.

Problems from Laser Treatments

When an imperfect diamond is treated with lasers to remove dark diamond flaws and inclusions from within the gemstone, sometimes a line is left through the diamond that looks much like a thread. The laser line begins at the outer edge of the diamond, and moves inward to the area where the dark inclusion was treated by the laser. These diamond flaws and inclusions are unsightly and easily spotted by most people, making the diamond less desirable.

Mineral and Crystal Inclusions

While most diamond flaws and inclusions are negative, there are instances when the diamond flaws and inclusions are actually an eye catching aspect of your diamond! For example, diamonds typically have smaller crystals inside the diamond, often so tiny they cannot be seen without some sort of magnifying device. The clarity of the diamond can be effected by these crystals, if there are enough of them and if they are all grouped together in one area of the diamond.

There are a few rare instances when another gem stone is actually inside a diamond, and could certainly not be seen as a diamond flaw or inclusion. For example, if you had a ruby or emerald that

was surrounded by a diamond, you would see that as a special piece of jewelry– not a flawed one!

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