



UNDERSTANDING THE RIGHT-BRAINED PERSON

by Stephanie Buckwalter

(Excerpt from *I Want My House Back!*)

In order to understand right-brained people, it helps to know these two things: They rely on seeing their stuff and they thrive on seeing the possibilities in life. Wanting to see everything means that they tend to leave things out in the open as visual cues to do something with them—a kind of visual to-do list. Seeing the possibilities in life means that they tend to keep a lot more stuff than they currently use because they can see twenty uses for each item. When those two tendencies meet, you have the potential for chaos.

Whether you are a right-brained person or live with someone who is, here are three characteristics that will help you understand the right-brained person.

- 1) They like to dream about the future and possibilities for their future.
Interpretation: They are dreamers. It is their nature. The things of this earth are too mundane for the lofty imaginings of their everyday lives.
- 2) They like to be prepared for that dream should it come to pass.
Interpretation: To be prepared, they like to have things readily available that might come in handy in case that future comes to pass, be it something practical like emergency planning or total fantasy.
- 3) They need time to revisit those dreams to see if they are still valid so they can make adjustments to their thinking.
Interpretation: When stress hits, leisure time to revisit those dreams disappears, leaving them slightly uneasy, but at a loss as to explain why they need “time away.”

The first item listed holds a very important insight. Right-brained people tend to be very creative. That creativity is driven by the tension between being in the mundane world that sparks ideas and living in a mental world where those ideas are explored in depth. Once an idea is deemed worthy of pursuing, the dreamer must return to the mundane world to enact it. This passing back and forth between two worlds explains how such a person can live in a messy house and never really see it. They prefer to be in the mental world ordering their thoughts rather than stay in the physical world ordering their stuff.

The second point explains why some people can't simply ask themselves, “Have I used this in the last year?” and if not, then toss it. They like to be as prepared as possible for any actuality. The highest compliment you can pay people like this is not an award for

how much they have done, but a compliment on how well prepared they were in a given situation. In their eyes, getting things done is easy, but being prepared for contingencies is a true challenge that deserves special notice.

The last point is key to understanding how a house gets out of control. A house can slowly slip into chaos or jump into it headlong. The slow slide usually occurs when homemakers do not take the time to evaluate their lives. Left-brained housekeepers tend to do an annual purge of anything they haven't used in a year. And they often recommend that same strategy for their right-brained friends. But for right-brained people, the annual evaluation tends to focus inward, on life direction, rather than outward, on the functionality of their stuff.

When right-brained people evaluate, they usually don't think to apply those mental adjustments to their stuff. If they alter their life's direction, it usually means that there is stuff they can get rid of along with the discarded part of their lives. For example, a young career woman gets married, has kids, and then decides to stay home. The main thing she can get rid of is most of her business wardrobe. She'll have many more casual clothes and will need room to store them. Or a mom begins to homeschool and is not sure of her philosophy so she buys a variety of curricula. A few years into the process, she determines her philosophy and goals. She could easily get rid of each curriculum that does not go with her new direction. However, right-brained people tend to overlook the "getting rid of the old" part of the process and move merrily ahead in the new direction. This is one of the greatest joys and the greatest frustrations of living with a right-brained person.

A jump into chaos is usually precipitated by a crisis of some sort, leaving no time for creative thinking or evaluation, and no time or emotional energy to deal with whatever piles up in the house, such as mail, laundry, and incoming goods. Life tends to run on autopilot during a crisis. If the usual housekeeping routine includes leaving things out as visual reminders or dropping things to deal with them later, that will continue to happen, building up over time. The longer the crisis, the worse the condition of the home.

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