What exactly is a social introvert?

A general misconception is that introverts are very quiet or socially awkward, incredibly anxious in social interactions, and keep to themselves. Apparently, to the majority, this is the only kind of introvert that exists. Just like any other category that people are put in, this description is not fitting to the entire group that categorizes themselves here.

In my case, I define myself as a social introvert in the sense that I love and gain so much from meeting new people, but I also require recovery time. Contrary to the description above, I very much do feel energized from social interactions, yet my favorite places to spend time are coffee shops – where many people come together, but each is introspectively in their own world.

Throughout engineering, this has been quite a unique personality trait, that I’ve found not many possess. I found that most people are either extremely extroverted in the sense that their work habits work in much more of a social setting than I can function in, and on the flip side many people have required complete and utter silence, where even a sneeze or cough will distract them and change the entire aura of the room. Further, most of the people I interact with in extracurriculars didn’t really understand why I needed to study/be by myself so much, and most of my friends in my classes didn’t really understand how I could do so many extracurriculars and still have a decent understanding of my courses. This has really impacted both my relationships and the person that I’ve become today.

However, of my time in school, I was lucky enough to find a small cohort of people that function similarly, who have become very close friends as they completely comprehend this dichotomy.

I define myself as a social introvert because that’s who I strive to be – an independent, reflective, and hard-working person that is also an outgoing, communicative, and collaborative person. I am currently in between the two, as my efforts to achieve the latter traits affect my ability to achieve the formal traits as time becomes of the essence. Maybe one day I’ll actually get 8 hours of sleep a night…