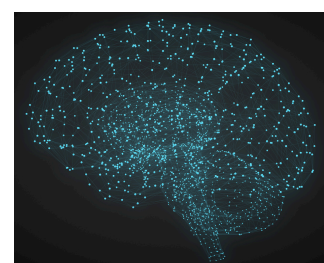


WHOLE BRAIN LIVING BOOK DIGEST



Chapter 2: Brain Anatomy and Personality

The Split-Brain Experiments

In the 70's, Dr. Roger Sperry conducted what was called Split-Brain Experiments, surgically separating the corpus callosum, in an attempt to prevent dangerous seizure activity from spreading from one hemisphere to the other. Dr. Gazzaniga did subsequent psychological analysis that allowed demonstration that the psychological and underlying anatomical abilities are dramatically different.

Post commissurotomy, patients behaved as though portraying two different characters, often acting in direct opposition of each other.

Later on it was discovered that most of the commissural fibers are inhibitory in nature. She writes:

“At any moment in time, both hemispheres have cells that are active, but opposing hemisphere cell groups dance between dominance and inhibition.”

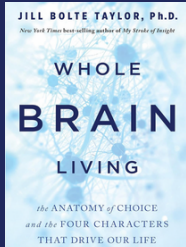
“When we are focused on the words and meaning of what someone is saying (left brain), we tend to not be so focused on the inflection of their voice or the emotional content (right brain) of what they are communicating. Vice versa—have you ever been so stunned that someone was yelling at you that you completely missed the point they were trying to make?”

As often, those findings were overly stereotyped and it was concluded that left-brain people were more organized, punctual, and detail-oriented and that right-brain people were creative, innovative and athletic. This led to pigeonholing strategies where people only reinforced the tendencies they already had, and we culturally skewed our abilities toward the two extremes over the next four decades.

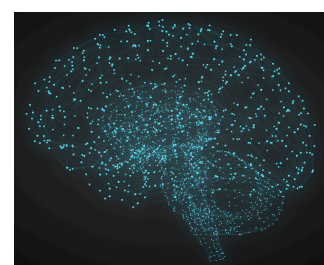
How The Two Hemispheres Function

Three other books can help us on this subject:

- The Master and His Emissary, by Dr. Iain McGilchrist—on differences between the two hemispheres
- Of Two Minds, by Dr. Fredric Schiffer—on applying knowledge of brain characters to treat mental illnesses
- No Bad Parts, by Richard Schwartz—about the Internal Family System model.



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In truth, the left and right brain collaborate at all time and never work in isolation. But, she adds:

“Brain cells dominate and inhibit their counterpart cells as a standard practice, so the brain is not all-on or all-off under any circumstance except death.”

And so neuroanatomically, here’s how our neurons work on each side of our brain:

- **In our left brain:** neurons work as a serial processor and function linearly. Comparing new ideas to the previous ones and by product of the newest ones to the next. This is how our left brain can function sequentially and how we can make sense of time and separate past, present and future.
- **In our right brain:** neurons work as a parallel processor. All data are revealed as a single complex moment of experience. Everything is registered in the right here and right now, which adds depth to our memories.

Each of our characters is supported by a unique and specific module of neurons—with the word module representing the way groups of neurons interact with each other to function as an aggregate.

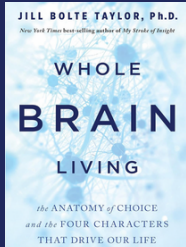
Reflecting back on her stroke, our author describes how:

“The characters of my left thinking and left emotional networks receded, while the comparable characters of my right brain’s thinking and emotional modules became untethered, unfettered, newly dominant, and free to run wild.”

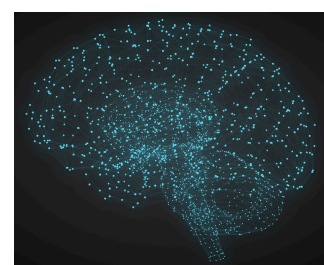
She explains:

“Our left brain offers us our individuality, while our right brain connects us with the consciousness of not only the collective whole of humanity but the vast expansive consciousness of the universe.”

And this is why it is normal for us all to experience a natural duality and a sense of ongoing internal conflict.



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The Four Characters in Our Brains

“The differences between the two hemispheres are far greater than simply the underlying anatomy, physiology, and resultant skill sets.”

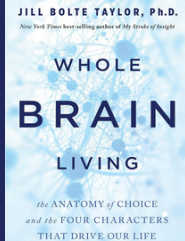
When Jill Bolte Taylor regained access to her left brain characters, she was reacquainted with C1, her strict and productive left-brain thinking part and with C2, her pained and cautious left-brain emotional part.

And even though she had enjoyed the few years passed without any recall of the pain of her past, she also shares that life can feel very flat without the richness of our deep emotions. Those characters also guide us to the edge of our potential for growth.

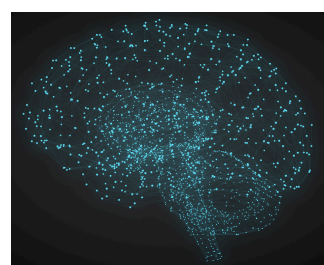
“If we want to evolve into our best selves and live our best lives, we must create a healthy relationship with our left-brain Character 2. We grow and thrive when we are brave enough to stand in the center of our pain and listen to what it is truly trying to communicate.”

Of note, our author did choose to remain mainly anchored in her right brain and to embody C4’s (the right-brain emotional character) peaceful gratitude and open heart. And she shares:

*“If I can choose which circuitry I want to run,
so can you.”*



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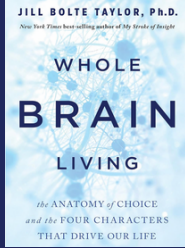


Chapter 3: Our Brain's Team: The Four Characters

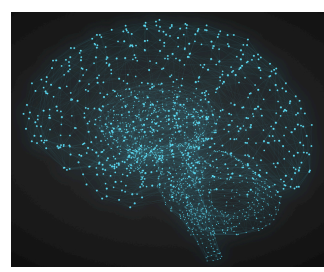
"Our two cerebral hemispheres think about different things, they care about different things, and, dare I say, they have very different personalities."

How Your Four Characters Think and Feel

<u>Left Thinking Character 1</u> (Serial Processor)	<u>Right Thinking Character 4</u> (Parallel Processor)
Verbal	Nonverbal
Thinks in language	Thinks in pictures
Thinks linearly	Thinks experientially
Past/future based	Present moment-based
Analytical	Kinesthetic/body
Focuses on details	Looks holistically at the big picture
Seeks differences	Seeks similarities
Judgmental	Compassionate
Punctual	Lost in the flow of time
Individual	Collective
Concise/precise	Flexible/resilient
Fixed	Open to possibilities
Focus on ME	Focus on WE
Busy	Available
Conscious	Unconscious
Structure/order	Fluid/flow

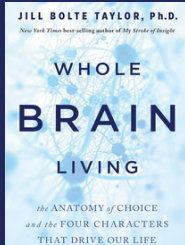


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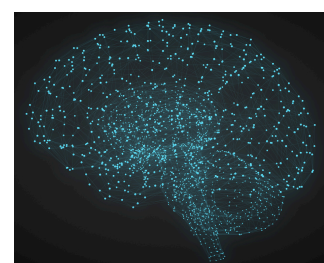


<u>Left Emotional Character 2</u>	<u>Right Emotional Character 3</u>
Constricted	Expansive
Rigid	Open
Cautious	Risk taking
Fear based	Fearless
Stern	Friendly
Loves conditionally	Loves unconditionally
Doubts	Trusts
Bullies	Supports
Righteous	Grateful
Manipulates	Goes with the flow
Tried and true	Creative/innovative
Independent	Collective
Selfish	Sharing
Critical	Kind
Superior/inferior	Equality
Right/wrong, good/bad	Contextual

“Please note that although we all exhibit thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that we are not proud of, none of our Four Characters is bad, wrong, or not worthy of our love and respect.”



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Your Brain Team And Your Power To Choose

She invites us to try and recall even one day when we didn't experience some kind of intrapersonal conflict. And how could we not since our two hemispheres value different things!

She writes:

"Knowing which characters are engaged in the dialogue, and what their motivating factors are, enables us to make conscious choices about who and how we want to be."

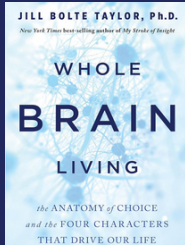
"When your heart says one thing and your head says another, it is simply a dispute between the different parts of your brain."

Our first goal will be to become so intimate with each character that we can appreciate and value the unique skill sets they bring to the table. And our ultimate goal will be for the Four Characters to become familiar with one another so that we have a healthy inner team.

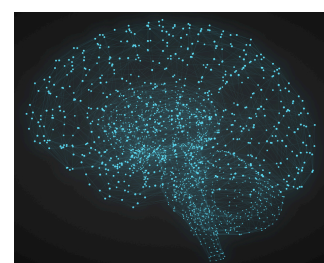
She introduces the concept of the BRAIN HUDDLE, a five-step process summarized through the acronym BRAIN. She encourages us to try it out in our everyday life since skills are meant to be built when we're feeling good and safe, so that they can endure when we're under duress.

- Breathe: focusing on our breath helps us pause and recenter on ourselves.
- Recognize: which character's circuitry is running the show right now?
- Appreciate: both the character that's at play and the availability of the other three.
- Inquire: by inviting all the characters at the same table to strategize collectively what the next move will be.
- Navigate: what comes next!

"Knowing our Four Characters and being able to recognize them in others enables us to interact more authentically in a whole-brain way."



WHOLE BRAIN LIVING BOOK DIGEST



Your Hero's Journey To Peace

Interestingly, the Four Characters coincide with Carl Jung's four major archetypes:

- C1 (Left/Think): The Persona
- C2 (Left/Feel): The Shadow
- C3 (Right/Think): The Animus/Anima
- C4 (Right/Feel): The True Self

And Joseph Campbell's classic monomyth of the Hero's Journey describes the path as follows:

The hero must leave his ego-based consciousness in order to triumph and serve the whole. In other words, they must step out of their C1 based thinking to step into the unconscious realm of the right brain. So the hero will have to be willing to let go of all they know and their worldly possession—that's the ego's individuality's death.

"To paraphrase Einstein, we must be willing to give up what we are, in order to become what we will be."

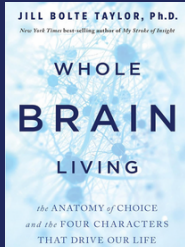
So to link Carl Jung's and Joseph Campbell's work, the hero must surrender their Persona to meet their Anima/Animus, aka the androgynous soul. She adds:

"The hero cannot be both characters—his individual and collective selves—in the same moment. He must lay down the justice-demanding judgment of his dominating left brain (C1 and 2) if he is to embody the merciful characters of his compassionate right brain (C3 and 4)."

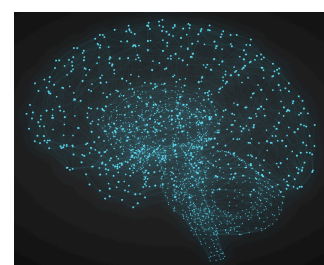
Once emancipated from his left-brain righteousness and ego, the hero can dissolve back into the Universe's consciousness and embody again the eternal love his soul originated from.

She concludes:

"Once the hero has battled his fear of death and all the other left-brain monsters he had been clinging to throughout his everyday life, he is now free to gain the insights of his heroic quest while enveloped in the wisdom of his euphoric right brain."



WHOLE BRAIN LIVING BOOK DIGEST



“When we are born, we have no sense of individuality, and our two brain hemispheres are similar in both their structure and in what they value.”

We learn how to perceive ourselves as individuals with time, when our left-brain cells develop. Only then do we start feeling separated from the whole. She explains:

“It is in those moments that the droplet of our left brain’s individual consciousness becomes separate from that sea of cosmic consciousness from which it came.”

And as we grow, so does our left brain which becomes more and more prone towards individuation and that’s when it learns how to inhibit the knowledge of our right brain. Now shifted to the background of our awareness, the cosmic consciousness of our right brain becomes our unconscious intuition.

And so our author now invites us on our own Hero’s Journey to reclaim our whole brain’s abilities.

She writes:

“The Four Characters, as I outline them in this book, provide a neuroanatomical road map of the time-tested paradigm of Jung’s Four Archetypes.”

“If you are willing to pause and recognize what is already going on inside of your brain, if you are game to observe how you present yourself under different circumstances, and if you are prepared to bring your present-moment awareness to your current thinking and emotional patterns, you will be well on your way to living a life of choice.”