



# The Highly Sensitive Person

Understanding the innate character trait of high sensitivity and how to live in a fallen and overstimulating world.

# What is High Sensitivity?

High Sensitivity is an innate temperament trait found in the same numbers of both men and women. 15 -20% of the population is born (inherited) with a highly sensitive nervous system that causes them to be more open to intuitive feelings and to picking up light, sound, and other subtleties in their environment.

# D.O.E.S.

D - Depth of Processing

O - Overstimulation

E - Emotionally Responsive/Empathy

S - Sensitive to Subtle

“D”

## Depth of Processing

At the foundation of the trait of high sensitivity is the tendency to process information more deeply.

“O”

## **Overstimulation**

If you notice everything, you are naturally going to be overstimulated when things are too intense, complex, chaotic, or novel for a long time.

“E”

### **Emotional Reactivity/Empathy**

HSPs react more to both positive and negative experiences.

Studies found that areas of the brain involved with awareness and emotion, particularly those areas connected with empathetic feelings, in the highly sensitive people showed substantially greater blood flow to relevant brain areas than was seen in individuals with low sensitivity.

“S”

## **Sensing the Subtle**

HSPs have a strong tendency to be aware of nuances in meaning and notice (sense) the little things that non-HSPs miss.

# Nervous System?

The nervous system is the control center for your body. It interprets the things your body senses, and it sends information to the muscles and glands, telling them what to do. It also runs the systems you don't have to think about, like the digestive and cardiovascular systems. The nervous system is also responsible for your moods and your thoughts.



# Nervous System

Basically, our nervous system helps us sense and feel. (cold/hot, loud noises etc)

The nervous system also causes us to think about what we are sensing and feel the ups and downs in our emotions.

# Nervous System

What's the big deal with the nervous system?

When your nervous system tells you that something doesn't feel right you will find ways to avoid or change the situation.

All this is very normal and beneficial to survival and daily life.

# Challenges

The challenge comes in the 15-20% of the population that were born with a highly sensitive nervous system.

Because Highly Sensitive People (HSP) feel and sense more and in a deeper manner, they are prone to feeling overwhelmed, different, and that something about them is just not normal.

# Challenges

- 1) Being vulnerable to sensory or emotional overload.
- 2) Reacting to emotions and thoughts of others.
- 3) The need to retreat or refresh.
- 4) Finding a balance of being “in” and “out”.
- 5) The constant pressure to be “normal” in a Western cultural.

# Common HSP Myths

Only introverts are highly sensitive.

Highly sensitive people are shy.

Most highly sensitive people are women.

The trait of sensitivity is a burden.

# Myths

If a person is highly sensitive, it's obvious.

Highly sensitive people are making a choice to be overly sensitive.

It's better not to be highly sensitive.

Highly sensitive people struggle in relationships.

# Myths

The environment in which a highly sensitive child is raised doesn't matter.

Highly sensitive people are very similar to each other.

Being highly sensitive is the same as being emotionally weak.

# How is being HSP Good?

We're able to concentrate deeply.

We notice subtleties that others may miss.

We're good at tasks requiring vigilance, accuracy, speed, and the detection of minor differences.



# Advantages

We're able to process material to deeper levels.

We're able to learn something new without being aware we have learned.

We're highly conscientious.

# Advantages

We have high levels of empathy, and we're deeply moved by other people's emotions.

We relish a good outcome and figure out more than others do how to make it happen.

We're specialists at fine motor movements.

# Advantages

We learn languages better.

We consider the past and the future more.

We think about our own thinking more.

We're more "right-brained."

# Am I a Highly Sensitive Person (HSP)?

## Homework

1. Take the assessment.
2. Journal your experiences (positive/negative), struggles, and strengths.
3. Examine your past.
4. Coping methods.

# You are God's workmanship!

For **we are his workmanship**, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so we may do them. (Ephesians 2:10)

I am crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but **Christ lives in me**. (Galatians 2:20)

The Son has set me free. **I am free indeed!** (John 8:36)

My **body is the temple** of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:19)

I can do all things through **Christ who gives me strength**.  
(Philippians 4:13)

**He who began a good work in me** will be faithful to complete it. (Philippians 1:6)

There is now no condemnation for **those who are in Christ Jesus**. (Romans 8:1)

# God is for us!

**Nothing can ever separate** me from the love of God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:38-39)

**In all things** God works for the good of those who love him. (Romans 8:28)

**God is faithful.** He will not let me be tempted beyond what I can bear. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

God has not given me a spirit of fear, but of **power, love and a sound mind.** (2 Timothy 1:7)

He is able to do immeasurably more than all I ask or imagine, according to **his power that is at work within me.** (Ephesians 3:20)

**God is for me!** Who can be against me? (Romans 8:31)

# Credits

Dr. Tedd Zeff

Dr. Elaine Aron

Jenn Granneman

Jacquelyn Strickland

And many more...

# Next Session

4/23/16

9:00-11:00 AM

Topics

Discuss the homework

Personal Stories

Coping Strategies

What would you like to see?