To: Engineering Communications

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Date: Nov 20, 2017

Subject: Listening Skills Video Series B - Professional Development

Susan Cain described how she was raised in a family who valued reading over other more social activities. She talked about how she went to a summer camp and was told that she needed to be “rowdie” to fully enjoy the camp. So, she hid her books under her bed for the entirety of the camp. She felt inadequate being an introvert. A third to a half of the population are introverts. This means that a third to a half of the population is trained to feel inadequate with who they are. Introversion is not shyness, it is about how you respond to social stimulation. Introverts get better grades even faced with a societal expectation to act a certain way in social situations. Introverts have been shown to perform better in the workplace as leaders because they let their employees or team members run with their ideas, and they listen better. The more freedom introverts are given to be themselves, the better they perform in their jobs. Focusing on constant group work negatively affects introverts by not only lowering their performance in that work, but also by creating a barrier for development for those introverts.

Speaking in a way that intrigues others to make use of that interest is difficult. It is not helped by the 7 deadly sins of speaking. Gossiping, judging, negativity and complaining provide little to no answers to problems and spread opinions which can be easily misconstrued. Blaming can make the blamer seem disingenuous and useless. Exaggeration is another sin of speaking because the true value of what is being talked about is lost. And finally, dogmatism confuses fact with opinion which is dangerous in the world. Speakers should always wish people well and have integrity. They should also be honest and authentic in their speech. If a listener feels that the person speaking holds these traits, they will be more likely to trust that speaker and join in on whatever the speaker is saying.