

Acclaimed Physicist and Science Writer Gets Inside Our Heads and Decodes What Makes Us Tick

Ransom Stephens' entertaining primer on neuroscience uncovers new ways to unleash innovation and creativity.

Why is it that two people who experience the same event have such different versions of what took place? How do nature and nurture play into our personal talents? Physicist and science writer Ransom Stephens, Ph.D., artfully explains these and other burning questions regarding perceptions versus reality in his engaging new book, *The Left Brain Speaks The Right Brain Laughs* (Viva Editions, 2016). Stephens presents new insights that help readers improve their creativity and innovative thinking.

Employing entertaining examples and laugh-out-loud anecdotes, Stephens cleverly leads the reader on a fascinating investigation of neuroscience. His explanations of complex systems using familiar, relatable experiences — picking out notes on a guitar; hanging out in a bar — deftly illustrate the intricacies of consciousness that both renders us individuals and unites us as humans.

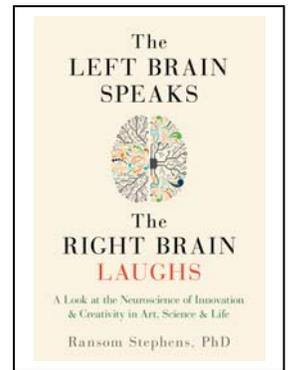
For instance, he explains how the brain establishes neural circuits to help us identify and categorize experiences by describing how water collects over time into a river that carves a canyon. He expands his analogy to describe how inventive ideas result when we push our brains “beyond their usual channels, scale the canyon walls, and look across the horizon” to new vistas.

RANSOM STEPHENS, PH.D., has written hundreds of articles on subjects ranging from neuroscience to quantum physics to parenting teenagers, and has developed a reputation for making complex topics accessible and funny.

Each chapter title in *The Left Brain Speaks The Right Brain Laughs* presents two opposing ideas — Life & Death; Art & Science; Alone & Together — that Stephens paradoxically proves inseparable in the way our brains interpret the world around us. Readers learn:

- Why right-brain and left-brain categorizations fall short;
- What keys unlock (or stifle) innovation and discovery;
- Why crowd-sourcing works, while decisions by committee fail;
- Where prejudices originate and how to recognize them when they appear;
- Why the concept of individualism is flawed.

Stephens offers a novel, irreverent deconstruction of what makes us tick, and turns deep-rooted perceptions on their heads. His memorably entertaining examples make neuroscience tangible to the layperson. Readers will discover fresh insights for stretching the mind in new ways.



“We are model-building, pattern-recognizing predictors — which makes us lazy bigots. It’s as though Mother Nature said, ‘You can be good, fast, or cheap—pick two,’ and natural selection said, ‘We’ll take fast and cheap.’”

—Ransom Stephens, PhD

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About the Author

RANSOM STEPHENS, PH.D., physicist, science writer, and novelist, has written hundreds of articles on subjects ranging from neuroscience to quantum physics to parenting teenagers. His new book, *The Left Brain Speaks The Right Brain Laughs* (Viva Editions, 2016), is an accurate irreverent look at neuroscience for a lay-audience with emphasis on innovation in art, science, and life. Stephens has given thousands of speeches across the US, Europe, and Asia and has developed a reputation for making complex topics accessible and funny.

“The nature-nurture question is not ‘Does nature or nurture play a greater role in determining a person’s talents?’ The question is: ‘Does the environment in which a person is nurtured make the most of the genetic nature of that person?’ Like democracy or a long-lasting marriage, the key to success isn’t which party contributes more, it’s how they interact.”

—Ransom Stephens, PhD