

# RIGHT- BRAINER

*SURVIVAL HANDBOOK OF OFFICE EPIPHANIES*



MARIJN VAN DER POLL

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Oyster Imperative

Marijn van der Poll founded his design studio in 2000. His work is part of the collection of amongst others the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. He advises governmental organizations such as the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. He is an ambassador of the internationally renowned Dutch Design Week and a permanent faculty member at the Design Academy Eindhoven (the Netherlands). He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Industrial Design from the same institution and a Master of Science from the University of Nebraska Lincoln. He lives in Eindhoven with his wife and two sons.

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First published in The Netherlands by Oyster Imperative publishing company, a subsidiary of vanderPolloffice v.o.f 2021

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ISBN 978-90-90-34004-3

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# 1

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THERE YOU ARE!: It's you! The one who has spent a good portion of 30,000 hours' training to get here. Learning, improving. Studying, sitting and passing exams. All this. The culmination of which is this magnificent manifestation of self. The proud, fully-functioning office professional, holding this book. Hoorah! Congratulations on all of your accomplishments, your skillset and degrees. By the way, you missed a spot.

Actually more like half, the right half of your brain. You missed that. You know the typology, left hemisphere for all things theoretical and methodical. The one you depend on, and the right half that is tagging along for the ride in case we suddenly need to pick out a new color scheme for the office. That right half. So, no harm no foul, right? Wrong. Work has changed. Repetitiveness has been replaced with autonomy on the work floor and autonomy comes with responsibility. With it your work routine is frequently uprooted by work problems without immediate answers. Your ability to mentally process and somehow 'solve' corporate conundrums has become a core skill not just improving your chances of sustained employment, it is essential to your professional survival. Thinking outside the proverbial box has become a critical work skill. Love it or loathe it, this 'thinking' is the differentiator in the global job market and across industries, from agriculture to aerospace.

The tables have turned. Your right brain is now in dire need of rescue and resuscitation, and it hasn't been schooled academically or technically, leaving you untrained and professionally, hopelessly ill-prepared.

Frequently asked question: 'Why is this type of thinking difficult?'

Whether you know it is as creative thinking, lateral or divergent thinking, out-of-the-box thinking, or abstract thinking, this type of thinking is left to chance because we don't recognize the familiar left brain handle on things. There are no right brain textbooks, no step-by-step-by-step process. We feel our thinking is un-controllable. As a whole.

Make no mistake: IT IS! We can put our right brain to work in a structured manner and get results by constructing an actual thing ... with our minds. A thought construct with a clear purpose, a logic and a scaffolding of reasoning. An asset of great value and the key to your sustained employability. It is always present, yet at the same time essentially overlooked in creative methodologies and innovation processes. It is the building block that ties of all forms of non-linear thought. It cuts through complexity like a knife through butter, allowing you to assert control over questions and problems without immediate answers. Finally! The missing link in our primarily rational, linear work-brains, programmed to go from problem straight to solution, the foundational element: the idea.

MISSION CRITICAL: Here are the statistics to back up this inconvenient truth. Over 13 million people were represented in a global survey on future job skills by the World Economic Forum (WEF). One of those bobbing data points is you. The researchers wondered how you could sustain yourself in a constantly changing professional environment. What skills were required and subsequently, which lack of skills would render you professionally obsolete? The outcome? All right-brain. They examined correlations between different disciplines, in different professions. Collected data across all the domains from every corner of the world. What they consistently found lacking wasn't some programming skill or some form of emerging technology savviness. On the top of the list of essential job skills were abstract thinking abilities. Specifically, creative



thinking, complex problem solving and critical thinking. The message was clear, if want to keep your job for the foreseeable future, then you need to be able to think on your feet. All they missed was the end product of these three elements put together. The idea.

AFFIRMING MY COMMITMENT TO YOU: WEF is onto something here. How do I know that? My area of expertise is ideas. In this book, I will show you how you can survive on yours. I have more than twenty years of experience in studying and researching ideas as well as professional experience in the field, and two degrees to back it up. One is from the same school Warren Buffett attended. The other is from a famed design school in the Netherlands described by the *New York Times* as the school for New Dutch Masters, so there's that.

I discovered early on how to survive using my original thoughts. I learned by falling down and getting back up, without any textbook or packaged methodology. I persevered.

After finishing school, I then built a career selling my ideas for profit. My work is now part of the collections of illustrious cultural institutions such as the Victoria & Albert Museum in London and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Time magazine called one of my designs a must-have. As a result, I know how to turn on inspiration by flipping a switch in my right brain. I know how to survive based on my 'creative' thoughts and outsmart others if necessary. I learned the hard way so you don't have to! If you make it through these pages, that is.