



Empowerment Coaching

Highly Sensitive Personality Test

with comment
and frequently asked questions

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Test for a Highly Sensitive Personality

This Test for Highly Sensitive Personality (HSP) is a copy of the original test developed by American psychologist Elaine N. Aron, creator of the concept of Highly Sensitive Person, who is herself an HSP.

Empowerment Coaching has obtained the author's consent to publish and distribute this test on our website. You can find the original source of the test at the following address: <https://hsperson.com/test/highly-sensitive-test/>

Test Completion Instructions

The test consists of 27 questions to be answered "Yes" or "No". The full list of questions is distributed across 2 pages. Each question is accompanied by a box to mark the answer "Yes".

We have prepared the test in various graphic designs. Choose the format that suits you best and print the appropriate 2 pages.

Once printed, answer all the questions and mark each box next to the question for which you answered "Yes" on a piece of paper.

If you are unable to print the test, display the test form on the screen and write down" on a separate piece of paper the question numbers to which you answered "Yes".

The interpretation of your test results is explained at the end of this document. It is important that you do not look at it before starting the Test. This could affect your answers.

Good luck!





Templates of Test for a Highly Sensitive Personality

Test for a Highly Sensitive Personality

Yes

- ☐ 1. Are you easily overwhelmed by strong sensory input?
- ☐ 2. Do you seem to be aware of subtleties in your environment?
- ☐ 3. Do other people's moods affect you?
- ☐ 4. Do you tend to be more sensitive to pain?
- ☐ 5. Do you find yourself needing to withdraw during busy days, into bed or into a darkened room or any place where you can have some privacy and relief from stimulation?
- ☐ 6. Are you particularly sensitive to the effects of caffeine?
- ☐ 7. Are you easily overwhelmed by things like bright lights, strong smells, coarse fabrics, or sirens close by?
- ☐ 8. Do you have a rich, complex inner life?
- ☐ 9. Are you made uncomfortable by loud noises?
- ☐ 10. Are you deeply moved by the arts or music?
- ☐ 11. Does your nervous system sometimes feel so frazzled that you just have to go off by yourself?
- ☐ 12. Are you conscientious?
- ☐ 13. Do you startle easily?
- ☐ 14. Do you get rattled when you have a lot to do in a short amount of time?



Test for a Highly Sensitive Personality

Yes

- ☐ 15. When people are uncomfortable in a physical environment do you tend to know what needs to be done to make it more comfortable (like changing the lighting or the seating)?
- ☐ 16. Are you annoyed when people try to get you to do too many things at once?
- ☐ 17. Do you try hard to avoid making mistakes or forgetting things?
- ☐ 18. Do you make a point to avoid violent movies and TV shows?
- ☐ 19. Do you become unpleasantly aroused when a lot is going on around you?
- ☐ 20. Does being very hungry create a strong reaction in you, disrupting your concentration or mood?
- ☐ 21. Do changes in your life shake you up?
- ☐ 22. Do you notice and enjoy delicate or fine scents, tastes, sounds, works of art?
- ☐ 23. Do you find it unpleasant to have a lot going on at once?
- ☐ 24. Do you make it a high priority to arrange your life to avoid upsetting or overwhelming situations?
- ☐ 25. Are you bothered by intense stimuli, like loud noises or chaotic scenes?
- ☐ 26. When you must compete or be observed while performing a task, do you become so nervous or shaky that you do much worse than you would otherwise?
- ☐ 27. When you were a child, did parents or teachers seem to see you as sensitive or shy?



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Interpretation of HSP Test Results

Interpretation of Test Results for Highly Sensitive Personality

If you answered "Yes" to at least 14 questions, you are likely to be an HSP - Highly Sensitive Person.

The more your "Yes" exceeds 14, the more likely it is and the greater the depth of your highly sensitive personality.

If fewer than 14 questions apply to you, but they are extremely true, this may also justify calling you a Highly Sensitive Person.

Important notes from Test developers

We (Aron et al., 2012) see HSP as an innate strategy for accurately processing information from the environment, which is related (not necessarily consciously) to prior knowledge before taking action, as opposed to a strategy of quick action, but without much processing.

It's sensitive or reflective versus brave or impulsive. Thus, it is a normal diversity of human temperament (a variety found in many, if not most, other species) that has advantages and disadvantages depending on the environment.

There appeared to be no difference in the number of men and women born with the HSP trait, and only those elements that did not show a significant difference between the sexes in our initial samples were included in the HSP scale. However, men tend to score lower than women on an overall scale. Given that HSP is a genetic trait that is not related to gender, we suspect that this gender-related bias is culturally motivated.



FAQ-Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know for sure that I am a Highly Sensitive Person or that my child is highly sensitive?

No paper and pencil test should be taken as the last word on an innate temperament trait, personality trait, or disorder. We have developed a test for use in scientific research into what we call "*sensory processing sensitivity*" (having nothing to do with sensory processing disorder).

Many other studies have also used this measure, although some researchers call it a little differently, such as "*biological sensitivity to context*."

So you can be sure of one thing - this feature is real and exists.

The thing is that the test we have developed is most useful in a scientific study conducted on a larger group of people. So that you as an individual can gain confidence about you or your child – read more about high sensitivity.

For example, almost every person with HSP, regardless of background, has four aspects of high sensitivity, abbreviated as D.O.E.S.:

1. **Depth of Processing,**
2. **Easily Overstimulated,**
3. **Emotional Responsiveness/Empathy,**
4. **Sensitive to Subtle Stimuli.**

For more information, refer to the list of proven links provided at the end of this document in the "Sources" section.

High sensitivity is a normal trait found in about 20% of the population. But it's easy to make a mistake about who is highly sensitive and who is not. Especially with young children, because we can not ask them what is going on in them and make sure that we understand their answer. Sometimes we can only guess what a certain behavior means. If the child does not want to join, is he shy? Scared? Does she / he have low self-esteem, feel superior, have low intelligence, or think it's too stimulating? Or maybe she / he just looks carefully at first, but is not really afraid? Someone who knows the child well, the parent, is probably the best judge of sensitivity.



FAQ-Frequently Asked Questions

In fact, there are three possibilities for misdiagnosis:

1. The HSP trait can be confused with a disorder.
2. The HSP trait can be confused with a problem.
3. HSP can and often does occur simultaneously with a disorder or serious problem.

1. Confusing HSP with the disorder.

Given the fact that HSPs are a minority, if compared to the other 80% of the population, they can easily be labeled "abnormal" and misdiagnosed as suffering from the disorder.

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association, the disorder occurs only when

„causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, professional or other important areas of functioning.“

Of course, in the eyes of the remaining 80% of observers, a person with HSP may appear impaired. But will a professional psychologist who is himself an HSP think the same? Are you handicapped if you think your office is too stimulating to continue working in? Or maybe you are not able to spend the evening in a noisy restaurant? Is a child "too shy" if he doesn't get into social situations right away? An insensitive professional might think so. A professional familiar with the HSP feature or being an HSP himself probably no longer and would certainly want to ask a lot of questions before making a definitive diagnosis.



FAQ-Frequently Asked Questions

2. Confusing you or your child with HSP when this is not true.

Some people are sure they have to be WWOs, but in reality they are not. Some parents think the same about their children. This is more difficult because such parents usually want sensitivity to be the only issue. This is especially dangerous when in reality the problem is something else. Real-world problems can be solved much more easily if they are detected early.

3. Thinking that this is just an HSP, while HSP comes along with another significant problem.

If you are not sure about what is happening, there is a high probability that along with the real problem or disorder there is a high sensitivity, since high sensitivity leads to the so-called "*differential susceptibility*".

This means that in a good environment that is not too stressful, people with the HSP trait develop better than the other 80%.

On the other hand, in situations perceived as stressful, people with HSP are more likely to have anxiety, depression or shyness.



FAQ-Frequently Asked Questions

If you are an adult and still reflecting on yourself, and especially if you have problems in life, you should of course seek professional help. It's best to start with the opinion of someone who knows you and understands high sensitivity or is open to your explanations.

You can go to an expert about a specific problem or disorder that you think you may have. But maybe it's better not to go to a specialist first. Instead, find someone very, very experienced who can assess the many different causes of the behavior that concerns you.

The problem is that a personality expert can only see a personality disorder, a depression expert can see depression, an anxiety expert can diagnose anxiety, an autism expert knows autism best, a sensory processing disorder therapist focuses on them, and those who treat environmental problems may see your situation as a result of problems at home, at work, or in childhood.

If you can't find a wise "generalist" and go to a specialist, you can ask for another expert opinion on the second most likely issue and see if that person insists that this is the problem he is investigating or agrees with the reasoning of the first expert.



FAQ-Frequently Asked Questions

Rejecting the HSP trait if you are a man, an extrovert or a "thrill seeker". Or thinking that your child can't be HSP because he's a boy, is sociable, or "ready for anything."

We know that as many men as women are born with the HSP trait, although of course they will vary by gender and how their family and culture perceive their vulnerability. In contrast, in the case of adults, men get lower scores in the auto-test. Even though each question was tested and used only when men and women answered "true" more or less equally, men still score lower throughout the test. It's as if they're starting to sense that they're discovering their vulnerability, and that makes them nervous. So, men and parents of boys must take this into account when deciding whether they themselves or their child are highly sensitive.

In addition, 70% of HSPs are introverts, so sometimes these two characteristics are equated. But 30% of the HSP population are extroverts - that is, people who like to be in a group, meet strangers and have a large circle of friends. If it's you or your child, this type of HSP just tastes different – it's more sociable, but it also requires a lot of downtime, unlike extroverts who aren't HSPs at the same time.

Finally, you or your child can be sensation seekers. It may seem impossible, because high sensitivity and high sensationalism sound like opposites. In fact, this is not the case. The opposite of being highly sensitive is to be very impulsive, as this is the opposite of deep processing and stopping from action (although sometimes HSPs act quickly because they already know from previous experience what is going to happen).

It seems that sensitivity and sensation-seeking are governed by two different systems in the brain, and how strong they are seems to be genetically determined. So you can be born with strong both qualities, which has its advantages and disadvantages.

One person said, *"It's like living with one foot on the gas and the other on the brake."* Children with both traits may seem willing to take big risks, but they have usually thought through the activity first and are (often secretly) very cautious.



Sources

[High Sensitivity Self-test](#)

[Find out if your child is Highly Sensitive.](#)

[High Sensation Seeking Self-test](#)

[What is the evidence that this trait is genetic?](#)

[How to recognize HSP \(using DOES model\)?](#)

[The Highly Sensitive Person Who Is Also A High Sensation Seeker](#)

[How does sensitivity differ from Autistic spectrum disorders \(Asperger's Syndrome, etc.\)?](#)

[What is the relationship between the HSP trait and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder \(also sometimes called ADD\)?](#)

[How can I describe being highly sensitive to other people?](#)

[Discussing Your Trait with Therapists, What To Say To The Professionals](#)

[For Highly Sensitive Teenagers: Dealing with the Rest of Your Family](#)

[Highly Sensitive People – what is their uniqueness?](#)



Books on HSP in English

Elaine N. Aron	The Highly Sensitive Person: How to Thrive When the World Overwhelms You
Elaine N. Aron	The Highly Sensitive Person's Workbook: A Comprehensive Collection of Pre-tested Exercises Developed to Enhance the Lives of HSP's
Elaine N. Aron	The Highly Sensitive Child: Helping Our Children Thrive When the World Overwhelms Them
Tom Falkenstein	The Highly Sensitive Man: How Mastering Natural Instincts, Ethics, and Empathy Can Enrich Men's Lives and the Lives of Those Who Love Them
Elaine N. Aron	Psychotherapy and the Highly Sensitive Person: Improving Outcomes for That Minority of People Who Are the Majority of Clients
Amanda Cassil	The Empowered Highly Sensitive Person: A Workbook to Harness Your Strengths in Every Part of Life
Judy Dyer	The Highly Sensitive: How to Stop Emotional Overload, Relieve Anxiety, and Eliminate Negative Energy
Barrie Jaeger	Making Work Work for the Highly Sensitive Person





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