

# Meeting Tips for Introverts



Challenges	Recommendations
<p><b>I often don't think of what I want in the moment.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ask for information ahead of time.</b> Introverts mull things over by nature. Often you don't think of what you want to say until the day after the meeting. You'll be amazed at how effective it can be for you to get information ahead of time.</li> <li>• <b>"Can we go back to . . . ?"</b> If what you wanted to say occurs to you before the meeting has ended, you can often use this phrase "Can we go back to . . . ?" to signal that you'd like to speak to a previous topic. The group needs this signal from you because abruptly returning to a previous topic is jarring. Also, do this between two other topics, not in the middle of one.</li> </ul>
<p><b>I don't tend to get what I need in meetings.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Go to the facilitator or meeting leader the day before.</b> If you have something that needs to be discussed, ask that it be put on the agenda.</li> </ul>
<p><b>I can't get a word in edgewise in meetings.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Understand that an extravert's sense of time is different from yours.</b> They are never going to pause long enough for you to be comfortable to enter the conversation. What seems like a reasonable amount of time for you can seem like forever to an extravert. You're going to have to raise your energy level and jump in. Once you're in there, it will be easier.</li> <li>• <b>Don't assume the others are just rude.</b> (Although, let's face it, that sometimes happens). Chances are you're dealing with an extravert who keeps wondering why you're not jumping in. They keep talking because you're not. The length of silence you need is not something they feel comfortable with. That's why they keep talking.</li> <li>• <b>Give the extraverts what they need. Jump in there.</b> Often an extravert is genuinely relieved that you've finally come out to engage with them.</li> <li>• <b>An extravert's brain thrives on external signals.</b> If your face remains still, they may be concluding that you're not interested or not engaged with them. Use facial expressions that let them know you're listening and considering what they're saying and that you want to say something.</li> </ul>
<p><b>I need time to think before replying.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Signal that you're thinking.</b> If you're not answering because you're mulling, then just say that – out loud.</li> <li>• <b>You can say, "That's an important point. I need time to think about that. Can I get to you tomorrow with that?"</b></li> </ul>

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I was just “thinking out loud,” not deciding anything.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Beware of your natural “thinking out loud” processing style.</b> In meetings, this can mean that you take up more than your fair share of “air time.”</li> <li>• <b>Also, if you’re the manager,</b> “thinking out loud” can create <i>profound</i> misunderstandings. Team members with other preferences may think you’re telling them what to do. Be clear when you’re just “thinking out loud.”</li> </ul>
Why don’t the introverts just jump in and speak up?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Get comfortable with longer pauses and more silence.</b> Introverts aren’t “jumping in” because you’re never pausing long enough to let them enter the conversation. Seriously, introverts can have a profoundly different sense of time than Extraverts. They truly need more time to reply than you do.</li> <li>• <b>Introverts “edit” before they speak.</b> Extraverts quite literally tend to “think out loud,” so they speak up quickly. Introverts, however, take more time to reply because they mull and edit before they speak. Give them that time.</li> </ul>
I’m uncomfortable during silences. I just have to speak and fill them up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Avoid the tendency to “fill in the silences.”</b> Introverts seem to understand that silences are OK; extraverts tend to feel uncomfortable in them and attempt to fill them up with talking. By doing that, you may unfortunately be making it difficult for the introvert to enter the conversation and engage with you.</li> <li>• <b>Avoid going “on and on”:</b> You may also be talking so much that it sounds like “going on and on” to an introvert; they tend to start tuning you out.</li> </ul>
I seem to talk a lot faster than others at times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Slow down. Fast-paced speaking can prevent building rapport.</b> Extraverts tend to speak more quickly than introverts. Introverts need more processing time than you do because they do more internal processing naturally. Remember, for introverts, “It’s all happening on the inside.”</li> </ul>
Sometimes I jump in very quickly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do not interrupt or talk over someone.</b> At times, extraverts jump in very quickly, even overlapping others slightly. Though it may be from enthusiasm instead of rudeness, it often comes across as rude to an introvert or even to another extravert.</li> <li>• <b>Male and female culture</b> can be profoundly different on this point. Women tend to use overlapping to show enthusiasm and build rapport with each other. Men can interpret it as trying to take the power in the conversation.</li> </ul>
It’s hard not to show it when I know what I want to say.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Listen before you react. Do not open your mouth and set your face, like you’re about to dive into the answer.</b> This one tendency of extraverts can have a very negative impact. You may be doing this because you’re fully engaged, but you can be misperceived as no longer listening or not serious enough to give your answer some real thought. Neither of these inferences bodes well for you as a professional.</li> </ul>