FROM INTERNATIONAL PILOT
to AUTHOR, COACH & SPEAKER

GROWING FORWARD

with Charlotte Hillenbrand



Visibility Equity

Any other introverts here?

I was an adult when I learned what introversion and extroversion actually are: not personality traits, but indicators of where we draw our energy from. Are you recharged by solitude and reflection, or energised by social interaction and external activity?

I'm an introvert. Long before I had the vocabulary for it, I knew I had a strong need for time to myself.

Did I need the label? No, labels can be limiting.

Did I need the awareness? Absolutely.

It would have helped all the times I watched others perform confidently in grand ways and wondered, What do they have that I don't? It would have helped to know that my quieter way didn't render my performance any less.

It would have helped when I questioned what I might be missing, to understand that I simply operated differently, and wasn't missing anything at all.

Awareness matters. It allows us to choose how we act or whether we act at all.

Unfortunately, introversion is often confused with shyness or lack of confidence. Many of our systems reward the loudest or most persistent voice, rather than the best thinking. Having a good idea is no longer enough; you also need to know how to market it.

And, more often than not, the responsibility to adapt sits with the introvert – to speak up more, take more space – rather than with the environment to make space.

Why does that matter?

Because deep thinking is often what happens instead of noise-making. And that thinking benefits families, teams, and organisations.

In the cockpit, visibility equity was created deliberately. Captains were trained to ask the first officer for their opinion before voicing their own. If the captain spoke first, alternative views rarely surfaced. By going second, leaders ensured two perspectives had a chance to be heard.

In my first flying job, we were taught a sentence repeated in every daily briefing: We are each other's life insurance.

It gave me both the opportunity and the responsibility to speak up.

Visibility equity is not about asking everyone to be louder. It's about creating conditions where different ways of thinking can surface without force.

Sometimes that simply means leaders pausing. Going second. Asking the quieter voice first – and waiting.

When only one style of expression is rewarded, we limit the quality of our collective thinking.

Equity, in this sense, is not about preference.

It's about wisdom, safety, and outcomes.

After all, we are each other's life insurance.

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