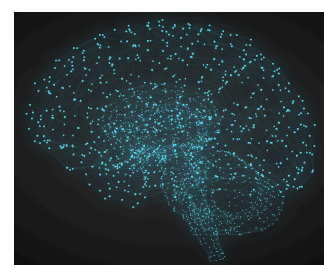


WHOLE BRAIN LIVING BOOK DIGEST



Chapter 4: Character 1—Left Brain Thinking

“Our brain’s left hemisphere is the primary tool we use to interact with the external world.”

Losing touch with her C1 the morning of the stroke, our author describes again how she lost her sense of physical boundaries and felt blended with the energy of the universe. She highlights how a C1 would judge this as a degrading loss of self, but how the experience was mostly exciting and insightful.

“My left brain could no longer ascertain the edges of boundaries between anything else in the external world. As a result,

I experienced myself as a fluid, in flow with energy of everything en masse around me.”

The Forest and the Trees

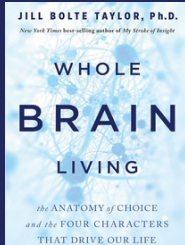
Our left brain focuses on details while our right brain sees the big picture, and so our overall perception of the two is a blend of the two.

Our author shares:

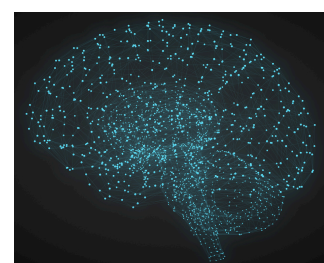
“On the afternoon of the stroke, I learned that the energetic flow of all mass moves so slowly that it cannot be detected by our left brain. As long as the left brain, preoccupied with detecting the details that allow us to differentiate one thing from another thing, it cannot focus on the component pixels that make up those things. In other words, our left brain focuses on the details that distinguish one thing from another thing (trees), while our right brain focuses on the pixels that have no distinguishing characteristics and move as one (forest), as part of the cosmic flow.”

Because her ego-center cells shut down, she lost touch with all the details, memories, preferences and dislikes that had made up “Jill Bolte Taylor” until that fateful day. She highlights that she didn’t feel like losing her memory on that day, she felt like the memory of herself had never existed at all.

“It’s a bit disconcerting to think that who we are is completely manufactured by a small group of cells in our left brain... but that is how fragile our ego identities are.”



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Losing and Regaining My Character 1

Having lost her C2, Jill Bolte Taylor didn't experience fear or anger anymore, and that blissful euphoria was the loveliest side effect of her stroke. It had become hard for her to function in the world, but she couldn't care less. Of course her C1 wanted to change that immediately when she came back online post recovery. Our author shares:

“But although she had been both an effective and brilliant part of my pre-stroke life and I had achieved a high level of success under her leadership, I was no longer motivated by the external factors of money and prestige that she valued.”

She had relearn how to value a more peaceful life, grounded in a slower pace and time spent co-creating deep and meaningful connections with those she loved. She adds:

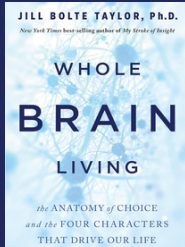
“Pre-stroke, my left-brain Character 1 had defined success through the achievement of external reward. Post-stroke, my right-brain characters found meaning through the internal standards of loving, being loved, and being in service to others.”

She named her C1 Helen and invites us to also give a name to each of our characters as a way to build intimacy with them. She highlights how fantastic Helen is and how much she helps her function everyday, but she also remarks that Helen is not her kindest part nor her best self, and this is not the place from which she wants to lead or interact with others.

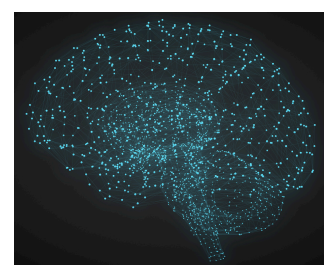
Left Brain Consciousness

Our left brain creates order out of the cosmos's randomness. It determines differences, organizes, categorizes. It creates our sense of identity and a specific type of consciousness based on its awareness of itself and its relationship with the so-called outside world. It defines the edges of where we end and begin; that's how we get to determine what is inside and outside of ourselves and why we believe that there is an external and an internal reality. This is also how we find ourselves feeling separate from the whole and unsafe. Because we believe in the “me” self, we become convinced that we have something to lose. She adds:

“Because we have become the center of our own universe, our left-brain ego-cells come online and begin organizing everything in the external world around our individuality.”



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“The cells of our left-brain thinking Character 1 organize, categorize, count, list, and eventually name everything once they have structurally manifested language for communication with others.”

As previously explained, C1 is the reflection of Jung’s archetype called the Persona, which he defined as “a kind of mask, designed... to make a definite impression upon others.” C1 is our alpha character and fights for what it believes in or when C1 believes we’re being challenged.

The tissue underlying our C1 holds our worldview and belief system. It also drives us to learn forever more.

“Neuroplasticity is the ability of our brain cells to rearrange which other neurons they are communicating with, and this underlines our ability to learn new material.

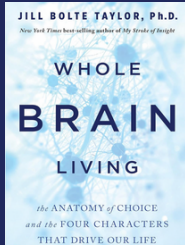
And interestingly, she explains:

“Because our brain is a product of both its nature and our nurture of it, we have the power to voluntarily change the cellular structure underlying our thoughts and feelings.”

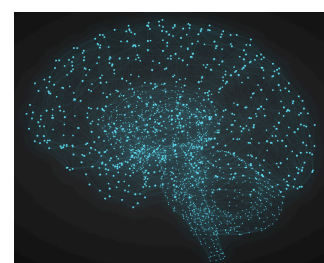
Our author also highlights that this gives us the power to direct humanity’s evolution to a higher level of intercommunication, and this is paramount for us to do this with a full comprehension of the different parts of our brain. She also reminds us that we literally have the power to change the anatomical structure of the cells underlying our thoughts, hence the healing power of practices such as meditation or the brain huddle for ourselves and for the whole.

C1 in the world

C1s tend to be purposeful, intentional and thorough. They drive us to group things in repeatable, practical routines so that we can create a world around us that feels familiar. Our left brain is the master of organization. Judging one thing more important than the other, we organize our time hierarchically and then we organize our behavior across time. C1s see the day as something to be conquered, are effective leaders and good at managing things, places and people. They’re highly productive and detail focused and will be hyper critical of their own performances, while being drawn to constant comparisons.



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“Everything a C1 does is deliberate because if something is worth doing, it is worth doing well.”

C1s are also the source of our perfectionist tendencies and they are by design rational thinkers. Finally, they allow us to obey rules and keep us respectful of authority.

C1 at work and play

“Soft 1” is online when we’re not experiencing any emotion, and “Hard 1” when C2 is ringing the alarm bell.

She explains:

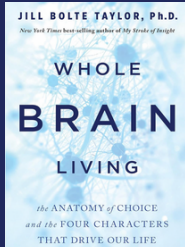
“(...) Our Soft 1 tends to be kind, thoughtful, relatively available, and a great team builder. Our Hard 1, on the other hand, is generated in response to an emotional upset of our C2. Consequently, our Hard 1 comes online feeling as though it is managing an emergency, because it is doing just that, even if the emergency is only inside of its own mind.”

C1 on the job

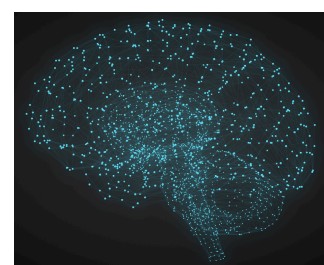
Because C1 leaders think linearly, they start projects at the logical beginning. The rest of their leadership style will be influenced by their soft (calm C1) vs hard (triggered by C2’s alarms C1) wiring.

She highlights:

“The Hard 1 is the leader of the team, not a part of the team. The Soft 1, in contrast, leads a team like a shepherd who circulates among their flock, helping them as they go.”



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Hard 1 leaders:

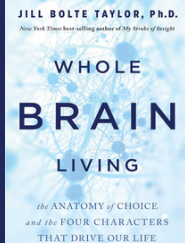
- Are influential critical thinkers who rely on vetted ideas and data
- Value their team as a workforce (not as individuals)
- Believe that failure and success have great consequences
- Consider emotions as weaknesses
- Are not interested in connecting with someone beyond the task at end
- Hold preconceived expectations about what needs to be accomplished
- Focus on results, not steps and tend to prevent their team from getting bird's eye view of the plan
- Is driven by C2's agitation.
- Are highly self-critical
- Cannot be content or at ease when they succeed
- Have a very hard time handling failure
- Need a very clear definition of success because they operate from a fear of failure
- Only welcome change if it serves directly their personal interests

*"If the Hard 1 pauses or fails,
it won't be able to outrun the monster that is nipping at the heels of its C2."*

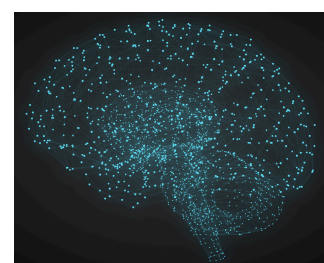
Soft 1 leaders:

- Are strong thinkers
- Value their team as individuals who each think and feel and must be treated compassionately
- Lead with empathy
- Assume that ignorance (not incompetence) drives errors
- Believe that everyone is doing their best
- Creates a vision and road map for their team to follow
- Define success and failure at baseline so that everyone's expectations are clear
- Are driven by their need to excel and make the world a better place
- Welcome change if it serves the team
- Celebrates the little wins and share any wins with the group
- Enables accountability, autonomy and teams' psychological safety

Hard 1 leaders think in "me" and Soft 1 leaders think in "we".



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A Snapshot of Your C1

- *“Organizes everything*
- *Categories well*
- *Is naturally mechanical*
- *Is neat*
- *Plans well*
- *Respects authority*
- *Critically judges right/wrong, good/bad*
- *Is detail based*
- *Counts everything*
- *Is protective”*

Getting to know your Character 1

Please refer to the books for guidance in answering the following prompts, meant to help you deep your relationship with your C1.

- *“Do you recognize your C1?”*
- *“What does C1 feel inside of your body?”*
- *“What if you don’t recognize this part of yourself?”*
- *“How much of the time do you let C1 run your life, and under what circumstances?”*
- *“As you think about C1, can you come up with an appropriate name for it?”*
- *“Who are some of the C1 of people who have influenced you over your life (in both positive and negative ways)?”*
- *“Who in your life appreciates and seeks your C1? How do those relationships feel?”*
- *“Who doesn’t like your C1 around you?”*
- *“What kind of parent, friend and/or parent is your C1?”*
- *“How kind is the relationship of your C1 with the other characters in your brain?”*