

# ADMINADVANTAGE

The Exclusive Online Magazine for Administrative Professionals

June  
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## Speaking Up: 12 Tips for the Office Introvert

### FEATURES:

Pampering for the Working Professionals  
Are your triggers holding you back from leadership greatness?  
Personal Color Analysis

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# ADMINADVANTAGE

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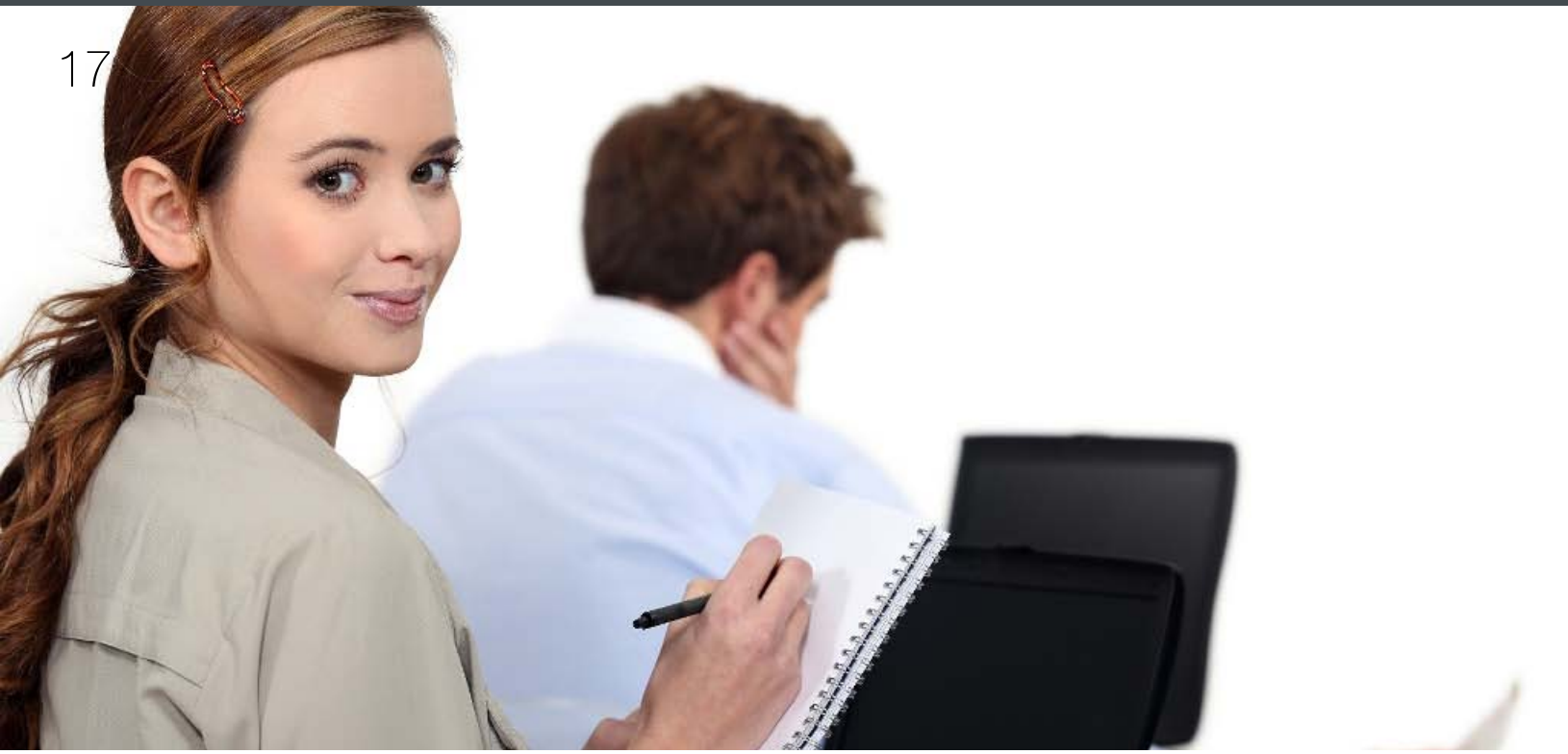
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# Pampering for the Working Professionals: Ten Tips for a Balanced Work and Social Life

by Maryse Mignott

**H**ealth experts worldwide resoundingly agree that workers in all labor categories must maintain a balance between their work and social lives. The dangers of more or over work and less socializing cannot be emphasized enough especially for the Londoner.

The advantages to having an active social life are many. Finding a healthy balance between our work and social lives is not always easy but some efforts towards developing that balance can assure we stay productive on the job and at the same time have a satisfying and healthy personal life. ▶▶

We have all heard of the dangers of stress and overwork. But what about those of us that love to work or have to work for various reasons? There has to be more to life than working at our jobs. How do we find a balance that keeps us healthy in both these important areas of our lives? Years of research and scholarly studies from experts in the UK, London, and worldwide have found the answers to these questions. While this article is about offering you the reader “tips” on developing that balance, it is important to highlight the dangers any one of us can succumb to if we don’t play or socialize in addition to working.

An awareness of your stress levels or symptoms of stress can give you a hint that you need more of a social life. Indicators of stress are many but the main symptoms to watch for are:

- **Migraine’s or headaches occurring more often**
- **Inability to concentrate**
- **Not wanting to get up in the morning or insomnia**
- **Over-tiredness**
- **Sudden mood swings not normal for you**
- **Isolation from friends and family**

**The last bullet point mentions isolation.** Isolating activities such as going to work and sitting at home every night, avoidance of friends and family and taking in little social outings/activities are probably the single most dangerous thing we can do for our physical and mental health. Our physical and emotional states of well being

depend upon a healthy balance of work and play. The following tips will help you avoid this common danger.

**Organize a social calendar.** Just like your daily “to-do” lists at work, start planning a social “to-do” list. Knowing what social activities appeal to you is essential towards organizing your social calendar. I have found <http://www.exclusivelondon.co.uk> an excellent source for researching ideas or social activities you may want to consider placing in your calendar. Find the time before or after work to get out into the London social scene.

**Dine out.** Many professionals in the work force are starting to see the satisfaction and pleasure in taking the time to experience food consumption in a whole new way. I’m not talking about going to a restaurant and quickly getting your meal down your throat and into your belly. I am talking about expanding your culinary horizons. For example, try ethnic cuisine or a new food you have never eaten before. Dine for hours at a trendy restaurant and savor an eight-course meal with a fine wine or cocktail. Most importantly, take your time and enjoy the experience.

**Dance the night away.** The benefits to a night out of dancing could never be overstated. The obvious benefits are the exercise and calorie burning. Dance experts have long asserted that dancing tones the body in a way no other form

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of physical activity can accomplish. Dancers are considered among the elite in athleticism and discipline. Dancing also offers social opportunities to meet new people. It gives you an outlet to work out aggression and the strains of the workday. Overall, dance is a complete source of exercise for the physical, social and mentally healthy self.

**Soothe your soul with music.** Take in a concert or musical affair. Choose your favorite music and attend an event that will fill you with the sounds of your favorite melodies. Music has long been a part of the human experience. It has been used for centuries to allow the human being an experience beyond their physical bodies. It can be said that music will lighten your mood and nurture your soul. Music, in a form that appeals to you, can quiet your mind and release the pain of the workday.

**Exercise.** Consider membership in a health or fitness club. A healthy physical body will give the hard working professional the energy needed to be both highly productive with job demands and the ability to keep up with an active social calendar. Other means of getting good exercise can be a walk in the park or bring out the child in you and dance around the house while getting ready for work.

**Take in some culture with art or theatre.** Museums and the theatre are fantastic venues in which to have a quiet and reflective personal experience.

The visual delight of examining a piece of art that touches you in a special way or watching a theatre performance that moves you in a positive manner can be extremely beneficial. Not every social event on your calendar has to include other people. Socializing with you, for yourself can very often be just as healthy an experience as being around hundreds or thousands of people.

**Getaway to a fine hotel or spa.** From a great deal of research and personal experience, three days at a spa is just about perfect. Like many of you, I often don't have the time for a one-day vacation much less three days however; I have found that a 3-day mini-vacation has its merits. It's just long enough to take in the full benefits of a massage, swimming, facials and some of the other amenities the hotel or spa has to offer. If one day is all you can take the time for, then do that. Try to do this at least twice a year. P.S. Leave the cell phone off, leave the laptop at home and tell the front desk you are taking no calls.


**Go shopping.** Indulge in a shopping trip every now and then. All of us need to treat ourselves to that special dress or suit. Buying that toy or electronic game we always wanted can only make life a bit better. Even shopping for food can be a great way to socialize. Take the time to say hello to the checkout clerk or butcher that has been serving you for years. A simple exchange of smiles is a social interaction that



benefits all people on many unimaginable levels. Involve your co-workers on your social calendar. There is nothing better than the buddy system for a healthy social (and work) life. Let's face it, engaging in some social activities is just no fun alone. Keep in mind, socializing with co-workers can also be a great way to maintain healthy work relationships.

**Breathe.** This may sound simple and unimportant because it is a natural activity we take part in every second of the day. Let me assure you, we can often stop breathing for several seconds at a time. The biological and rhythmic breathing pattern of humans often gets interrupted for many reasons. Stress and automatic response to difficulties in life are just a few of the reasons this occurs. Why is this important? One reason is because we need to maintain a regular and healthy breathing pattern throughout our bodies for optimal oxygen intake. Lack of oxygen can be responsible for depression, fatigue and damage at the cellular level of our bodies, to name a few. Good breathing flow and control can keep you loaded with energy as well as provide a healthy balance between mind and body. It will also make your work life much more tolerable.

These ten tips are by no means the only ways to build a social life and maintain a balance between work and fun. These tips are many that have been provided by the best experts on work

and social life. Those experts being you or those like you, the workers. Be creative, discipline yourself to organize your life towards a whole and healthy you both on the job and socially. Remember that it's not always about where, how or how long or with whom you socialize. Socializing can be as simple as sitting alone and enjoying the flavors of good food and libations, exercising a couple hours a week at a favorite gymnasium with friends or standing front and center at a major rock concert. The point is to get out and be social. Taking these suggestions will get you out. No matter what profession you work in a healthy balance in work and social life will keep you mentally healthy and energized, stress-free and socially empowered. 

*This article was written by Maryse Mignott, Corporate Strategy & Communications Executive for Exclusive London. Balance your work and social life by taking part in the London entertainment scene. For the hottest London events, restaurants, clubs, fashion boutiques and more, visit [<http://www.exclusivelondon.co.uk>] Reproductions of this article are encouraged but must include a link pointing back to <http://www.exclusivelondon.co.uk>*

# Are your triggers holding you back from leadership greatness?

by Rosalie Chamberlain

**F**ear that underlies bias about others can show up in ways we might not expect. It can show up in the individual who wants to succeed but holds themselves back because of fear, and it can show up in the leader who cannot see the talent that is right before them because there is too much focus on what/who is comfortable. The sense of discomfort or difficulty and our emotional reaction to that discomfort is the trigger process we are looking for. ▶





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Triggers show up in our emotional reactions. They do not always look like fear, though I believe a kind of subtle fear is at the root of each one of our triggers. If we have done some work on our unconscious biases, it may be helpful to review what we've discovered. Protecting ourselves from fearful situations is only natural. Our built-in desire for safety comes from a long ago evolutionary time when human beings had to be defended and reactive against the real dangers to their physical existence. There was no time to ponder. For survival, the reactions needed to occur instantaneously without lengthy thought.

However, these days our fight or flight instinct is overused and overworked and not always in proportion to its natural, instinctual purpose to protect us from truly harmful situations. We do experience—or our brains interpret experiences as—threats to our sense of well-being, to our sense of self, to our sense of success. Whether perceived or real, this “threat” brings on the same reactions. In order to become more thoughtful leaders, we need to grow in awareness of the difference between real bodily harm and perceived personal threats of a less existential kind.

Triggers are important to be aware of because triggers and fears become habits. The more we allow them to operate below our full conscious awareness, the less power we have to change them or to create a different outcome based on more beneficial insights and habits. Just as with our unconscious biases, triggers can cause us

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to miss valuable opportunities. If we are triggered to react emotionally to our colleagues and team members, we may overlook the ways we can support each other's success. We have a choice to proceed differently, but often don't recognize it. Our realities will become (or remain) governed by these triggers. Even if you do not know what it is, others could interpret the message as unwelcoming and implying disinterest.

For instance, biases can be either a bias for or a bias against something or someone. Reactions to a bias can manifest as tension, anxiety, frustration, uncertainty and even anger. These body sensations are connected to what our mind is thinking or perceiving even when we are not conscious of those thoughts. We just feel the need to protect or defend. If you recognize an emotional reaction to someone or to their opinion, notice what body language is taking place in you. You may want to roll your eyes, disengage or turn away. It could be that you are aware of the reaction and prefer to put on a face that is bland, sort of a poker face. While a poker face may seem like a neutral expression, it is a mask to cover up what is really going on. Question if you have intolerance, dislike or bias about the other person's perspective or way of being. This is not inclusion. This is exclusion of different perspectives. Being open to listening to other perspectives does not mean that you have to agree. How much can it hurt to be open to really listening? How much might it help?

I am a firm believer that our thoughts create our realities. We can change our reality by focusing on our thoughts and making changes in them that can produce a more productive outcome. If you approach fears and triggers with a mindset of curiosity, you will be better able to set judgment aside and discover new possibilities. Remember to proceed with self-kindness and acceptance, as you create a dialogue with your unconscious biases. Self-judgment is another emotional reaction that can be triggered by fear of the unknown. Judgment, in this context, is not useful to us. Non-judgment is a key piece because it is a state of being that provides us the opportunity to consciously observe situations. Have a curious mindset about where the judgment of self or others comes from. We will always have more time for discernment when it is necessary. But for now, we are on a fact-finding mission: what triggers influence our decision-making?

A powerful partner in the way our thoughts create our realities is language. Begin to listen to language—yours and the language of others. Notice if you use words like “hate,” “don't like,” “crazy busy,” etc. My clients are amazed at how their energy and perspective shifts when they recognize language that has a negative tone. Our words help create our reality and empowering words have an amazing impact on that reality. You can generate positive changes in yourself and in others simply by paying attention to the words you use. Words can trigger negativity. It's likely you have had


the experience of reacting emotionally to what someone else has said. What words trigger your hot buttons? What do others say and do that trip your emotional trigger? In order to grow in conscious awareness, we have to know what our triggers are and be aware of what happens to us when a trigger occurs. The next time one of your triggers is tripped, explore the following questions:

- **What is happening to my energy?**
- **Where is my focus?**
- **What can I do to get back on track, get grounded or centered?**
- **What motivates me and what de-motivates me?**

For instance, if you get off track on a goal or action because something did not go quite the way you anticipated it would; do you give up, beat yourself up, complain about the situation or the others involved, and create a vicious cycle that keeps you running on a hamster wheel? Our reaction to triggers happens instantaneously.

As you work more deeply on your awareness about triggers and their effects, remember to take a breath and slow down. By slowing down and learning about the trigger and your defensive emotional reaction, you have a better chance of ending these types of internal struggles. You benefit, and so do those you lead. Try the following exercise to help identify your triggers:

1. Identify a challenge you see and experience in your world.
2. What are the perspectives that are learned and the ones that are habitual? List these.
3. List alternative perspectives to approach the perceived challenge. Once you examine other perspectives, what might be another way of looking at the challenge or situation?

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# Personal Color Analysis

## How Your Personal Color Palette Is Determined

by Manu Verma

Colors Speak. Most of us at some time or the other are 'stuck' on a color and are on an impulse drawn towards it. Why? Probably because at that time we can relate to what that color conveys. As our perspectives change with time, so do our color preference. ▶▶

A world in black and white would alter the panorama of life, because colors form the very basis of visual perception. Each one has an identity summed by the meanings that it sends across. This implication has been distinctly proven by psychologists around the globe, who have tested their effect in different situations, using them in our surroundings as apparel, in educational institutions, hospitals, and professional organizations.

They speak a silent language.

And what they have to say categorizes them...

Blue & Green - colors of mother Earth that nurtures life and inhabits man. They embody the tranquil & nurturing qualities of water and nature, and instill a cooling effect.

Red, Yellow & Orange - the colors of the Sun blaze with its temperament. Naturally warm they are aggressive, and when used in their pure form, incite fierce emotions.

Beige, Brown, Grey, & White - the colors of

moon. They are neutral in their effect and can be artfully combined with hot and cool hues to complement their respective qualities.

Unconsciously our personalities and state of mind might align us to certain hues, having understood what they represent we can insinuate them effectively to trigger certain responses from the brain. To arouse an effect in ourselves, or stimulate it in others, we can use them consciously to carry out our non-verbal messages.

How do we do that?

Well... beginning with Blue - since it has aqua properties, try wearing it to work after a confronting brush up with a colleague or Mr. Boss. Summed with your 'hey-no-hard-feelings' attitude it is sure to blink out a message for a truce.

Presumably the color mostly seen around in hospitals, Green with its natural nurturing properties of nature, is considered to hasten healing. Wrap it around as you have your soups, juices, and plenty

of sunshine, and let it do its share to help you in recuperating after a 'sick' spell.

Passionate and provocative, Red can add sparks to a lifeless relationship, or really 'spark off' a situation as it could excite the opponent. So unless you intend to do that, leash it by blending it with beige, grey or cream.


Though belonging to the red family, Orange expresses thoughtful assertion. Orange could be an ideal color option if the situation requires you to stand up for yourself and state your creativity. The 'color of Buddha' and religious sects have used it, seemingly forever, to affirm their spiritual beliefs.

The least aggressive amidst these hot colors is controversially associated with cowardice, Yellow requires an 'its-a-happy-day' attitude to hoist what it positively stands for - cheer and joy. Mellowed with white, it radiates sunshine - A perfect color for you to dress up in on a rainy day!

White stands for truth, purity of thought & action. It can help sooth down tossed emotions, and envelop you in peaceful vibes when grueling routines leave you disheveled.

Black on the other hand obscures. It is a mask that blocks out more than just your figure flaws. Suspending an element of mystery, it could add a magnetic appeal to your demeanor.

Unlike blatant verbal speech, colors call for sensitized senses and form the ocular essence that can flavor expressions.

They go a long way in highlighting different moods, when words are not called for. Try donning them suggestively, and let hues do the talking. 

***Most of us randomly pick out an outfit on a mood binge without a thought to what the color denotes and if it could effect us and those around. But colors give out a strong message! Read on to know what they can say and how we can use them effectually for our good.***



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# Speaking Up: 12 Tips for the Office Introvert

by Brandi Britton, OfficeTeam

**C**ommunication is one of the most vital soft skills in the workplace. Often, it seems as though extroverts have all the advantages. They always seem to know what to say, and speaking in front of a crowd and chatting to strangers is easy for them. In fact, they're such a natural at it, many of them don't seem to know how to stop talking. ▶▶

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Introversion can actually be an asset for administrative professionals. Classic introverts think critically, write well, manage their time wisely and possess strong ethics. They're also leaders. In fact, Barack Obama is often described as an introvert. Still, not being an extrovert can get in the way of your professional advancement if it keeps you from speaking effectively before a group. Here are 12 tips that can help:

**1. Be prepared.** Shy people don't ad lib like extroverts seem to do so easily. To avoid that embarrassing deer-in-the-headlights look when you're suddenly called on, come to every meeting with details — perhaps even a script — of your project updates. Include things like numbers, highlights and client feedback. Having these prepared notes will help you feel more comfortable when talking in public.

**2. Make eye contact.** While this can feel awkward initially, it will give the impression that you're confident and in control, even if you feel like hiding under your desk. Comfortable eye contact also helps you remember that those listening are your colleagues, and they support you and want you to succeed.

**3. Visualize a flawless performance.** If possible, visit the room where you'll be speaking and stand in front of the empty seats. Imagining yourself delivering your speech without a hitch can do wonders for your confidence.

**4. Be someone else.** Some of the most experienced and effective public speakers have

an onstage persona. If you're shy and withdrawn, the advice to "be yourself" may not be very effective. When the time comes for you to give a talk or lead a meeting, try adopting an alter ego instead. Imagine yourself as an actor playing a powerful, confident character. This is a great way to release your inhibitions — and maybe even have a little bit of fun in the process.

**5. Don't apologize.** By this I mean an introvert shouldn't draw attention to their nervousness or lack of confidence. I've heard people start a talk by saying, "I'm not a very good public speaker, so I apologize in advance." That's a terrible way to begin. Even if you think you're not a very good speaker, calling attention to your lack of communication skills makes the audience uncomfortable. This lowering of expectations is absolutely unnecessary and can even backfire.

**6. Ask questions.** A good way to improve your communication skills is to ask questions of others in the room. This tactic is useful because when you're engaging with others the spotlight is on you only temporarily. Many people, especially extroverts, love talking about themselves and are flattered when asked to do so. You'll also be developing your empathy and critical listening skills, which are an important part of effective communication.

**7. Participate during meetings.** It's easy for an introvert to hang back and let others take over the discussion, but remember that your opinions and ideas are just as valuable as your coworkers'. During a meeting, when you get a good idea, plan what you're going to say. If

necessary, write it down so if you get nervous, you'll have text to fall back on. What's important is to make yourself visible and part of the group.

**8. Get out more.** Spending time with lots of new people is draining for introverts. But if you're serious about improving your communication skills, you need to put yourself out there. Attend a couple of conferences or workshops a year, which will push you outside of your comfort zone — in a good way. As a bonus, you'll be boosting your confidence while building your network like a pro.


**9. Don't dwell on past faux pas.** Introverts with social anxiety often waste hours fretting over even the smallest mistake, such as getting an answer wrong or not unmuting the microphone when called upon during a phone conference. The more you agonize, the less you're likely to talk in public again. Extroverts laugh at themselves and their missteps, and so should you.

**10. Set easily attainable goals.** There's no reason to jump into the deep end by volunteering to lead a workshop or cold-call clients. Instead, give yourself one small goal per week that will build your social and communication skills. For example, start a conversation with a new coworker during a break, or resolve to weigh in with your opinion during a staff meeting.

**11. Let your listening skills shine.** As an introvert, this is likely one of your natural strengths, so use it to your advantage. Listen respectfully, using visual and verbal cues to show you're paying attention, such as nodding your head, leaning toward the speaker, uncrossing your arms and

voicing your agreement. The better you listen, the more you'll be able to understand the issue and ask intelligent follow-up questions.

**12. Take control where you can.** When your boss asks you to give an update on your project, you can ask to present toward the beginning of the meeting (to get it out of the way) or at the end (so you can see how others do it). When you attend a convention, draw up your own schedule and carve out some alone time to recharge. Having the ability to make choices gives you more power over your situation, which in turn makes you more comfortable and calms your nerves.

Again, being an introvert is not a negative. It hinders your administrative career only if your shyness gets in the way of conveying your ideas. By focusing on small steps and increasing your confidence, you can develop stellar communication skills while remaining true to yourself. 

*Brandi Britton is a district president for OfficeTeam, the nation's leading staffing service specializing in the temporary placement of highly skilled administrative and office support professionals. OfficeTeam has more than 300 locations worldwide and offers online job search services at [www.officeteam.com](http://www.officeteam.com). Connect with us on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest and the OfficeTeam blog.*