

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE FOR BECOMING A BETTER LEADER

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"Promoting learning requires a spirit of inquiry and openness, patience, and building in a tolerance for error and a framework for forgiveness."

—From *The Leadership Challenge*, 4th Edition, by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner

Welcome to The Leadership Challenge Newsletter!

This monthly publication shares stories, examples, and information about the impact of The Leadership Challenge in all kinds of organizations. [As always, please let us know how we are doing](#); we may even contact you about featuring your ideas and stories in future editions of this newsletter.

Join the conversation on our new Leadership Challenge blog *LeaderTalk*

www.leadershipchallenge.com/go/blog

Thoughts on the Model

Practice may lead to excellence. But as Master Facilitator Steve Coats explores, how do 'work-in-progress' leaders practice their way to the Carnegie Hall of leadership when they are always operating in full view of critics ready to see every flaw? [More](#)

Tips and Techniques

"A picture is worth a thousand words." Learn how one firm parlayed this classic adage into a creative approach to engage everyone in promoting the value of The Five Practices to improve individual and organizational performance. [More](#)

Ask an Expert

Master Facilitator Stephen Hoel tackles the question of how to overcome resistance from senior-level executives reluctant to become active workshop participants, laying out proven step-by-step advice on how to educate, engage, and gain commitment to the process and programs. [More](#)

Rants and Raves

Certified Facilitator Angie Chaplin shares the compelling story of her mission-driven human services agency that embraced the essential practices and tools of The Leadership Challenge and found new opportunities to make a difference in the lives of the children and families they serve. [More](#)

What We're Reading

[The Alphabet vs. the Goddess: A Conflict Between Word and Image](#) is a provocative book that makes the case that as literacy developed, it has reinforced the brain's linear, abstract, masculine, left-hemisphere at the expense of the holistic, iconic, feminine right one. And to make the point clear, author Leonard Shlain takes the reader on a journey from the beginning of time, making connections across a range of myths, religion, science, cultural shifts, wars, patriarchy, and misogyny to literacy.

Although I found Shlain's well-documented premise disturbing, I found it compelling at the same time, especially his suggestion that computer processes today have unwittingly advanced the cause of women and images. He argues that the computer has carried human communication across a threshold-one as significant as the introduction of writing-and he states that ". . . cyberspace's reliance on electromagnetism and photographic reproduction will only lead to further adjustments in consciousness that favor a feminine worldview. Irrespective of content, the processes used to maneuver in cyberspace are essentially right hemispheric. The World Wide Web and the Internet are both metaphors redolent of feminine connotations."

While it is possible to draw different conclusions from this, it is difficult to gauge the full effects of technology while we are in the middle of it. For example, Shlain likens our current situation to someone trapped in the center of a spinning washing machine: it is difficult for anyone in that position to appreciate that the clothes are not only tumbling violently around, they also are becoming cleaner. So even though I'm in the center of that spinning washing machine, I like to think that we are moving to a more right-hemisphere thinking and that we are becoming more concrete, holistic, visual, and, well, feminine. In addition to the introduction of the computer that Shlain points to, television also has contributed to this shift in thinking-turning words on a page to images on the screen, continuing to blur the distinctions between men and women.

Reading this book left me feeling that we are entering a new age of tolerance and caring. It's a big, provocative thought, but one worth thinking about, especially in the context of leadership.

Jeni Nichols is "Queen of Connections" at [Sonoma Learning Systems](#), an authorized training provider of The Leadership Challenge.

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