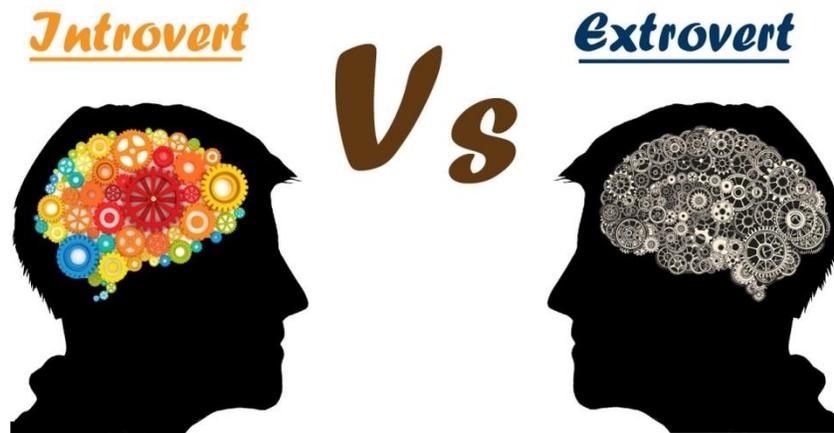


Do You Need to be an Extrovert? (What is the “Right Personality” For an Exchange?)

By Sarah Zeran



It is often stated that to truly thrive during student exchanges, you are required to have a certain type of personality. Most notably, you supposedly have to be extroverted in order to build a place for yourself in another country. While being an outgoing and personable individual certainly has many benefits, it is not strictly necessary. You don't need to be the smartest student in class that is eager to provide answers, learn more, and makes friends with everyone to be a part of a successful ISE exchange. So what is it that you *really* need?

1. Enthusiasm!

First and foremost, you need to be enthusiastic in regards to the exchange. This does not mean you are required to have a very peppy attitude and are always expressing excitement. Rather, it is important that you are completely sure this exchange is something you want to do and will remain interested in for the duration of your program. That eagerness to travel, learn, participate in new activities, and make friends is essential whether you are shy or outgoing.

2. Determination and Motivation

An exchange is a big opportunity and you need to be confident that you are ready to take it on. Learning to adjust to another culture is not always an easy feat and you need to have a level of determination in order to stick with it during the tougher beginning period. Without motivation to educate yourself, your chances of success are lowered significantly.

3. A Willingness to Learn

Going hand in hand with the previous reason, you need to actually be willing to learn something. An exchange is not a chance to take a vacation and a break from school, but instead, provides a unique educational experience in an entirely new environment. Being ready

to face that is greatly important. Even if you are not participating in an exchange where attending school is an occurrence, adjusting to the culture around you is a learning experience in itself.

4. Friendliness

Being friendly in nature is an absolute for our exchanges. In order to bond with your exchange family and other people during your time abroad, you need to show kindness to those you meet. Without this, how can you be expected to build solid relationships?

5. To not be Overly Committed to Other Activities

Unfortunately, due to the long period of our exchanges, if you are too committed to a club, sport or job, you may not want to participate. While you are abroad, you cannot be committed to any of these things, and while your partner is here, you are expected to be with them much of the time to show off Canadian culture.

6. A Genuine Interest in the Culture/History of Your Exchange Location

It is *very* important to have an interest in the location that you will be visiting. Without that, you will not enjoy the full exchange experience.

Bonus! The Desire to Pursue a Job where What You Learn Will be Useful.

While this is not necessary, it is great if pursuing this exchange will be beneficial in your future employment endeavours. Maybe your dream job requires you to be bilingual, maybe you'd like to work abroad, or maybe it requires a certain level of knowledge of another culture! No matter the case, if you can use what you learned for a future career, that accelerates our experience even further!

It is true that not just anyone can participate in a student exchange, but even if you are a quiet individual you are encouraged to send in an application if you believe you can take on the challenge!