

Are You a Highly Sensitive Person?

by Amy Scholten, MPH

Research psychologist Elaine Aron, Ph.D. discovered that 15-20% of the human population have finely tuned nervous systems. This means they are acutely aware of sounds, smells, other people's moods, and subtleties that most people may not notice. People who are highly sensitive often experience this trait as both a gift and a challenge.

The following survey has been designed to help you determine if you might be a highly sensitive person. Please keep in mind that this is a *general* assessment, not a diagnostic tool. Please see a mental health care provider for more in-depth testing.

Directions: Please read each statement carefully and select either TRUE (T) or FALSE (F) as you feel it applies to you. When finished, you can interpret your score at the bottom of the page.

1. I'm aware of subtle things in my environment that others often fail to notice. T F
2. I'm easily affected by other people's emotions. T F
3. I usually recover quickly from a full day of excitement and stimulation and seem to need very little "downtime." T F
4. Bright lights, harsh sounds and strong odors really bother me. T F
5. I'm more of a doer than a thinker. I tend not to reflect too much before I do something. T F
6. I tend to be very conscientious. T F
7. I tend to be deeply affected by art, music, and other forms of beauty such as nature. T F
8. Since childhood, people have described me as "sensitive" or "shy." T F
9. I often feel overwhelmed when too much is going on around me. T F

10. I tend to perform especially well when being observed. T F
11. Watching violent movies doesn't seem to bother me that much. T F
12. I'm very good at coping with change. T F
13. I try to avoid conflict and situations that upset or overwhelm me. T F
14. I am easily overwhelmed. T F
15. I seem to experience the effects of caffeine more intensely than most people. T F
16. I often feel others' pain as if it were my own. T F
17. I tend to be highly intuitive. I seem to "know" things without knowing how I know them. T F
18. I enjoy multi-tasking (doing many things at the same time). T F

Scoring

<p>Circle all of the following question numbers that you answered as "TRUE:" 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17</p>	<p>Add your number of circled TRUE answers (0- 12) from the Left Column: _____</p>
<p>Circle all of the following question numbers that you answered as "FALSE:" 3, 5, 10, 11, 12, 18</p>	<p>Add your number of circled FALSE answers (0-6) from the Left Column: _____</p>
<p>Interpretation: If your total score was 12 or higher, you are probably a highly sensitive person.</p>	<p>Add both scores above to determine your total score. Your Total Score is: _____</p>

Source:

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Biography

Amy Scholten, MPH, has a Master of Public Health in health promotion and education from the University of South Carolina and a Bachelor of Science in food and nutrition from Framingham State College. She is a freelance health writer and has taught stress management at Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY, USA.

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