



The Highly Sensitive Person

A **Highly Sensitive Person (HSP)** is someone who processes sensory data exceptionally deeply and thoroughly due to a biological difference in his or her nervous system. This term was first coined by Dr. Elaine N. Aron, the author of *The Highly Sensitive Person*.

For HSPs, regular sensory information is processed and analyzed at a deep level, which contributes to creativity, intuition, sensing implications and attention to detail. The drawback is a tendency to become over-stimulated very quickly.

Highly Sensitive People have an uncommonly sensitive nervous system. It is a normal occurrence and a distinct personality trait that affects as many as one out of every five people. It means you are aware of details and facets of your surroundings that others often overlook.

- This trait is normal—it is inherited by 15% to 20% of the population, and indeed the same percentage seems to be present in all higher animals.
- Being an HSP means your nervous system is more sensitive to subtleties. Your sight, hearing and sense of smell are not necessarily keener (although they may be). An HSP brain manages information and reflects on it more intensely.
- Being an HSP also means having a tendency to be over-stimulated, stressed out and overwhelmed.
- This trait is not something newly discovered. It has been mislabeled as shyness (not an inherited trait), introversion (30% of HSPs are actually extroverts), fearfulness and the like. HSPs can be these, but none of these is the fundamental trait they have inherited.

In our culture, being tough and outgoing is the preferred or ideal personality. This cultural bias affects HSPs as much as their trait affects them. You may have grown up hearing, "Don't be so sensitive," making you feel abnormal, when in fact you could do nothing about it. The trait is not a flaw or a syndrome, nor is it a reason to brag. It is an asset you can learn to use and protect.

Take this test to see if you are a Highly Sensitive Person

www.hsperson.com/pages/test.htm

The Highly Sensitive Person: How to Thrive When the World Overwhelms You, by Elaine N. Aron, PhD. Broadway Books, 1996