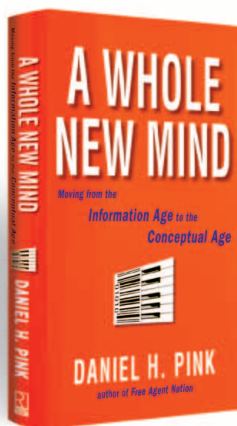




SOUNDVIEW
Executive
Book Summaries®



By Daniel H. Pink

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Moving From the Information Age to the Conceptual Age

A WHOLE NEW MIND

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Lawyers. Accountants. Radiologists. Software engineers. That's what our parents encouraged us to become when we grew up. But Mom and Dad were wrong. The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind. The era of "left brain" dominance, and the Information Age that it engendered, are giving way to a new world in which "right brain" qualities — inventiveness, meaning, empathy — predominate. That's the argument at the center of this summary — a summary that uses the two sides of our brains as a metaphor for understanding the contours of our times.

In the tradition of Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence and Marcus Buckingham's and Donald O. Clifton's Now, Discover Your Strengths, Daniel H. Pink offers a fresh look at what it takes for individuals and organizations to excel. Drawing on cutting-edge research from around the world, A Whole New Mind reveals the six essential aptitudes on which professional success and personal fulfillment now depend: Design, Story, Symphony, Empathy, Play and Meaning. It also includes several hands-on exercises and examples culled from experts around the world to help readers sharpen the necessary abilities. This summary will change not only how we see the world but how we experience it as well.

In addition, this summary will also show you:

- ✓ *Why a seismic — though as yet undetected — shift is now under way in much of the advanced world.*
- ✓ *Differences between the left and right hemispheres of our brains.*
- ✓ *Why three huge social and economic forces — abundance, Asia and automation — are nudging us into the Conceptual Age.*
- ✓ *Why people who master high concept and high touch are setting the tempo of modern life.*
- ✓ *How six essential aptitudes can help you make your way across the emerging landscape.*

A WHOLE NEW MIND

by Daniel H. Pink

— THE COMPLETE SUMMARY

Introduction

The last few decades have belonged to a certain kind of person with a certain kind of mind — computer programmers who could crank code, lawyers who could craft contracts, MBAs who could crunch numbers. But the future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind — creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning makers. These people — artists, inventors, designers, storytellers, caregivers, consolers, big-picture thinkers — will now reap society's richest rewards and share its greatest joys.

There is a seismic — though as yet undetected — shift now under way in much of the advanced world. We are moving from an economy and a society built on the logical, linear computer-like capabilities of the Information Age to an economy and a society built on the inventive, empathic, big-picture capabilities of what's rising in its place, the Conceptual Age. This summary is for anyone who wants to survive and thrive in this emerging world — people uneasy in their careers or dissatisfied with their lives, entrepreneurs and business leaders eager to stay ahead of the next wave, parents who want to equip their children for the future, and the legions of emotionally astute and creatively adroit people whose distinctive abilities the Information Age has often overlooked and undervalued.

Six Senses

There are six essential aptitudes — “the six senses” — on which professional success and personal satisfaction increasingly will depend: Design, Story, Symphony, Empathy, Play and Meaning. These are fundamentally human abilities that everyone can master.

A change of such magnitude is complex. But the argument at the heart of this summary is simple. For nearly a century, Western society in general, and American society in particular, has been dominated by a form of thinking and an approach to life that is narrowly reductive and deeply analytical. Ours has been the age of the “knowledge worker,” the well-educated manipulator of information and deployer of expertise. But that is changing. Thanks to an array of forces — material abundance that is deepening our nonmaterial yearnings, globalization that is shipping white-collar work overseas, and powerful technologies that are eliminating certain kinds of work

altogether — we are entering a new age. It is an age animated by a different form of thinking and a new approach to life — one that prizes “high concept” and “high touch” aptitudes. High concept involves the capacity to detect patterns and opportunities, to create artistic and emotional beauty, to craft a satisfying narrative, and to combine seemingly unrelated ideas into something new. High touch involves the ability to empathize with others, to understand the subtleties of human interaction, to find joy in one's self and to elicit it in others, and to stretch beyond the quotidian in pursuit of purpose and meaning.

Two Hemispheres

There's something that encapsulates the change — and it's right inside your head. Our brains are divided into two hemispheres. The left hemisphere is sequential, logical and analytical. The right hemisphere is nonlinear, intuitive and holistic.

We enlist both halves of our brains for even the simplest tasks. But the well-established differences between the two hemispheres of the brain yield a powerful metaphor for interpreting our present and guiding our future. Today, the defining skills of the previous era — the “left brain” capabilities that powered the Information Age — are necessary but no longer sufficient. And the capabilities we once disdained or thought frivolous — the “right brain” qualities of inventiveness, empathy, joyfulness and meaning — increasingly will determine who flourishes and who flounders. For individuals, families and organizations, professional success and personal fulfillment now require a whole new mind. ■

The author: Daniel H. Pink is the author of the best-selling *Free Agent Nation*. He is a contributing editor at *Wired* magazine. His articles on business and technology have also appeared in *The New York Times*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Fast Company*, and other publications.

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PART ONE: THE CONCEPTUAL AGE

Right Brain Rising

Outside a gargantuan government building, a light May rain is falling. Inside, the author is having his brain scanned.

To find out what direction our lives will take in these outsourced, automated, upside-down times, clues might be found in the way the brain is organized. So, the author has volunteered to be part of the control group — what researchers call “healthy volunteers” — for a project at the National Institute of Mental Health, outside Washington, D.C. The study involves capturing images of brains at rest and at work, which means he’ll soon get to see the organ that’s been leading him around the past four decades — and, in the process, perhaps gain a clearer view of how all of us will navigate the future.

The Belly of the Beast

The stretcher he is on juts from the middle of a GE Signa 3T, one of the world’s most advanced magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machines. It’s a huge piece of equipment, spanning nearly 8 feet on each side and weighing more than 35,000 pounds. At the center of the machine is a circular opening, about 2 feet in diameter. The technicians slide his stretcher through the opening and into the hollowed-out core that forms the belly of this beast. With his arms pinned by his sides and the ceiling about 2 inches above his nose, he feels like he’s been crammed into a torpedo tube and forgotten.

After a half hour, they’ve got a picture of his brain. That initial brain scan was like sitting for a portrait, and the machine painted the picture. While science can learn a great deal from these brain portraits, a newer technique — called functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) — can capture pictures of the brain in action. Researchers ask subjects to do something inside the machine — hum a tune, listen to a joke, solve a puzzle — and then track the parts of the brain to which blood flows. This technique is revolutionizing science and medicine, yielding a deeper understanding of a range of human experience — from dyslexia in children to the mechanisms of Alzheimer’s disease to how parents respond to babies’ cries.

The Right (and Left) Stuff

Our brains are extraordinary. Yet for all the brain’s complexity, its broad topography is simple and symmetrical. Scientists have long known that a neurological Mason-Dixon Line divides the brain into two regions. And until surprisingly recently, the scientific establishment considered the two regions separate but unequal. The left side, the theory went, was the crucial half, the half that made us human. The right side was subsidiary

— the remnant, some argued, of an earlier stage of development. The left hemisphere was rational, analytic and logical. The right hemisphere was mute, nonlinear and instinctive — a vestige that nature had designed for a purpose that humans had outgrown.

This view prevailed for much of the next century — until a soft-spoken Caltech professor named Robert W. Sperry reshaped our understanding of our brains and ourselves. In the late 1950s, Sperry studied patients who had epileptic seizures that had required removal of the corpus callosum, the thick bundle of some 300 million nerve fibers that connects the brain’s two hemispheres. In a set of experiments on these “split-brain” patients, Sperry discovered that the established view was flawed. Yes, our brains were divided into two halves. But as he put it, “The so-called subordinate or minor hemisphere, which we had formerly supposed to be illiterate and mentally retarded and thought by some authorities to not even be conscious, was found to be in fact the superior cerebral member when it came to performing certain kinds of mental tasks.” In other words, the right wasn’t inferior to the left. It was just different.

Thanks to Sperry’s pioneering research and the advent of technologies like the fMRI that allow researchers to watch the brain in action, the right hemisphere today has achieved a measure of legitimacy. It’s real. It’s important. It helps make us human. No neuroscientist worth his or her Ph.D. ever disputes that. Yet beyond the neuroscience labs and brain-imaging clinics, two misconceptions about the right side of the brain persist.

The Wrong Stuff

These two misconceptions are opposite in spirit but similar in silliness. The first considers the right brain a savior; the second considers it a saboteur.

Adherents to the savior view have climbed aboard the scientific evidence on the right hemisphere and raced from legitimacy to reverence. They believe the right brain is the repository of all that is good and just and noble in the human condition.

Partly in response to the tide of inane things that have been said about the right brain, a second, contrary bias has also taken hold. This view grudgingly acknowledges the right hemisphere’s legitimacy, but believes that emphasizing so-called right-brain thinking risks sabotaging the economic and social progress we’ve made by applying the force of logic to our lives.

Alas, the right hemisphere will neither save us nor sabotage us. The reality, as is so often the case with reality, is more nuanced.

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Right Brain Rising

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The Real Stuff

The two hemispheres of our brains don't operate as on-off switches — one powering down as soon as the other starts lighting up. Both halves play a role in nearly everything we do. With more than three decades of research on the brain's hemispheres, it's possible to distill the findings to four key differences:

- 1. The left hemisphere controls the right side of the body; the right hemisphere controls the left side of the body.**
- 2. The left hemisphere is sequential; the right hemisphere is simultaneous.**
- 3. The left hemisphere specializes in text; the right hemisphere specializes in context.**
- 4. The left hemisphere analyzes the details; the right hemisphere synthesizes the big picture.**

We need both L-Directed Thinking — sequential and literal — and R-Directed Thinking — metaphorical and contextual — in order to craft fulfilling lives and build protective, just societies. But the mere fact that this obvious point must be underscored is perhaps further indication of how much we've been in the thrall of reductionist, binary thinking.

But this is changing — and it will dramatically reshape our lives. Left-brain-style thinking used to be the driver and right-brain-style thinking the passenger. Now, R-Directed Thinking is suddenly grabbing the wheel, stepping on the gas, and determining where we're going and how we'll get there. L-Directed aptitudes — the sorts of things measured by the SAT and deployed by CPAs — are still necessary. But they're no longer sufficient. Instead, the R-Directed aptitudes so often disdained and dismissed — artistry, empathy, taking the long view, pursuing the transcendent — will increasingly determine who soars and who stumbles. It's a dizzying — but ultimately inspiring — change. ■

Abundance, Asia and Automation

Three forces are tilting the scales in favor of R-Directed Thinking. Abundance has satisfied, even oversatisfied, the material needs of millions — boosting the significance of beauty and emotion, and accelerating individuals' search for meaning. Abundance has produced an ironic result: The very triumph of L-Directed Thinking has lessened its significance. The prosperity it has unleashed has placed a premium on less rational, more R-Directed sensibilities — beauty, spirituality and emotion. For businesses, it's no longer enough to create a product that's reasonably priced and adequately functional. It must also be beautiful, unique and meaningful.

Asia is now performing large amounts of routine, white-collar, L-Directed work at significantly lower costs, thereby forcing knowledge workers in the advanced world to master abilities that can't be shipped overseas. One out of 10 jobs in the U.S. computer, software, and information technology industry will move overseas in the next two years and one in four IT jobs will be off-shored by 2010. According to Forrester Research, “at least 3.3 million white-collar jobs and \$136 billion in wages will shift from the U.S. to low-cost countries like India, China and Russia” by 2015.

And automation has begun to affect this generation's white-collar workers in much the same way it did last generation's blue-collar workers, requiring L-Directed professionals to develop aptitudes that computers can't do better, faster or cheaper. Just as John Henry couldn't beat the steam drill, or Garry Kasparov, now our modern John Henry, can't beat Deep Blue, people can't compete with machines when it comes to logic or calculation. We have to develop aptitudes that can't be replicated by machines. ■

High Concept, High Touch

To survive in this age, individuals and organizations must examine what they're doing to earn a living and ask themselves three questions:

- 1. Can someone overseas do it cheaper?**
- 2. Can a computer do it faster?**
- 3. Is what I'm offering in demand in an age of abundance?**

If your answer to question 1 or 2 is yes, or if your answer to question 3 is no, you're in deep trouble. Mere survival today depends on being able to do something that overseas knowledge workers can't do cheaper, that powerful computers can't do faster, and that satisfies one of the nonmaterial, transcendent desires of an abundant age.

That is why high tech is no longer enough. We'll need to supplement our well-developed high-tech abilities with abilities that are high concept and high touch.

How can we prepare ourselves for the Conceptual Age? In a world tossed by abundance, Asia and automation, in which L-Directed Thinking remains necessary but no longer sufficient, we must become proficient in R-Directed Thinking and master aptitudes that are high concept and high touch. We must perform work that overseas knowledge workers can't do cheaper; that computers can't do faster; and that satisfies the aesthetic, emotional and spiritual demands of a prosperous time. But on another level, that answer is inadequate. What exactly are we supposed to do?

The answer can be distilled to six specific high-concept and high-touch aptitudes that have become essential in this new era. These aptitudes are “the six senses”: Design, Story, Symphony, Empathy, Play and Meaning. ■

PART TWO: THE SIX SENSES

Introducing the Six Senses

In the Conceptual Age, we will need to complement our L-Directed reasoning by mastering six essential R-Directed aptitudes. Together these six high-concept, high-touch senses can help develop the whole new mind this era demands:

1. Not just function but also DESIGN. Today it's economically crucial and personally rewarding to create something that is beautiful, whimsical, or emotionally engaging.

2. Not just argument but also STORY. The essence of persuasion, communication and self-understanding has become the ability also to fashion a compelling narrative.

3. Not just focus but also SYMPHONY. What's in greatest demand today isn't analysis but synthesis — seeing the big picture and, crossing boundaries, being able to combine disparate pieces into an arresting new whole.

4. Not just logic but also EMPATHY. What will distinguish those who thrive will be their ability to understand what makes their fellow woman and man tick, to forge relationships, and to care for others.

5. Not just seriousness but also PLAY. Too much sobriety can be bad for your career and worse for your general well-being. In the Conceptual Age, we all need to play.

6. Not just accumulation but also MEANING. A world of material plenty has freed us to pursue more significant desires: purpose, transcendence, and spiritual fulfillment.

Design

The late Gordon MacKenzie, a longtime creative force at Hallmark Cards, once told a story that quickly entered the folklore among designers. MacKenzie was a public-spirited fellow who often visited schools to talk about his profession. He'd open each talk by telling students he was an artist. Then he'd look around the classroom, notice the artwork on the walls, and wonder aloud who created the masterpieces.

"How many artists are there in the room?" MacKenzie would ask. "Would you please raise your hands?"

The responses have always followed the same pattern. In kindergarten and first-grade classes, every kid thrust a hand in the air. In second-grade classes, about three-fourths of the kids raised their hands, though less eagerly. In third grade, only a few children held up their hands. And by sixth grade, not a single hand went up. The kids just looked around to see if anybody in the class would admit to what they'd now learned was deviant behavior.

Designers and other creative types repeated MacKenzie's tale — often over drinks, usually in a wistful tone — to show how little the wider world valued their work. And when MacKenzie related the story him-

self to large audiences, people would slowly shake their heads. What a shame, they would mutter. Too bad, they would cluck. But their reaction was, at most, a lament.

In fact, they should have been outraged. They should have raced to their local school and demanded an explanation. They should have consoled their children, confronted the principal, and ousted the school board. Because MacKenzie's story is not some teary saga about underfunded art programs. It is a cautionary tale for our times.

The wealth of nations and the well-being of individuals now depend on having artists in the room. In a world enriched by abundance but disrupted by the automation and outsourcing of white-collar work, everyone, regardless of profession, must cultivate an artistic sensibility. We may not all be Dali or Degas. But today we must all be designers.

It's easy to dismiss design — to relegate it to mere ornament, the prettifying of places and objects to disguise their banality. But that is a serious misunderstanding of what design is and why it matters — especially now. John Heskett, an expert on the subject, explains, "[D]esign, stripped to its essence, can be defined as the human nature to shape and make our environment in ways without precedent in nature, to serve our needs and give meaning to our lives."

Utility and Significance

Design is a classic whole-minded approach. It is, to borrow Heskett's terms, a combination of *utility* and *significance*. A graphic designer must whip up a brochure that is easy to read. That's utility. But at its most effective, his or her brochure must also transmit ideas or emotions that the words themselves cannot convey. That's significance. Utility is akin to L-Directed Thinking; significance is akin to R-Directed Thinking. And, as with those two thinking styles, today utility has become widespread, inexpensive and relatively easy to achieve — which has increased the value of significance.

Design — utility enhanced by significance — has become an essential aptitude for personal fulfillment and professional success for at least three reasons. First, thanks to rising prosperity and advancing technology, good design is now more accessible than ever, which allows more people to partake in its pleasures and become connoisseurs of what was once specialized knowledge. Second, in an age of material abundance, design has become crucial for most businesses — as a means of differentiation and as a way to create new markets. Third, as more people develop a design sensibility, we'll increasingly be able to deploy design for its ultimate purpose: changing the world.

Design is a high-concept aptitude that is difficult to outsource or automate — and that increasingly confers a competitive advantage in business. Good design, now

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Design

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more accessible and affordable than ever, also offers us a chance to bring pleasure, meaning and beauty to our lives. But most important, cultivating a design sensibility can make our small planet a better place for us all. ■

Story

Time for a pop quiz.

Earlier, in the discussion of the three forces nudging us into the Conceptual Age, some supporting evidence was presented. How much do you remember?

Question 1: In the section on Asia, abundance and automation, we learned that large amounts of white-collar work are going to places like India, China and the Philippines. According to the research cited, how many dollars in American wages are expected to shift to these low-cost locales over the next 10 years?

Question 2: In that same section, we learned that powerful software was reconfiguring, and often eliminating, the jobs of many knowledge workers in the West. Who is the John Henry of the Conceptual Age?

Unless you have a photographic memory or a peculiar fascination with lost wages, you probably missed Question 1 and nailed Question 2. Why? In Question 1, you had to recall a fact. In Question 2, you had to remember a story.

Our difficulty retrieving that isolated factoid, and our relative ease summoning the sad saga of Garry Kasparov, aren't signs of flaccid intelligence or impending Alzheimer's. They merely demonstrate how most minds work. Stories are easier to remember — because in many ways, stories are how we remember. “Narrative imagining — story — is the fundamental instrument of thought,” writes cognitive scientist Mark Turner in his book *The Literary Mind*. “Rational capacities depend on it. It is our chief means of looking into the future, of predicting, of planning, and of explaining. ... Most of our experience, our knowledge and our thinking is organized as stories.”

But as important as story has been throughout humanity, and as central as it remains to how we think, in the Information Age it got something of a bad rap. Hollywood, Bollywood and other entertainment centers revere story. But the rest of society, to the extent anyone even thinks about it, considers it fact's less dependable younger sibling. Stories amuse; facts illuminate. Stories divert; facts reveal. But this view runs counter to how our minds actually work. In the Conceptual Age, minimizing the importance of story places you in professional and personal peril.

The truth is that facts have become widely available and, as a consequence, each one becomes less valuable. What begins to matter more is the ability to place these facts in *context* and to deliver them with *emotional impact*.

And that is the essence of the aptitude of Story — context enriched by emotion. Story exists where high concept and high touch intersect. Story is high concept because it sharpens our understanding of one thing by showing it in the context of something else. To paraphrase E.M. Forster's famous observation, a fact is “The queen died and the king died.” A story is “The queen died and the king died of a broken heart.”

The ability to encapsulate, contextualize and emotionalize has become vastly more important in the Conceptual Age. When so much routine knowledge work can be reduced to rules and farmed out to fast computers and smart L-Directed thinkers abroad, the more elusive abilities embodied by Story become more valuable. Likewise, as more people lead lives of abundance, we'll have a greater opportunity to pursue lives of meaning. And stories — the ones we tell ourselves, the ones we tell to ourselves — are often the vehicles we use in that pursuit. ■

Symphony

The aptitude of “Symphony” is the ability to put together the pieces. It is the capacity to synthesize rather than to analyze; to see relationships between seemingly unrelated fields; to detect broad patterns rather than to deliver specific answers; and to invent something new by combining elements nobody else thought to pair. Symphony is also an attribute of the brain's right hemisphere in the literal, as well as the metaphorical, sense.

Symphonic thinking is a signature ability of composers and conductors, whose jobs involve corralling a diverse group of notes, instruments and performers, and producing a unified and pleasing sound. Entrepreneurs and inventors have long relied on this ability. But today Symphony is

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Dyslexic Self-Made Millionaires

One remarkable recent study found that self-made millionaires are four times more likely than the rest of the population to be dyslexic. Why? Dyslexics struggle with L-Directed Thinking and the linear, sequential, alphabetic reasoning at its core. But as with a blind person who develops a more acute sense of hearing, a dyslexic's difficulties in one area lean him or her to acquire outsized ability in others. As Sally Shaywitz, a Yale neuroscientist and specialist in dyslexia, writes, “Dyslexics think differently. They are intuitive and excel at problem-solving, seeing the big picture, and simplifying. ... They are poor rote reciters, but inspired visionaries.” Game-changers such as Charles Schwab, who invented the discount brokerage, and Richard Branson, who has shaken up the retail music and airline industries, both cite their dyslexia as a secret to their success.

Symphony

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becoming an essential aptitude for a much wider swath of the population. The reasons go back to the three forces propelling us out of the Information Age. Automation has taken over many of the routine analytic tasks that knowledge workers once performed. Many of those tasks are also heading to Asia, where they can be done equally well for much less. That is freeing (and in some cases forcing) professionals to do what computers and low-wage foreign technicians have a more difficult time replicating; recognizing patterns, crossing boundaries to uncover hidden connections, and making bold leaps of imagination.

Meantime, a world teeming with information, individual choices, and just plain stuff is putting a premium on this aptitude in our personal lives as well. Modern life's glut of options and stimuli can be so overwhelming that those with the ability to see the big picture — to sort out what really matters — have a decided advantage in their pursuit of personal well-being. ■

Empathy

The author writes, “Yesterday was rough. I worked nonstop from the time I awoke, straining to meet a couple of deadlines, trying to squirm out of an unexpected new assignment, and contending with a 7-year-old with a runny nose, a 5-year-old with a loose tooth, and an 18-month-old who was teaching himself cause-and-effect by pushing ceramics off a counter. In the afternoon I ran five miles. After a rushed dinner, I returned to my office and worked a few more hours, until I was too tired to concentrate. At about 10 p.m. — bone tired — I went to bed. Except I couldn't sleep. I read a little, then tried again. No go. So around 1 a.m., I went downstairs, poured myself a glass of wine, and read the previous day's newspaper. Then another glass of wine. Finally, I did fall asleep, sometime after 3:06, the last numbers I remember seeing on the clock radio beside my bed.

“About three hours later, the 18-month-old stood up in his crib and began bellowing his traditional morning milk chant. By 7 a.m., the house had erupted into full morning mania. And by 8 a.m., I was back in my office, facing another day of deadlines. I'm tired, really tired. In fact, I just yawned. And as I think about the day before me, I'm yawning again.”

Stop for a moment. In the past minute, have you yawned? When you read the author's account of sleepiness, and then pictured him yawning, did you feel an inkling of a yawn creep toward your jaw? If so, you probably have a natural inclination for the next essential aptitude — Empathy.

Empathy is the ability to imagine yourself in someone else's position and to intuit what that person is feeling. It

is the ability to stand in others' shoes, to see with their eyes, and to feel with their hearts. It is something we do spontaneously, an act of instinct rather than the product of deliberation. But Empathy isn't sympathy — that is, feeling bad *for* someone else. It is feeling *with* someone else, sensing what it would be like to be that person. Empathy is a stunning act of imaginative derring-do, the ultimate virtual reality — climbing into another's mind to experience the world from that person's perspective.

But Empathy — like many of the other high-concept, high-touch, aptitudes — wasn't always given its proper due in the Information Age. It was often considered a softhearted nicety in a world that demanded hardheaded detachment. The era of sharp-minded knowledge workers and briskly efficient high-tech companies prized emotional distance and cool reason — the ability to step back, assess the situation, and to make a decision unimpeded by emotion. But as with so many attributes of L-Directed Thinking, we are beginning to see the limits of such a single-minded approach. Daniel Goleman's book *Emotional Intelligence* signaled the beginning of this shift. Goleman argued that emotional abilities are even more important than conventional intellectual abilities — and the world took to his message.

But 10 years later, the Conceptual Age is increasing the stakes. When Goleman wrote his book, the Internet was in its infancy and those highly skilled Indian programmers were in elementary school. Today, cheap and widespread online access, combined with all those overseas knowledge workers, are making the attributes measurable by IQ much easier to replace — which, as we have seen, has meant that aptitudes more difficult to replicate are becoming more valuable. And the one aptitude that's proven impossible for computers to reproduce, and very difficult for faraway workers connected by electrons to match, is Empathy. ■

For additional information on sharpening your empathic powers, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Play

Why is Dr. Madan Kataria laughing?

The explanation is more complicated than you might expect. Kataria, a physician in Mumbai, India, likes to laugh. A lot. In fact, he believes that laughter can function like a benevolent virus — that it can infect individuals, communities, even nations. His popularity around the world, and especially the gradual acceptance of his laughter clubs in offices and boardrooms, reveal another important dimension of the Conceptual Age — a move away from sober seriousness as a measure of ability and the elevation of the next essential high-concept, high-touch aptitude: Play. Kataria says, “When you are play-

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Play

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ful, you are activating the right side of your brain. The logical brain is a limited brain. The right side is unlimited. You can be anything you want.”

Contrast Kataria’s movement, and the workplace laughter clubs it has spawned, with the Ford Motor Co. of the 1930s and 1940s. At Ford’s River Rouge plant, laughter was a disciplinary offense — while humming, whistling and smiling were evidence of insubordination. Work and play, Ford feared, was a toxic combination. If they weren’t quarantined, each would poison the other.

But in the Conceptual Age, as abundance releases organizations from the post-Depression grimness that gripped the River Rouge plant, commingling work and play has become both more common and more necessary. At times, it is even an explicit corporate strategy. Take the airline business. Southwest Airlines is one of today’s most successful carriers, earning a regular profit while many of its competitors wobble on the edge of insolvency. The company’s mission statement offers clues to its stellar performance. It says, “People rarely succeed at anything unless they are having fun doing it” — a 180-degree turn from Ford’s mandated joylessness.

And it’s not just one zany American corporation that is supplementing the work ethic with a play ethic. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, more than 50 European companies — including less-than-zany firms such as Nokia, Daimler-Chrysler and Alcatel — have brought in consultants in “Serious Play,” a technique that uses Lego building blocks to train corporate executives. In the Conceptual Age, fun and games are not just fun and games — and laughter is no laughing matter. ■

Meaning

In the early winter of 1942, Austrian authorities in Vienna rounded up and arrested hundreds of Jews, among them a young psychiatrist named Viktor Frankl. At the time, Frankl was a rising figure in his field who was developing a new theory of psychological well-being. He and his wife, Tilly, anticipated the roundup, so they took pains to preserve their most important possessions, including the manuscript of a book he was writing about his theories. Although Tilly sewed the manuscript into the lining of his coat, it was lost. Over the next three years, at Auschwitz and later at Dachau, as his wife, brother, mother and father perished in the gas chambers, Frankl worked to recreate his text by scratching notes on stolen scraps of paper. And in 1946, one year after Allied forces liberated the concentration camps, those crumpled bits of paper formed the basis of what would become one of the most powerful and enduring works of the last century — Frankl’s book, *Man’s Search for Meaning*.

In his book, Frankl describes how he persevered in the face of crushing labor, sadistic guards, and scant food. Frankl elaborated the theory he had begun before his arrest. He argues that “man’s main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in his life.”

Frankl and others managed to find meaning and purpose even in the unimaginably ghastly setting of a concentration camp. The search for meaning is a drive that exists in all of us — and a combination of external circumstances and internal will can bring it to the surface.

This last point is the key to the book — and to its relevance today. In the early years of the 21st century, several forces have gathered to create the circumstances for the pursuit of meaning on a scale never before imagined. Robert William Fogel, a Nobel laureate economist, calls this moment the “Fourth Great Awakening.” Whatever we call it the consequences are the same. Meaning has become a central aspect of our work and our lives. Pursuing meaning obviously is no simple task. You can’t buy a cookbook with a recipe for it. But there are two practical, whole-minded ways for individuals, families and businesses to begin the search for meaning: Start taking spirituality seriously and start taking happiness seriously. ■

For additional information on longevity, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Afterword

The Conceptual Age is dawning. Those who hope to survive in it must master the high-concept, high-touch abilities. This situation presents both promise and peril. The promise is that Conceptual Age jobs are exceedingly democratic. The peril is that our world moves at a furious pace. The first group of people who develop a whole new mind, who master high-concept and high-touch abilities, will do extremely well. The rest — those who move slowly or not at all — may miss out or, worse, suffer.

The choice is yours. ■



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