

## How to Find Success as an Introverted Leader (#59)

### Jean's introduction 0:00

Hello, everybody. I am really pleased to bring this interview to you today. This is Carol Stewart, who has a masters in counseling psychology. She lives in London. Her specialty is introverted leadership. I've been following her for quite a while on LinkedIn. I get her email where she sends out tidbits for introverted leaders. She's on a mission to let people know that you can be introverted and a leader at the same time. I gravitated toward what she has to say because I tend towards introversion. I hope you enjoy her and I'm glad she's here.

Hi, Carol.

### Carol 0:52

Hi, Jean.

### Jean 0:53

I am so delighted that you're here. I'm going to tell you a story about how I happened to invite you in a minute. But first, I want to introduce you to the audience. Carol Stewart is the author of *Quietly Visible*, do I have that right? Yeah, *Quietly Visible*. She specializes in introversion and leadership; leaders who are introverts. A lot of people think I can't be a leader because I'm an introvert, I'm quiet. And she's here to tell you that the exact opposite is true. It is true, it is possible to be both a leader and an introvert. I have been following Carol on LinkedIn and I think maybe one other place for at least a year before I decided to invite her to talk. And because I'm an introvert -- people think I present as an extrovert, but I'm really an introvert. And we're going to talk about the difference in a minute. At least that's my self-diagnosis. You're the expert, so you'll be able to tell me. And so, this is why I invited her. She has a Master's in Coaching Psychology. She's an executive coach, leadership coach, facilitator, trainer, speaker, columnist; she's got an impressive background. And so, I am so glad you agreed to be here and I'm eager for us to talk.

### Carol 2:32

Thank you for inviting me on. I'm looking forward to our conversation.

### Jean 2:35

Oh, and I forgot to say she's in London. You all hear that. You can hear the difference because I'm Southern and she is in London and so we both speak English with different

accents. Okay, Carol. So first, I want to work into how you ended up specializing in introversion and leadership. My work is focused on leading in multicultural organizations. And I focus especially on racial and social justice. I'd like to understand your background in this arena. Tell about your growing up. How did you become interested in racial and social justice? How did you become specifically interested in introversion?

Carol 3:30

Okay, so as you said that I'm in London in the UK. I was born in the UK, but my parents were born in Jamaica, so they were immigrants to the UK. I don't know if you've heard of the Windrush generation?

Jean 3:47

What's that word again?

Carol 3:49

The Windrush generation. They came from Jamaica in the 1950s; between 1948 and I think it was the late 60s, early 1971. Many people from the Caribbean and Africa were invited to come to the UK to help build up the country after World War II. And so, my parents are part of that generation. And they call them "the Windrush generation" after the first ship that arrived from the Caribbean in 1948, which was called HMT Windrush, so they're known as the Windrush generation. So, I'm the first-born child.

Jean 4:27

Would you spell Windrush?

Carol 4:29

W-I-N-D-R-U-S-H.

Jean 4:35

Windrush. Okay.

Carol 3:55

Yeah, so that was the name of the ship, the first ship that came to the UK from the Caribbean, which was then part of the British Empire. And being the firstborn generation that is my experience of being in multicultural Britain, growing up in multicultural Britain. I was the only Black girl growing up in my class at school. Yes, I was the only Black girl in my class at school, so junior school, senior school, the only Black girl. But the area in which I grew up, we tended to find that when people settled in the UK, they settled in communities. And so, the area that

we lived in, although it was a predominantly White area, there was a community of Black people from the Caribbean that lived in that area. So, living next door to where we lived, there was another Black family. We were the only Black families on the road. And so, my early experience was one of being different, as in being in the minority as a Black person, and also being introverted. At the time, I didn't really know about introversion or understand it, but I just knew that I was quiet. And back then I used to mistake that quietness to a lack of confidence. And then as I sort of grew up and did a lot of work on my self-development, I began to realize I was actually quite a confident person, that it was because of the misconceptions around introversion, I had done what many people do, labeled myself in that way. And I had a long career working in the UK Ministry of Justice and I started off in a very junior role, worked my way up to a senior role, and I had operational responsibility for a group of magistrates' courts. Again, as someone being introverted amongst extroverted colleagues, I recognized that there was a difference in terms of how I interacted and engaged. And then it was in 2011, I decided to leave employment, to do a master's in coaching psychology and start my coaching business. And that's when I started to really get an understanding, better understanding of what introversion was, and understand myself better.

#### Jean 7:00

Okay, hang on. When you say you started to get an understanding, let's break that down. What was it that you understood introversion was? What did you recognize about yourself?

#### Carol 7:19

That it was okay to be introverted and it was a preference of the being, whereas because of the misconceptions around introversion, people think that introverts are shy, lack confidence. Like you said, people think introverts don't make good leaders. I had bought into those misconceptions myself, because I didn't understand it. And I even remember, once I was still in employment as a senior leadership team, we did The Myers-Briggs test. And when I got my results, I kept adding my scores, because I didn't want it to show as being introverted because of these misconceptions. Because I didn't understand what it meant. And to me, it was a very negative word, and I didn't want to really associate with it. But once I left employment, and I was doing a master's in coaching psychology, and studying the work of Carl Jung around introversion-extroversion, I really understood what it meant. And I realized that it's a preference, the being and interacting and engaging with the world. And that we all have a preference as to, you know, introversion and extroversion exists along a continuum and we all have a preference as to where we fit along there depending on the environment, the situation we are in, will determine where we fit, but some of us have a preference to be in one part more predominantly. And so, I recognized myself and I recognized that introversion was actually a strength; those things which I was seeing as a weakness were actually strengths.

Jean 9:00

Okay, so let's start right here. You thought you discovered the name of what you were experiencing when you took that Myers-Briggs test, correct?

Carol 9:13

Yeah.

Jean 9:15

And then you read the description of it. And then later, you dug into Carl Jung who was the predecessor, that was the theory on which The Myers-Briggs was built. When you understood that it was okay to be. So, very simply, contrast introversion with extroversion. Somebody who has not taken the Myers-Briggs test, how are they going to know which they are?

Carol 9:43

It's about how we interact and engage with the world. So, introverts are typically concerned with things which are internal to the mind, and can get overly stimulated by external events, external, being around lots of people in social environments where there's a lot of people. Spending too long in those environments can be draining because they are overly stimulating for us. Whereas people who are extroverted tend to thrive in those sorts of environments, because they are more concerned with things which are external to their mind. So being in those sorts of environments, social environments around other people, they are energized by that, whereas introverts are depleted of energy. And when we spend too long in those sorts of environments, we want to retreat and go somewhere where we can be on our own and recharge. So, it's not that we don't necessarily like being in those environments, it is the spending too long in those sorts of environments can be draining. And once we feel drained, we're less likely to want to interact and engage.

Jean 10:52

Okay, so I have a friend who's an extrovert. And when I was just figuring out this difference for myself, she went to meditate with a group of women. And last thing I would want to do if I want to meditate is be surrounded by a group of people. And she found it, of course, stimulating and relaxing to be meditating with women. And no way would that ever appeal to me. So that's the difference you're talking about.

Carol 11:28

Yes.

Jean 11:29

I get overstimulated in malls, for example. And I have friends who can't wait to go to some social gathering post COVID. And I think, "You all really, really want me to come out?" So, that's the difference. So, how you respond. Are there any other differences?

Carol 11:16

Yes, how we energize. And I'll give you an example, I have a son who is extroverted and he's very extroverted. And when he was younger (he's 32 now) but when he was studying for what we call GCSE's and A levels in the UK, he would study listening to fast paced music. This was before I really understood introversion. And I would say to him, turn the music down, because it's going to distract you. And he'd say, no mom. He said, it helps me to study, it helps me to focus. And I knew that for me I wouldn't be able to focus with that sort of upbeat, fast music on, but he did because he did really well in his GCSE's, in his A Levels and at university. And to me, that really highlights those differences.

Jean 12:50

Okay, so does fast movement, people, all of that, does that energize you or does that deplete you?

Carol 13:00

It depletes me if I'm too long in that sort of environment. Yeah.

Jean 13:04

So that's the question that people can answer for themselves. Now, I understand and you may not know that there are people like myself who present as extroverts, but who are not, who are introverts. Is that a distinction you talk about or is that a phenomenon or is that just something?

Carol 13:27

A lot of people can do that, because I'd sometimes get mistaken for being extroverted because I do public speaking, I network. And I was at a networking event once and I told a woman I was introverted, and she said, "Oh, you've don't look like an introvert." And I thought to myself, "Well, what is an introvert supposed to look like?" And you know, both introverts and extroverts need to be able to adapt and modify their behavior to different environments and situations in order to get the best outcome. So sometimes as introverts, we do need to be sociable. We do need to be more gregarious at times depending on what it is that we do for our careers, depending on what it is that we're doing. Just like extroverts also need to be a bit more reflective and maybe step back a bit. But one thing is, I've never heard

someone who's extroverted being told they need to act more introverted, but I often hear people who are introverted being told they need to act more extroverted.

#### Jean 14:33

Yes, that's absolutely so. Okay, so you network. How do you pull that off, for the introverts who really don't want to be around a group of people and certainly not around a group of strangers? What do you say in your mind? How do you get yourself psyched up to do that?

#### Carol 14:54

I know that when I'm networking because I have my own business, I know that I need to be networking in order to market and promote myself, I know that networking is a great way of doing that. And so, what I do is when I go networking, I don't think that I have to speak to as many people as possible making small talk. I prefer to have fewer more meaningful conversations, because introverts typically prefer conversation over quantity. So, extroverts typically will go networking, speaking to as many people as possible, whereas introverts don't necessarily like that because that can be draining. So, it's about being more strategic about how I network and thinking about the types of events I'd want to go to, who I want to connect with, so that when I go networking, being very strategic about it in that way, so that I don't get depleted.

#### Jean 15:53

Okay, when you say think about the type of networks, talk about what type do you prefer.

#### Carol 16:01

So, I don't really enjoy networking events where it's just a social gathering, when there's lots of people just talking. I prefer networking events where there's a theme, so maybe there's a speaker, or it might be a conference where it has a particular purpose, a particular theme. And then people maybe network in the breaks or have breakouts where they get to talk to each other. So, if it's just an event where people are coming together just to talk without a theme or purpose, I don't really enjoy those types of networking events.

#### Jean 16:36

Ha, okay. So, here's what you remind me of: I know, and I have a number of people of color—Black and even a couple of Hispanics—who are invited to social events at their job, the boss invites everybody over or the organization throws a party for employees, and they have to drag themselves to show up. The music is different, because they, you know, if they don't want the music, they don't want the crowds. If they are gay, they don't want to bring their partner. So, how do you advise people to handle that?

### Carol 17:16

What I would say to people is to look at the perspective that they have about it. Because if you're viewing it as: it's going to be an event, there's going to be a lot of noise, a lot of people that you don't really want to engage with, then that's going to not make you want to go there. I used to have a client who she was a lawyer and as part of her job she needed to network as part of the business development. And she likened it to going to a meat market, where everybody is trying to just sell their wares. And she hated it. But by shifting her perspective on it, and looking at the reason and the benefits of going networking, so what was she going networking for? What were the benefits of it? How it would help her in her job, how it would help the organization and how the people that she networked with may eventually become clients who would benefit from the interaction that she had with them. By changing her perspective on it, it changed how she felt about it.

### Jean 18:20

Ah, so focus on the results you want, rather than the process you have to go through to get those results.

### Carol 18:30

Yeah. Yeah.

### Jean 18:33

And she was able to pull it off more successfully?

### Carol 18:35

Yes, she was. Yes. By not viewing it in that way and shifting her perspective that changed how she felt about it.

### Jean 18:46

Okay, I have to think about that. Know why you're doing it, and then have that as a purpose. Did she set clear outcome goals for herself, or she just was open ended in terms of the possible benefits?

### Carol 19:05

It was a bit of both: getting clear on the benefits but also setting herself goals and outcomes. And what I would suggest as well to people who maybe don't enjoy networking is oftentimes, making that small talk is a segue to more meaningful conversations. And so, if you find it uncomfortable making small talk, maybe have some conversation starters up your sleeve. So,

it could be that you're going to an event which is about a particular theme and a particular speaker, think about the sorts of questions you can ask about what has been talked about when you approach people after and ask open questions. So, questions that start where, how, when, who, when you're speaking to people, because then they will respond with more of a yes or no. And listen to what they have to say because introverts are typically known as being good listeners, and people like to be listened to. So, listen to what they have to say. And then ask another open question. And then just keep repeating that until the conversation starts to flow.

#### Jean 20:14

Okay, so you're saying prepare, go in fore-armed, have your questions together. Have your plan together, have your desired outcomes together. Don't just show up, show up prepared.

#### Carol 20:30

Yeah. Plan and prepare. Yeah. And then it will be a more enjoyable experience.

#### Jean 20:36

I want to ask you about something else that just occurred to me, a common tension in teams. There'll be those who talk. There'll be those who say, I prefer to listen. Those who talk look at those who prefer to listen and think, don't you have anything to say? They don't say it out loud. But that's what they're thinking. Those who prefer to listen sometimes think those who are talking won't ever shut up and give them a word in edgewise, right? For both sides of it, how do you advise them to act?

#### Carol 21:14

To understand the preferences of their colleagues. So, understand that someone who's introverted likes to think and reflect before speaking, so give them that space, so that they can do that, that they've got that thinking and reflecting time and engage with them. So, it doesn't mean that because they're not saying anything that they've got nothing to contribute, it is just that they're processing their thoughts before they speak. And likewise, for those who are introverted, understand that extroverts typically speak and they process their thinking as they're talking. So, you might think, "Oh, gosh, that person is talking all the time." But, they're processing their thoughts. So, when you have that understanding that that is that person's preference, it is then easier to interact and engage with them. And you take that into consideration.

#### Jean 22:09



So, extroverts are not just...they are hearing themselves talk, because that's how they think. They're thinking out loud.

Carol 22:20

Yeah.

Jean 22:21

And the introverts need the time to reflect, so is the extrovert supposed to sit there in silence? What are they supposed to do? Are they supposed to call on the person? If the person is sitting there saying nothing, what is the extrovert supposed to do?

Carol 22:39

So, as I've said, both introverts and extroverts need to be able to adapt to get the best out of that particular situation. So as someone who's introverted, I need to be able to adapt and speak up as well. And so, you know, oftentimes in meetings that I find for introverted leaders, that meetings are one of their biggest challenges, because the way that meetings are conducted doesn't allow for that thinking and reflective time. So it could be that they do a lot of their preparation beforehand, going through the agenda, looking at the items on the agenda that they want to have a say on or they want to discuss, so that they do a lot of that thinking before they go into the meeting, so that when the meeting comes they're more able to respond on the spot, when those items come aboard if questions get put to them. Also, if somebody asks them a question, and they feel that they need more time to think and process their thoughts, to give, maybe give their initial response, their instinct on what their initial response is, and then just say, "Well, if I've got anything further to add, I'll get back to you."

Jean 23:51

Ah, okay. So, say, if I'm an introvert and I haven't said anything, just say any response and say, "I'll give you my initial thoughts." And after I've finished saying that, I'll say, "If there's more, I'll say it later." Do that, rather than say nothing.

Carol 24:14

Yeah, yeah.

Jean 24:17

So, what about the people who are scared to death that if they say something, they'll say the wrong thing or it won't come out perfectly? What do they do?

Carol 24:29

Yeah and then that is a definition because sometimes people are fearful of speaking up and so, it's about managing those fears. So, when you're fearful of speaking up, you're likely to be feeling anxious about it. And as a result of feeling anxious, then you're not going to speak or if you do speak, because you're feeling so anxious, you won't speak and say what you want to the best of your ability. So, by just managing your thoughts, and your emotions, will help to change how you feel. If you're going into a meeting or a discussion, and you're worrying about am I going to say the right thing, am I going to say the wrong thing, then that is going to make you feel anxious. So, challenge your thoughts about the environment, why you're at the meeting, challenge your thoughts and beliefs and change them to something more helpful. And if you find that your mind sort of starts to wander and worry, just bring it back to the moment and focus on the here and now. Because worrying about it will just make you feel worse. And so rather than letting your mind wander away and worry, just tell yourself: I haven't got time to worry about this right now. Right now, I'm just going to focus on what I've got to say or getting through this meeting and I'll worry about it later.

Jean 25:49

Ha. Now, you know, I have a thing I've said to some of my coaching clients, make an appointment to worry.

Carol 25:56

Yeah. I do that as well.

Jean 25:59

Yeah. Make an appointment to worry, tell the worrisome thoughts, you'll get your time at such and such a time. But right now, I'm here in this meeting, and I have to do this thing. So, you're saying the same thing?

Carol 26:11

That's what I do as well, I say: tell yourself you'll have a worry party later.

Jean 26:16

Okay, and so for now, risk saying it even if you say it wrong.

Carol 26:24

And because the thing is, when you remove that anxiety, you're going to be thinking more rationally and more clearly. And chances are, you won't say the wrong thing. But when you're worrying about it, and you're feeling anxious, you'll start to think irrationally, and then you're more likely to say the wrong thing. But if you can clear your mind and think more rationally,

you're in the role that you're in, because you have something of value to contribute, and you have the experience that you bring to the table. So, no doubt you're doing that job, because you've been considered you're the best person for that role. So, you know your subject matter, and chances are, when you're thinking rationally, and you're thinking clearly, you're going to say the right thing. And the thing is, if you say some things, sometimes people worry that people might ask them a question, and they can't answer it. And if somebody does that, and you don't know the answer, just say, "I'll get back to you on that."

#### Jean 27:32

I call that self-affirmation. So, affirm, I know what I know, I wouldn't be at the table if I didn't deserve to be here. To the extent you can, to prepare ahead of time so that you can have your thoughts, push away worry. Plan not to worry if you can, plan when you're going to worry, I'm going to worry over there but right now I'm here. You said focus on the here and now. So, focus on the people in the room. And then that stacks you up for success, is that my understanding?

#### Carol 28:12

Yes, it does. Yes. And keep putting that into practice.

#### Jean 28:20

Putting that into practice, say more about that.

#### Carol 28:22

Because if you know those sorts of environments are not necessarily your best, and you know that you have a tendency to worry, then what we've talked about the preparation, put your worries aside, the delay, telling yourself you'll worry about it later, bringing your mind back into the present as something that you'd have to keep on putting into practice. Every time you go into a meeting is recognizing that this can happen in these sorts of situations. So, I know that this is what normally happens to me in these situations. So, I know that these are the things that I have to do in order to be at my best.

#### Jean 29:05

Okay. Okay. Are there racial or ethnic differences in introversion and extroversion? Are there situations in which one will pop up more than the other?

#### Carol 28:48

I haven't observed any differences between races when it comes to how you know they are with their introversion, but what I do find is that where somebody is in the minority, things like

imposter syndrome is more likely to rear its head. So, if they are introverted, if they are Black, if they're introverted in an extroverted dominated environment, if they are Black in a White extroverted dominated environment, then things like imposter syndrome and self-doubt are more likely to rear its head.

Jean 30:10

Hah. So, an introvert surrounded by a bunch of talkers is likely to think I don't belong here. And a Black person, for example, in a predominantly White environment is going to think I don't belong here.

Carol 30:25

Yeah.

Jean 30:26

Okay, so, now, I'm thinking I don't belong here and I know from experience that feeds on itself, right?

Carol 30:33

It does. Yes.

Jean 30:35

So, what am I supposed to do to get out of it?

Carol 30:38

So, it is recognizing what it is your thinking, your thoughts, and what you believe yourself in that situation you are in. Because we're very much led by our emotions, many of us are very much led by our emotions, and the way that we think, that's how we feel and react and behave according to how we're feeling. So, recognize what is going on in your mind. Recognize what it is that you're thinking about yourself in those situations, and then just challenge your thinking, and change it to something which is more helpful. So, what we talked about previously, you're in the role because you were deemed the best person for that role and you have something of value to contribute. Those self-affirmations as you say, affirming yourself in that moment and changing when those unhelpful thoughts come into your mind and you find yourself thinking, "Oh, my gosh, I shouldn't be here, I don't think I'm as good as them," just challenge yourself, and change it and put into practice those self-affirmations, "I've got something valuable to contribute, I got appointed to this role because I'm the best person for this role and I have something of value to offer."

### Jean 31:53

So, I have a question just as you were talking that popped in my head. There are some people for whom failure is not an option. And for whom they think if I say something, and it's not accepted completely, or if I suspect that I am not stellar, then I'm a failure. Do you think that happens more with introverts versus extroverts or is that just a characteristic of some people?

### Carol 32:30

I think it's a characteristic of some people but I do see a lot of introverts who can be like that, and are perfectionist, so they don't want to fail, they want things to be perfect. And I often find that the reason why that is, is because they are maybe doubting themselves and thinking that they're not as good as everybody else. And as a result, things have to be perfect. But then perfectionism can be very stressful. And when you strive for perfection, you're putting a lot of stress and pressure on yourself. And so, it's about recognizing that it doesn't have to be perfect. Strive for excellence but you don't have to strive for perfection, because good is good enough.

### Jean 33:33

Okay, so most of the perfectionists I know, know they are perfectionists, but they don't have a clue as to how to not be that way. They don't have a clue as to what to...their heart sinks, they feel themselves getting flushed, they pull back and they don't know what to do. What do you suggest?

### Carol 33:50

So, recognize what is good and what is being perfectionism. So, giving you an example, I had a client who was a perfectionist, and would spend hours ruminating over work, staying late, wanting to get things perfect, and would get very sort of disappointed when she would maybe submit reports or something and people didn't seem to acknowledge the amount of work and effort she put in getting things perfect. And it was stressful for her. And so, what I did was I asked her what is good, what does good look like? And how, what is it that people are expecting of you. And she recognized that the standard to which she was striving for was not what people were expecting of her. So, she delivered, the fact that she'd spent hours ruminating over it, working excessively long hours, that didn't make a difference with people. They just knew that she had delivered what they expected. And so, by raising her tolerance levels and recognizing what was good enough, she started to not stay so late at work when she had done something, trusting herself that it was good enough so she didn't have to spend ages going over it again and again and again. And when she was delivering a particular project, and she submitted it, she said that this was the least stressful she'd ever felt

for delivering on a particular project. And she recognized that she didn't have to stay late. She didn't have to ruminate because the standard of what they were expecting was what she was delivering.

#### Jean 35:50

Wow. Okay, so I am a recovering perfectionist. And what you're saying was, my sister used to say, Jean, your good enough is other people's high standards. And I really had to work on lowering my standard. And what I deliberately said was 90% is good enough, if I get it up to my 90%, I can stop there. I had to put a number on it. And so that's what you're saying basically, is just lower your standards. Now, getting it felt sinful. It felt like I was violating a rule of the universe and the heavens would open up and something would swallow me up. So, do you have people who experience that in the beginning?

#### Carol 36:40

Yeah. And then the thing is, you see that nothing bad is going to happen. The world doesn't end that people still carry on going about their day to day and it is okay.

#### Jean 36:53

I'm getting a vicarious thrill just hearing you say that. Yes, the world does not end if it isn't perfect.

#### Carol 37:08

Yeah. The thing is we often imagine the worst possible outcome. And the thing is, chances are the worst possible outcome happening doesn't happen. And even if it was to happen, you know, we're all incredibly resourceful that we would be able to find a way to get around that.

#### Jean 37:30

Yep. Okay. So, think of the introverted leader who's doubting themselves, what's the mistake they are most likely to make? And then after that, what gifts do they bring that they probably don't acknowledge?

#### Carol 37:51

Often what introverted leaders do, who don't own that introversion, they try and be something that they're not. They will try and put on an extroverted persona, because they think that that is how they will get ahead or that is how they will fit in. And I would say that by doing that, trying to be something that you're not, you not only come across as inauthentic, but you put a lot of pressure on yourself as well. And it's stressful. There's only so long you can pretend to be something that you're not before it starts to take its toll.

Jean 38:32

Hmm. So, you do yourself in when you play act.

Carol 38:35

Hmm, yeah.

Jean 38:40

Okay, so a pitfall is pretending to be extroverted when you're not, putting the stress on yourself but appearing inauthentic, in the end it is all false?

Carol 38:52

Yeah. And then when that happens, it can affect your confidence. It can have a negative impact on your confidence because it's like you're trying to fake being something that you're not. And so, you know, when we're our authentic selves we're naturally more confident.

Jean 39:14

So, a lot of times people feel they don't appreciate me for who I am. Is that likely to be someone faking? Would that contribute to that feeling?

Carol 39:28

It might be or it might be that people don't necessarily understand. Because as I said there is a lot of misconceptions around introversion that people don't necessarily understand. But people who are inauthentic, that comes across whether you're introverted or extroverted. When you're inauthentic, people can tell that you're not being authentic.

Jean 39:55

That reminds me way back when I was learning group facilitation. The trainer was told--the woman who was facilitating--you need to jump in there. And she looked him dead in the eye and said, I'm slower than you are. And that stopped him dead in his tracks.

Carol 40:17

Yeah, when I was doing research for my book, I spoke to lots of different introverted women who were leaders and there was one Senior Vice President who when she joined the organization, she made a point of saying to people, if you want me to make a decision then you have to give me time. She said, you can come to me and expect a decision on the spot and I will give you one, but it's not going to be my best decision. If you want my best

decision, you have to give me that time. So, she set the tone from the beginning. She went in and she set the tone from the beginning.

Jean 40:51

Wow, so lay it on the table.

Carol 40:54

Yeah, yeah, but not everybody has the confidence to do that though.

Jean 41:00

Ah, so to lay it on the table you've got to believe enough in yourself and in your strengths to be able to do that.

Carol 41:08

Yes, yes.

Jean 41:10

Okay, so the second half of my question was, and this will be our wrap up question, what gifts do introverted leaders bring to the table that often they don't recognize as gifts?

Carol 41:24

Okay, so their thinking and reflective style is a strength, quick decisions aren't always the best decisions. So being able to think and reflect is a strength. Introverts are typically known as being empathetic, that's a strength. Introverts are typically known as being good listeners and that's another strength. Introverts typically don't hog, they don't want to hog the limelight. And so, again, they let other people shine. And there is research that shows that when it comes to dynamic teams, introverts make better leaders of dynamic teams, because they don't want to hog the limelight and they let the people run with their ideas as well.

Jean 42:12

Wow, I haven't heard that before. You're saying introverted leaders, research has shown to be better leaders because they don't hog the limelight.

Carol 42:23

When it comes to leading dynamic teams.

Jean 42:25

Dynamic teams.



Carol 42:26

So, they let them go with their ideas. They don't want to be the center of attention, so they let people go with their ideas.

Jean 42:38

Oh, okay. I had never heard that before.

Carol 42:43

Yes. The research was by Adam Grant and I can't remember who else, the people that did that research with him.

Jean 42:51

Okay. So, is there any question or anything that we haven't covered that you want to make sure you say?

Carol 43:00

One thing I would like to say is that -- and it's to do with the reason why I decided to make intervention my area of specialism because I want to change the narrative, because the corporate environment in the UK, in the US, is very much geared towards extroversion. And it's often the case that he or she who's the loudest is the one that gets heard. That gets recognition, that gets ahead. And so, I want to change the narrative around that, so people recognize that introverts do make great leaders too. And when I started was after being in business for a few years, and I started to reflect on the clients that I'd worked with and identified that a lot of them are introverted, and I was like well, that's interesting, because I'm introverted myself. And then I started writing articles on LinkedIn about the challenges that introverted leaders face. And I got inundated with emails, messages, comments on my articles, from introverted leaders--men and women--telling me about their experiences. And some of them are quite horrific in this day and age. One woman who said that she'd been to an interview and the interview had gone well, and she was told that they wanted to give her the job, but they wanted her to justify why they should give it to her because she was introverted.

Jean 44:22

They asked her? That is wild.

Carol 44:29

It is, it is, yes. And so, that's why I decided to make -- because of what people were sharing with me -- that's why I decided to make it my area of specialism.

Jean 44:43

Okay. But it is not discriminatory by the traditional definition of discrimination.

Carol 44:50

No, so, you know, whether you're Black, White, Hispanic, whatever, I do think that when people are talking about diversity and inclusion that they should take into consideration, diversity and personality as well.

Jean 45:10

Yeah. When I do D&I workshops, a lot of times I'll lead off with introversion-extroversion, because everybody can relate to that. Then I do gender, then race last because that's the hardest, but once they understand that you have to accommodate differences with the introversion-extroversion that makes them more receptive for the other.

Carol 45:34

Yeah. Yeah.

Jean 45:36

Well, this has been delightful. I thank you for your time and your expertise. I know people will get from this. What I got from it was your whole statement about what the research says that introverts make better leaders in dynamic teams. I had not reflected on that before. So, I do thank you.

Carol 46:04

Thank you for having me.

Jean 46:06

Any closing comments?

Carol 46:12

I would just say for anybody that's an introvert, be introverted and proud. For those who are listening who are extroverted, be extroverted and proud. And for both introverts and extroverts, I have a saying that goes: comparing introverts to extroverts is like comparing apples to pears. They're both tasty fruits but different.

Jean 46:37

Okay, so this is Carol Stewart, author of *Quietly Visible*. A leadership coach, who specializes in helping introverted leaders learn to be fully themselves. Carol, so if someone wants to reach you, how do they do that?

Carol 46:58

My website is [aboundingsolutions.com](http://aboundingsolutions.com). Or, you can find me on LinkedIn, I'm very active on LinkedIn.

Jean 47:07

Okay so abounding...? Spell that.

Carol 47:10

A-B-O-U-N-D-I-N-G solutions.com.

Jean's concluding remarks 47:19

Hello, everybody. Wow, I'm still reflecting on what Carol had to say and the way she's so clearly explained the gifts of being an introverted leader, I'm not going to repeat them for you here.

I will tell you the one that stuck with me the most: her statement that introverted leaders were actually superior as leaders than extroverted leaders in dynamic teams. She was careful to qualify that it's dynamic teams that we're talking about. Now, what she said they brought to the table is the ability to listen, and the ability to....the willingness to not hog the credit, Hogging the credit is a big issue for many people I coach, not that they do it, but that they have leaders who refuse to acknowledge them. There's something about the hierarchy that gets set up, so that the top leader gets identified as having most of the credit, or all of the credit. People who actually did the work are not even mentioned. Introverted leaders don't do that, apparently. And so that's one of the things that make them better as a leader. So that's something to think about.

And if you are someone who knows that you don't do a good enough job of acknowledging those who report to you or those on your team -- you might be in a community group -- then you know that's something to address. And if you're someone who is being bypassed and the leader is taking all the credit, then I encourage you to consider how you might approach that person to talk about this. I know that might be kind of scary, so you can direct message me or text me. And if you want us to talk more about this, let me know.

Thank you for listening and thank you, Carol, for bringing us your insights. Bye.