

A Whole New Mind

Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future

By Daniel H. Pink; Riverhead Trade, 2006

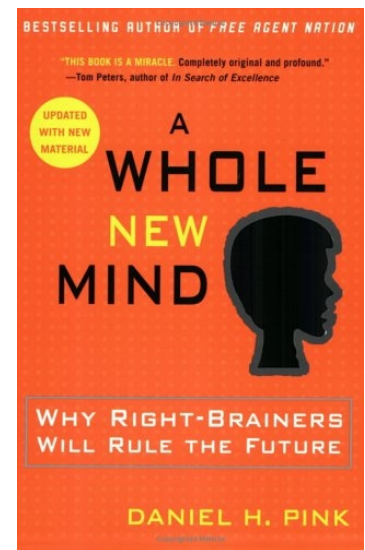
The last few decades have belonged to a certain kind of person with a certain kind of mind: computer programmers, lawyers, MBAs—people whose form of thinking and approach to life is reductive and analytical. But the keys to the kingdom are changing hands. This book describes a seismic shift that is now under way in much of the advanced world, one in which the logical, linear, computer-like capabilities of the Information Age are taking a backseat to the inventive, empathic, big-picture capabilities of the so-called Conceptual Age.

The future belongs to a very different kind of person with an

equally different kind of mind: creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers, meaning makers. These people—artists, inventors, designers, storytellers, caregivers, consolers, big picture thinkers—will reap society's richest rewards and share its greatest joys.

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BOOK OF THE WEEK:



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- The Six Senses

Why You Need This Book

The author has his finger on the pulse of the world, so to speak. He outlines a sea change in the economy and society of what he terms as “much of the advanced world,” but as he discusses, there are lessons and implications in it for those who hail from other parts of the world as well. *A Whole New Mind* is thus intended for those who want to survive and thrive in this emerging world.

This book is divided into two parts. Part One lays out the broad animating idea—an overview of the key differences between the left and right hemispheres of our brain and their implications; why and how three huge social and economic forces—Abundance, Asia and Automation—are nudging us into the Conceptual Age; and an explanation of “high concept” and “high touch.” Finally, Part Two covers the six essential abilities people will need to make their way across this emerging landscape: Design, Story, Symphony, Empathy, Play, and Meaning.

The Conceptual Age

Right brain rising

The brain is an exceedingly complex organ, consisting of around 100 billion cells that forge a network of one quadrillion connections that guides how we talk, eat, and breathe, among other things. For all its complexity, though, the brain’s topography is simple and symmetrical—it’s easily divided into right and left hemispheres.

It used to be that the left side of the brain was the side that “made us human,” thanks to discoveries in the past that the left side controlled both the ability to speak and the ability to understand language, which separated man from beast.

However, it was recently discovered that the right brain was actually superior when it came to performing certain types of mental tasks. The left hemisphere reasoned sequentially, excelled at analysis and handled words. The right hemisphere reasoned holistically, recognized patterns, and interpreted emotions and nonverbal expressions.

This and related discoveries have led some groups to trumpet the superiority of the left brain, and others to champion the right brain. Yet neither one is subsidiary to the other, even though they take significantly different approaches to guiding our actions, understanding the world and reacting to events. The two sides always work in concert.

Here are four key differences between the brain hemispheres:

1. The left controls the right side of the body, and vice versa. Our brains are “contralateral” each half of the brain controls the opposite half of the body.
2. The left is sequential; the right is simultaneous. The left is good at recognizing serial events—events whose elements occur one after the other. The right interprets things simultaneously.
3. The left specializes in text; the right in context. The left handles what’s said, while the right focuses on how it’s said—the nonverbal, often emotional cues delivered using gaze, expression and vocal intonation. But more than that, the right also allows us to understand metaphors.
4. The left analyzes the details; the right synthesizes the big picture. The left participates in the analysis of information. The right is particularly good at putting isolated elements together to perceive things as a whole. The left focuses on categories, the right on relationships; the left grasps the details, but only the right can see the big picture.

Abundance, Asia and Automation

This section, as mentioned previously, explains why and how three huge social and economic forces—Abundance, Asia and Automation—are nudging us into the Conceptual Age.

Abundance. The information economy has produced a standard of living in much of the

developed world that would have been unfathomable to our great-grandparents.

- The defining feature of social, economic and cultural life in much of the world is abundance. Giant stores with an incredible variety of goods for sale are becoming the norm in many parts of the world.
- However, the prosperity left-directed thinking has created, and has lessened its significance. It's no longer enough to create a product that's reasonably priced and functional; it has to be well-designed too.
- A premium is now placed on less rational and more right-directed sensibilities such as beauty, emotion, and spirituality. The pursuit of purpose and meaning has become an integral part of our lives.

Asia. Outsourcing and the advent of fast, efficient communications systems has meant that many left-brain jobs such as computer programming have been moved from the US to such countries as India, China and the Philippines, where knowledge workers get paid only a fraction of the wages that their American counterparts earn.

- Many of today's knowledge workers have to learn to command a new set of aptitudes they

must learn to do what foreign workers cannot do equally well for less money namely, jobs that need right-directed thinking.

Automation. In an increasing number of endeavors that depend heavily on rule-based logic, calculation and sequential thinking left-brain thinking computers are faster, stronger, and don't get fatigue, headaches or choke under pressure.

- As above, many of today's knowledge workers have to learn to master different aptitudes to rely more on creativity than competence, tacit knowledge than computer manuals, and fashioning the big picture than sweating the details.

High concept, high touch

To survive in this day and age, individuals and organizations have to ask themselves three tough questions about what they do for a living, namely:

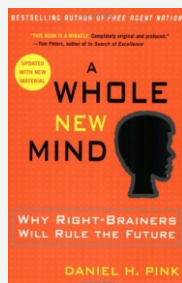
1. Can someone overseas do it cheaper?
2. Can a computer do it faster?
3. Is what I'm offering in demand in an age of abundance?

If the answer to question 1 or 2 is yes, or if the answer to question 3 is no, there's bound to be trouble. As discussed in earlier sections, survival nowadays depends on being able to do something overseas knowledge workers can't do cheaper, that a computer can't do faster, and that satisfies a nonmaterial desire.

Well-developed high-tech abilities have to be augmented by abilities that are high-concept and high-touch.

- High concept involves the ability to create artistic and emotional beauty, to detect patterns and opportunities, to craft a satisfying narrative, and to combine seemingly unrelated ideas into a novel invention.

ABOUT THE BOOK:



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- High touch involves the ability to empathize, to understand the subtleties of human interaction, to find joy in oneself and elicit it in others, and to stretch beyond the quotidian in pursuit of person and meaning.

To prepare themselves for the Conceptual Age, therefore, knowledge workers must become proficient in right-brain-directed thinking and master high-touch and high-concept aptitudes. They must perform work that overseas knowledge workers can't do cheaper, that computers can't do faster, and which satisfies the emotional, aesthetic and spiritual demands of a prosperous time.

The Six Senses

Design

It's easy to dismiss design by considering it a mere ornament, the prettifying of places and objects to disguise their banality, something merely secondary to function. But that would be a serious misunderstanding of what design is and why it really matters.

Stripped to its essence, design can be defined as the human nature to shape and make our environment in ways without precedent in nature, to serve our needs and give meaning to our lives.

Design is a combination of utility and significance. Aside from being merely useful, what is designed must also transmit ideas or emotions, or possess an aesthetic appeal that transcends functionality.

Design has become essential for personal fulfillment and professional success for the following reasons:

1. Thanks to rising prosperity and advancing technology, good design is more accessible than ever. An increasing number of reasonably-priced or even cheap goods are being designed by famous designers.
2. In an age of abundance, design has become crucial for most modern businesses, as both a

means of differentiation and a way to create a new market. Decent quality and reasonable price, once most significant, have become just the entry ticket into the marketplace.

3. As more people develop a design sensibility, we can increasingly be able to deploy design for its ultimate purpose: to change the world. More and more individuals and organizations are realizing that beauty and increased sensitivity to it can improve both ways of life and thinking.

Some tips to develop this sense:

1. Keep a design notebook buy a small notebook and make a note of great design in it whenever and wherever you encounter it.
2. Choose a household item that annoys you in any way; think about how it could be improved and then send your idea to its manufacturer.
3. Read design magazines.
4. Be like Karim Rashid check out his "Karimanfesto", a fifty-point guide to life and design, at karimrashid.com.
5. Become a design detective. Tour open houses and look for design trends and commonalities, as well as unique or quirky expressions of the owners' personalities or tastes.
6. Participate in the "Third Industrial Revolution" and design something yourself a unique piece (Nike ID shoes at nikeid.nike.com, or Vans skating shoes at vans.com).
7. Visit a design museum.
8. When buying things, choose those things which will endure, that are a pleasure

to use, and which truly delight you and don't just impress others.

Story

Story is just as integral to the human experience as design. In many ways, stories are how people remember things. Story represents a pathway to understanding that doesn't run through the left side of the brain. Narrative imagining story is the fundamental instrument of thought; most of our experience, knowledge and thinking are organized as stories.

Unfortunately, the bulk of society (the entertainment industry aside) considers story second-tier to argument or facts. Stories amuse while facts illuminate, divert while facts reveal, are for cover while facts are real. The trouble with this is that it runs counter to how our minds actually work and puts those who advocate it in peril as well, in both a professional and personal sense they are not at all conscious of the context of the facts and this can be dangerous in many ways.

Facts these days are so widely available and instantly accessible that each one becomes less valuable; what matters more now is the ability to place these facts in context and to deliver them with emotional impact. This is where story comes in context enriched by emotion: packages containing information, knowledge, context and emotion.

What makes personal narrative so important in times of abundance is that many people are freer to seek out a deeper understanding of themselves and their purpose in such times. There is a yearning for self-knowledge and a hunger for what stories can provide.

To develop this sense:

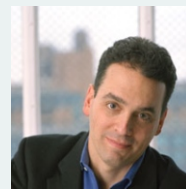
1. Write a mini-saga an extremely short story just 50 words long.

2. Enlist in StoryCorps, a project to record Americans' stories in sound. (storycorps.net), or use a tape recorder.

3. Visit a storytelling festival.

4. Underline a sentence in a book or magazine, and craft a story that evolves from this opening line.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Daniel H. Pink is the author of two influential business books.

His latest, *A Whole New Mind*, charts the rise of right-brain thinking in modern economies and explains the six abilities individuals and organizations must master in an outsourced and automated world. Reviewers have described the book as "an audacious and powerful work," "a profound read," "right on the money," and "a miracle." *A Whole New Mind* is a New York Times, Washington Post, and BusinessWeek bestseller -- and has been translated into 12 languages.

Dan's first book, *Free Agent Nation*, about the growing ranks of people who work for themselves, was a Washington Post nonfiction bestseller and business bestseller in the U.S. and Canada. Publishers Weekly says the book "has become a cornerstone of employee-management relations."

A popular speaker, Dan lectures to corporations, associations, and universities around the world. He's provided analysis on dozens of television and radio broadcasts -including CNBC's "Power Lunch," ABC's "World News Tonight," NPR's "Morning Edition," and American Public Media's "Marketplace." And as an independent business consultant, he's advised start-up ventures and Fortune 100 companies on recruiting, business trends, and work practices.

To know more about the author, please visit: <http://www.danpink.com/aboutdp.php>

5. Use pictures for story inspiration; select a photo and fashion a story regarding the picture.

Symphony

Symphony is the ability to put together the pieces, the capacity to synthesize rather than analyze, to see relationships between seemingly unrelated fields, to detect broad patterns rather than give specific answers, and invent something new by combining elements that haven't been paired before thus forming relationships between relationships and grasping the big picture.

As automation has taken over many routine analytic tasks, many professionals are now free (or forced) to do what computers and foreign technicians may not be able to: recognizing patterns, crossing boundaries to uncover hidden connections, and making leaps of imagination. Also, the current glut of options and stimuli gives those with big-picture abilities a definite advantage.

There are ample opportunities these days for three sorts of people who are good at this sense:

1. **The Boundary Crosser** a person who can operate equally well in starkly different areas. They develop expertise in multiple spheres and speak different languages. The most creative people see relationships between areas that most of us would never notice. Such ability is at a premium in a world where specialized knowledge work can quickly become routinized and then either outsourced or automated.
2. **The Inventor** a person who recognizes that the most powerful ideas come from simply combining two existing ideas no one ever thought to unite. We all harbor this capacity to invent; it simply takes ability and fortitude to experiment with novel combinations and make many mistakes until a solution is found.

3. **The Metaphor Maker** the mastery of metaphor, a whole-minded ability that has been called "imaginative rationality", is ever more valuable these days. Metaphor is central to reason: human thought processes are largely metaphorical. Only the human mind can think metaphorically and see relationships computers could never detect.

To develop this sense:

1. Listen to the great symphonies by the likes of Beethoven, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Haydn and Mahler.
2. Hit the newsstand, buy magazines you never noticed before and draw connections to your life.
3. Draw. Drawing is about seeing relationships and integrating them into a whole precisely what this sense is all about.
4. Keep a metaphor log. Write down compelling and surprising metaphors you encounter.
5. Choose a word or topic you find interesting, type it into a search engine, follow one of the links, and venture on, repeating the process seven or eight times. Reflect on what you learn and on what patterns, themes and connections you noticed.
6. Examine existing solutions and think of other problems they might solve.
7. Empty your bulletin board and create an inspiration board. On it place something you find compelling and try to see connections between these images.
8. Brainstorm with your staff to come up with creative solutions.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to imagine oneself in someone else's position and intuit what that person is feeling. It's not just sympathy, which is feeling bad for someone else; it's feeling with someone else, sensing what it would be like to be that person. This is the one aptitude impossible for computers to reproduce and very difficult for outsourced labor to match.

Empathy is all about reading facial expressions. People's emotions are rarely put into words; most often they are expressed using other cues but the main canvas for this purpose is the face. The seven basic human emotions have clear facial signals: anger, fear, sadness, surprise, contempt, happiness and disgust.

Women appear to be more empathic than men. They are generally better at reading facial expressions and detecting lies, and, as early as age three, are better at inferring what others are thinking and at deciphering emotions from facial expressions. The female brain is predominantly hard-wired for empathy, while the male brain is predominantly hard-wired for understanding and building systems. (Not all women have "female" brains, though, and not all men have "male" brains either.)

Tips to develop this sense:

- Test yourself. Determine your Empathy Quotient, among other things.
- Next time you're in a position to eavesdrop, listen carefully to what your targets are saying and imagine yourself in that position.
- Empathize with your colleagues at work. Find out what work is really like for them; see how each of them found their way to your company.
- Don't outsource your empathy. Create your own greeting or special-occasion cards instead of buying them.
- Volunteer somewhere in your community or abroad that serves people whose experiences are very different from your own.

Play

Mixing work and play used to be seen as a toxic

combination. It used to be feared that one would pollute the other. Nowadays, however, doing so has become both common and necessary to offset the rapid pace of work, which threatens to burn out many employees, to such an extent that it has even become corporate strategy for some companies.

Play is an important part of work, business and personal well-being. Its importance manifests itself in three significant ways:

1. Games. Playing video games can sharpen many vital skills for instance, visual perception, the ability to detect changes in the environment, pattern recognition, and the capacity to process information simultaneously.
2. Humor. The right hemisphere plays an essential role in understanding and appreciating humor. Humor involves incongruity and surprise in funny situations, the "punchlines" that take place are both surprising and unexpected. It embodies the ability to place situations in context, glimpse the big picture and combine differing perspectives.
3. Joyfulness. Laughter has many benefits. It's a social activity, and there's evidence that people who have regular, satisfying connections to other people are healthier and happier. It can decrease stress, boost the immune system, activates the cardiovascular system and pumps more blood.

To help develop this sense:

- Find a laughter club to be able to find people to laugh and relax with.
- Select five or six funny cartoons from a newspaper or magazine, cover up the captions, and show them to your pals and ask them to come up with captions of their own.
- Learn to like video games, or understand

them if you can't like them (check for online resources such as QJ.net or GameSpot.com).

- Dissect a joke to learn more about what kinds of humor work and what kinds don't.
- Play right-brain games such as Tecmo's Right Brain Game and Right Brain Paradise.

Meaning

Meaning has become a central aspect of our work and our lives. In developed countries, as has already been explained, the era of abundance, the existence of technology and other such factors have all contributed greatly to making the search for meaning that much more important.

Meaning can be defined as knowing what your highest strengths are and deploying them in the service of something larger than you are.

There are two practical, whole-minded ways to begin the search for meaning, namely:

1. Taking spirituality seriously 'spirituality' here does not refer to religion per se, but to the more broadly defined concern for the meaning and purpose of life. Spirituality is a fundamental part of the human condition. Our capacity for faith the belief in something larger than ourselves, and thus the basis for spirituality may be wired into our brains. This has been on the ascendant as of late, and is even being described by some as the next phase of business the search for meaning, purpose, deep life experience.
2. Taking happiness seriously happiness derives from a mix of factors biology (we're all born with a relatively fixed range of well-being in our genes, although we can learn to reach the upper portions of our individual range); one's work; avoiding negative events, people and emotions; being married; and having a rich social network.

Tips to develop this sense:

- Say thanks. Gratitude works; feelings of gratitude enhance well-being and deepen one's sense of meaning.
- Visit someone who's deserved your thanks but whom you've never properly thanked. Write a detailed "gratitude letter" beforehand and read it out aloud.
- Look at your life at your work in particular and ask yourself whether you'd still do what you're doing now if you had \$20 million in the bank or knew you had no more than ten years to live.
- Compile a list of the important changes you'd like to make in your life and what's keeping you from realizing them (use 'but' to separate these two). Go back to each item and replace the word 'but' with 'and' to move yourself out of excuse-making mode and into problem-solving mode.
- Select one day a week and stop working on that day. Don't answer your phone. Turn off your voice mail.
- Make a list of what matters to you most people, activities, values just 10 items or less. Next, examine how you've spent your time in the past week and month. Have you successfully aligned your values with your time? Do this to keep yourself honest and steer your days toward a more meaningful life.
- Dedicate your work to someone else to give it purpose and enrich it by thinking of it as a gift.
- Picture yourself at ninety and try to see your life at that vantage point. What have you accomplished, contributed? What are your regrets, accomplishments?

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