

# Strategy Guide for Quiet Power Clubs: 5 Essential Tips

## Quiet in the Classroom

### STRATEGIES FOR HAVING YOUR VOICE HEARD

- **STRIKE EARLY:** If you know the topic of discussion beforehand, plan out what you're going to say. Develop an opinion or idea, and contribute before the discussion rambles off in an unexpected direction.
- **IDENTIFY YOUR BEST ENTRY POINT:** When are you most comfortable pitching in? Develop a strategy for joining the discussion in the way that's easiest for you. Instead of being the first to speak, maybe you prefer building on or adding to another student's comment. Maybe you like to be the person who asks thoughtful questions, or to play devil's advocate. Choose a role that feels natural for you.
- **USE NOTES:** If you're worried about freezing up while speaking, jot down your ideas on a piece of paper so that you can refer to them if needed.
- **FOLLOW UP:** If you had a point to make, but couldn't summon the courage to raise your hand, e-mail your teacher after class, so that she or he knows you're paying attention and are curious.
- **OBSERVE YOUR CLASSMATES:** Notice all the times when other people make nonsensical comments, or say something that's just plain wrong, and no one minds. Develop a warm and forgiving attitude about other people's mistakes, and thus about your own. You'll come to realize that nothing terrible will happen if your answer is wrong or if your voice quivers slightly. "If your answer is incorrect, the teacher will simply move on to the next person," says one wise teen named Annie.

### STRATEGIES FOR THRIVING WITHIN A GROUP

- **QUIET NOT SILENT:** You don't need to talk over anyone, or to speak up at every opportunity, but do share your thoughts in a way that's comfortable for you. Perhaps you'll opt for one-on-one conversations with key members of your group. (It can be especially effective to have these conversations before the meeting starts.) Or try written communication as an alternative to speaking in front of a bunch of people: Start a group e-mail or message chain so that you can lay out your thoughts without the pressure of wording everything perfectly on the spot. Some teachers may create an online forum for students to discuss ideas, give feedback, or post their results. (If yours hasn't done so, think about suggesting it.)
- **THE RIGHT ROLE:** Some people contribute best by taking notes, conducting research, and tapping into their powers as observers. Others are more comfortable playing the role of devil's advocate, or facilitating a group meeting by asking for others' ideas, without necessarily advancing their own. Put time into finding the role or roles that best fit your personality. Behind-the-scenes work is just as important as what goes on in the spotlight—just look at the film and technology industries!



### STRATEGIES FOR THRIVING WITHIN A GROUP (CONT'D)

- **NEW PARTNERS:** If you notice that you work well and feel comfortable with certain people, try collaborating with them. That's not to say you should only work with friends or people who are just like you. Test out different partnerships—it can be a good way to get to know new people, and you might find that some classmates bring out your assertive leadership side.
- **ADVOCATE FOR QUIET:** Before any group discussion, suggest that everyone take a few minutes to come up with ideas quietly. This may help both the introverted and extroverted members of your group pause and frame their thoughts, leading to more meaningful conversations.
- **HOW TO AVOID BEING INTERRUPTED:** If you feel that you tend to be talked over, try this technique. Signal that you want to keep talking by raising your voice slightly and holding up your hand with your palm facing out. This is a polite method that still succeeds in saying, “Back off, I’m not done yet.”
- **SPEAK UP EARLY:** Give yourself a little push to speak up early in a group session. Once you’ve spoken, you’ll feel more comfortable, and others will start directing their own comments to you. You’ll feel more a part of things, and this will help you gain confidence.

## Quiet Leaders

### STRATEGIES FOR LEADING THROUGH LISTENING

- **FOLLOW YOUR PASSIONS:** Leading people is hard enough, but trying to do so in the service of a cause or goal that means little to you is nearly impossible. Whether it's a charitable cause or a sports team, tap into your passion, and let others see how much you care. Believe in your mission and push through with perseverance.
- **CONNECT AND LISTEN:** Introverts specialize in forging deep personal relationships. We're great listeners. Both of these traits can transform you into a powerful leader. When people see that you care about what they're thinking and feeling, they're more likely to follow you. If you don't think you excel in large groups or at the podium, build your alliances slowly and steadily, one empathetic conversation at a time.
- **EMPOWER OTHERS:** Dictatorial rule rarely works; no one appreciates being bossed around. Generous leaders make sure that others have a sense of purpose, by giving them key roles and by soliciting their opinions and acting on them when they make sense. As a listener and observer, you'll be uniquely tuned in to which roles suit which people in your group.
- **FIND A ROLE MODEL:** No matter how many times I assure you that there is such a thing as a quietly powerful leader, it probably won't mean much to you without a flesh-and-blood example of your own. Think of a person in your life—whether someone you know personally, or a famous figure you admire from afar—who is a strong leader and who has a temperament similar to yours. This will show you that it really can be done—and you can even try to mentally “channel” this person when you're feeling unsure of yourself.



### STRATEGIES FOR LEADING THROUGH LISTENING (CONT'D)

- **LEAD BY EXAMPLE:** This is one of the tenets of leadership, and it's an easy one for the quietest introverts to follow. Showing your classmates, teammates, or friends that you're dedicated and diligent can be just as inspiring as a rousing speech. Immerse yourself in the topic and study everything you can about it.

## Quiet Public Speaking

### STRATEGIES FOR SHINING IN THE SPOTLIGHT

- **PREPARE:** The more work you do beforehand to hone your performance or presentation, the more confident you'll be in front of your audience. First, master the content. Then start practicing. Test your speech or act in front of the mirror, or make a video of yourself and play it back to see how you're coming across. Usually you'll find that you sound and look much better than you think—and this knowledge will make you feel much better. Start practicing by yourself first, then graduate to a few friends or family members. Each time, ask yourself how anxious you are on a scale of 1 to 10. You should be practicing in the 4 to 6 range, not the 7 to 10 range
- **STUDY THE EXPERTS:** If possible, look online for examples of skilled performers in action. Try to find ones who have a similar personal style to yours. Study them. Watch how they stand, move, and alter their voices. But don't try to be something you're not. If you have a great sense of humor, use that. But if you're more serious, there's no need to turn yourself into a comedian; focus on sharing seriously interesting stories. The key to compelling speaking is being wholly yourself onstage—and having something real to say.
- **BREATHE and SMILE:** When your moment arrives, take a deep breath before you start, and continue to steal deep, relaxing breaths as you speak, sing, or perform. Suck the air in slowly and deeply, so that it expands your stomach like a balloon. When you exhale, that balloon should deflate. Breathe in through your nose, hold it for as long as feels comfortable, and then let it out through your mouth. Smiling is a great icebreaker. No matter how nervous or uncomfortable you are, smile at your audience before you start. Remind yourself to smile while you're speaking, and do it again at the end. This will make you feel more relaxed and confident, and will likely provoke an ego-boosting return smile from someone in the audience.
- **CONNECT:** Establish eye contact with a few friendly members of the audience throughout your presentation. If someone is grimacing or yawning, look away and find a more energetic, engaged member of the audience. Locking eyes with someone who appears to be interested in your speech will do wonders for your confidence.
- **LOOK OUTWARD:** Leading isn't just about you—it's about the people you're leading. Ask yourself, who are they? How can you best serve them? How can you best teach, help, or make them feel comfortable? Remember that they're there not to judge you. They're there to learn from you. Think of yourself as a role model who can help them, and introduce them to new ideas!



## Quiet Friendships

### STRATEGIES FOR FORGING FRIENDSHIPS

- **BE YOURSELF:** Don't try to be someone you're not, in order to impress. A true friend will appreciate you for you. "Don't fake being an extrovert to gain friends," advises an introvert named Rara. "One good friend is so much better than a lot of acquaintances. Even if that means sometimes you're alone, it's better than having to be fake around people." At the same time, look for the friends who bring out your true self—your silly side, your uninhibited side, your dramatic side. That's how you'll know you're truly "home."
- **RISK SOLITUDE:** Extract yourself from mean groups of people or friendships that feel toxic. It's better to have no friends than to stay in a damaging, bullying relationship. You deserve to be around people who make you feel relaxed and yourself—whether you're feeling happy or sad.
- **JOIN A GROUP:** This advice may sound counterintuitive to a quiet person. But a team, club, or extracurricular activity can be a great way to build new friendships. This is especially true if the group is organized around a topic that truly interests and even excites you. You'll spend time with people who share your interest, and there's less pressure to make a great first impression. "When you're joining a class or a group that you're going to attend regularly, you'll be able to make friends more easily," says Jared, an introverted boy from California. "You can get to know each other slowly and let time do the work."
- **ASK QUESTIONS:** Listening is one of your superpowers, so use it when meeting new people by asking questions about them, and then asking follow-up questions that show you're paying careful attention. You'll learn a lot about the person quickly, and as a bonus, you'll be giving yourself a break from talking while the other person tells you his or her tales. (Just be careful not to turn the conversation into a one-sided interview! People want to hear a little from you too.)
- **EMPATHIZE:** Everybody feels insecure or awkward sometimes—even the most extroverted, charismatic, or intimidating person in the cafeteria. By imagining what others might be feeling, you'll find yourself more comfortable around them.

## Quiet Athlete

### STRATEGIES FOR THE INTROVERTED ATHLETE

- **PRACTICE ALONE:** Embrace solitude as a time to both enhance your skills and restore your mental energy.
- **STUDY YOUR GAME:** Channel your ability to focus, and apply that to your sport. Build a deeper understanding of your game or event. Use the principles of deliberate practice (that likely come naturally to you) to improve and excel.
- **VISUALIZE SUCCESS:** Put your busy, imaginative brain to work by picturing your victory and bolstering your confidence.



- **SHRINK YOUR WORLD:** Don't let the crowd sap your energy and strength. Forget the crowd. Shrink your world down to the mat, the field, or the pool. Block out the external distractions and focus entirely on your performance.
- **EXERCISE SOLO:** Yoga, running, walking, climbing, sit-ups. These are all exercises you can do for free, on your own, in your bedroom or outside.

## Quiet Hobbies

### STRATEGIES FOR THE INTROVERTED MAESTRO

- **FIND YOUR MEDIUM:** Maybe you'll discover an app for creating beats, or a recipe that inspires you to bake something totally new. Maybe all you need is a sharpened pencil for writing or drawing. Try to identify the means of self-expression that feels natural and exciting to you.
- **PRODUCE:** Once you've identified this calling, pursue it with energy and passion. Throw yourself into it. Practice, practice, practice.
- **SEEK INSPIRATION IN ROLE MODELS AND ALLIES:** Finding role models who are also introverted can show you that your goals are achievable. There are people just like you who have been widely recognized for their creativity, charisma, and intelligence. (Many are profiled on the Quiet Revolution website, Quietrev.com.)
- **CLAIM PRIVACY:** Some diaries are never meant to be read, and some projects are for you and you alone. Create a safe space to write or create without worrying about what anyone else thinks. Enjoy having projects all to yourself...
- **BUT DON'T FORGET TO SHARE:** Let others see and hear what's going on inside your head. Often, people hesitate to share because they're afraid of criticism. But try showing your work to a friend or two. Feedback can be helpful, and you might be surprised by how supportive and appreciative people can be.