

CHAPTER I



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TRAITS OF THE HIGHLY SENSITIVE PERSON

THE TRAITS OF HIGHLY SENSITIVE PEOPLE

Here's a quick overview of some of the most common traits of Highly Sensitive People. Highly Sensitive People tend to be...

1

Highly intuitive and sensitive to their environment.

2

Naturally very empathetic and compassionate.

3

Often feel emotionally exhausted.

4

Often feel stressed by conflict.

5

Tend to ruminate over things and have an overactive mind.

6

Often neglect self-care and put the needs of others first.

7

May need to withdraw after a busy day, into a place where they can have privacy and relief from the situation.

Am I Highly Sensitive?

CHECKLIST

This short checklist has been adapted from the extensive work and research of Elaine N Aron, the author of *The Highly Sensitive Person*. It is a very good indicator as to whether you resonate with the traits of a Highly Sensitive Person (HSP). If you answer YES to 12 or more of the statements it is very likely you are a Highly Sensitive Person.

- ☐ I am aware of subtleties in my environment
- ☐ I am easily affected by people's mood
- ☐ Sometimes I absorb the emotions of others
- ☐ I have a lower tolerance to pain than other people
- ☐ I often need to spend a lot of time on my own
- ☐ I am easily affected by things like bright lights, strong smells, fabrics or loud noises
- ☐ I have a rich, complex inner life
- ☐ I think of myself as creative and have a strong imagination
- ☐ I am deeply moved by music, art and being in nature
- ☐ I am conscientious and I don't like to make mistakes
- ☐ I am very aware of the needs of others
- ☐ I get overwhelmed by too many tasks at once

- ☐ I think of myself as a perfectionist
- ☐ I don't like watching violence on TV and it strongly effects me
- ☐ Being hungry creates a strong reaction in me
- ☐ When I am being observed I get easily nervous or anxious
- ☐ When I was a child people thought I was sensitive and shy
- ☐ I experience strong and sometimes overwhelming emotions
- ☐ I find myself thinking, reflecting and analyzing situations a lot
- ☐ I often feel misunderstood
- ☐ It takes me a while to adapt to change

If you answered yes to 12 or more of the statements, it is very likely that you are HSP.

Remember, this is not a diagnostic tool and being a Highly Sensitive Person is definitely not a disorder or a disease. Yet, it has been shown that there are biological differences that are inherent in HSP and make up 15-20% of the population.

I have found that the ability to identify these unique traits in ourselves is an empowering process rather than a label that acts to put us into a box or limit our potential.

The label can help us to receive the appropriate guidance and support as we navigate our way through life. It also enables us to identify and cultivate our unique strengths and gifts.

The traits of HSP exist on a spectrum ranging from extreme to somewhat, to not at all. So even if you identify with only a few of the traits, but the traits are particularly strong for you, you will benefit from learning more about HSP.