

Career Rx
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Thinking in the Conceptual Age

Think about how you learned new things growing up. Do you remember playing and exploring as a toddler without being given instructions, or do you think of organized sports where the rules are communicated and you need to play within the given guidelines? As we begin our careers, we learn what is expected of us in our new environments. These environments are the communities that we live, play and perform in. Learning the culture of the company we work for, the clubs we join, the organizations we volunteer our time with is sometimes learned through osmosis and sometimes taught explicitly. We learn the expectations of our boss, colleagues, clients, professional organizations, community groups, and so on.

In today's job market, we need to understand how to survive in this fast-paced world in which we live. Information is available to us 24/7 - online, written, verbal, video/television, just to name a few. How do we filter all of this media and yet stay on top of it all? When it comes to your present or future career track, are your skills and abilities in demand? Are they in abundance with fierce competition for jobs? Can computers or overseas labor do it faster or cheaper?

If we look at our history as a society, America has migrated from the Agricultural Age to the Industrial Age to the Informational Age to a new Conceptual Age economy. The conceptual age is "one of creators and empathizers, whose distinctive ability is mastery of the right directed thinking" according to Daniel H. Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*.

So, you may ask, how do you plan and prepare for this Conceptual Age in an outsourced and automated world? How do you appeal to the consumer to select your product or service? Most companies sell their products or services based on their "unique" design or delivery, empathizing with their client's needs, or playing into their soft side to connect. Think of how the internet has dramatically altered how you conduct business, how you communicate, and even how you socialize.

The majority of future jobs will require a high level of emotional intelligence. Individuals with a high emotional intelligence will be caring, imaginative, instinctual, and engaging with social dexterity. This is where our upbringing and the influence of our experiences can help us think outside the box. If you were in school prior to the 1980's, you were probably taught more convergent thinking. Convergent thinking is thinking that brings together information focused on solving a problem with a single correct solution. As a parent of students in public education now, their focus is more directed at divergent thinking. Divergent thinking is thinking out of the box, involving a variety of perspectives, ideas and creative solutions leading to multiple potential answers. Thinking outside the box and understanding the balance between analytical (right-brain) and creative thinking (left-brain) is a powerful combination.

As you are thinking through your career options, where do your passions, experiences and abilities meet? What types of individuals do you partner well with? What strengths do you bring? When you blend all of this together - you will have your answer. As environments are constantly changing, we must remember that life is all about learning, growing and adapting to change. Everyone has the ability to do this once they overcome resistance.

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Lisa's extensive human resources and coaching experience with Fortune 500 companies, small enterprises, medium-sized firms, and non-profit organizations gives her the unique ability to bring together wide-ranging perspectives on career transitions, executive and leadership development. She has consulted with a wide variety of sectors — consumer goods, financial services, healthcare, media and entertainment, pharmaceutical and life sciences, publishing, professional services, technology, and non-profit. Lisa has a passion for motivational speaking, conducts career forums, and provides executive and career coaching.

Lisa's greatest strength is that she enables individuals and organizations to see themselves in new ways, freeing them to achieve their goals. Lisa can be reached at Lisa@ChenofskySinger.com.