

My Memoir: Anecdotes of An Introvert

Everyone is different. Some are big, and some are small. Some people are short, and some are tall. Some are shy, or outgoing, or kind, or mean, or everything in-between. Me, I am a very quiet and loyal person, but one of my defining characteristics is that I am an introvert. An introvert is many things, but the textbook definition is a *shy, reticent person*. This describes me pretty well. As an introvert, I stay in the house, I don't go out, I don't talk to people, and I stay nice and safe in this bubble I have created. I'm sort of like a worm in a cocoon, but without the beautiful transformation. As fun and comforting as it is inside my bubble, it also makes it really hard to meet new people and make friends. I often find myself wondering '*What if they don't like me? What if they think I'm weird. Should I approach them, even though we have never talked before? Is this a good idea?*'. As you can see, my mind is a bit of a mess when it comes to social interactions. Regardless of awkward tendencies, I have had several friends over the years, and we were pretty close. They were friends I told everything to, friends that I talked with often, friends that I formed strong connections with. But this was in middle school and elementary school, and that was a different time. A time before masks and quarantine, an entirely new era. With that, this is the story about how an introvert was able to get a friend.

One close friend that I had was Alyssa. She was the first real friend that I made after Mackenzie, my best friend in the 5th grade, moved away. I met Alyssa in my own introverted way. So in the 7th grade, I needed to complete a project for English class, I believe (IDK I have goldfish memory). This was a group assignment, and I believe we were assigned who we worked with. Since I didn't have any friends, this wasn't a problem for me. I was grouped with Alyssa and one other student. We were doing a project on the gold rush since we read about it in *Call of The Wild*. The project went well and I got along so well with Alyssa, we started hanging out more and became friends. I accepted this friendship well, as I wasn't approaching anyone to be friends with any time soon. Alyssa was also friends with Mackenzie, so the situation worked. I could only make friends out of convenience and circumstance, since no one ever really wanted to talk to me and I didn't really fit in any friend group. This was my first friend in a while, and we clicked well.

Throughout my life, I haven't had many friends. It has been a problem I have struggled with for a long time. I have learned that I need to step out of my comfort zone and put myself out there, even if I feel like I will fail or be embarrassed. I need to take chances and find it within myself to accept these parts of me, but also not let them keep me from forming close relationships, even if it's only with a few people. Being an introvert has shown me that even though I am a quiet person, I can still form genuine connections and can read people well. The connections that I make can even last me a lifetime. I also understand that not all introverts are similar though. Some are quieter than others, and some can even be outspoken when comfortable with someone. I have learned to not let my identity as an introvert limit my social skills. Instead of letting these parts of myself control me, I will allow them to help me accept the person I am and build me up to the person that I want to be.

