



# You Got the Right One, Baby?

**Stephen Palmer**

**Please Distribute This Document Freely**

*Provided that the content and links are left intact, as is, without editing, and that proper credit and attributions are made to Stephen Palmer with the [Center for Social Leadership](#).*

**Copyright Notice**

© Copyright 2011 by [The Center for Social Leadership](#). All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical. Any unauthorized use, sharing, reproduction, or distribution of parts herein is strictly prohibited. You may and are encouraged, however, to freely distribute this document as a whole, without any changes or editing, or reprint its content as long as the links are left intact, and proper credit and attribution are included.



**Stephen Palmer** is a marketing consultant and writer with [KGaps Consulting](#), a co-founder of [The Center for Social Leadership](#), and the author of [\*Uncommon Sense: A Common Citizen's Guide to Rebuilding America\*](#).

He co-authored the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, and Amazon bestseller [\*Killing Sacred Cows: Overcoming the Financial Myths that are Destroying Your Prosperity\*](#).

He is a liberal-arts graduate of [George Wythe University](#) and a graduate and faculty member of the "non-traditional business school" [Wizard Academy](#).

Stephen resides in Round Rock, Texas with his gorgeous wife Karina, awesome son Alex, and princess daughters Libby, Avery, and Laela. Stephen and Karina blog about their magical life on [Palmer Journeys](#).

**Connect With Stephen:**



*"We know more than we know we know." -Michael Polanyi*

I once asked the Center for Social Leadership community why I've published [poetry every Sunday](#) on our blog.

Aside from the obvious answer that quality poetry inspires, the short answer is this: **Poetry activates the right hemisphere of your brain, which [social leaders](#) need in order to increase their impact and effectiveness.**

Now for the detailed answer.

## 1 Brain 2 Brains, Left Brain Right Brain

In 1981, neuropsychologist and neurobiologist [Roger Sperry](#) won a [Nobel Prize](#) "for his discoveries concerning the functional specialization of the cerebral hemispheres."

Before Dr. Sperry's "split-brain experiments," it was commonly thought that the left hemisphere of the brain was more important than the right.

Dr. Sperry shattered this false view and revealed stunning new insights into how the brain works. As he put it,

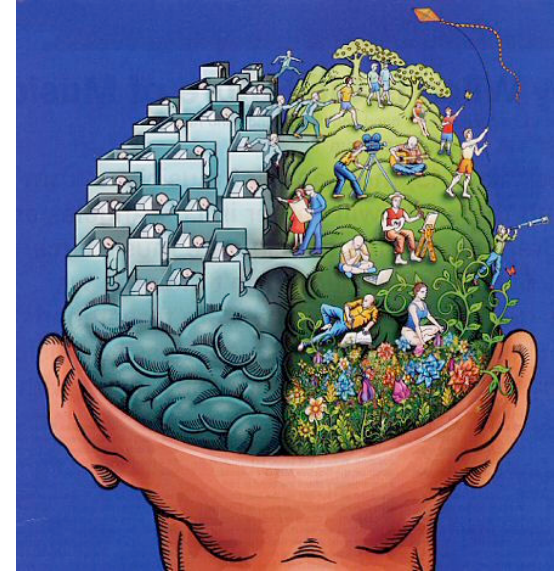
*"The so-called subordinate or minor hemisphere, which we had formerly supposed to be illiterate and mentally retarded and thought by some authorities to not even be conscious, was found to be in fact the superior cerebral member when it came to performing certain kinds of mental tasks."*

The left brain is linear, logical, objective, verbal, and conceptual. The right brain, visual and perceptual, reasons holistically, [recognizes patterns](#), and interprets emotions and nonverbal expressions.

The left brain is scientific, the right is intuitive, artistic, creative, imaginative. The left brain craves order, the right feeds on chaos. The left brain demands everything to be literal, while the right brain is electrified by symbols, metaphors, art, and abstractions.

The left brain sees a sentence like "Her heart soared to the heavens" and smirks, "What a load of crap." The right brain gushes, "Wow! Cool! Can I soar, too?"

*"Good poets make extensive use of 'right-brain language.' Forget that sensible, linear, factual, left-brain speech. The language of the right brain is a horse of a different color. A riot of imagery, a cascade of connections, sensations, and associations. The right brain speaks in metaphors, juxtapositions, and similes, using a whole range of poetic devices to express the inexpressible and describe the indescribable." -Robin Frederick*



Clearly, both hemispheres are vital to success in any endeavor. Unfortunately, our society and educational system have traditionally placed way more emphasis on the left.

However, we're engulfed in monumental shifts. To navigate these shifts and leverage them to your advantage requires a much higher degree and depth of right-brain thinking than most people are used to.

*"Employers are already saying that a degree is not enough, and that many graduates do not have the qualities they are looking for: the ability to communicate, work in teams, adapt to change, to innovate and be creative."*

*"This is not surprising... The traditional academic curriculum is not designed to promote creativity. Complaining that the system does not produce creative people is like complaining that a car doesn't fly...it was never intended to.*

*"The stark message is that the answer to the future is not simply to increase the amount of education, but to educate people differently." -Professor Ken Robinson of the [21st Century Learning Initiative](#), a group of neuroscientists, psychologists, and educators committed to educational reform*

**For social leaders in particular, cultivating your right brain is vital for at least the following reasons:**

- 1. To make more money.**
- 2. To increase your innovation and problem-solving skills.**
- 3. To move the cause of liberty.**

## **Right-Brain Economics**

In his phenomenal bestseller [A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future](#) (affiliate link), [Daniel Pink](#) draws from mountains of research to explain that we're moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age.

*"We've progressed from a society of farmers to a society of factory workers to a society of knowledge workers. And now we're progressing yet again—to a society of creators and empathizers, of pattern recognizers and meaning makers."*

Pink cites three primary reasons for this cataclysmic shift:

## Abundance

*"Our left brains have made us rich...But abundance has produced an ironic result: The very triumph of [left-brain] thinking has lessened its significance. The prosperity it has unleashed has placed a premium on less rational, more [right-brain] sensibilities—beauty, spirituality, emotion."*

## Asia

*"If standardized, routine [left-brain] work such as many kinds of financial analysis, radiology, and computer programming can be done for a lot less overseas and delivered to clients instantly via fiber optic links, that's where the work will go."*

## Automation

*"Last century, machines proved they could replace human backs. This century, new technologies are proving they can replace human left brains."*

To adapt to these forces, Pink offers six requisite senses for thriving in the Conceptual Age—all of which are right-brain aptitudes:

1. **Design.** Making things beautiful *and* functional.
2. **Story.** Appealing to logic *and* emotion.
3. **Symphony.** Connecting dots, seeing the full picture.
4. **Empathy.** As Daniel Goleman demonstrated in [Emotional Intelligence](#) (affiliate link), emotional abilities impact our careers much more than our IQ.
5. **Play.** "Play will be to the 21st century what work was to the last 300 years of industrial society—our dominant way of knowing, doing and creating value." -Pat Kane, Author of [The Play Ethic](#) (affiliate link)

6. **Meaning.** "Meaning. Purpose. Deep life experience. Use whatever word or phrase you like, but know that consumer desire for these qualities is on the rise. Remember your Abraham Maslow and your Viktor Frankl. Bet your business on it." -Rich Karlgaard, Publisher of *Forbes*

Pink challenges individuals and businesses to ask themselves three questions:

1. Can someone overseas do it cheaper?
2. Can a computer do it faster?
3. Is what I'm offering in demand in an age of abundance?

He then concludes:

*"Individuals and organizations that focus their efforts on doing what foreign knowledge workers can't do cheaper and computers do faster, as well as on meeting the aesthetic, emotional, and spiritual demands of a prosperous time, will thrive. Those who ignore these three questions will struggle."*

## Get Out of the Box

Change has never been more fundamental, rapid, and disruptive. More than ever, today's leaders must learn to recognize, trust, and follow their intuition to connect dots, predict trends, and adapt to new realities.

And where does intuition come from? You guessed—the right brain.

Roy H. Williams, author of the legendary [Monday Morning Memo](#) and founder of [Wizard Academy](#), explains:



*"Intellect is linear, putting facts in columns and rows, while intuition is nonlinear, putting all the facts in a big bowl, then stirring them together like soup, watching to see what might 'connect.'*

*"...Great leaders have intuition. Explorers have intuition. Inventors have intuition. It is intuition that tells them how to go where none has ever been."*

Accessing and [cultivating intuition](#) is how social leaders can successfully navigate change, overcome challenges, and solve problems.

To create different results, we need new ways of thinking, and left-brain thinking isn't going to get us there.

(By the way, if you want to test your intuition, read [this article](#) and connect the dots between Oliver's thesis and what I'm saying here.)

## Fight for the Right

In his eye-opening—and highly intuitive—lecture ["The Freedom Crisis,"](#) [Oliver DeMille](#) declares that one of the serious flaws of freedom-lovers is that we tend to think and communicate very literally.

The problem with this, as Oliver says, is that

*"Literal talk is not what sways the thinking populace. The thinking populace is swayed by symbol, celebrity, and poetry—poetry in the broad sense."*

Literal language is divisive. It repels people with whom we share common beliefs and goals. Symbolism and poetics, on the other hand, speak to universalities. They unite and inspire.

**To change hearts and minds and win the freedom war requires us to be artful rather than forceful. In other words, passionate freedom-lovers must take a more right-brain approach to their struggle.**

Oliver goes on to explain the difference between *sensus solum* and *sensus plenior*. *Sensus solum* translates as "one meaning," while *sensus plenior* means "multiple, or fuller meanings."

*Sensus solum*—or literal—thinking has dominated mainstream education for decades. It trains the masses to think in terms of black or white, right or wrong. *Sensus solum* thinkers read things to find *the* correct answer. It is rigid and, by definition, limited.

In contrast, *sensus plenior* education—of which poetry is an integral component—explores depth, nuance, multiple perspectives, and holistic thinking. It fosters creativity and innovation.

Bottom line: *sensus solum* is left-brain thinking, *sensus plenior* is right-brain thinking.

Which is needed to promote freedom?

Trick question—we don't need either/or, we need *both*. Just as those who cultivate both left and right brain aptitudes will have greater success economically, so will they have greater impact on the freedom movement.

Still, since *sensus solum* is the dominant perspective most of us have been trained in, it is vital that we cultivate the ability to think in terms of *sensus plenior*—which means specific and consistent right brain training.

## Get the Right Stuff

*"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."* -Albert Einstein

This isn't "touchy-feely, artsy-fartsy" stuff—the realities of right-brain thinking are tangible, practical, relevant, and vital.

---

Nurturing your right brain makes you more creative, imaginative and innovative, and better equipped to solve problems, overcome challenges, and make better decisions. It helps you recognize, predict, and capitalize on trends. It helps you communicate more effectively and universally.

In short, it makes you a better entrepreneur and leader. And it's the right thing to do. [Uh-huh](#).

## 10 Specific Ways to Cultivate Your Right Brain

1. Attend [Wizard Academy](#) courses.
2. Take art, music, acting, and/or dancing classes. Starve your inhibitions, gorge your imagination.
3. Visit art museums and galleries.
4. Practice writing short stories. One valuable and quick technique is to do what I've done on [this blog](#). Another is "[mini-sagas](#)"—stories consisting of no more than 50 words.
5. Keep a notepad and pen on your nightstand and write down your dreams. Dreams are your right brain communicating to your left; it has no language functions, so it communicates through symbols. Record not only what you visualized, but also how it felt. Try to interpret the symbolism and apply your interpretations to practical things in your life. Compare your dreams over time to recognize patterns.
6. Read more fiction, fantasy, [poetry](#), and humor.
7. Listen to more classical music.

8. Play more. Seriously. Video games, sports, board games, concerts, leisure time. Intuition kicks in more often and more clearly when you have no deadlines or objectives. Simply play. If you think this sounds silly, consider that Nobel Prize-winning physicist [Richard Feynman was a huge proponent of play](#).

9. [Meditate](#) at least 15 minutes every day.

10. Read and listen to these books, articles, and speeches:

- [A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future](#) (affiliate link) by Daniel Pink
- [Free the Beagle: A Journey to Destinae](#) by Roy H. Williams
- ["The Freedom Crisis"](#) by Oliver DeMille
- [Drawing on the Artist Within: An Inspirational & Practical Guide to Increasing Your Creative Powers](#) (affiliate link) by Betty Edwards
- [Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More than IQ](#) (affiliate link) by Daniel Goleman
- [Accidental Magic: The Wizard's Techniques for Writing Words Worth 1,000 Pictures](#) by Wizard Academy
- ["CEO Libraries Reveal Keys to Success"](#)
- ["A Liberal Take on Hiring"](#)
- ["What Would Plato Do?"](#)
- ["Think Your Liberal Arts Degree Won't Get You a Real Job?"](#)
- ["The Liberal Arts & Business"](#)

## About The Center for Social Leadership

The Center for Social Leadership (CSL) is a think tank and action organization dedicated to building [social leaders](#) for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Humanity is experiencing dramatic changes. Traditional leadership is broken. Conventional human organization based on hierarchies and formal authority is outdated. Human consciousness is evolving. Technology has transformed the way we interact and enhanced our ability to have impact—for good or ill. The Center for Social Leadership was formed to steer these changes to improve the health of society, preserve freedom, and ensure peace and prosperity for humanity. A new vision of leadership is needed. Not the old, hierarchical, positional, authoritative, privileged-elite leadership, but a new democratic, action-determined, service-oriented leadership. Through this social leadership mankind can achieve unprecedented happiness and fulfillment.

Learn more and engage with CSL by [reading our e-book](#) and joining our mailing list at [www.TheSocialLeader.com](http://www.TheSocialLeader.com).

**“It’s not about someone doing everything. It’s about everyone doing something.”**

