

# The Highly Sensitive Person: How to Thrive When the World Overwhelms You

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“Engaging, perceptive ... suggests new paths for making sensitivity a blessing, not a handicap. A must-read.” – Philip G. Zimbardo, author of *Shyness*

## What readers are saying about Elaine Aron & *The Highly Sensitive Person* ...

“I have just finished *The Highly Sensitive Person* & I can’t thank you enough for writing such a wonderful book – you put into clear, understandable words what I have always known about myself. As I read your book, I felt for the 1st time in my life that someone truly understood what it was like to go through life as a highly sensitive individual ... Your book was the 1st that I have ever read that not only validated the traits of highly sensitive individuals but cast them as necessary for our society.” – M. C., Rockaway, NJ

“1st, let me express my deep gratitude to you if I can. I have just finished reading your book ... You have truly given me hope for a new life at the age of 52. I hardly know how to express the comfort & joy I have received from you ... Once again, thank you, thank you, thank you!” – J. M., New York, NY

“I cannot thank you enough for the inner peace your book has given me!” – S. P., Sacramento, CA

“This book has opened my eyes to the fact that I am not alone in my sensitivity & that it is OK to be this way ... I’ve always felt that there was something wrong with me ... It has given me tremendous insight ... So thank you for your research & your words of encouragement. They’ve both been a blessing.” – M. G., Belle River, Ontario (Canada)

"I am writing to express my gratitude to Elaine Aron for her book, *The Highly Sensitive Person*. I laughed & cried, I felt known. I felt affirmed. It is not only 'OK' to be highly sensitive, it is a gift. Thank you." – L. H., Findlay, OH

"Thank you for writing such a wonderful book." – R. P., Norwalk, CA

"... it really helped me understand myself a lot better." – E. S., Westerville, OH

"I can't remember the last time I sat down & read a book from cover to cover in 1 day. It has really made me feel like a part of a larger group, & not quite so weird after all ... I am looking forward to reading this book again." – K. J., San Francisco, CA

"I loved the book!" – S. R., Springfield, MA

"I just finished reading Elaine N. Aron's excellent book ... The descriptions fit me perfectly! It was inspiring, informative, & emotional." – R. D., San Francisco, CA

"I find Dr. Aron's book immensely valuable." – L. J. W., Provo, UT

"I have been trying to find out who I am & what I can do. Many of the situations described in the book I find fit my situation ... I wish I could send [it to] everyone I know & have known." – C. M., Riverside, CA

"I just read your book & it is *extraordinary*! Absolutely the best & most helpful of many I've read ... You have done tremendous work & I am so deeply touched by much of what you say." – S. S., New York, NY

"This book, *The Highly Sensitive Person*, was a revelation to me." – A. A., Tustin, CA

"Your book ... has helped me so much." – A. B., Lethbridge, Alberta (Canada)

"*The Highly Sensitive Person* was a true revelation to me & to several others I recommended the book to." – D. R., Irvine, CA

"Elaine Aron's book, *The Highly Sensitive Person*, is the 1st ever to really speak to *me*!" – M. J., Houston, TX

"I have enjoyed reading your book, *The Highly Sensitive Person*, & find the information & insights extremely valuable." – M. F., Mountain View, CA

To Irene Bernadicou Pettit, Ph.D. – being both poet & peasant, she knew how to plant this seed & tend it until it blossomed.

To Art, who especially loves the flowers – 1 more love we share.

## Acknowledgments

"I especially want to acknowledge all the highly sensitive person I interviewed. You were the 1st to come forward & talk about what you had known very privately about yourself for a long time, changing yourselves from isolated individuals to a group to be respected. My thanks also to those who have come to my courses or seen me for a consultation or in psychotherapy. Every word of this book reflects what you all have taught me.

My many student research assistants – too many to name – also earn a big thanks, as do Barbara Kouts, my agent, & Bruce Shostak, my editor at Carol, for their effort to see that this book reached all of you. Barbara found a publisher with vision; Bruce brought the manuscript into good shape, reining me in at all the right places but otherwise letting me run with it as I saw it.

It's harder to find words for my husband, Art. But here are some: Friend, colleague, supporter, beloved-thanks, with all my love." – Aron, 2013, p. 6

"I believed in aristocracy, though – if that is the right word, & if a democrat may use it. Not an aristocracy of power ... but ... of the sensitive, the considerate ... Its members are to be found in all nations & classes, & all through the ages, & there is a secret understanding between them when they meet. They represent the true human tradition, the 1 permanent victory of our queer race over cruelty & chaos. Thousands of them perish in obscurity, a few are great names. They are sensitive for others as well as themselves, they are considerate without being fussy, their pluck is not swankiness but the power to endure ..." – E. M. Forster, "What I Believe," in *2 Cheers for Democracy*

## Author's Note, 2012

"In 1998, 3 years after this book was 1st published, I wrote a new preface for it titled "A Celebration." It was an invitation for all of us to feel good about how many people had discovered they were highly sensitive & found the book useful, & that the idea was catching on in the scientific world. Now we can celebrate about 50 times more of the same. *The Highly Sensitive Person* has been translated into 14 languages, from Swedish, Spanish, & Korean to Hebrew, French, & Hungarian. There have been articles about high sensitivity in many prominent media throughout the world. In the U.S., that has included a feature in *Psychology Today*, a shorter discussion in *Time*, & many women's & health magazines such as *O Magazine* as well as numerous health websites. There are "HSP Gatherings" & courses on the subject in the United States & Europe, plus YouTube videos, books, magazines, newsletters, & websites & all sorts of services exclusively highly sensitive persons – most good & some, well, not as good. Tens of thousands subscribe to my own newsletter, *Comfort Zone*, at [hsperson.com](http://hsperson.com), where there are now hundreds of newsletter articles archived covering every aspect of being highly sensitive. We have come a long way.

## Preface

### *Are You Highly Sensitive? A Self-Test*

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## References

Aron, Elaine N. (2013). *The Highly Sensitive Person: How to Thrive When the World Overwhelms You*. Revised Edition. Citadel Press, p. 290.