

'Let the Left Brain Know What the Right Brain Is Doing': An Interview with Dr. Lucia Capacchione

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Twelve years ago, I read "Recovery of Your Inner Child." The book opened up a whole new world for me. Technically, it was my right brain (the creative, intuitive, instinctive hemisphere) that I opened up. It was like turning on the proverbial light switch. More than any self-help book I had read before, the exercises helped me break through barriers to turbo-charge my life. The progress was not limited to my personal life; the lessons also helped me in my business career.

It is almost uncanny how simple the process is, and equally amazing are the profound results. I decided to track down the author who set me forth on this amazing journey. Dr. Lucia Capacchione is a bestselling author and has written 15 books. To my surprise, I was able to locate her [website](#) and contact information. She was gracious enough to answer my questions for this interview.

Bill Donius: How did you discover writing with your non-dominant hand as a way of tapping into a different part of your brain?

Dr. Capacchione: Out of sheer life and death necessity. Not something I planned to do. I was struggling with a mysterious and completely debilitating illness. Later it was diagnosed as a collagen disease, in the family of Lupus. I had serious side effects from medication being prescribed in a hit-or-miss fashion. I was pretty desperate when I began drawing and writing my feelings out in my sketch pads. (I was both a professional designer and early childhood educator at the time of this illness.) The end result was a complete recovery, a new life and a new career as an art therapist.

Bill Donius: What has been your most important discovery?

Dr. Capacchione: My first therapist put a crayon in my non-dominant hand (for me it is the left) and asked me to write with it. I had no idea this would change my life forever. A child-like self

Switching hands activates what we think of as the right brain – the creative, holistic, subconscious, intuitive brain – that tends to be underdeveloped and underutilized. It lurks behind the so-called left brain, partly because our culture has traditionally prioritized left-brain thinking and also because all thoughts arising from the right brain have to be cleared through the left. This means that the left brain gets the final say (no matter how distorted or deluded).

The right brain is not concerned with protecting our ego and preserving the status quo. It's more about reflecting the truth as we understand it. The subconscious is constantly absorbing and processing information, sending up hunches, flashes of insight, gut feelings. By switching the pen to your nondominant hand, it's like you find a way to surface this hidden stream of nonverbal intelligence and translate it to words on the page.

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within spoke to me who had been buried under a mountain of responsibility and five years of continual crises. At home, I spontaneously began dialogues in my journal between that inner child (non-dominant hand, the one we don't normally write with) and my adult self or my inner critic (dominant hand). As a result, my physical energy increased dramatically, as well as my will to live.

My therapist encouraged me to develop this style of journaling, especially using both hands alternately. Someone who tried my method told Cal Tech's Roger Sperry [the brain research pioneer] about my technique. He said this was opening the right brain and integrating the hemispheres. I took his word for it. He later won the Nobel Prize in 1981.

Bill Donius:How do lives change using your methods?

Dr Capacchione: Most people report that they have found their inner child: emotions, playfulness, creativity, physical stamina, intuition, gut instinct, creativity. This is the most common experience. And it is real. Not a cliché, or a theory. They also find inner guidance from a higher power or spiritual source of wisdom. They become more creative problem-solvers in all areas of life. And they apply these techniques to everyday challenges with amazing results. Relationships get healed or resolved. New career directions evolve.

Bill Donius: Have you needed or wanted endorsement from the scientific community?

Dr. Capacchione: Scientist Dr. Valerie Hunt [formerly of UCLA] read my book, "The Power of Your Other Hand," when it was published in the late 1980s. She explained how she thought my techniques accessed right-brain processing and integrated both hemispheres. However, she encouraged me to continue with clinical work since I was "an artist" and a keen observer of people, and was helping so many to heal. She felt that the instrumentation would eventually be there to measure what was happening in the brain while one is engaged in these methods.

Bill Donius: What exactly is the advantage of writing with the non-dominant hand?

Dr. Capacchione: The new aspects of personality, the abilities and forms of expressions listed above are what we see clinically when people write with the non-dominant hand. They are functions described by Jill Bolte Taylor in her book, "My Stroke of Insight," describing her loss of left-brain functions and immersion in the right brain after a stroke. According to Dr. Hunt, writing with the non-dominant hand integrated the hemispheres and opens up new neuronal pathways between the two sides of the brain. This is what people report that it feels like, using their intuition and inner sense of perceiving their brain. They can actually feel a buzzing in the right brain while writing with the non-dominant hand.