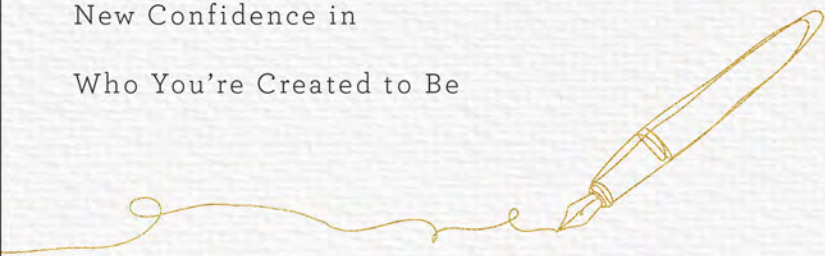


Introvert by Design

A Guided Journal for Living with
New Confidence in
Who You're Created to Be



Holley Cierth

Wall Street Journal Bestselling Author

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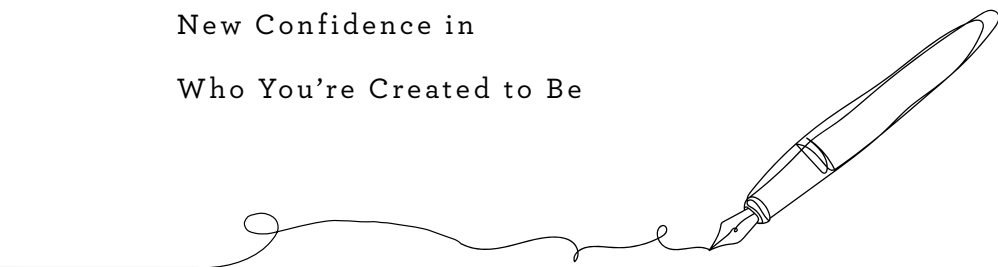
What Your Mind Needs for Anxious Moments

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Holley Gerth



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Grand Rapids, Michigan

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Published by Revell
a division of Baker Publishing Group
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49516-6287
www.revellbooks.com

Printed in the United States of America

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Gerth, Holley, author.

Title: *Introvert by design* : a guided journal for living with new confidence in who you're created to be / Holley Gerth.

Description: Grand Rapids, MI : Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group, [2023] | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022033210 | ISBN 9780800742805 (paperback) | ISBN 9781493442072 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Introversion—Religious aspects—Christianity. | Introverts—Religious life. | Spiritual journals—Authorship.

Classification: LCC BV4597.58.I58 G465 2023 | DDC 155.2/32—dc23/eng/20221011

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022033210>

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Baker Publishing Group publications use paper produced from sustainable forestry practices and post-consumer waste whenever possible.

Interior design by William Overbeeke.

Illustrations by Olivia Stallmer.

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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introduction

introvert, God created you on purpose

In the beginning, God created pink flamingos and orange starfish, the bitterness of grapefruit and sweetness of honey, the thrill of sex and stillness of sleep, the smell of rainstorms and sound of laughter. He created the heavens and earth, land and sea, masculine and feminine. He is a God of contrast and complements. And I believe, from the very start, he intentionally designed introverts and extroverts too.

Maybe that's not what you've been told. You've probably heard "you're too quiet." You might have been pressured to change by a boss, a peer, or even a family member. In your lowest moments, you might have even wondered if God made a mistake when he crafted you. I'm here to tell you the opposite—you are a wonder, a miracle, the art and joy of a God who built you for moments of silence and deep thinking, for meaningful relationships and restorative work, for showing this world the power of a nurtured soul.

What have you heard as an introvert (example: “You’re too quiet”)?

What’s a different way to see it (example: God designed me to listen well)?

I’ve been told . . .

A different way to see it is . . .



What proof do I have that you’re created as an introvert? We now live in an age of technology where we can literally see into our minds. And what researchers keep finding is that introverts and extroverts are wired in unique ways. For example, we rely on different primary neurotransmitters, parts of our nervous system, and even brain pathways for processing. I’ll go deeper into all these later. For now, what you most need to know is that when God dreamed you into being, he knew you’d be an introvert.

When we try to live as someone we’re not, we drift from God’s divine image in us. I found this out the hard way by pushing myself to the brink of burnout trying to be an extrovert because I believed that was what was required. I bent my true self into the shape I thought everyone wanted, and it broke me. It has taken years for me to heal, to come back home to who I really am, to grow quietly comfortable in my own skin. I never want anyone else to go through what I did.

“Then God looked over all he had made,
and he saw that it was *very good!*” (GEN. 1:31)

Look at the story of creation and know you are part of it. Look at history and know you are here for such a time as this. Look at yourself and dare to say that what God made is good.

It's time to trade the insecurities you've felt about being an introvert for new confidence in who you're created to be, starting right now.

Here's your invitation today:

Set down the expectations that don't fit.

Stop listening to the lies of comparison.

See your powerful, needed strengths and gifts in new ways.

I accept this invitation.

How to Use the Guided Journaling Space

Transformation doesn't happen by accident; it takes intentionality and action. This guided journal uses a process that will move you toward confidence one simple, doable step at a time. As a coach, counselor, and bestselling author of *The Powerful Purpose of Introverts*, I've designed this journal based on research and what I've seen work for introverts.

Each day will begin with a reading like the one you just finished. Some of this content is totally new, and some of it is curated from the core concepts of my book *The Powerful Purpose of Introverts*. Each reading is followed by interactive journaling sections that will help you:

- * Connect in a deeper way with God through solitude and simple prayers.
- * Become more aware of what's happening in your inner world.
- * Learn to manage what energizes you and drains you as an introvert.
- * Develop helpful habits like reflection, gratitude, and taking the next small step.

* Live each day as an introvert in ways that allow you to thrive and serve.

The guided journaling space has three sections: In This Moment, Yesterday, and Today. Let's walk through them together so you're ready to start using them when you get to day one of the journal. If you need a reminder of how to use the guided journaling space once you get started, you can come back to these pages.

Section 1: In This Moment

Because our minds are so active, introverts often get pulled into mistakes of the past or concerns about the future. So each day's journaling starts with being present *in this moment*.

One simple way to bring our attention to this moment is with a *breath prayer*, which is simply a short prayer that is an affirmation of truth. As introverts, we can struggle with believing lies about who we are, so it's important that we realign with our true identity each day.

God's name is not "I was."

It's not "I will be."

His name is "I am."

This present moment is where we can most fully connect with him.

As introverts, we also need simple ways to calm our bodies and quiet our minds (we'll talk more specifically about why later).

As you say the breath prayer for each day of the journal, remember to:

- * Take a deep breath in through your nose.
- * Hold your breath for a count of three.
- * Release your breath slowly through your mouth.
- * Hold your lungs empty for a count of three.
- * Repeat the prayer and breathing until you feel calm.

After the breath prayer, you'll have a practical application or question to ponder that will help you engage in a deeper way with what you've read that day.

The *In This Moment* section closes with a quote, usually from a fellow introvert, that offers an insight or helpful perspective.

Section 2: Yesterday

Introverts excel at reflection. While we don't want to get stuck in the past, we do want to intentionally learn from it. The *Yesterday* section will help you do so in two important ways.

First, one of the most essential elements of thriving as an introvert is energy management. If we're not aware of how what's happening in our lives impacts us, we're headed for exhaustion and burnout. This section will give you a simple prompt to help you learn what fills you up and what drains you.

The goal of this exercise isn't to never have moments that drain you. That's not only impossible, but it would also deprive you of some of life's most rewarding experiences. What matters is that you manage what drains you so it doesn't become the master of you.

The more filled up you are, the more you can pour out to others. Knowing what you need as an introvert and honoring that isn't selfish; it's preparation for service.

When you discover something that fills you up as an introvert, you can ask . . .

How can I have more of this in my life?

When you find something that drains you, you can ask . . .

Can I eliminate this from my life?

If not, can I delegate it?

If not, can I minimize it?

If not, what strategies will help me through it?

One thing that can be draining to introverts is our tendency to feel like we're not doing enough. Our brains have a negativity bias (more on that later), so our perceptions of how well we're doing and what we're accomplishing are often inaccurate.

Second, to counter that kind of thinking, you'll make a Ta-Da! List each day that encourages you to look back and record three things you did the day before and celebrate them—*nothing is too small to write down*.

Section 3: Today

After you focus and reflect, you'll be ready to prepare for the day. You'll do so in three simple but effective ways: releasing worries, practicing gratitude, and making a doable plan.

As introverts, we can get stuck in rumination—which is a fancy name for worries on repeat in our minds. Research has shown it helps to get those worries out of our minds and onto paper. When you capture a worry, you can give it to God and ask for his help.

It's not enough just to release our worries. We need to replace them. Research has also shown gratitude shifts our perspective and primes our minds to look for what's good and helpful in our lives. Making gratitude a habit can impact our mental health and overall well-being as introverts.

As the final part of this section, you'll create a "Do What You Can" Plan for the day. Introverts are great at imagining what could be, coming up with big plans, and setting high expectations. This can mean we never actually take small steps toward our goals or dreams.

Your "Do What You Can" Plan will help you prioritize steady growth and progress over perfection. What are three small things you can realistically get done today?

Section 4: Thoughts, Feelings, All the Things

Your inner world as an introvert is full of thinking, feeling, dreaming, learning, observing, exploring, pondering, processing, and imagining.

This final section provides blank space for you to capture whatever is happening inside you. *As you move forward, remember . . .*



This journey is paved with *GRACE*, not *GUILT*.

It's about steady *PROGRESS*, not *PERFECTION*.

It's a gentle *INVITATION*, not an *OBLIGATION*.



There is no right or wrong way to do the exercises in the guided journaling sections. Make them work for *you*. This is your space, and you can use it however you feel is most helpful.

If you miss a day, it's okay. Go at the pace you need and give yourself room to process. If you get distracted or busy, just pick up where you left off and keep going.

As an introvert, you're likely hard on yourself. As you go through this process, speak to yourself as you would someone you love.

No matter how you feel on any given day, no matter what you do or don't do, this is still true: *you're enough, you're already loved, and you're gifted with strengths our world needs more than ever before.*

Let's get started.

Visit [HolleyGerth.com/Introverts](https://www.HolleyGerth.com/Introverts)
for even more introvert resources.

one

embrace the gift of solitude

Have you ever stood in a crowded room and felt alone?

I'm at an event holding a tiny plate covered with crackers and cheese, green grapes, and a few olives, wondering how to eat without looking awkward. Actually, I'm wondering how to even *be* in this room without awkwardness. All around me conversations flow, laughter echoes, and people exchange contact information, but I feel out of place.

One of the biggest myths in our world today is that isolation is about physical space. If someone is in a room by themselves, they must be isolated. If they're in a room full of other people, they must be connected. But we, as introverts, know deep down it doesn't really work that way.

What's a time when you felt alone even when you were with people?

What's a time when you didn't feel alone even though you were physically by yourself?



On every day of creation, God pronounced what he made good. Then he said, “It is not good for the man to be alone” (Gen. 2:18). The word *alone* in this verse isn’t about our proximity to others; it’s about the level of intimacy in our lives. The original meaning of *alone* in this context essentially expresses *living disconnected from God, others, and our true selves*.

In contrast, solitude is time when we’re physically apart from others for a specific purpose like prayer, creative work, reflection, a walk outside in nature, or going through this journal. Isolation is draining; solitude is restorative.

3 Things I Enjoy Doing in Solitude

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



For most of the church’s history, solitude was seen as an important spiritual discipline. Breaks from the outside world were viewed as essential for the soul, and even

“Jesus often *withdrew*
to the *wilderness* for prayer” (LUKE 5:16).

As introverts, we can shame ourselves for our need to have time alone. We might tell ourselves it's an indulgent luxury when so many people and tasks demand our attention. But what if our need for time alone is actually *holy*? What if it was placed there by a God who values quiet just as much as boldness, who invites us into stillness and not just busy schedules, who offers restoration and inspiration in the moments no one else is around?

Our noisy, chaotic world needs people with the courage to choose solitude. It helps all of us to reflect rather than react, to be intentional instead of impulsive, to live filled up rather than stressed out. It gives us room to create, dream, innovate. Our greatest contributions to others are likely to flow from solitude. By practicing it, we give those around us permission to slow their pace, lower their volume, and reconnect to what matters most.

I walk outside of the conference into a cloudless, silent evening. The stars are flung across the sky, diamonds on velvet. I remember I'm part of something so much bigger than I am, that I belong to Someone who spoke all this into being, that he is with me even now.

Solitude is not selfish; it's a sacred invitation.

Solitude
IS NOT SELFISH;
IT'S A SACRED
invitation.

IN THIS MOMENT

Please refer back to the *How to Use the Guided Journaling Space* section in the introduction if you need a reminder about how to use these sections.

BREATH PRAYER:

*God, you are always with me whether
I am with others or alone.*

Solitude often takes intentional planning. Pause and choose a time for solitude this week. Schedule it just like you would an important meeting. When and where will you have solitude?

For an introvert like me, being alone for any amount of time recharges me. In the midst of a busy day I'll sit in my car for a few extra minutes before coming inside just to enjoy a few minutes of rest or silence before jumping into whatever's next.

—JOANNA GAINES

yesterday

A moment that filled me up was ...

A moment that drained me was ...

TA-DA! LIST

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

today

One thing I'm worried about today is ...

One thing I'm grateful for today is ...

MY "DO WHAT YOU CAN" PLAN

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____
