

The Highly Sensitive Person

By Elaine Aron

- Highly Sensitive to stimulation – sounds, sights, physical sensations that go unnoticed by others.
 - This does not mean the hearing, vision, or other senses are more acute – many HSP's wear glasses.
 - Means that the brain processes this information differently than for other people
 - Things are sorted into *finer* distinctions
 - Information is processed in a subconscious way – seems like you “just know” how things are and how they will be and don't know how you know.
- Stimulation is particularly upsetting if you feel like you have no control over it.
- Arousal is not fear.
 - Arousal may or may not be associated with an emotion.
- Research supports that this is most likely an inherited trait.
- Higher levels of Norepinephrine and Cortisol, even when not stressed. Page 28.
- Two Systems of the Brain
- Behavioral Activation (approach) – designed to move us toward things, especially new things. Fresh food, companionship. Makes us curious, bold, impulsive.
- Behavioral Inhibition (Avoidance; cultural bias is evident in the names of these two systems) – cautious, watchful.
- Get Enough Rest
- Protect your sleep time
- If you can't sleep, lie in bed with your eyes shut. 80% of sensory stimulation is visual.
- Play. HSP's are contentious and can not play until the work is done. It is like a sensory “needle” poking us.

- Downtime. Unwind and think over the day. While driving, washing the dishes, gardening.
- Transcendence. Meditation, prayer, contemplation.
- Eat right and exercise.
- Watch caffeine intake. Especially if you do not regularly use it, as a little too much will make you over stimulated.
- Coping With Over Arousal
 - Psychological Strategies:
 - Reframe the situation.
 - Repeat a prayer, mantra, phrase
 - Witness the over arousal. Imagine standing to one side, watching the situation.
 - Physical Strategies
 - Get out of the situation
 - Close your eyes.
 - Go outside
 - Use water
 - Calm your breathing
 - Adjust your posture to a more relaxed position
 - Move!
 - Smile softly
 - Take frequent breaks
 - Develop Healthy Boundaries
 - This takes practice