

Right Brained, Wrong Brained: How Caltech Neuroscience Became a BuzzFeed Quiz

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Somewhere between art class and algebra, most of us learn—probably after struggling in one area and excelling in the other—which “side” of our brain is dominant. You are either left brained or right brained. (And if you are in doubt, you can turn to any number of online tests to peg your hemispheric tendencies once and for all.) Left brainers are supposed to be analytical, orderly, mathematical, and good with language. Right brainers tend to be more disorganized, creative, artistic, and visual. A test on BuzzFeed informs me that I’m right brained, though as a science writer, my background would suggest that I draw more from the left. This cognitive shorthand for establishing left- or right-brain dominance doesn’t just aid us in discerning the nature of our talents and shortcomings, it has fueled TED talks, magazine articles, and best-selling books on how to make the most of your alpha side and shore up the weaker one.

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“There’s a folk psychology that says people have two skills—they’re more verbal or more visual, more artistic or more analytical,” says Michael S. Gazzaniga, director of the SAGE Center for the Study of the Mind at the University of California, Santa Barbara. “But the simple dynamics of ‘the left brain does this, the right brain does that’ are way overdone.” A pioneer in cognitive neuroscience, the 75-year-old professor was one of the first to define right-brain/left-brain processing in humans, at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena nearly a half century ago.

Read the whole story: [*Los Angeles Magazine*](#)