

Fortress of Solitude



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Extraverts employ various social devices to keep them in the company of others, and introverts have ways of protecting their own privacy. As with most personality factors, everyone harbors both tendencies, but you can effortlessly classify anyone you know as predominantly one or the other. Think of the three introverts you know best. Like beavers, introverts construct their personal fortress from the materials they find at hand. Solitary commitments sequester personal time just as the sticks and stones of the dam sequester its pond, so that secrets and treasures may be safely stashed and privately savored. Email and voicemail insulate personal space just as mud insulates the lodge. Calendar and

location ambiguity camouflage the introvert like branches and leaves. Access to the inner chamber is mediated by a labyrinth of literal and metaphorical tunnels, passages, obstacles, challenges and checkpoints.

Now, it is important to note that many introverts are also outgoing and socially adept. We cherish and nurture our human relationships and our social engagements every bit as tenderly as our extraverted cousins do. Our fortress of solitude is not about excluding you and we hope you don't take it personally, because we love you. It is simply that we recharge our batteries and commune with our muse offline rather than on the public grid, as you may prefer. Regard the pleasure that we take in your company when we are in it rather than our habitual protective devices when we are not. Note the depth of our connection when we are with you rather than the comfort we take in our isolation. Consider the quality and creativity of the gifts that we craft for you in our retreat.

In special relationships like intimate friendship, good marriage, or personal counseling, we can assume an introverted posture *together*. In this way we can reap the benefits of private and unbridled reflection, unconstrained for the moment by any social or cultural agenda. In retreat we can speculate and explore any terrain in our own way, then decide what part of it we choose to bring out into the world. Trust me. Call me.

Relief, Recovery, Resolution

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