



A presentation by **Ransom Stephens, Ph.D.**

Get Inside Your Reader's Brain: The neuroscience of how to make readers laugh and cry

Description:

Neuroscience is like looking under the hood to see how it works. When you know how readers process your writing you can figure out what grabs readers, what bores them, and why. In this presentation, we'll investigate how to write in ways that administer dopamine when you want readers happy and withholds it when you want readers sad. We'll explore the roots of what people like and why bestsellers aren't always critical favorites. Art is subjective, but our subjectivity has a lot in common.

This seminar helps participants understand:

- The truth about creativity in the left and right hemispheres of your brain
- Putting your reader's brain to work
- The intimate relationship between creator and beholder
 - Mirroring and a reader's brain on lit
 - Percolating plot points above and below conscious awareness
- The tricks of our trade and why they work
 - Applying the rules of neuroaesthetics to literature
 - Dissonance and consonance, peak shift, contrast, isolation, opposition, symmetry, bait, and bullshit
- Balancing what to write and what to let the reader figure out
 - Puzzles, mysteries, showing vs telling, and the power of withheld information
- The good, the bad, and the bestseller
 - Yes, it's subjective, but our subjectivity has a lot in common

About the Speaker:

Ransom Stephens, Ph.D., is a scientist, science writer, and novelist. He's written hundreds of articles on subjects ranging from neuroscience to quantum physics to parenting teenagers. In his first novel, *The God Patent* (47North, 2010), a troubled father is caught in the science-religion culture war and in his second, *The Sensory Deception* (47North, 2013), scientists and venture capitalists use the relationship between the senses and the mind to give people the experiences of endangered animals. His first nonfiction book, *The Left Brain Speaks but the Right Brain Laughs* (Viva Editions, 2016), is an irreverent and accurate look at neuroscience for a lay-audience with emphasis on innovation in art and science. Ransom has given thousands of speeches across the US, Europe, and Asia and has developed a reputation for making complex topics accessible and funny.

Details:

A 35, 50, or 75 minute presentation for anyone interested in science. If an HDMI compatible overhead projector is handy, we'll use it, but it's not required.

Ransom W. Stephens, Ph.D.
Scientist • Author • Speaker

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