

Reviewed by Michelle Fella Przybylowski

A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future

By Daniel Pink

New York, NY: Riverhead Books, 2006

Imagine the world filled with professional success and personal fulfillment. Do you have a multidisciplinary mind? Are you a storyteller? Do you like to design and create? Do you look for solutions in search of problems? Do you laugh? In his book, *A Whole New Mind*, Daniel Pink uncovers how to achieve personal success, develop a multidisciplinary mind, find resources that will enhance your storytelling, learn to be a designer and creator, solve problems, and recognize the importance of laughter and humor in your work and play. This book, which is divided into two parts, offers numerous exercises and resources to help you attain “a whole new mind.”

In Part One the author lays out the broad animating idea. In Part Two, the heart of the book, he explores the six fundamental human abilities that are absolute essentials for professional success and personal fulfillment—*design*, *story*, *symphony*, *empathy*, *play*, and *meaning*—and reveals how to master them.

Pink examines 21st century thinking by posing the question, “to whom does the world belong?” Is it artists, inventors, designers, storytellers, caregivers, counselors, and big-picture thinkers? No, it is none of these. According to Pink, that was the way the former owners of the world functioned. The owners of the present world are the creators and empathizers, the pattern recognizers and meaning makers. Are you any one of

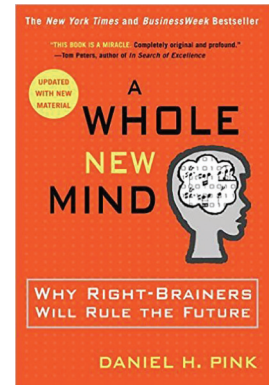
these? If you answer yes, Pink asserts, then you are a result of the age of the right brain.

Why will right-brainers rule the future? What drives the right brain? Various hemispheres of the brain impact the way we function and react to daily encounters. The right brain reasons holistically, recognizes patterns, interprets emotions, and perceives nonverbal expressions. Pink examines right-brain high-concept—the ability to create artistic and emotional beauty, to direct patterns and opportunities, to craft a satisfying narrative, and to combine seemingly unrelated ideas into a novel invention—and its increasing influence on our society.

Let’s look more closely at the six fundamental human abilities. *Design* is an essential, high-concept aptitude. It means business, and business means design. *Story* sharpens our understanding of one thing, and stories are integral to the human experience. Story represents a pathway to understanding that doesn’t run through the left side of the brain. *Symphony* is the ability

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to put together the pieces and see relationships between seemingly unrelated fields, to invent something new by combining elements nobody else thought to pair. *Empathy* is the ability to imagine yourself in another person’s position and feel with that person. Are men or women more empathetic? Read and discover the answer. *Play* in the 21st century will replace what work represented during the last 300 years of industrial society—our dominant way of knowing, doing, and creating value (Kane, 2005). *Meaning* has become a central aspect of our work and our lives. Success comes from empathy, play, and other “soft” aptitudes, and empathy is not a standalone aptitude, but rather an essential part of design. It is related to symphony and story.



Humor embodies many of the right hemisphere's most powerful attributes, such as the ability to place situations in context, to glimpse the big picture, and to combine differing perspectives onto new alignments. And, Pink contends, that makes this aspect of play increasingly valuable in the world of work.

If you want a creative life, laugh. When you laugh, you are more creative. Are you the best at what you can't do? Do what you can't and experience the beauty of mistakes you make. Problems need solutions. Asking "Why?" can lead to understanding, whereas asking "Why not?" can lead to breakthroughs. Be aware of the negative space—it will change how you look at your surroundings and will make the positive space snap into focus.

In closing, Pink offers interesting ideas on how to enhance work through design, story, symphony, empathy, play, and finding meaning.

In *A Whole New Mind*, Daniel Pink demonstrates his skill at engaging the reader to contemplate 21st century thinking. In the period of Common Core, this book will free your mind to explore a new means of thinking, discovering, creating, and imagining. The right-brainer will rule the future! ■

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