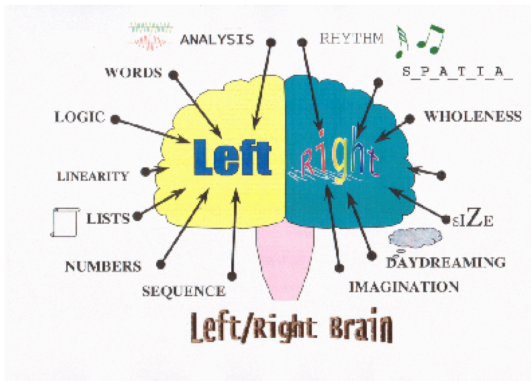


A Whole New Mind: Introduction

Posted on October 20, 2011 by Louisa



I loved Daniel Pink's book: [A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers will Rule the Future](#). I picked it up in the airport and devoured it on a long flight. It was easy to read and resounded with the artist part of me who hates my crossword puzzle habit. (I am doing the NY Times Wednesday (medium difficulty) puzzles with a goal of working my way up to Sunday's (most difficult) by the time I am 90.)

Right brain-left brain knowledge has been around for a long time now, so I will not review it anymore than the following:

- The left hemisphere controls the right side of the body and vice versa.
- The left hemisphere is sequential: the right side is simultaneous.
- The left hemisphere specializes in text (what is said) ; the right side specializes in context (how it is said).
- The left hemisphere analyzes the details; the right side synthesizes the big picture.

Both sides work together but have different specialties: The left handles logic, sequence, literalness, and analysis. The right handles synthesis, emotional expression, context, and the big picture. They are designed to work together.

What Mr. Pink claims is that the left brain thinking has been emphasized in our information age. Right brain thinking has been "short-changed by organizations and neglected in schools."

But now, He says that right brain thinking is coming of value and in demand.

Here's why:

- **Abundance:** Since our left brains have made us rich, we now want beauty, spirituality and emotion. Some interesting examples of our wealth are: A \$17 billion dollars a year industry is self-storage. And the U.S. spends more on trash bags than 90 other countries spend on everything i.e. all the goods consumed by half of the world's nations! Now we don't just want a functional toilet bowl brush, we want a well-designed one! We don't just want money, we want purpose and meaning.
- **Asia:** Left brain jobs are being outsourced. An accountant in the U.S. can earn \$5000 a month, but in the Philippines brings \$300 a month. The prediction is that 3.3 million white collar jobs will shift to low cost countries like India, China and Russia by 2015.
- **Automation:** New technologies are replacing left brains. "If a \$500-a-month Indian chartered accountant doesn't swipe your comfortable accounting job, Turbo-Tax will."

As youth workers we don't have to worry that our jobs will be shipped overseas or replaced by automation. We have many right brain skills that are in high demand for growing successful youth. We will look at these in the upcoming blogs.

A Whole New Mind: Part 2 : Design & Story

Posted on November 9, 2011 by Louisa



Daniel Pink presents 6 high concept, high touch senses that he says we need to master in this generation. We will look at Design and Story in this blog.

Design: "Design, stripped of its essence, 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." (Heskett)
Design combines utility and significance. Aesthetics matter. Why else would we all like different cars, colors, clothes, and such? BMW says

that they don't make automobiles, but "moving works of art that express the driver's love of quality".
Newsweek said that the "Detroit Auto Show...might as well be renamed the Detroit Interior Decorating Show."

Beauty improves our life, our way of thinking and our happiness. And design creates beauty. In a research study, patients needed less pain medicine and were discharged 2 days earlier when in a better-designed hospital ward than those who weren't. When school environments are improved, student's test scores increased. Design is important and it is a right brain function.

Application: Choose things in your life that are a pleasure to use and that delight you. Make your surroundings as beautiful as possible.

Story: Today we have millions of facts available at the speed of light. What matters is how these facts are put into context with emotional impact. "Story exists where high concept and high touch intersect." Stories carry emotion and that influences us. "Humans are not ideally set up to understand logic; they are ideally set up to understand stories." (Schank) I love this example: A fact: "The Queen died and then the King died." A story: "The Queen died and the King died of a broken heart." Ursula K. Le Guin says, "There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories." Stories are how we make sense of things. They are ways of understanding that run through the right side of our brain. We have a need for story: "context enriched by emotion, a deeper understanding of how we fit in and why that matters."

Application: Use stories as much as possible in your work with others. Listen to other's stories and create your own.

A Whole New Mind: Part III Symphony & Empathy

Posted on November 21, 2011 by Louisa



Symphony: Daniel Pink describes symphony as the "ability to put together the pieces. It is the capacity to synthesize rather than to analyze; to see relationships between seemingly unrelated fields; to detect broad patterns...and to invent something new by combining elements nobody else thought to pair."

When the right brain is active we see relationships and integrate them. That is why when we are driving for long periods of time, we start to think of new things...the right brain takes over and the patterns of the lines in the road and trees, etc. promote right brain activity.

We live multi lives with multi interests and that is good, Pink says.

Powerful ideas come from all these backgrounds and areas. Also the use of metaphors, understanding things in terms of other things is important. Did you know that velcro was invented when Georges de Mestral noticed how burrs stuck to his dog's fur? Some say that MQ (metaphor quotient) is as valuable as IQ.

Application: Teach and use metaphors. Have youth start a metaphor log. Teach youth to make connections between different areas of content. Teach the big picture not just the details. Listen to great symphonies. Create collages.

Empathy: Empathy is one quality that most youth workers have in abundance. Why else would we accept low pay and long hours to work really hard? Often it is because we remember what it was like to be a youth and how we needed someone like us back then. For example, some of our parks & recreation youth workers "grew up" at community centers and now work there so they can help the youth that need them.

Did you know that we both express our emotions and read the emotions of others through our right hemisphere? And we can actually improve our ability to read faces. For example, genuine smiles involve 2 facial muscles while "fake" smiles involve only one. So to detect a real smile, look to see if the eyes are "smiling" too.

Application: Take an empathy test on line. Check out www.ideo.com for IDEO Method Cards that put empathy at the center of a design process. Put yourself in your youth's shoes and remember what it was like to be a middle schooler or a teen.

A Whole New Mind: Part III Play & Meaning

Posted on December 20, 2011 by Louisa



Play: When you are playful, you are activating the right side of the brain, says Daniel Pink. Southwest Airlines' mission statement states "People rarely succeed at anything unless they are having fun doing it." Have you ever flown Southwest? The flight attendants certainly look like they enjoy their job. I have heard hilarious announcements from them. Last time I flew, I asked to use the lavatory before take-off. The flight attendant said, "Sure. But make sure you yell FLUSH before you do, so it won't spray the mechanic."

Pink says that play manifests itself in three ways: games, humor, and joyfulness. Did you know that the video game industry is larger than the motion picture one? I'd rather go to a movie. I also don't have fun when I am being smeared in a game. Just ask me after a terrible day of fantasy football. But seriously I love to play games. We play them at my family reunion with all ages together and we laugh and have fun. Humor represents one of the highest forms of human intelligence. But we are not talking about sarcasm or negative humor. How many of us were criticized and then told, "I was just kidding"? Laughter reduces stress. Joyfulness is unconditional and from within. As little children we could laugh a lot, it is good to reclaim that part of ourselves. Laughing people are more creative.

Application: Try to lighten up. Watch funny movies or tv shows. (I watch Bones, Seinfeld and Frazer) Read the comics. Laugh. Play games.



Meaning: Pink writes about Victor Frankl's experience in a concentration camp and how he found meaning. If you have not read his book, Man's Search for Meaning, you must do so. I have never forgotten (although I am foggy on the details now) a story Frankl tells in his book about a man who came to see him. The man was elderly and could not shake the depression that had settled on him 2 years ago when his wife of 50 years or so had died. So Dr. Frankl asked him, "Do you think your wife would have suffered like you have, if you had died first?" The man replied, "Oh yes. We were so close all our lives. She would have been

devastated like me." Then Frankl asked the man, "Can you see how by outliving your wife, you saved her from this pain and suffering?" The man's whole face changed. It brightened and he straightened up and with a smile reached out shook Frankl's hand and said "Thank you". He now had a purpose to his suffering. We all need meaning and purpose and it runs through our right brain just like spirituality.

Application: Walk a labyrinth. Practice gratitude. Dedicate your work to someone.