

TRUE OR FALSE? THE LIGHT OF INSIGHT

Peter Shepherd



Cultivate Life!

The following selection is from
Cultivate Life! magazine

Cultivate Life! magazine is published by www.trans4mind.com
Editors: Greg Willson and Peter Shepherd

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by Peter Shepherd

Two Ways of Knowing

A creative person is one who can process in new ways the information directly at hand - the ordinary sensory data available to us all. A writer needs words, a musician needs notes, an artist needs visual perceptions, and all need some knowledge of the techniques of their crafts. But in addition, in the creative process, a second mode of mental processing takes place: in an altered state of consciousness, an individual intuitively sees possibilities for transforming ordinary data into an original creation.

Concepts of the duality, or two-sidedness, of human nature and thought have been postulated by philosophers and scientists from many different times and cultures. The key idea is that there are two parallel 'ways of knowing': thinking and feeling, intellect and intuition, objective analysis and subjective insight. Political writers say that people generally analyze the good and bad points of an issue and then vote on their gut feelings. The history of science is replete with anecdotes about researchers who try repeatedly to figure out a problem and then have a dream in which the answer presents itself as a metaphor intuitively comprehended by the scientist. In another context, a person may intuit about another, 'The words sound OK, but something tells me not to trust him': both sides of the brain are at work, processing the same information in different ways.

The brain functions in broadly two quite different modes. The first 'left brain' mode is linear, logical, verbal thinking, which we normally identify as our 'mind' - the 'semantic program' of the left hemispherical cortex. The second 'right brain' mode is holistic, intuitive, non-verbal functioning (one cannot call it 'thinking' but it is a way of knowing) of the right hemisphere. Of this we are usually not consciously aware, except as the results of its functioning, which are passed over to the left hemisphere for analytic verbal interpretation.

This duality of functioning passes over to the manipulation of objects by the hands. The right hand of a person (controlled by the left brain) determines fine detailed movement, such as writing, adjusting mechanisms, using tools or doing anything that requires a sequence of actions. Meanwhile the left hand (controlled by the right brain) establishes an anchor point or reference.

You might say that the left brain is chalk and the right brain the blackboard. The left side is linear, it cannot deal with more than one thing at a time, and it forgets strings of words or numbers rather rapidly. The right side holds the gestalt, the overview. It can compare many things simultaneously and its memory of pictures, feelings and emotions is permanent. It is like 'figure and ground', subject and background, focused imaging and overall perception.

Luria, the great Russian neurologist describes this in his book 'Man with a Shattered World'. He writes of a soldier who received a bullet wound severely damaging the right cortex, yet

the man survived, but with very strange experiences. While eating soup, when he concentrated on the soup the spoon disappeared, when he concentrated on the spoon the soup disappeared, and when he concentrated on the flavour the whole room disappeared!

Without this capability music would not be possible. The left hemisphere can concentrate on only one note at a time, while the right hemisphere is able to look at the overall context, of what has been played and anticipation of what is to follow, such that improvisation and emotional interpretation are possible. Whereas a left-brain dominant musician could merely tune the instrument and play simple tunes robotically.

Mostly our consciousness resides in the left, organizing hemisphere but this does not mean that the right side is inactive - it continues like the shining of stars in the daytime, there but unperceived. If the left hemisphere has become excessively dominant the right hemisphere has reduced opportunity to share in consciousness, being blocked in various ways, and can only express itself in deeply Subconscious functions (often only apparent in dreams). Full consciousness would arise from a collaborative integration of the two sets of processes.

How such blockage comes about is demonstrated in the following example. Imagine the effect on a child when its mother presents one message verbally but quite another with her facial expression and body language. 'I am only spanking you because I love you, dear' says the words, but 'I hate you and will destroy you' say the face and body blows. Each hemisphere is exposed to the same sensory input, but because of their respective specializations they each emphasize one of the messages. The left will only attend to the verbal cues, because it cannot extract information from the facial gestalt and kinesthetic sensations efficiently. The right will attend to the non-verbal cues because it has become specialized to do this and cannot understand the words.

In this situation the two hemispheres might decide on opposite courses of action: the left to approach, the right to flee. Since the left is the organizing hemisphere it can take control of the output channels most of the time but if it cannot 'turn off' the right completely, it may settle for disconnecting the conflicting information from the other side. The mental process in the right hemisphere, cut off in this way from the left hemispheric consciousness that is directing overt behavior, may nevertheless continue a life of its own. The memory of the situation, the emotional content and the frustrated plan of action may all persist, affecting subsequent perception and forming the basis for expectations and evaluations of future input. These may have their effect when the right hemisphere is not blocked and cause irrational misinterpretations.

When a person is in a right-brain mode of extreme emotion such as love, rage or grief, the pain and emotion and effort is experienced but he is unable to access the postulates, conclusions and other verbally and conceptually stored material in the left, as this is below the boundaries of consciousness - a person overcome is often speechless.

As a result of the more common left-brain dominance, emotions become a symbolic memory ('I was angry') rather than the feeling sensation of what was actually experienced. The person may have a verbal description of events but is unable to experience the emotion

and pain thereof. The painful emotions persuade the left hemisphere to hold-off the right side's contribution habitually. Eventually, with reduced nervous traffic between the hemispheres, the nerve fibres of the connecting channel (the corpus callosum) become atrophied with disuse (though this may be stimulated to re-grow with Transformational Psychology techniques) and the potential quality of brain functioning is then severely retarded.

A frequent cause of such blockage is when the right hemisphere contains data that the left finds distinctly uncomfortable - such as the truth! For example, the fact of a bad action may be repressed in this manner, as may any experience that the mind finds embarrassing, unacceptable or unconfontable. Similarly, deeply held beliefs that have a strong emotional investment become charged areas in the right hemisphere. The person who is left-dominant tends to be governed by words and belief systems often to the exclusion of external reality; a person with an integrated mind uses words as his servants and is in touch with the truth of where he stands.

The average person lives too much in a state of sensory illusion, of indoctrination, to be clear about anything except at rare, lucid intervals. Trance states are much more prevalent than is generally realized; there is rarely an 'objective' state of consciousness. Most of us are in a semi-waking, semi-sleeping trance induced by our cultural and genetic heritage and our personal belief system. To become fully awakened we must be wholly aware of all the influences that bear upon our daily state of consciousness.

For many centuries the Sufis have said that man must learn to use his mind in a different way if he is to progress. That missing link is the recovered integration of holistic right brain functions. Our right hemisphere, with its capacity for appreciating a complex whole, for facial recognition, map reading, maze solving, provides the alternative mode of understanding.

How did we get this way? Left-brain dominance probably came about because of a basic need to survive in a physical world. It may have developed when man changed from simple food-gathering to having to kill for survival - including having to kill others who threatened his survival or territory. Man had to organize in larger groups in order to live. He had to give up part of himself, to deny his own needs and feelings in deference to those of his society. And in order to kill animals and other humans he required some sort of shut-off mechanism in allow such acts.

The point about the split is that one side of our brain can be feeling something while the other side is thinking something very different. The split person can yell at you and not know why he is doing it, though he will manage to rationalize his acts and put the blame on others. With that division of the brain one could think one thing and do another. Feelings could be transmuted into symbolic form, disconnected from their feeling roots - the elaborateness of the ritualistic and symbolic life being commensurate with the loss of self. Man could then murder others for religious reasons or kill others when the state (an abstraction - not himself) was threatened.

As man came to defer to higher authority, his symbolic and repressive hemisphere became more active. He developed all sorts of ideas and rationales that were out of keeping with his feelings. The cultural trance had begun.

Through thousands of years our ancestors added to left-brain dominance because that was the way to get things done. The two specializations work effectively, the left brain supporting the right hand's use of tools, including writing. Our entire system - books, schools, universities, industry, political structures, churches - is fundamentally left-brained in learning, application and operation. We have generally regarded right-brain functions with suspicion, frustration and awe.

In fact we use our right brain throughout our daily lives in many subtle ways. While the left-brain serves our consciousness, the right-brain serves our awareness. Though the left-brain seems to predominate and to coordinate general behavior from both halves, it is the minor side that sees things in a broader perspective. It sees the context and views the parts of an event as its gestalt. It is the right-brain that takes the facts worked out by the left-brain and can make proper conclusions (connections) from them. It makes facts 'meaningful'.

The importance of understanding our dual consciousness is that it is possible to have thoughts that have nothing to do with what one is feeling, and to try to reach and change someone for the better through his thoughts and intellectual apparatus alone, without reference to the necessity for connection, is a vain exercise. The left-brain can be quite aware that smoking causes cancer but the person will still pull out a cigarette. The person is aware but not conscious.

LEFT	RIGHT
<p>Verbal description, explicit Linear - one thought following another Sequential, orderly, counting Rational, conclusions based on reason Abstract - representing a whole by a part Conceptual, word-symbols Logical thought, analysis Symbolised, evaluative feelings (head) Convergent, focused (attends to detail) Solves problems towards goals organizes actions, masculine Has only present time, active, involved Ends oriented, telic Imagines details, fictionalises stories Short-term symbolical memory Hostile weakness, friendly strength Hypocritical, lying Ego-consciousness</p>	<p>Non-verbal awareness, implicit Spatial, relational, holistic, synthesising Simultaneous, spontaneous Non-rational, willing to suspend judgment Analogical - seeing similarities Perceptual, concrete, image-symbols Intuitive ideas, connections Affective feelings and emotion (heart) Divergent, contextual (ignores detail) Perceives problems Supportive, receptive, feminine Deals with time, reflective, objective Means-whereby oriented, paratelic Constructs contexts, assumptions Long-term perceptual memory Friendly weakness, hostile strength Authentic, genuine Sub-consciousness</p>
<p>Defenses: falsifying, fabricating, mis-owning, invalidating, or fixating</p>	<p>Blocks: suppressing, withholding, denying, or accepted imprinting</p>

Man is conscious, as are animals, of external stimuli, but to be conscious that he is conscious, to be self-aware, is the introspective faculty that separates him from the animals. But he can only be meaningfully objective about that self when his feelings and contextual understandings are connected and integrated.

Logic is fine for mentally running over the mistakes of the past and for anticipating the future so that we do not commit the same blunders twice. But we cannot actually live in either of these two time realms, and the effort to do so may damage both our minds and bodies. Our task, then, is to learn to free ourselves from the cultural trance, the daydream of illusions, and with an awakened mind, live life today, in fully objective consciousness.

In our daily life we live in two worlds simultaneously, the left and right modes. The left mode is associated with logic, linear thinking, rationality, schedules, time, sequencing, measurements, the obvious, names, dates, deductive reasoning - the things we learn at school. The right mode is about intuition, holistic understanding, expressive movement, art, poetry, emotions, the hidden, the inferred, and imagery - in short, it is the 'ah-ha' state. In therapy, the unconscious is best accessed through the route of images and feelings; answers are then revealed from the unconscious that the rational mind would not otherwise be able to reach.

The right brain, by its very nature, cannot lie; the left brain is an expert at lying - at fabricating answers, telling stories, rationalising, blaming and erecting all of the Ego defenses.

As we converse in normal language, we tell each other anything we want to: details, about admissible feelings, social pleasantries, half-truths, lies or anything we need to say to function in the day to day world. But we may not say what we really think - we may omit information and lie, in order to protect others or ourselves from potentially hurtful truths.

We are, meanwhile, always telling ourselves the repressed truth, both about our conscious reality and also relating to the deeper dimensions of our innermost Self, giving facts about events and information about our motives, but this may not be revealed through the conscious mind. It is our direct feelings, utilizing images and metaphors, and does not disguise itself with pleasantries. The hidden messages occur especially at times when the right-brain is stimulated: when a person is expressing his or her Self emotionally or creatively.

So there is no more need to lie or pretend. To do so is to support power struggle, tyranny, low self-esteem and isolation. Truth conversely brings us closer, though it might take more risk, openness and vulnerability. As human beings we want to be welcomed, for our needs to be honoured, to be able to be strong and still be loved, to be recognized for who we really are. By being honest with our fellow beings and our selves, we can often strike a chord that resonates in every human heart.

Integration of the Two Sides

True higher creative thought arises from an integration of the two sides of the brain. Einstein said, "I will do a flight of fantasy and work on some thinking, which is not thinking as you would understand it, but a combinatorial play of some types of imageries and sensory feelings. Only when this activity comes to some resolution, would I fumble in the other side of my head for words and for algebraic statements, which would permit me to communicate these insights to others".

The parallel processing of the right hemisphere attends to the nonverbal, holistic, spatial and emotional aspects of the environment. The right brain identifies relevant experience and provides the context and awareness within which understanding is possible. There is no sense of time, and much of this process operates below the level of consciousness.

In contrast, the interpretative processing of the left hemisphere provides a verbal description and attends to the detailed information in the environment, and this material is usually available to our conscious minds. The left brain is sequential and, above all, time-based - it includes an accurate internal clock. When the left-brain takes control, this results in rigid adherence to the one-sided reality in which we have been educated and culturally conditioned. In short, we have been fed with pre-packaged cultural patterns - fixed solutions - which emphasize the penetrating, masculine values of activity, manipulation and direct influence over the environment.

In most cases right-hemisphere participation in conscious thinking is actually suppressed. As a result of traumatic experience and cultural conditioning many of the important functions of the right hemisphere are suppressed, e.g. the softer, more feminine ability to be aware of one's feelings, to let things happen and be involved in the moment in an un-selfconscious way. If only the verbal-analytic left side is operating, a person is effectively cut off from many of the ways in which he could experience the world around him - life can become dry, meaningless and boring.

Whether you are left or right handed, man or woman, left-hemispheric cultural patterns of thinking rule the day. As a result we lose touch with our intuitive, spiritual nature. We push aside our unspoken feelings as irrelevant to the struggle for survival. We rationalize the beliefs we have adopted in order to be accepted members of our partnership, family, peer generation, etc. We push aside right-hemisphere intuition because it contains the real truth of who we are, what we have done and what we intend to do. Above all, we repress what we feel about ourselves, because the truth hurts. The keystone of left-brain consciousness is *time*, the primary lie of the physical universe. The right brain is timeless, so it cannot lie!

The brain is a sophisticated transduction device through which the Higher Self is able to relate its mental subtle energies to the coarser energies of the nervous system of its bodily identity. In this way, mental processes manifest as changes of arousal in particular parts of the brain, which leads to bodily action or behavior. The left hemisphere of the brain cortex usually controls selective attention, language, rational analysis, temporal and other sequential functions; meanwhile, the right hemisphere is responsible for felt, intuitional, relational, pictorial, spatial and other awareness processes - it creates a non-verbal, holistic synthesis of information without regard to particular details.

In short, the left brain deals with significance and attempts to reason, and the right-brain deals with the perception, kinesthetic sensation and pictured memory of reality and emotion. Thus the left-brain interprets, which can lead to falsity and rationalization, whereas the right-brain duplicates reality as it is.

The left-brain mode of thought is one of sifting sequentially through files of associated data and then the right brain obtains an overview. The emotional force contained within the right-brain way of representation may prevent inspection of deeply held beliefs, hidden aspects of the personality, or repressed traumatic experience; in which case the right brain will have reduced arousal. In addition the left-brain may fictionalise to cover up missing data (including that which is unconfontable in the right-brain) or make rationalizations, based

on false information or influences which have been installed through genetic or cultural imprinting.

In contrast, if thinking analytically about painful experiences or wrong-doings cannot be confronted, this may result in a retreat to the right-brain mode of experience, where there are strong feelings but no logic to direct them. This is how we feel when overcome by fear, sadness or remorse, and when we are cathartically re-experiencing a past moment of pain or loss.

Healing the split

As a result of the two essentially disparate ways of handling reality, right-brain awareness becomes split off from consciousness. True release and resolution occur only when this split is healed; this depends upon re-integrating the hemispheres, so feelings can be adequately described and organized. Whereas pseudo-release is the consequence of rationalization, leading at most to a detachment, because the individual's attention has been taken off the problem.

Truth may be concealed by distorted thinking fuelled by charged contents of both the left and right hemispheres. Alterations and additions to the truth are derived from the left-brain. Likewise, avoidance of truth and obscured information, derives from painful material in the right brain. Whilst the right brain 'feels wrong', the left brain 'is wrong'. However, from the perspective of a deeper level of consciousness, we 'know better'. We already know the nature of the conflict, and the defense system surrounding it, because we have set this up, almost as a mental game. A game requires unknowingness, and this void is filled with fiction. The unconscious mind contains the truth as to the nature of the conflict through its connection with the Higher Self.

Spiritual writers make much of "being in the present moment" - what they really mean is the state of right-brain involvement, which is timeless and right-brain in nature, so intuitive faculties are fully available and therefore access to the Higher Self and universal spiritual connection. For this reason, the Law of Attraction, a spiritual principle, does not come into play until we move beyond a thinking and planning stage and adopt the mode of full involvement, of responsible action aligned with our vision. Since we are responsible, at cause, and connected with Spirit - responsible for All That Is - the whole world of synchronicities and the "magic" of manifestation is enabled. This is just not possible in the "thinking about" customary mode of left-brain consciousness.

A further important aspect of right-brain consciousness with respect to the spiritual life, is connected with the fact that the right brain cannot lie. Our essential inner nature is loving, indeed as sparks of God-consciousness we are each of us unconditionally loving in nature, and that basic truth is obscured only by the machinations of mental distortions and conditioned belief systems. "The Kingdom of God is within," as Jesus said. Therefore, when our actions are guided by our own inner loving nature, and informed intuitively through the wisdom of the Higher Self, again we are connected to Spirit and the full power of the Law of Attraction is in our hands. When informed solely by the Ego mind (however intelligent and well-intentioned) and especially when guided by fears and considerations of time, then

we are detached from Spirit and the Law of Attraction is weakened, as most people discover to their disappointment.

Playing the Game of Life

There are two fundamental approaches that we adopt in life - we may be **thinking about** things or we may be **taking action**. We can do these in a masterful way, serene and calm; or we may find difficulties, get stressed and worry ourselves - in this case we have a life challenge. Well done personal development involves changing from living for tomorrow to living today. By learning to change our way of being, while facing challenges in life, we move from stress and worry to serenity and calmness.

To illustrate this, imagine a tennis match between two players: both of whom are well involved in the action and playing well. They are in right-brain mode, involved in the moment - time does not exist for them. (This is the paratelic state described in [*Transforming the Mind*](#).) But then it reaches a crucial point; one of the players becomes nervous, worries about whether their serve will be good enough and as a result, becomes self-conscious and serves badly. He has reversed through anxiety to the detached, thinking, left-brain 'telic' state. The other player stays cool and involved in the game, and thrashes the weak serve with a pass down the line. One player then is even more tense and 'out of the flow' of the game; the other is excited but calm and really into their flow.

This tennis match is just like the game of life. We all need to make plans, learn from the past, think about things, and then take action, by getting involved in making the plans a reality. But when we have challenging situations, often we have difficulties... We may not have the required knowledge and skills. We also may have previous negative experiences that we fear may happen again, or we may have acquired self-defeating beliefs as a result of our past experiences and conditioning.

These factors may prevent full involvement in, and commitment to, the actions you need to take, and impede the good performance that you need in order to succeed. By learning and applying the skills, insights and understandings that [Life Mastery Training](#) provides you are empowered to overcome these life challenges. Then although you are in the same situation, facing the same life challenge, you can now succeed!

Having Unshakable Inner Peace

The ego is a mental projection of Self into the world, necessary to function. It is selfish and egotistical when weak, which is the case when it's dominated by conditioning, fears and pressures, and disconnected from heart and spirit (as is so often the case). Therefore the way forward is to connect and integrate the ego, so it dissolves into a transparent window to the world, rather than acting like an alternative mechanical self on the rampage.

When we focus on clarifying what is being observed, felt, and needed rather than on diagnosing and judging, we discover the depth of our own compassion. That kind of judging and rationalizing easily becomes a filter obscuring what IS, and who we ARE, because it's effected by beliefs and conditioning and distance. Not that one should not reason, but be

always objective and direct as possible, reasoning only with an open mind, ALL beliefs and assumptions open to revision, and seeing from all viewpoints so there is little separation.

Liking and agreement are the customary measures of accord, but they lead to separation; they are not a spiritual way of relating. Communication, understanding and empathy are the factors involved in a higher level of relationship; they enable true compassion and the dissolving of the solidity of existence.

We have all we need within to stay calm and unstressed, to feel good about ourselves and perform to our full potential. What we need is a training program that identifies our greatest challenges and which then supports us in facing this challenge with skill and calmness. This is what personal development, and the resources offered at Trans4mind, are all about.

The following diagram illustrates the the two aspects of mastering life challenges: our thoughts and our actions. The top half illustrates the negative ways we may approach thinking and doing. These are the negative states that separate mind and heart from working together and create inner conflict and stress. The bottom half illustrates the positive states that form as a result of the training that Life Mastery provides, resulting in mind and heart working together, and the resulting experience of unshakable inner peace while facing and addressing life challenges...

Mastering the Challenges of Life

THINKING ABOUT (Left brain)	TAKING ACTION (Right brain)
STRESSED BY LIFE CHALLENGES Conflict (worrying) (Negative ego) Fears, regrets Guilt, blame, judgment Greed, envy Distorted thinking Conditioned beliefs Negative interpretations	STRESSED BY LIFE CHALLENGES Conflict (stressed) (Reactive) Dispersed Unfocused Uninvolved Intuition blocked Poor performance Negative emotions
In conflict states, mind and heart are disconnected, feelings repressed	
MASTERY OVER LIFE CHALLENGES Peace (serene) (Positive ego) Aware and mindful Learn positively from past Plan how to achieve vision Objective and rational thinking Self-directed and proactive	MASTERY OVER LIFE CHALLENGES Peace (calm) (Inner guidance) Involved and living in the moment No time "in the flow" Clear intuition Good performance Positive emotions
In peaceful states, mind and heart have open communication	

Truth is multi-dimensional

"The mind is like a parachute; it works much better when it's open!" ... Trans4mind's motto. We try to be neutral in the information we put across, for "truth" is unique to the individual perspective. For example, from the scientist's material view, the world looks very different than from the more subjective emotional, intellectual or intuitive points of view. To you and me sitting here, we are first and foremost individual personalities; but from an enlightened, spiritual viewpoint, there is no separation, and we are truly at One with All That Is, we are God. Two widely disparate views - but both are true!

For some God is the Sun, or Mother Nature, or All That Is. For others God is universal consciousness or the quality of Love as a creative and binding force. For others God is Creator and all life on Earth is created by Him. For some, human beings are also spiritual entities who can survive the body's death, and for others Spirit is entirely in God's hands.

Atheists and humanists perceive the physical world to have a completely independent existence that naturally evolves, and in which there is no place for God and spirit. Consciousness may be highly developed and humane but not a supernatural phenomenon. Some believe that our destiny is the will of God; others that our life is directed according to decisions and agreements in-between lives. And others believe destiny is purely a matter of self-determined choices in the present.

Perhaps all these people are right, on one level or another? There are many theologies, dogmas and philosophies... paganism, spiritualism, christianity, buddhism, zen, sufism... just to begin the list. Some demand personal subjective experience of God and spirituality before belief is possible, others demand scientific proof, whilst others will believe according to their faith. And others will not believe at all. One thing is for sure, belief in God and personal spirituality - or not - plays an important part in many peoples' lives, providing sense and reason, and a foundation for their values and worldview.

In argument, the ego presents a view from one level and says it is right; in truth, all the views may be "right" in their own way. Beautiful and ugly, good and bad, are opinions but not essential truth; essential truth is simply the unconditional acceptance of what IS, as it is, without judgment.

And yet we need discernment in everyday life; we want a picture we find attractive on the wall, not an ugly one. Judgmental views are only a problem when they are ego based, to make self right and others wrong - in short, when they present a barrier to unconditional love.

So... we always have to be aware of the context, when we make proclamations about how things are. And "truth" is always something the individual needs to discover inside themselves - what is true for them at their current level of awareness. And be open to revise that view, when new opportunities for learning and expansion of awareness occur. With compassion and empathy, we will understand that truth for others may naturally differ from our own.

Trans4mind remains neutral in these arguments, but we trust the tools and coaching we recommend below will help you become aware of alternative points of view, and help you to synthesize your own unique perspective. ###

Peter Shepherd is a psychologist and writer, who works particularly in the field of personal development and runs the web site, www.trans4mind.com. Born in London in 1952, he spent most of his life in England before moving to France to be with his wife, Nicole. Trained both as a rational-emotive and transpersonal psychotherapist, Peter combines these techniques in his own system of transformational psychology, applied to personal growth rather than therapy. His book, [*Transforming the Mind*](#), was the foundation of the web site, which over 10 years has expanded to become one of the top personal development portals on the Internet.

Peter is also the author of [*Daring to Be Yourself*](#), which gives the reader the tools to turn their life around.