

Introverts are people, too



Emily Battmer

We live in a nation that values talkers. Those who speak the loudest are the ones we pay the most attention to. And frankly, it's crap.

The general consensus among researchers is one-third to one-half of Americans are introverts, according to the findings published in "QUIET: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking." Susan Cain, the author of this New York Times Bestselling book, asserts that many people find these statistics surprising, largely because so many introverts "closet themselves" to more closely fit the "Extrovert Ideal" — a personality type that is "gregarious, alpha and comfortable in the spotlight," Cain wrote. According to her book, studies show we tend to rate talkative people as smarter, more attractive, more interesting and more desirable as friends.

"Today we make room for a remarkably narrow range of personality styles," Cain wrote. "We're told to be great is to be bold, to be happy is to be sociable."

As an openly introverted person, I can vouch this stigma is harmful. I have been underestimated, taken advantage of, "left out" and dismissed because of my reserved personality — and every time I have raised this issue, my introversion has been identified as the "problem."

Somehow, when I was left out of a social gathering or teased for my quiet demeanor as a child, I was to blame. My personality was inferior to the extroversion exhibited by my peers. I was expected to "step outside of my comfort zone" and push myself to be more extroverted.

This undue pressure for people to conform to an ideal personality is outrageous, and can be just as harmful as the pressure to conform to an ideal physical appearance.

I speak not only from my own experience, but the experiences of those around me. The following is an excerpt from a close friend's personal journal, printed with her permission:

"To my peers, ... I will always be the quiet one. I always feel like when someone sees me as quiet or like I never speak that they don't really see any other trait in me at all. Speaking is the basis of all human actions and communication ... It's like saying I'm not even a person. Like I'm just a body standing there, with nothing to offer. That's how it makes me feel, and that's what makes me hate it."

This bias has become so mainstream that not even highly educated medical professionals have been spared its influence.

Thirty years ago, the American Psychiatric Association actually proposed adding "introverted personality disorder" to its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, according to the 2010 "Psychology Today" article titled "A Giant Step Back for Introverts." More recently, during 2012, the APA debated including introversion as a symptom or way of diagnosing certain personality disorders.

The idea that a natural personality type is diagnosable as "wrong" is completely absurd, and reminiscent of the 1970s APA mentality that homosexuality was a "psychiatric diagnosis."

We as a nation glorify ourselves as progressive and open-minded. It's true — we have made great strides in overcoming prejudices against all sorts of minority groups. Acceptance is sexy when it comes to ethnicity, sexuality or religion. And yet, we continue to ostracize a group that comprises as much as 50 percent of the population.

There is something to be said for introversion — the ability to reflect quietly, to find comfort in solitude and analyze scenarios without being centered within them.

As my friend wrote, "I love everything about myself and my life, whether it's filled with silence or eardrum-bursting noise. Being quiet has built who I am. People may not know everything about me, but I know people, and that's actually a pretty powerful thing."

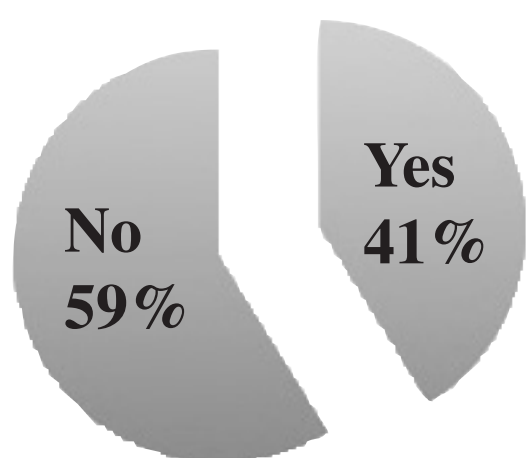
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Contact

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Web Poll

Were you offended by Miley Cyrus' performance at the MTV Video Music Awards?



Out of 17 votes.

Letter to the Editor

I would like to bring to the attention of your readers an important initiative at Truman State. Recently both the Undergraduate Council and Faculty Senate have passed resolutions affirming the value of critical thinking at Truman. Although the implementation of aspects of critical thinking evaluation in different disciplines is still some time away, it may be helpful for students at Truman to be aware of the importance of critical thinking to their educational experiences at Truman, and, more importantly, in their lives beyond Truman.

So, what is critical thinking? Critical thinking is higher order thinking and goes beyond simple vocabulary and definitions. It is beyond rote memorization of complicated math proofs or standard procedures for solving difficult problems or esoteric flow charts or an entire musical piece. That is, it is not the difficulty of a task that defines critical thinking ...

... Simply put, critical thinking is about being honest regarding facts, thorough in analysis, and mindful of the boundaries of the conclusions and claims.

You might say, so what's the big deal? Don't we all do it all the time? The answer is both yes and no. Yes, the human brain is very well equipped to sort through a complicated situation, weigh alternatives, and figure out a reasonable solution. Unfortunately, we do not always use our brain in this way. Most times, the human brain takes a short cut and jumps to a conclusion without accounting for the presence or absence of any evidence.

We tend to latch onto apparent and self-serving solutions and credit our "intuition" for escaping the drudgery of hard work and reasoned analysis. This mental tendency works well when we have to make a split second decision on a fight or flight situation, but it can lead us astray

when faced with more complex problems of modern life.

Thus, when a student's work is examined for the elements of critical thinking, it is often found wanting. A term paper may lack a discussion of the supporting evidence or the proper context in which the paper's conclusions need to be understood. A mathematical proof may lack the continuity of logic or may have missing crucial steps, and so on. Even here at Truman, with our highly capable student body, the data on critical thinking, as portrayed in the writing of the graduating students, show that much more work is needed at our university to create an environment in which students are encouraged and trained to take the path of a more thorough analysis in their thinking ...

Sincerely,
 Mohammad Samiullah, Professor and Department Chair of Physics

Corrections

- In last week's page 1 story "Truman installs solar panels," it was incorrectly stated that Truman State groundskeepers installed five solar panel systems on campus. The solar panels were installed by contractors from Brightergy, LLC.
- In last week's page 1 story "Truman installs solar panels," it was incorrectly stated that solar panel systems installed on campus were paid for through Truman State's auxiliary utilities budget. Most of the money for the systems comes from the "Education and General" budget.
- In last week's page 11 story "Stepping down after 33 years of coaching," it was incorrectly stated that "The closest current coach to [John] Cochrane in terms of years spent at Truman is ... coach Mike Cannon ..." at 20 years. Coach David Schutter actually is the closest at 23 years.
- In last week's page 3 story "New Truman publication debuts during summer," it was incorrectly stated that the magazine "Harry" debuted during summer 2013. The first issue was available prior to summer 2013.

Cartoon

By Megan Archer



House Bill lacks purpose



Sarah Muir

House Bill 436, a bill outlawing federal gun control, recently was vetoed by Governor Nixon. This veto is another of a whole list the Missouri Legislature wants to override. The bill nullifies all federal gun laws in Missouri that infringe on the right to keep and bear arms, according to the bill text. Missouri lawmakers are wasting time as they fight to make political points instead of making real legislation to help the state.

This bill makes it a misdemeanor for federal agents to enforce the law. It also applies to journalists — or any person or entity — who publish information identifying gun owners, according to the bill.

Governor Nixon cited two main reasons when he vetoed this bill. First, he argues it is in violation of the Supremacy Clause in the United States Constitution, according to his veto letter. The Supremacy Clause deals with issues involving conflict of state and federal law, giving

precedence to federal law. According to Nixon's letter, HB 436 is trying to supersede federal law, making its enforcement illegal. Second, Nixon argues the bill is in violation of free speech, which is protected by the state and federal Constitutions, according to his veto letter.

Nixon isn't alone in thinking the bill would fail in court due to issues of constitutionality. According to an Aug. 29 Fox News article, many of the Democrats who voted for the bill agree it wouldn't survive a court challenge but still plan to vote for an override. This is the real problem with HB 436. Many legislators don't seem to think this bill is constitutional, but they continue to vote and fight for it.

Essentially what lawmakers are trying to do is send a message, but that's not what lawmaking is supposed to be about. Lawmaking is about trying to create and pass real laws — shocking, I know. Creating these symbolic bills designed to let the U.S. Congress know a state disagrees with them is a huge waste of time. If individual Missouri lawmakers want to send a message to the federal government, they should do what the rest of us have to do — contact our national Senators and Representatives.

The scary thing is this kind of legislation is becoming more and more popular, and not just in Missouri. According to an Aug. 28 New York Times article, Montana has passed similar gun control legislation, and since January 2011, 23

states have considered bills to nullify health care law.

That's not to say there aren't powerful arguments to be made about states rights versus federal law. However, HB 436 isn't written this way. This bill is about politics and making a statement. If lawmakers really want to challenge federal law on gun control, they should have left out the part that makes enforcing federal law illegal. The inclusion of the criminalization of federal law sends a clear message that they aren't really interested in talking about states' rights. They're just interested in showing how "pro-gun" they are.

For example, states that have enacted medical marijuana laws have done so without criminalizing federal law, according to an Aug. 28 New York Times article. This is the difference between a bill intended to survive court challenges and a symbolic bill.

It's time lawmakers step up and act like adults, instead of like petulant children whose favorite toy was just taken away. When lawmakers reconvene during September, I would like lawmakers to realize how ridiculous they were acting. Or at the very least, agree they made their point about gun control instead of wasting more time trying to override the veto.

Sarah Muir is a sophomore political science major from Lee's Summit, Mo.

Editorial Policy

The Index is published Thursdays during the school year by students at Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 63501. The first copy is free, and additional copies cost 50 cents each. The production offices are located in Barnett Hall. We can be reached by phone at 660-785-4449. The Index is a designated public forum, and content of the Index is the responsibility of the Index staff. The editor in chief consults with the staff and adviser but ultimately is responsible for all decisions. Opinions of Index columnists are not necessarily representative of the opinions of the staff or the newspaper. Our View editorials represent the view of the Editorial Board through a majority vote. The Editorial Board consists of the Editor-in-Chief, managing editor and opinions editor. The Index reserves the right to edit submitted material because of space limitations, repetitive subject matter, libelous content or any other reason the editor in chief deems appropriate. Submitted material includes advertisements and letters to the editor.

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