



## Do you have multiple personalities?

In 2004, archaeologists digging in Israel unearthed the earliest evidence to date of the controlled use of fire — charred wood and seeds — at a site dating back 790,000 years. At least one academic believes this pivotal use of fire originated in part thanks to the proliferation of multiple personalities.

“I believe fire was discovered by a group of extroverts, cavemen sitting in a group, loudly banging rocks together,” said Dr. Brian Little, a psychology professor, during his keynote speech at the Golf Industry Show in San Diego Feb. 10. “After the extroverts discovered fire, however, I believe it was the introverts who, one by one, quietly kept the fire going.”

Little, a Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, kicked off his address with a 10-question personality quiz. Green Industry professionals were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest score, for each question.

To give you an overall sense of the pop quiz (and Little’s wit), one question was, “Are you a fast-paced person? ... If you’re still thinking about this one, go ahead and give yourself a low score.”

I scored a 64 out of 100. Go figure, I’m an extrovert. I scored well under 100 because sometimes I flex beyond my biological wiring, according to Little.

Based on certain cultural settings and projects I’m committed to, I exhibit introverted tendencies sometimes.

“This is just a baseline quiz — don’t tell people your scores,” Little said in a surprisingly serious tone.

“*Uh-oh, too late,*” I thought to myself.

Then after a five-second pause, Little chuckled and said, “Just kidding. We all know the extroverts immediately shared their scores with the introverts seated beside them, while the introverts haven’t even disclosed their scores to themselves.”

### Find the right mix

When hiring and developing people and forming internal teams, remember: You can’t always judge a book by its cover. Little, who has delivered more than 700 keynote speeches, is a self-admitted closet introvert.

A few introvert-versus-extrovert generalities, according to the psych professor, include:

▶ Introverts are marathoners; extroverts are sprinters: “An extrovert might say, ‘I’m the fastest brain surgeon in the country. What more do you want?’ And the extrovert might not think for a minute that his rushing might be the problem,” Little said.

▶ “When extroverts say, ‘I need a cup of coffee,’ they aren’t kidding. A little caffeine really helps extroverts kick it into gear,” Little said. “On the other hand, coffee can hinder the performance of introverts, particularly if they’re tackling quantitative, timed tasks.”

▶ Extroverts learn better in engaging, humorous, hands-on, group settings. Introverts, meanwhile, find those types of environments stifling, and prefer more traditional, classroom-type training. “You can almost hear the introverts whispering to themselves in kindergarten, ‘I can sit as still as a statue ... na-na, na-na, na-na ... And I’m gonna be an accountant,’” Little said.

“We desperately need both introverts and extroverts within our organizations,” Little said. “It’s a matter of survival, not just success. Mankind would be extinct without such diverse personalities. The key is getting everyone to accept their inherent personality differences, and then taking full advantage of your organization’s multiple personalities.”

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