

## Exploring How Gendlin's Theories Cross with RH – LH Hemisphere Awareness to Guide Us in Process

Initial sensing of a Situation via our Right Hemisphere <i>*Wholistic</i>  ↓	Always happening. Accesses present moment. Most noticeable with NEW experiences or with sharp changes.	Moves easily. Values fresh experience, multi-perspectives & possibility. Relatively uncertain.	Whole Integration Context Both/And Sees Individual Uniqueness  Will Doubt LH to show differences in context.	Flexible Broad Open Sustained Alertness	Content is implicit, fluid, personal, living  "I am the body" sense of self	Truth is consistent with our experience,  <i>*Less verbal, short phrases, metaphor, images, sensation*</i>	Reasoning Emotionally expressive  Looks at eyes; our brain knows how we are feeling even if we do not.	Being Enjoys exploring, creating, connecting, relating  noradrenaline	<i>We miss most of this if we are not slowing down to notice.</i>
Accessing What we Already Know from our Left Hemisphere <i>*Unit Model</i>  ↓  RH→LH→RH	Acting from routines, habits, rules and roles in past or future tense.	Has a stickiness to what is already known & predictable.  Convinced it is right.	Parts Division Abstraction Either/Or Places words and order on what has been sensed.	Control Grasping  Focused attention to detail for shorter times	Content is explicit, static, impersonal, non-living,  "I have a body"	Truth is consistent with a known logical system  <i>*Language centered here, complex thoughts*</i>	Rationality  Anger & aggression  Looks at mouth	Doing Enjoys doing stuff, acting on, manipulating, putting together pieces  dopamine	<i>Typically, we are looking at the world from this perspective</i>
PAUSE	POWER	PAUSE	POWER	PAUSE	POWER	PAUSE	POWER	PAUSE	POWER
Back to our Right Hemisphere in a way that holds BOTH LH-RH Freshly <i>*Functional Wholes</i>	Welcoming. Holding space for it all. A sense of coming together in clusters.	Curiosity. Radical Acceptance. All fresh new stuff arises here.	Big picture Integration of LH/RH as applied uniquely to THIS situation.	Safe Supported Multi-dimensional	Fluidly implicit – explicit – implicit, etc  "I am living process"	Truth emerges from Trust in Life Forward Movement	Deeply Relational Humor Humility Sacred Awe Aha! Mutual appreciation	Being WITH. I AM Awareness.  Gratitude beyond success or failure.	<i>With practice of the pause, we can achieve lasting integration</i>

**\*\*Typically, we jump back and forth all day from RH to LH, and are encouraged to ignore our RH communication. We experience ourselves as having the perspective from whatever that spot is wired to. For me, the power of the pause, is a conscious choice to be the space for all of this to connect. ~SJB**

**Iain McGilchrist "The kind of attention we pay actually alters the world: we are, literally, partners in creation."**

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## Gendlin's Three Types of Theories

**Wholistic:** we are looking at wholes, everything here is interconnected and cannot be taken into pieces without losing something of value. It is easy to see this model in nature and ecology. On its own, hard to find an end.

**Unit Model:** everything is broken down into pieces we experience as fixed, exploring these pieces brings clarity around what they can do, how we can use them. If there is a piece we do not understand, we'll ignore it for now. It is important that everything here has a purpose we can wrap around. We often live as though time and space follow this model and experience stress about that.

**Functional Wholes:** here we are looking at one situation, one moment in time, how this functions within itself.

**Resources:** Gendlin's 3 types of theories: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mO\\_IBwLBySg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mO_IBwLBySg)  
Gendlin, E. T. (2012). Process Generates Structures. *The Folio*. Pages 3-13  
Gendlin, E. T. (1997) *A Process Model*. The Focusing Institute  
Early, Annemarie, Ph.D., LMFT, (2016) *Beyond the Boundaries of our Skin: Extending Our Felt Sense* (sensory exercises)

## The Neuroscience of the Divided Brain

"Everything above the brainstem is divided between right and left hemispheres. The amygdala, for example, is really the amygdalae—one on the right and one on the left. The two sides are linked. Cortical areas are joined by the corpus callosum, which connects just 2% of neurons on either side, illustrating the degree of separation. It enables each side to know what the other is doing, but it also enables one side to inhibit the other. The hemispheres are asymmetric in various ways. The left is better at inhibiting the right than vice versa—hence, perhaps, the ease with which we can suppress feelings. The right has more connections between the different areas within it, enabling integration of their functions, while the left has more connections within each area, enabling specialization of each function. And the right hemisphere is more connected to the subcortical areas below, and therefore to the body, than is the left. So the left hemisphere says "I have a body", while the right says "I am my body". Most forms of attention are handled by the right hemisphere, but focused attention is the preserve of the left. McGilchrist argues that the primary difference between the two is that the left does focused attention on one thing, while the right does global attention to the body and the environment. He gives the example of a bird pecking at grain it wants to eat: its left hemisphere focuses on the grain while the right keeps a look out for predators and danger. These are very different attentional tasks, making the specialization of the two hemispheres an evolutionary advantage. The majority of people, including many left-handed people, follow this leftright pattern, but not everyone does. Some people have their hemispheres reversed, and others do not follow a clear pattern of hemispheric specialization at all.

**Nature creates exceptions to every rule."** From *Focusing in an Age of Neuroscience*, 2012, Peter Afford

**Resources:** Peter Afford's website for a variety of articles: <http://www.focusing.co.uk/>  
McGilchrist, Iain (2012) *The Master and his Emissary, The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* (new version coming 3-2019!!)  
Here is a 2018 documentary on McGilchrist's Divided Brain research. <https://vimeo.com/274518954> And...Special thanks to Laura Read for the experiential LH/RH exercises she developed in leading a Focuser's monthly discussion group on this book and to all those who have joined me in participating. (2018-19) Also special thanks to the Floyd Focusers who joined me for discussions around this book the first time around. (2016)