

I am a human being, with a complex brain, over which I have a small, but crucial, amount of control in the form of my conscious choices – whatever I am predisposed to attend to at each moment of my life.

I draw upon the internal processes of both sides of my brain, but I may not realise that the emphasis I give to one side or the other changes as I change my attention. This happens naturally. When I relax and allow myself to be present here and now, without scheming for the future or regretting something from the past, my right brain is asserting its rightful role as the leader of my mind. It is the right hemisphere that gives us that special ability to feel that we are ‘present’ in the world, here and now.

But in Real Life, I don’t necessarily do that. My thoughts never stop – I am continually trying to work things out, make a plan, or go over what has just happened. I am also a creature of habit. Habits are powerful – as everyone knows who has tried to break a bad habit. The habit that is cause for alarm today, across our population, is a pronounced over-activity of left-brain activity that is good for maintaining a sense of control and for inventing and using technology, but bad news for our Intelligence.

We begin our Attention in a holistic way, but soon hand over our Perception to the left hemisphere to grasp and organise details that will help us to manage the situation. If we don’t pause to allow our right brain to process that information, we are more likely to make rash Judgments because of the left brain’s faulty Perception that I mentioned in last week’s Blog. The left brain’s logic, within its narrow and self-referring framework, may not be appropriate for Real Life. Examples of this are seen in our devotion to bureaucracy and over-simplified dogma – arbitrary ‘rules’ that are impersonal and inflexible.

Worse than that, the left brain’s logic is so entirely self-consistent within its own narrow ambit that it tends to convince us that it can’t be wrong. We actually like it when everything seems to ‘add up’ – it’s habit-forming. It is the right brain that gives us the ability to consider a range of alternatives within a broader context and make more Intelligent decisions. Our world is so complex that dogmatic thinking, as if we know it all, often leads us astray.

The left hemisphere is working with an abstraction – more like a map – of the Real World, and then re-presenting what it has found, whereas the right hemisphere enables us to actually be ‘present’ in this world at this time. This is a nice feeling that helps us to know we are utilising both sides of our brain, thereby maintaining some **breadth** in our mind.

This enables us to see that our ability to abstract and represent our reality is a useful tool, but it’s a danger to us if we allow it to be the leader in the way we use our mind. For example, it has no real awareness that the most important aspect of Real Life is the quality of our relationships with other people. Intelligence has more to do with our BELONGING than our BEING – it is a way of BELONGING that will enable our BEING to realise its potential, as I put it in my recent book (*I Said to Myself*). In this Blog I hope to take that idea further.

Our cultural dream of bigger and better technology has given priority, in education and employment, to STEM – science, technology, engineering and mathematics. But in Real Life, a broader agenda will be needed to strengthen our Intelligence.