

# A Whole New Mind Summary

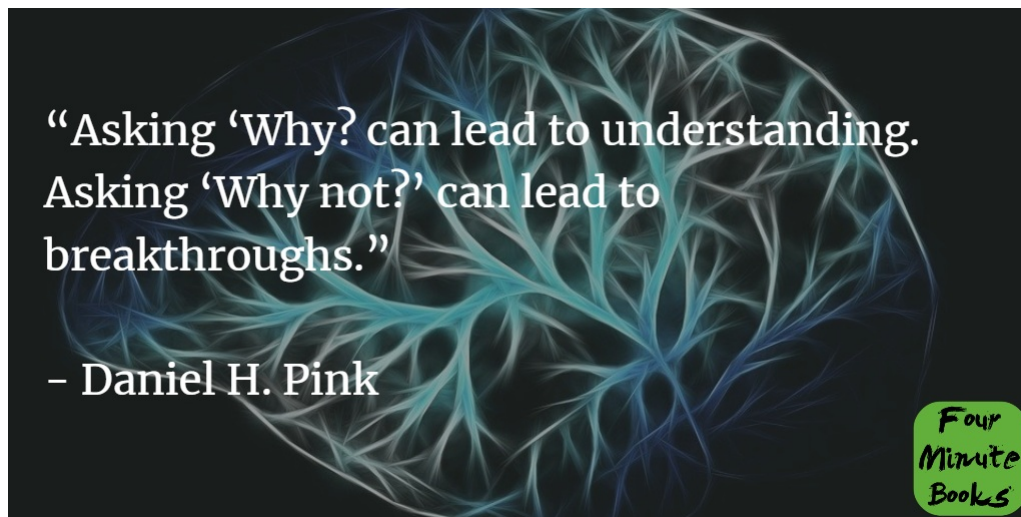
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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *A Whole New Mind* is your guide to standing out in the competitive workplace by taking advantage of the big-picture skills of the right side of your brain.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Do you consider yourself the kind of person that is great with details, or are you better at looking at the big picture? Whether you think of yourself as right or left brained, both hemispheres have their advantages.

We now know that each side has different skill sets, both of which are necessary for success. But recent advances in technology and business have made our world value the left, analytical part, more. It turns out that this is a dangerous assumption that leaves out many of the important skills of the right side.

This is what you'll discover in Daniel Pink's *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*. This book is your ticket to thinking differently so you can become more competitive and come out on top.

Here are the 3 biggest lessons I've learned from this book:

1. We're moving from the Information Age into the Conceptual Age, which requires right-brain thinking.
2. The ability to tell stories is more important to becoming successful than just giving facts.

3. As artificial intelligence continues sweeping through the workforce, emotional abilities like empathy are vital.

Are you ready for a new perspective on the power of your brain? Let's dive right in!

## Lesson 1: Right-brain thinking is great for the Conceptual Age that we are moving into now.

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A few months ago I had a friend contact me for some help finding a job. He's an engineer like I am, and wanted to see if I had any connections that were hiring. I did what I could, but these days it's just difficult to stand out. It seems that everyone's got an engineering degree or knows how to code. What does it take then?

Well, the fact that my friend was asking me for help says one thing. Our ability to relate to and connect with others is a pretty big deal. **"The money is in the network" as they say, but without people skills you've got no network.**

It's Right-Directed Thinking, as the author calls it, that gives us the ability to associate with others well. We must develop these skills as we move from the Information Age into the Conceptual if we want to excel.

The reason for this is because our brain's right hemisphere helps us use the following powers that the author reviews throughout the book:

1. Design
2. Story
3. Symphony
4. Empathy
5. Play
6. Meaning.

These skills are so vital also because it's easy for companies to outsource left-brain activities to other, cheaper countries. Let's take a closer look at just a couple of these.

## Lesson 2: Giving facts isn't enough to convince people to follow you anymore, storytelling is the way to go now.

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One central component of the human existence has always been stories. They are the way we remember things, even our own lives. If you think about it, you tend to see your existence as having a beginning and events along the way. Tales, which we use to remember things, have a bigger impact on our minds than mere facts. Stories also help our lives have a sense of purpose.

For a few years now it's been easy to stand out by knowing interesting facts. But moving into the Conceptual Age, it's easy for anyone to find these anywhere on the Internet. It requires storytelling to convince others to listen to you, which is a skill of the right side of your brain. Already there are many fields where this is crucial for success.

Advertising and consulting, for example, are more about selling a why than just talking about your product. **Medical schools also are trying to help doctors empathize with their patients stories by offering humanities courses.** I've heard of hospitals nearby that don't like nurses from a certain school as much because they have no personal skills.

In general, many companies are switching to storytelling as a way to stand out in overcrowded markets. This works well because people think of their lives as stories and can identify better with companies who do also.

## Lesson 3: You need to practice your emotional skills such as empathy if you don't want to become obsolete in the wake of AI.

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Is your job at risk of being taken over by a machine? In this age we're all worried about this happening, and for good reason. But there is hope in the one difference between us and computers, and that's emotion. Computers can't replicate this important feature of people that is a component of our right hemisphere.

Take lawyers for example. An intelligent algorithm could perform legal research. But the most vital part of what a lawyer does involves understanding and empathizing with their clients. And that's something that only a person can do.

Doctors also have to learn to use their hearts. Would you go to a doctor that you felt had terrible bedside manner? **I have relatives who have changed physicians just because they don't know how to relate well to people.** We're even beginning to see that empathy is a crucial part of the healing process.

No matter what profession you're in, people skills are a must. In my last engineering job, it was tough to communicate even within the company. That made for some difficult times on some projects. Those who could empathize and be personable were the ones that got the most work come in, and the most done with the team.

Take a lesson from some of the top programs in the world and teach yourself some empathy. Stanford Business School teaches interpersonal dynamics classes, and FBI and CIA agents get training in reading facial expressions. All it takes is learning a few basic emotional skills to connect with people and you'll set yourself apart in no time.

## A Whole New Mind Review

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Well, at first I didn't think I would like *A Whole New Mind* but found it a pleasant surprise. I'm not sure we need to compare the importance of the left and right brains, but knowing their functions is vital. This was especially helpful to me, as one who is good at details, to get an appreciation for big-picture thinking!

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## Who would I recommend the A Whole New Mind summary to?

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The 47-year-old engineer who has a difficult time seeing the forest through the trees, the 22-year-old college student that's looking for information on how the workplace has changed in the last few years, and anyone who wants to understand their brain better.