

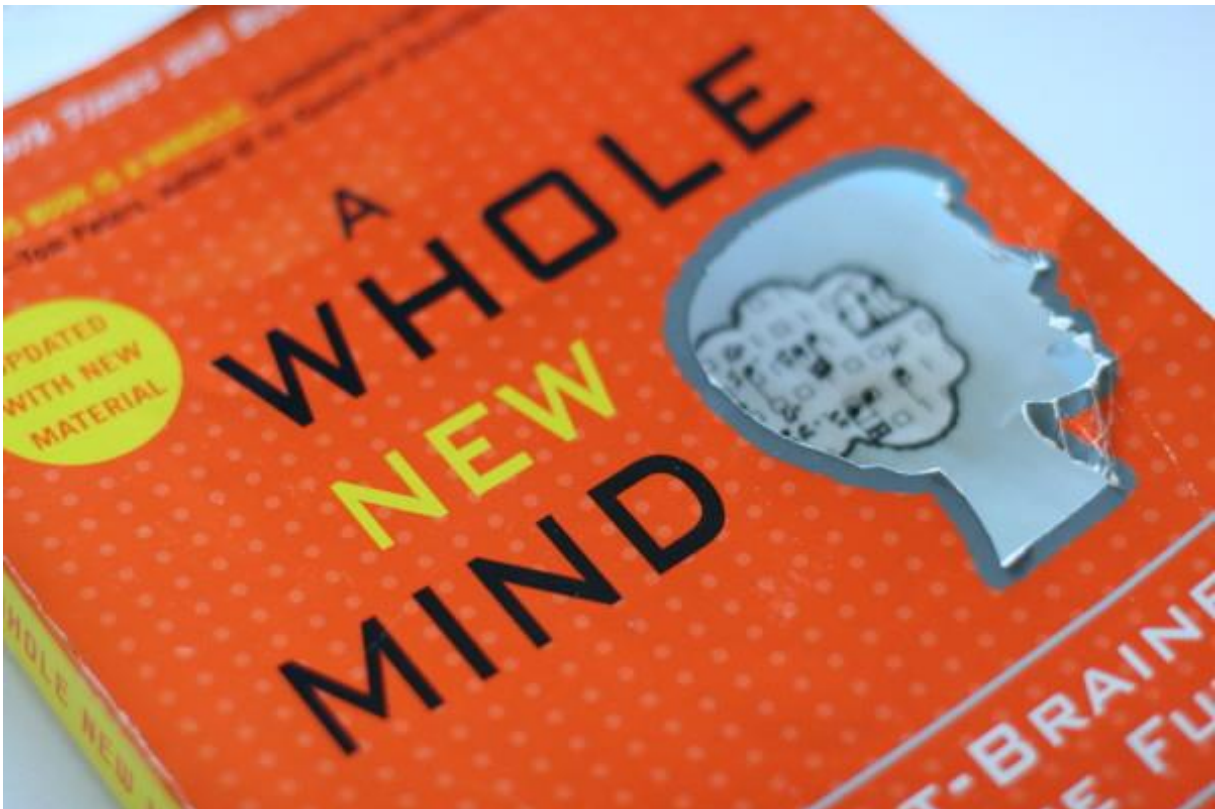
A summary of the book

A whole new mind

Why right-brainers will rule the future

By Daniel H. Pink

Summary by Kim Hartman



This is a summary of what I think is the most important and insightful parts of the book. I can't speak for anyone else and I strongly recommend you to read the book in order to fully grasp the concepts written here. My notes should only be seen as an addition that can be used to refresh your memory after you've read the book. Use the words in this summary as anchors to remember the vitals parts of the book.

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Description from amazon

The future belongs to a different kind of person with a different kind of mind: artists, inventors, storytellers-creative and holistic "right-brain" thinkers whose abilities mark the fault line between who gets ahead and who doesn't. Drawing on research from around the world, Pink (author of *To Sell Is Human: The Surprising Truth About Motivating Others*) outlines the six fundamentally human abilities that are absolute essentials for professional success and personal fulfillment--and reveals how to master them. *A Whole New Mind* takes readers to a daring new place, and a provocative and necessary new way of thinking about a future that's already here.

The Conceptual Age

Chapter 1: Right brain rising

The right hemisphere is specialized for synthesis; it is particularly good at putting isolated elements together to perceive things as a whole. Analysis and synthesis are perhaps the two most fundamental ways of interpreting information. You can break the whole into its components. Or you can weave the components into a whole. Both are essential to human reasoning but guided by different parts of the brain.

The left can grasp details. But only the right hemisphere can see the big picture. The left handles logic, sequence, literalness, and analysis. The right takes care of synthesis, emotional expression, context, and the big context.

L-directed thinking: is directed by left-brain attributes towards a left-brain result.

R-directed thinking: directed by right-brain attributes towards a right-brain result.

Chapter 2: Abundance, Asia, and Automation

For most of history, our lives were defined by scarcity. Today, the defining feature of social, economic and cultural life in much of the world is abundance.

Abundance has made L-directed thinking less significant. The prosperity it has unleashed has placed a premium on less rational, more R-directed sensibilities – beauty, spirituality, emotion.

In an age of abundance, appealing only to rational, logical and functional needs is woefully insufficient. Engineers must figure out how to get things to work. But if those who things are not also pleasing to the eye or compelling to the soul, few will buy them. There are too many other options.

The paradox of prosperity is that while standards have risen steadily decade after decade, personal, family, and life satisfaction haven't budged. That's why more people – liberated by prosperity but not fulfilled by it – are resolving the paradox by searching for meaning.

People everywhere have moved from focusing on the day-to-day text of their lives to the broader context. Abundance has freed literally hundreds of millions of people from the struggle for survival.

Chapter 3: High concept, high touch

Act 1: the industrial age. Factories, mass production and efficiency

Act 2: the information age. Information and knowledge

Act 3: the conceptual age. The main characters now are the creator and the empathizer, whose distinctive ability is mastery or R-directed thinking.

Within a profession, mastery of L-directed thinking matters relatively little. More important are qualities that are tougher to quantify, the very kinds of high-concept and high-touch abilities such as imagination, joyfulness, and social dexterity.

The Rainbow Project: Have so far been twice as successful as the SAT in predicting how well students perform in college.

David Wolfe: As people mature, their cognitive patterns become less abstract (left-brain) and more concrete (right-brain) which results in a sharpened sense of reality, increased capacity for emotion, and enhancement of their sense of connectedness. In other words, as individual's age, they place greater emphasis in their own lives on qualities they might have neglected in the rush to build careers and raise families: purpose, intrinsic motivation and meaning.

Meaning is the new money in this new era.

The six senses

There are 6 specific high-concept and high-touch aptitudes that have become essential in this new era

The six senses:

- Design
- Story
- Symphony
- Empathy
- Play
- Meaning

Not just function but also design. Today it is economically crucial and personally rewarding to create something that is also beautiful or emotionally engaging.

Not just argument but also story. Data isn't enough. The essence of persuasion, communication and self-understanding has become the ability also to fashion a compelling narrative.

Not just focus but also symphony. While the industrial society specialized in making a few things in large numbers, the conceptual age is about putting the pieces together – Symphony. Not analysis but synthesis – seeing the big picture, crossing boundaries, and being able to combine pieces into an arresting new whole.

Not just logic but also empathy. In addition to logic you need to have an ability to understand what makes your fellow man tick, to forge relationships, and to care for others.

Not just seriousness but also play. There are evidences of enormous health and professional benefits of laughter, lightheartedness, games and humor.

Not just accumulation but also meaning. Materialism has freed people from day to day struggles to pursue more significant desires: purpose, transcendent, and spiritual fulfillment.

The high-concept, high-touch abilities that no matter most are fundamentally human attributes.

Chapter 4: Design

Design, stripped to 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.

Design is a classic whole-minded aptitude. It is a combination of utility and significance. A graphic designer must whip up a brochure that is easy to read. That's utility. Her brochure must also transmit ideas or emotions that words themselves cannot convey. That's significance.

Paola Antonelli: good design is a renaissance attitude that combines technology, cognitive science, human need, and beauty to produce something that the world didn't know it was missing,

Today, decent quality and reasonable price has become merely table stakes in the business game – the entry ticket for being allowed into the marketplace. Once companies satisfy these requirements, they are left to compete less on functional or financial qualities and more on ineffable qualities such as whimsy, beauty and meaning.

For every percent of sales invested in product design, a company's sales and profits rise by an average of 3-4% according to research.

BMS's Chris Bangle: "we don't make cars, we make moving works of art that express the drivers love of quality.

The typical person uses a toaster at most 15 min per day. The remaining 1425 minutes of the day the toaster is on display. In other words, 1% of the toaster's time is devoted to utility, while 99% is devoted to significance. Why shouldn't it be beautiful?

One of design's most potent effects is this very capacity to create new markets. The forces of automation, abundance and Asia turn goods and services into commodities so quickly that the only way to survive is to constantly develop new innovations, inventing new categories, and giving the world something it didn't know it was missing.

Good design offers us a chance to bring pleasure, meaning and beauty to our lives. But most important, cultivating a design sensibility can make our small planet a better place. To be a designer is to be an agent of change.

Chapter 5: Story

Stories are easier to remember – because in many ways, stories are how we remember. Narrative imagining – story – is the fundamental instrument for thought.

Rational depends on it. It is our chief means of looking into the future, of predicting planning, explaining. Most of our experience, our knowledge and our thinking are organized as stories.

When facts become so widely available and instantly accessible, each one becomes less valuable. What begins to matter more is the ability to place these facts in *context* and to deliver them with *emotional impact*.

The essence of story: context enriched by emotion.

Story exists where high concept and high touch intersect. Story is high concept because it sharpens our understanding of one thing by showing it in the context of something else. Story is high touch because stories almost always pack an emotional punch.

Don Norman: stories have the capacity of capturing exactly those elements that have formal decision methods leave out. Logic tries to generalize, to strip the decision making from the specific context, to remove it from the subjective emotions. Stories capture the context, capture the emotions. Stories are important cognitive events, for they encapsulate, into one compact package, information, knowledge, context and emotion.

All myth – across time and cultures – contains the same basic ingredients and follows the same recipe.

Storytelling doesn't replace analytical thinking. It supplements it by enabling us to imagine new perspectives and new worlds. Abstract analysis is easier to understand when seen through the lens of a well-chosen story.

We are our stories. We compress years of experience, thought, and emotion into a few compact narratives that we convey to others and tell ourselves.

Chapter 6: Symphony

Symphony is 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 rather than to deliver specific answers; and to invent something new by combining elements nobody else thought to pair.

One of the best ways to understand and develop the aptitude of symphony is to learn how to draw.

When the left brain doesn't know what the right brain is doing, the mind is free to see relationships and to integrate those relationships into a whole. In many ways, this is the key to mastering the aptitude of symphony.

Symphony is largely about relationships. People who hope to thrive in the conceptual age must understand the connections between diverse, and seemingly separate, disciplines. They must know how to link apparently unconnected elements to create something new. And they must become adept at analogy – at seeing one thing in terms of another.

Boundary crossers: people that develop expertise in multiple spheres, speak different languages and find joy in the rich variety of human experience. They live multi lives.

Creativity generally involves crossing the boundaries of domains. The most creative among us see relationships the rest of us never notice. Such ability is at a premium in a world where specialized knowledge work can quickly become routinized work – and therefore be outsourced or automated.

Perspective is more important than IQ. The ability to make big leaps of thought is a common denominator among the originators of breakthrough ideas. Usually this ability resides in people with very wide backgrounds, multidisciplinary minds, and a broad spectrum of experiences. Boundary crossers reject either/or choices and seek multiple options and blended solutions. THEY LEAD HYPERNATED lives filled with hypernated jobs and enlivened by hypernated identities.

When tests of masculinity/femininity is given to young people, over and over one finds that creative and talented girls are more dominant and tough than other girls, and creative boys are more sensitive and less aggressive than their male peers.

Metaphor – understanding one thing in terms of something else – is an important element of symphony. Human processes are largely metaphorical.

Metaphorical thinking is also important because it helps us understand others. That's one reason that marketers are supplementing their quantitative research with qualitative investigations into the metaphorical minds of their customers.

Metaphorical imagination is essential in forging empathic connections and communicating experiences that others do not share.

A large part of self-understanding is the search for appropriate personal metaphors that make sense of our lives. The more we understand metaphor, the more we understand ourselves.

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The conceptual age demands the ability to grasp the *relationships between relationships*. This meta-ability has many names – systems thinking, gestalt thinking, holistic thinking etc. the simple words for it is “seeing the big picture”.

Self-made millionaires are four times more likely to be dyslectic because they have a hard time with L-directed thinking. As a blind person that evolves her hearing, dyslectic people also evolve other skills to compensate. A dyslectic are intuitive, sees the big picture, are good at problem solving and can easier simplify.

Michael Gerber: All great entrepreneurs are systems thinker.

The study of executives at fifteen large companies: just one cognitive ability distinguished star performers from average: pattern recognition, the big picture thinking that allows leaders to pick out the meaningful trends from a welter of information around them and to think strategically far into the future. These star performers relied less on deductive, if-then reasoning and more on the intuitive, contextual reasoning characteristic of symphony.

Chapter 7: Empathy

Empathy is the ability to imagine yourself in someone else's position and intuit what that person is feeling. It is the ability to stand in others shoes, to see with their eyes, and to feel with their hearts. But empathy isn't sympathy – feeling bad for someone else. It is feeling with someone else, seeing what it would be like to be that person.

Empathy builds self-awareness; bonds parent to child, allows us to work together, and provides the scaffolding for our morality.

Just as the mode of the rational mind is words, the mode of the emotions is nonverbal. And the main canvas for displaying those emotions is the face.

Empathy is an ethic for living. It's a means of understanding other human beings, a universal language that connects us beyond country of culture.

Seven basic human emotions have clear facial signals: anger, sadness, fear, surprise, disgust, contempt and happiness.

Empathy is related to symphony – because empathic people understand the importance of context. They see the whole person much as symphonic thinkers see the whole picture.

Dozens of studies have shown that women are generally better at reading facial expressions and at detecting lies.

Simon Baron-Cohen: the female brain is predominantly hard-wired for empathy. The male brain is predominantly hard-wired for understanding and building systems.

Empathy is neither a deviation from intelligence nor the single route to it. Sometimes we need detachment; many other times we need attunement. And the people who will thrive will be those who can toggle between the two. As we have seen again and again, the conceptual age requires androgynous minds.

Chapter 8: Play

At Fords River Rouge plant, laughter was a disciplinary offence – and humming, whistling, and smiling were evidence of insubordination. Ford feared that work and play was a toxic combination.

Joyfulness makes us more productive and fulfilled. And play ethics can strengthen and ennoble the work ethic.

Pat Kane: play will be to the 21century what work was to the last 300 years of industrial society – our dominant way of knowing, doing and creating value.

Humor is a sophisticated form of intelligence that can't be replicated by computers and that is becoming increasingly valuable in a high-concept, high-touch world.

Chapter 9: Meaning

Man's main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but to see a meaning in life.

The search for meaning is a drive that exists in all of us – and a combination of external circumstances and internal will can bring it to the surface.

The typical boomer now has more of his life behind him than ahead of him, prompting the searching for souls and the reevaluation of priorities.

The fourth great awakening: spiritual or immaterial inequity is now as great problem as material inequity, perhaps even greater. People have enough to live, but nothing to live for. They have the means, but no meaning.

Our capacity for faith – not religion per se, but the belief in something larger than ourselves – may be wired into our brains. Through the right side of the brain.

Women to whom life's meaning and purpose was central had higher levels of the types of cells that attack viruses and some kind of cancer cells.

Seligman's "The good life": is where you use your signature strengths (what you are great at) to achieve gratification in the main areas of your life. This can turn work from "a Monday to Friday sort of dying into a calling. A calling is the most satisfying form of work because, as gratification, it is done for its own sake rather than for the material benefits it brings.

A labyrinth is an escape for the right brain. As the left brain engages in the logical progression of walking the path, the right brain is free to think creatively.

When people walk into a labyrinth, they shift consciousness from the linear to the non-linear and bring to the surface the deep, intuitive, pattern part of ourselves.

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