

Is it time to tackle discrimination against introverts?

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As some will be aware, there has been a discussion of introversion going on in the comments section of this blog as a result [of the post I made on Friday](#) which discussed the conditions for innovation to flourish.

In that comments section a person I do not know said, in response to discussion on the difficulties many introverts face in modern, open plan working environments

Thanks for your considered response.

I've no issues with your analysis — however what I'm unsure about is how this works in the world of work for the majority of people. It's not clear to me how a company can set up options for the majority of workers (rather than management types) who would like their own space. One example might be a car factory.

By way of background (which I never normally do as I have experienced people telling me what a bastard I am) — I worked at a senior level for a large financial services organisation in the call centre space. Also, I have set up and run my own call centre company. Clearly all recruits into these businesses had to be comfortable with open plan working & team dynamics with a lot of social activity (!). Otherwise the job is not for them. This also applies to management in this particular industry.

Innovation in this area is produced by professional management teams and technology suppliers. I've met some serious introverts in the deep weeds of major technology companies who were given what they wanted as their employers recognised the capability. But — this is a few people & cannot be replicated in the mass market.

In summary my point is — choice of occupation is critical for both extrovert and introverts.

Be interested in your view.

I took a day or two to consider this, partly because I was very tired yesterday and needed a good walk to get my head around anything.

My response is, I am afraid, fairly robust.

I know that once it was also said it was not possible to accommodate women in the workplace.

Or ethnic minorities.

Let alone those from the LGBTQ communities.

It was all 'just too hard, and upsetting for the majority' to do that.

Considering people as they are was not considered necessary. They had to comply or lose out. That was the doctrine.

And that is what I am hearing in this comment. Introverts should accept their lot and lose out if necessary.

I happen to think that is wrong. It is discrimination on the basis of a person's inherent human qualities. And that is unacceptable.

No one can be sure how many people are introvert. Fewer probably identify as such than probably are. But if you want to make a guess maybe half the population are, and for maybe half of them it's a big enough issue to impact on their lifestyle choices in a significant way. I'm guessing, but as a start point that seems fair.

I am one of those introverts, however well adjusted to social situations I can appear to be (which is why most people I know are surprised by the suggestion).

I could not work in an open plan office.

Should I be denied work opportunities in that case because I am an introvert?

If so, why?

Isn't this an issue that should be addressed?

And if not, why not?

I'm not trying to be awkward. But can anyone tell me why introverts should suffer discrimination in 21st century society?