

# Whole Brain Thinking

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The words in the left hand column are typically associated with the "left brain thinking," and the words in the right hand column are typically associated with "right brain thinking." These are simple generalizations, designed to get you thinking about the habitual thinking patterns you use to approach your work. The more integrated we are - the more we access and use the elements associated with both sides of this list in any given situation - the more effective we can be at generating elegant solutions and creating new systems. Most individuals and most organizations lean more toward one side or the other. Certainly, in our culture most organizational systems use more "left brain" approaches and would benefit greatly by balancing out their methods.

I've developed a short quiz to help you determine your most common brain usage. Quickly scan the list for the words that apply to you in your work. Don't think about it or try to figure it out—go by initial gut instinct. Keep track of how many words in each column describe your own. You don't have to choose between the 2 columns - just check off each word that resonates with you as part of your own process, even if they seem opposite. For example, you may find you already use both detailed and big picture thinking in your work. If so, check both.

## Whole Brain Dimensions Quiz™

Left Brain	Right Brain
Rational	Intuitive
Logical	Metaphorical
Fact-based	Aesthetic
Quantitative	Holistic
Sequential	Synthesizing
Detailed	Big-picture
Plan	Improvise
Mathematical	Musical
Administrative	Correlative
Technical	Visual
Analytical	Emotional
Scientific	Spiritual
Abstract	Conceptual
Order	Movement

Singular	Complex
Preparation	Incubation
Verification	Illumination
Objective	Subjective
Parts	Wholes
Evaluation	Elaboration
Deduce	Expand
Accuracy	Randomness
Pattern perception	Spatial perception
Strategies	Possibilities
Safety & security	Risk-taking
Practical	Impetuous
Remember	Fantasize & envision
Adds	Integrates
Successive	Simultaneous
Directed	Flowing
Convergent	Divergent
Splits	Connects
Sensing	Perceiving
Cause and effect	Correspondence
Straight lines	Meandering
Verbal	Kinesthetic
Isolates	Interdependent
Deducts	Expands
Distinctions	Relations
Observes	Imagines
Discerns	Generates
Categories	Interconnections

Catalogues & labels	Incorporates & assimilates
Sorts & separates	Infuses & blends
Figures out	"Gets"
Concludes	"A-ha!"
Segmented	Contextual
Methodical	Spontaneous
Levels & stages	Dimensions
Lists	Story
Itemizes	Unites

Add up the totals on each side to become aware of your dominant thinking approach. What are your strengths? What are your dominant thinking patterns? Where is there room for expansion into whole brain thinking?

#### 4 Whole Brain "Activation" Techniques

**Opposite functions** - Spend some time doing everything with your non-dominant hand. Every time you break a dominance habit, you create new neural pathways and give the brain more options. It become easier to think in new ways throughout your day, and easier to adapt, respond and create in high pressure environments.

**Colored markers and unlined paper** - Instead of using lined legal paper and a pen in meetings, brainstorming sessions or any other work related function, try use unlined paper and colored markers (I recommend the Sharpie fine point brand - they're vibrant and long lasting). Without exception, once you get used to the exhilarating freedom of working "outside the lines" and the new ideas it will produce, you won't go back to being mentally boxed in. Lines have a subconscious effect on us which keep the brain locked in habitual thought patterns. By removing the lines, the brain is more free to think multi-dimensionally instead of just linearly.

**Sensory Immersion** - consciously engage all of your senses. Instead of coming to a situation from thinking alone, come to it from you sense of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch as well. The more senses you bring into a creative process, the more you expand your thinking and awareness, and the more information you receive.

**Embodiment** - become the project, problem, vision, product and act from its point of view. New ideas will flood your mind. This is easy to prove. First, try imagining new features to add to any product in a certain time period, i.e., 5 minutes. You will come up with a number of features. Then, pretend you actually are the product - become the product - and start talking from *it*, again for 5 minutes. You will learn exponentially more about what it "needs." The act of embodying a product, process, concept, etc. will give you new insights and awareness' into the product, and therefore, potential new features, that you cannot get from just thinking about it.