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Working Therapeutically Between Sessions: Journaling Exercise

Left and Right Brain

Recent technological advances in imaging have facilitated an explosion in research on the human brain and how it functions. The chart below offers an over-simplified version of how the brain tends to “divide the work” of connecting us to our world. Of course, many structures and function help integrate both domains into a complex whole, and every human does it just a bit differently. Our purpose today is to become aware of some of these functions and where they reside, to assist with self-awareness and self-understanding of strengths and weaknesses.

1. Examine the chart below, which is adapted from several sources (Milton Erickson quoted in Lankton & Lankton (1983) The answer within, p. 141; Dan Siegel (2010) The mindful therapist, p. 60; and others):

Left Brain/Left Processing	Right Brain/Right Processing
Later to Develop	Earlier to Develop
Conscious	Unconscious
Awake	Trance
Linguistic/Verbal	Visuospatial/Nonverbal/Pantomime
Logical/Analytical/Solving	Perceptual/Synthetic/Artistic
Linear/ Rational	Holistic/Intuitive/Insightful
Semantic Memory (1 + 1 = 2)	Experiential/Emotional Memory
Abstract	Kinesthetic
Directed	Spontaneous
Literal	Metaphorical
Focused	Diffuse
Effort	Comfort
Doing/Achieving/Performing	Being

2. As you examine this chart, what is the most interesting thing to you?

3. Do you know people who are “Right Brain Driven” or “Left Brain Driven”?

- How would you recognize a Right- or Left-Brain driven person?

- With regard to their relationships, what are their strengths likely to be? Weaknesses?

4. Do you see yourself as primarily Right- or Left-Brain Driven?

- How has that benefitted you in your life so far?

- How has that caused you difficulties?

- Do you see any benefit and building or developing the skills and abilities on the side of your brain that are less-developed? If so, what could those benefits be?