**Introduction**

"One-half of the personality emotes and dictates while the other half listens and notates. The half that listens had better look the other way, had better simulate a half attention only, for the half that dictates is easily disgruntled and avenges itself for too close inspection by fading entirely away."

Aaron Copland

American composer

Very little about the human brain is understood. Scientists have barely scratched the surface of the brain's complexities. While we understand the basic structure of our central nervous system, its functions such as thought, memory, creativity, and its ability to learn are still very much a mystery.

One aspect of the human brain that separates it from the brains of other organisms is its large cerebral cortex. The cerebral cortex is divided into two hemispheres: right and left. It is crucial to remember that the right hemisphere controls the left side of the body and the left hemisphere controls the ride side. (This is why left-handed individuals claim they are "in their right minds.") Most individuals have a dominant hemisphere, meaning that the majority of information is being sent by, received in, or processed by a particular hemisphere. By no means does this suggest that the other hemisphere is superfluous and serves no purpose in that individual. However, the dominant hemisphere is often where the individual's center for language is located. What is very peculiar is that a function as important as language would be based in a single hemisphere. While many of the body's functions are bilateral (use both hemispheres), a key evolutionary difference--the use of complex language--between humans of today and our ancestors has a unilateral basis in most individuals. Scientists remain puzzled.

For the majority of individuals, the dominant hemisphere is the left hemisphere. This may be the reason why ninety percent of the human population is right-handed. However, having a dominant left hemisphere does not guarantee that an individual will be right-handed. Most right-handed individuals do not have a completely dominant left hemisphere; nor do left-handed persons have a completely dominant right-hemisphere. There are degrees of dominance. For example, a man may write and eat with his right hand but play all sports left-handed; his degree of right-hand dominance would be less than that of a person who did all tasks right-handed.

Scientists have unearthed a few reasons as to why right-handed individuals have become the majority. Judging by Stone Age tools, scientists have concluded that at one time there were nearly the same number of right-handed persons as left-handed persons. Tools in the Bronze Age show the number of "lefties" drastically dropped. Scientists speculated that this was due to first use of language during this time period. The left-brain perhaps was developing faster than the right. Tools were very valuable and not easily made. They were kept within families or communities for several generations, creating a social environment that selected for right-handed individuals. In addition, the location of the heart was believed to be on the left side of the body, so fighters of the day would wear shields on their left sides and learn to fight with swords in their right hands. Today, many conditions still favor right-handedness. In many Arab nations, the left hand is believed to be "unclean" and used for cleaning oneself, while the right is used for proper tasks such as eating and greeting others. Many children are forced to write with their right hands despite their left-hand dominance for cultural reasons. Doctors and scientists also believe that many children are simply right-handed because parents unconsciously placed a spoon or fork in their child's hand when he was learning to feed himself and the child simply began to favor his right hand out of habit.

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