

The Lost and Found Personality

FARIA KHAN

Laughing so hard that my facial muscles hurt and then waiting to lose myself in a melody and simply reflect on life. This is what I want. I am an extrovert and an introvert at the same time. So I wondered, "How can I be both?"

An introvert, who are quite often mistaken for being shy, tend to be preoccupied with their own thoughts and feelings and minimise their contact with other people. On the contrary, an extrovert is a friendly person who enjoys talking to and being with other people.

If you think you can relate to both like I can – congratulations, you're an "ambivert"!

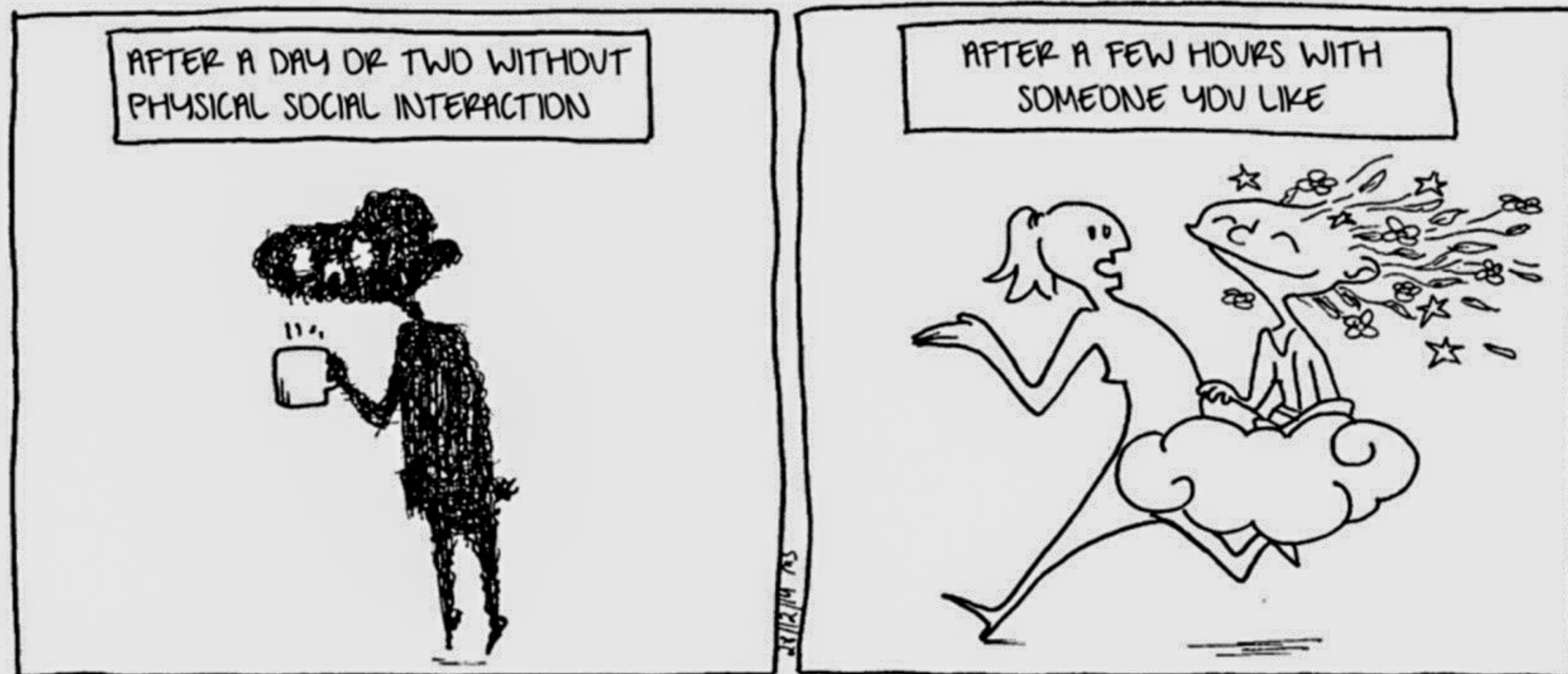
Social psychologists and behavioural scientists are now saying that introversion and extroversion belong to a spectrum and are defining an ambivert as a person having characteristics of both extrovert and introvert.

You like to hang around a certain self-approved group. However, you only show interest when you find the subject of conversation considerably fascinating but as soon as that's over - you land right back in la-la land. Plainly, the attention span is the size of a small ruler. Then there's the factor of a right number of people in your group. Too many people may exhaust you, too few may bore you. Plus, when it comes to meeting new people – hello, awkwardness! The level of uncomfortable-ness just reaches the sky. And small talk? Ain't no ambivert got time for that.

Moreover, it seems like you have a sort of split personality. You appear to have days of high and low.

On the dreaded low day, you'll spend a lot of time thinking, which will cover an oversized range. To how

SIGNS YOU MIGHT BE AN AMBIVERT



your friend makes that weird expression when she's confused to the path your life is taking you on.

Consequently, you'll find your friends complaining that you zone out from time to time. As offensive as it seems there isn't much you can do about it, you are who you are. What's more, you'll be ready to put on your headphones, even in the busiest of rooms and almost certainly you'll be spotted with a phone in your hand, scrolling away. You might be labeled as the nerd type or the anti-social but what they don't know is that you have an untamed version too.

This version can be brought to life on your high day

when you will be bursting with energy, laughing unlike the truly miserable person you were yesterday and sing your heart out, maybe even dance till you're breathless. You'll seize the day with your beaming confidence, being absolutely spontaneous. Your intuitive nature will definitely reward you and without a doubt, you'll be the life of the party.

You see, being an ambivert means that you have the best of both worlds. You have two of the glorious character strengths. So embrace your awkwardness, be the quiet one and then *carpe diem* – seize the day with your contagious enthusiasm.

Tinkering with the Genome

KHADIZA KARIM CHOWDHURY

Imagine being able to detect and edit flaws in the genetic constitution of a person as effectively as a spell checker works when spotting misspelled words in a document. Sounds like something right out of a Dan Brown fiction plot, right? Well, it's no more a mere figment of imagination, but rather a reality.

In 2012, a group of geneticists at the University of California, Berkeley devised a method through which specific genes can be sought out and edited. The method is formally known as CRISPR, and no, it does not involve potato chips as one may assume.

The term stands for "clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats" and is based on a naturally occurring system which takes place inside certain species bacteria and serves as a defence mechanism against invasion by viruses. It involves a special protein called Cas9, able to cut DNA, attached to a strand of RNA which is complementary to the target region of DNA and serves as the guide to lead the protein to the sought after segment within which specific genes can be deleted as well as inserted. It has been seen not only this protein works on viral DNA, but on all DNA, including those inside living cells and too with exceptional precision.

The concept is intriguing yet alarming at the same time, with the potential to revolutionise not only the field of biomedical sciences, but as well as life as we know it. For instance, researchers in London have implemented this technique in order to produce genetically modified female *Anopheles gambiae* mosquitoes so that they are infertile. Now, this can lead to the eradication of their species as it inactivates egg production. Since the mosquitoes are responsible for spreading malaria, this may as well serve as an effective method for getting rid of the disease.

The whole process is as simple as cut and paste, so much that an endowed 10th grader can carry it out.

However, the bigger picture isn't as simple, eradication of the *Anopheles gambiae* mosquitoes will lead to survival struggles for the species dependent on it such as bats, and this in turn can trigger a chain reaction and have unintentional grim ecological consequences.

Regardless, there are certain areas where the prospects of CRISPR appear to be extraordinary, particularly in the case of treating genetic diseases such as Tay-Sachs disease and in case of degenerative diseases such as Parkinson's and cancer. In a recent research it has been seen the power

of CRISPR can be further harnessed to remove the HIV genome from infected cells, and can lead to a victory for humans in the evolutionary race against one of most fatal diseases known to mankind.

Undoubtedly the list of implications is endless for CRISPR and the technology is still in its very early days. It certainly will be a stimulating journey to see where it takes the humankind along it as it develops further, and how humanity chooses to face the ethical and social questions raised along the way.

