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My right brain is dominant

Published on November 23, 2020 Your neighbors downstairs are playing loud music. Again. How do they not get tired of partying? And why do they choose songs with such a heavy downbeat that the glass in your cupboard is vibrating every two seconds? What can you do to get some peace that you deserve? What should you?Human mind tends to go in circles whenever faced with a problem without a clear solution. It becomes easy to forget the big picture and get lost in anger and self-pity, wasting our precious time, energy and enthusiasm.Would it not be nice if we always remembered to put things in perspective?Would it not be more efficient to face all kinds of problems, from tiny annoyances to life-changing emergencies, with a calm demeanor, sharp focus and fearless determination to promptly take the most efficient action possible?Alas, humans are not like that. All too often we let anxiety or greed get the best of us and make a rushed or shortsighted decision that we quickly come to regret. Other times, we spend weeks or months at an impasse, rehashing the exact same arguments, unable to accept the compromise required to move forward with any of the available options.Buddhists talk about getting lost in the “small self.” In this state of mind, we literally forget the big picture and focus on the small one. We start taking our daily problems too personally and, paradoxically, becomes less capable of solving them in an efficient manner. And this is the opposite of big picture thinking.Let me share with you a story related to big picture thinking....In 1812, the French army of Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Russia. After a decisive Battle of Borodino, the capture of Moscow and therefore Napoleon’s victory in the war seemed inevitable.Unexpectedly, the Russian Commander-in-Chief Mikhail Kutuzov made a highly controversial decision of retreating and allowing the French to capture Moscow. Much of the population had been evacuated taking supplies with them. The city itself was set on fire and large parts of it burned into the ground. After waiting in vain for Russia to capitulate, Napoleon had to retreat in the middle of a bitterly cold winter. He won the battle but lost the war. The campaign ended in a disaster and the near destruction of the French army.What can we learn from this historical lesson?1. Focus on the ConsequencesNapoleon focused on the important part: capturing Moscow. Nobody could accuse him of thinking small. Yet he overlooked that the Russian army could still fight even after giving up the country’s most important city.So was Moscow not an important target after all?Success expert Brian Tracy has a litmus test: things are important to the extent that they have important consequences. Things are unimportant to the extent that they have no important consequences.When faced with a choice, ask yourself, what would be the consequences of each option? Want to spend an hour studying or watching the new series on Netflix? What would be the consequences of each option? Netflix can sometimes be a better choice, but it helps to put things in perspective. Want to maintain your apartment by yourself or to pay a cleaning service? Would would be the consequences of each option? Want to meet up for coffee with this acquaintance of yours or catch up on your work instead? What would be the consequences of each option? The choice can be different for different people. An aspiring filmmaker may have a legitimate reason for choosing Netflix. Personally, cleaning your own apartment can be relaxing and nourishing even if the economics of hiring a cleaner looks compelling because you are earning a high hourly rate.This is where you will need a basic idea of who you are — what are your goals, values and aspirations.2. Flip Defeat Into VictoryKutuzov managed to turn Russia’s defeat into a historic victory by recasting the problem in a wider context: losing Moscow need not mean losing the war. Despite the symbolic meaning attached to the Kremlin, the churches, the priceless treasures that had been stored in the city for centuries, the outcome of the campaign was ultimately determined by the strength of the remaining armies.If you can adopt this result-oriented perspective, many of your personal defeats may be flipped into victories as well. Few events in a human life are absolutely good or absolutely bad, and it usually takes many years to recognize in retrospect, what role a particular encounter did play in your story.Therefore we have every reason to look for the good in the things that happen to us.This is a very practical attitude, far from baseless “positive thinking.” After all, if something unfortunate has happened to you and you find good sides in this circumstance, you will then be better positioned to take advantage of those good sides.Say your noisy neighbors are affecting your productivity. What if it is a blessing in disguise? How can you turn this defeat into a victory? Perhaps you are too serious about life and could learn how to have more fun. Join your neighbors or go out for a walk instead of working; Perhaps you only wanted to be productive while instead procrastinated on social media. Now that your procrastination has been interrupted, stop and acknowledge this much greater obstacle to your productivity; Perhaps you are too sensitive to interference. Take this opportunity to practice ignoring the noise and doing your best anyway; Perhaps you have a victim mentality and the feeling of unfairness drains you more than any actual nuisance your neighbors might have caused. Try accepting this lapse in your productivity the way you would accept bad weather. Get used to finding opportunities in your problems. This is the quintessential big picture thinking.3. Ask for AdviceBoth Napoleon and Kutuzov had trusted advisers to discuss their affairs with. In general, getting a different perspective — or several — can only help inform your understanding and lead to better decisions. Just ensure that the people giving you advice are competent in the particular area where experience is needed.Paying money for advice can also be a wise investment. Lawyers, tax accountants, medical doctors spend years learning how to assist people like yourself in living more successful, more fulfilling lives.A quick legal consultation can save you a fortune down the line or even keep you out of big trouble. A medical check-up can uncover potential issues and help keep you healthy and active for years to come. Even big, complex dilemmas at your job or in your romantic relationship can be tackled more effectively by partnering up with a coach or a therapist or, of course, with the help of a wise friend.4. Beware of Biased AdviceMany imperfect decisions occur in response to an imperfect piece of advice that you choose to act on. This advice often comes from a biased party.For example, we are often encouraged to buy something that we supposedly need. Protect your skin from harmful UV rays by using a special lotion. Fortify your health by taking multivitamins. Connect with your friends by sending them elaborate gifts. Brighten your weekend by consuming a delicious pastry. Become more productive by getting a faster computer. However, most purchases are unnecessary.Some, such as the sunscreen, do have legitimate benefits when used properly. Others, such as multivitamins, only make a difference for a small group of people.Advertisers of those benefits inevitably want to narrow your focus in order to overstate the importance of their product. They frequently present it as the only solution to your problem, whether real or imaginary.After all, Skin can also be protected from the sun by wearing appropriate clothing. Health can be better fortified by consuming a balanced diet and getting regular exercise. Spending time or talking on the phone with your friends is the foremost way of connecting with them, and it is virtually free. Your weekend can be brightened by doing something that you love. You can become more productive by focusing on the tasks that have the most important consequences. A faster computer can, in fact, decrease productivity by making it easier to multitask and by enabling your favorite distractions. There are other sources of imperfect advice. Politicians also frequently want us to focus on a particular “big picture,” to the exclusion of the alternatives.Even loving parents can be guilty of the same. They can advise their children to pick a career path that is safe and respectable, based on their “big picture” that in life one has to make a living. A child may disagree, however, based on another “big picture” that one’s life has to have meaning and fulfillment. Bottom LineIt is human nature to make rushed, emotional decisions based on incomplete information, then regret those decisions later on.You can protect yourself from poor judgment by striving to attain the big picture when careful consideration is called for.Focus on the consequences of your decision before considering how you feel about it.Play with the cards you’ve been dealt, but look for opportunities in each situation and you will find them.Ask knowledgeable mentors for advice, but beware of biased people who have an opinion, but do not necessarily have your best interest in mind.Yet remember, true big picture thinking comes from hard-won experience. Legendary military commanders Napoleon Bonaparte and Mikhail Kutuzov were both injured on the battlefield.Clear thinking comes from putting your big picture to the test of reality.More Tips on Thinking ClearlyFeatured photo credit: Haneen Krimly via unsplash.com Last Updated on June 1, 2021 “Busy” used to be a fair description of the typical schedule. More and more, though, “busy” simply doesn’t cut it. “Busy” has been replaced with “too busy”, “far too busy”, or “absolutely buried.” It’s true that being productive often means being busy...but it’s only true up to a point.As you likely know from personal experience, you can become so busy that you reach a tipping point...a point where your life tips over and falls apart because you can no longer withstand the weight of your commitments.Once you’ve reached that point, it becomes fairly obvious that you’ve over-committed yourself. The trick, though, is to recognize the signs of “too busy” before you reach that tipping point. A little self-assessment and some proactive schedule-thinning can prevent you from having that meltdown.To help you in that self-assessment, here are 7 signs that you’re way too busy:1. You Can’t Remember the Last Time You Took a Day OffOccasional periods of rest are not unproductive, they are essential to productivity. Extended periods of non-stop activity result in fatigue, and fatigue results in lower-quality output. As Sydney J. Harris once said, “The time to relax is when you don’t have time for it.”2. Those Closest to You Have Stopped Asking for Your TimeWhy? They simply know that you have no time to give them. Your loved ones will be persistent for a long time, but once you reach the point where they’ve stopped asking, you’ve reached a dangerous level of busy.3. Activities like Eating Are Always Done in Tandem with Other TasksIf you constantly find yourself using meal times, car rides, etc. as times to catch up on emails, phone calls, or calendar readjustments, it’s time to lighten the load.It’s one thing to use your time efficiently. It’s a whole different ballgame, though, when you have so little time that you can’t even focus on feeding yourself.4. You’re Consistently More Tired When You Get up in the Morning Than You Are When You Go to BedOne of the surest signs of an overloaded schedule is morning fatigue. This is a good indication that you’ve not rested well during the night, which is a good sign that you’ve got way too much on your mind. If you’ve got so much to do that you can’t even shut your mind down when you’re laying in bed, you’re too busy.5. The Most Exercise You Get Is Sprinting from One Commitment to the NextIt’s proven that exercise promotes healthy lives. If you don’t care about that, that’s one thing. If you’d like to exercise, though, but you just don’t have time for it, you’re too busy.If the closest thing you get to exercise is running from your office to your car because you’re late for your ninth appointment of the day, it’s time to slow down.Try these 5 Ways to Find Time for Exercise. 6. You Dread Getting up in the MorningIf your days are so crammed full that you literally dread even starting them, you’re too busy. A new day should hold at least a small level of refreshment and excitement. Scale back until you find that place again.7. “Survival Mode” Is Your Only ModelIf you can’t remember what it feels like to be ahead of schedule, or at least “caught up”, you’re too busy.So, How To Get out of Busyness?Take a look at this video:And these articles to help you get unstuck: Featured photo credit: Khara Woods via unsplash.com The two hemispheres of our brain — left and right — specialize in different tasks. A recent study asks how this occurs and reaches a surprising conclusion.Hemispheric dominance, also known as lateralization of brain function, describes the tendency for either the left or the right side of the brain to carry out specific brain activities.Even though both sides of the brain are almost identical, one hemisphere primarily carries out some functions over others.For instance, the left hemisphere houses brain regions linked to speech (or the right hemisphere in left-handed people).Previously, scientists thought humans were the only creatures to exhibit this phenomenon. However, recent research has found lateralized brain function throughout the animal kingdom — from insects, such as honeybees, to aquatic mammals, including killer whales.The corpus callosum — a thick tract of nerve cells, known as commissural fibers — connects the two hemispheres. Exactly how dominance is produced remains uncertain.Recently, researchers from Ruhr-Universität Bochum in Germany set out to investigate this question. They chose to study the visual system of pigeons, and they have published their findings in the journal Cell Reports.Previously, scientists have theorized that one side of the brain simply inhibits the other, allowing it to take dominance.Co-lead author Prof. Onur Güntürkün explains that “[i]n the past, it had been assumed that the dominant hemisphere transmits inhibitory signals to the other hemisphere via the commissures, thus suppressing specific functions in that region.”In effect, the dominant hemisphere is thought to overpower its neighbor. However, scientists have also noted that excitatory messages run both ways, so there must be more to this interaction.The researchers decided to use a pigeon model because other studies have described hemispheric dominance in this species in some detail over recent years.For instance, in pigeon brains, the left hemisphere takes the lead when it comes to visual processing of patterns and colors. Conversely, the right brain more often deals with social or emotionally charged stimuli.The scientists trained the birds to perform a color differentiation task. In particular, this challenge involves part of the brain that uses visual information to guide motor activity. In this type of task, the left side of the brain is dominant.To understand how cross-talk between hemispheres influences dominance, Prof. Güntürkün and co-author Dr. Qian Xiao intermittently switched off some of the neurons that run between the two sides of the brain.After blocking specific neurons running from one side, they would observe the activity of the neurons that usually receive their input on the opposite side. In this way, they could pick apart the way in which the dominant hemisphere exerts its control.The researchers showed that, rather than merely inhibiting the right side of the brain during this task, the left brain could delay the response of the right brain, so preventing it from getting involved.As Prof. Güntürkün explains, “The right hemisphere simply acts too late to control the response.”Rather than merely inhibiting the response, the right brain still operates, but its signals are too late to the party to make a difference to the bird’s behavior.”These results show that hemispheric dominance is based on a sophisticated mechanism. It does not hinge on one general inhibitory or excitatory influence; rather it is caused by minute temporal delays in the activity of nerve cells in the other hemisphere.”Prof. Onur GüntürkünThe findings provide an entirely new way to look at hemispheric dominance. Research is bound to continue into this rather peculiar phenomenon that evolution has lovingly conserved throughout many branches of life.However, it is likely to be quite some time before we understand why dividing tasks between the hemispheres is so evolutionarily advantageous.

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