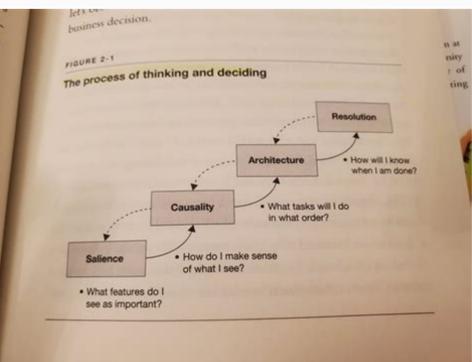
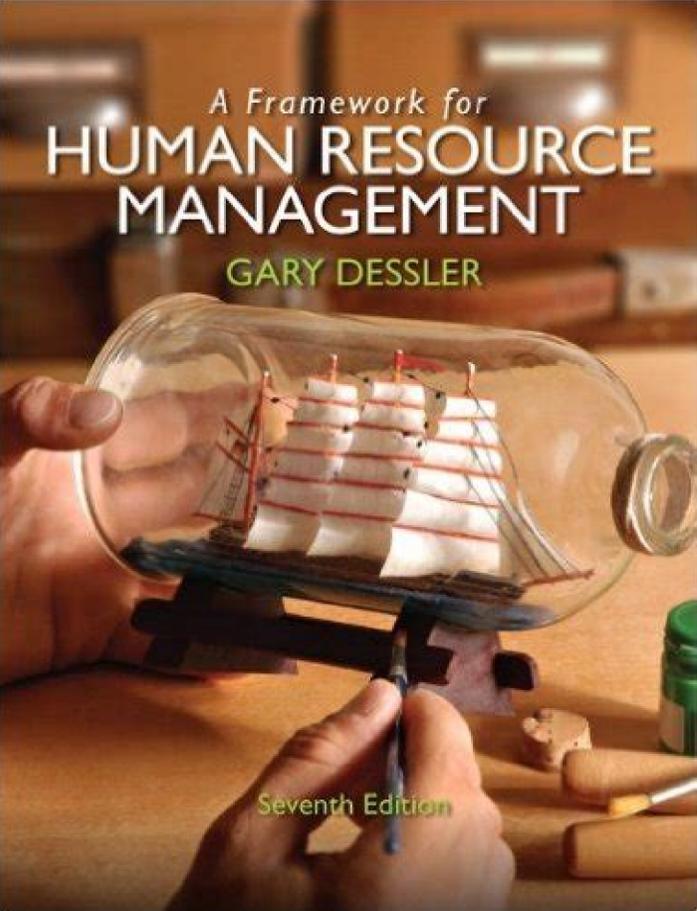
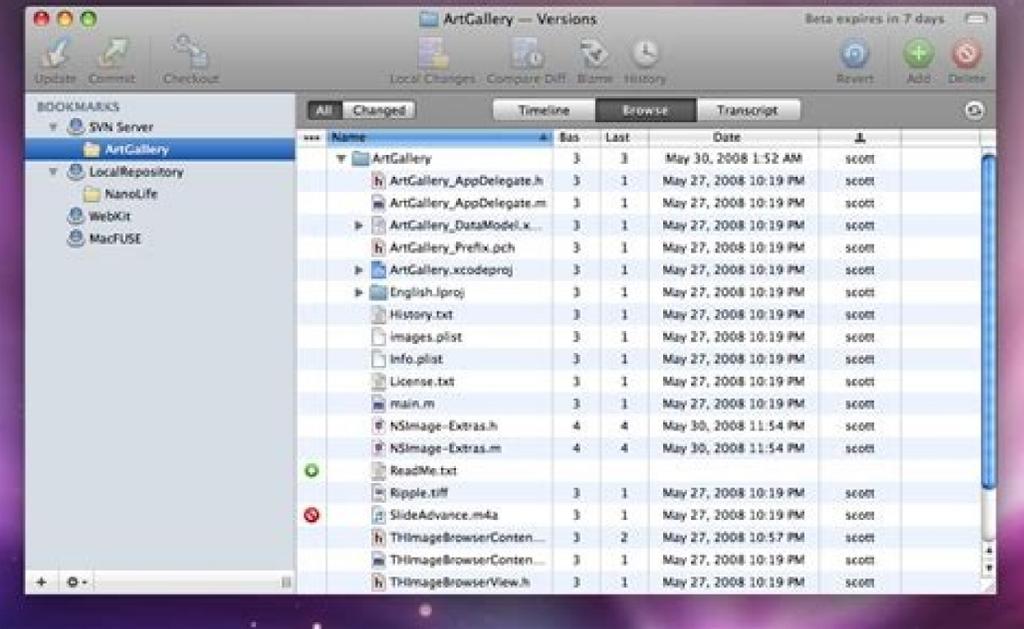


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# THE *Opposable* MIND

## Winning Through Integrative Thinking



### ROGER MARTIN



The opposable mind roger martin pdf.

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The Opposable Mind: How Successful Leaders Win Through Integrative Thinking is a book written by Roger Martin and published by the Harvard Business Review Press in 2007. The book introduces a concept of integrative thinking, using academic theory and insights from prominent business leaders to substantiate the idea. Summary Martin argues that to emulate the world's best leaders people need to study how leaders think. He argues integrative thinking is a common feature found in successful leaders. The book gives a working definition of integrative thinking as: "The ability to face constructively the tension of opposing ideas and, instead of choosing one at the expense of the other, generate a creative resolution of the tension in the form of a new idea that contains elements of the opposing ideas but is superior to each". Martin notes some of the major differences between integrative thinkers and conventional thinkers. Integrative thinkers: take a broad view of what is salient despite the increase it causes in the complexity of problems, consider multi directional and non-linear causal relationships, keep the entire problem in mind while working on individual segments, and search for creative resolutions rather than accept trade offs. In the second half of the book Martin outlines how to develop integrative thinking capabilities. The three main components that make up the integrative thinkers personal knowledge system are stance, tools and experience; "the tripod supporting the system". Martin devotes a chapter to each element of the tripod, explaining their significance in the integrative thinker's development and how they combine to create an effective integrative thinker. Throughout the book, Martin studies the thought processes of prominent leaders and for each chapter uses several examples outlining how the leader used a particular aspect of integrative thinking to create successful strategy. Leaders used in Book Isadore Sharp, founder of Four Seasons Hotels A.G. Lafley CEO of Procter & Gamble Bob Young, co-founder of Red Hat software Piers Handling, director of Toronto International Film Festival Moses Zaimar co-founder Cityte Victoria Hale, founder of The Institute for OneWorld Health (IOWH) Taddy Blecher, co-founder of CIDA City Campus Reaction The book has been noted for having a thesis that understands "that fresh thought processes are required to deal with the world's contradictions and complexities"[1] and has been praised for showing how great leaders think rather than what they do.[2] India's Business Today argues that the book will "almost certainly enable you to go beyond the sort of reasoning taught at most B-schools." [3] The main criticism of the book has been its inability "to teach "generative reasoning" or to provide readers with specific conceptual tools and a knowledge system for integrative thinking." [4] Integrative thinking is taught in MBA programs at several business schools, most notably the Rotman School.[5] See also Roger Martin The Design of Business opposable thumb References ^ Evans, Richard. "The either/or dilemma." The Financial Times 19/12/2007 2. 10 Jul 2008 < . ^ Robb, Jay. "Why settle for the best bad choice?." The Hamilton Spectator 09/02/2008 10 Jul 2008 < . ^ Sridharan, R. "The shrink's perspective." Business Today 17/03/2008 10 Jul 2008 < . ^ Evans, Richard. "The either/or dilemma." The Financial Times 19/12/2007 2. 10 Jul 2008 < . ^ Dearlove, Des. "Students advised to judge leaders by thoughts not deeds." Times Online 23/01/2008 10 Jul 2008 < . External links Review of the book in The Financial Times Review of the book in The Hindu Business Line Review of the book in The Toronto Star Retrieved from " An enjoyable, albeit light book on how to think about dilemmas. Martin makes two essential arguments. First, we must remember that how we view the world is always a set of models. Should your business aim to serve a local community intimately, or a global community remotely? Are you high quality and high price, or low cost but also lower quality? etc. These forms don't exist as real things, but are ways of understanding the world. Second, as creative models of reality, we can and should try and An enjoyable, albeit light book on how to think about dilemmas. Martin makes two essential arguments. First, we must remember that how we view the world is always a set of models. Should your business aim to serve a local community intimately, or a global community remotely? Are you high quality and high price, or low cost but also lower quality? etc. These forms don't exist as real things, but are ways of understanding the world. Second, as creative models of reality, we can and should try and break through them to find new ways of operating. Martin's case studies all feature business leaders who rejected taking path A "OR" B, and developed path C. The global hotel chain with a local touch, the business which offered a free product but global reliability etc. Martin offers useful guidance about how to rethink issues, such as what factors we consider salient, what tools we apply, what stance we take towards the question, and related factors of having both the courage, high standards and patience to work through such challenges. There's little here about why some dilemmas may not be so resolvable, but we probably over estimate how fixed they really are (see point 1).The only thing I found slightly weird - and I'm assuming its deliberate - was that a book entirely devoted to the role of opposing ideas and finding an artful0 synthesis makes no mention of Hegel, Marx or the dialectic style of thought. As many 19th century thinkers demonstrated - for instance Carl von Clausewitz - the thesis-antithesis-synthesis model can be extremely powerful. Even today it is still in good use. Yet there's not even a note about it. It must be deliberate, but I'm not entirely sure why.Still, this is one of the better books on thinking that have a business-literature background. Akin to 'Essentialism' by Greg McKeown. It has triggered a few ideas already for my own teaching and research, which makes it a worthwhile - and enjoyably written - read. ...more Synopsis #34 - Have you read "The Opposable Mind" by Roger Martin? So much of what we discover outside our own experience depends on word of mouth or chance encounters. To help this process along, I'm sharing some notes from books I've read. I hope they might be of some benefit to you, and may inspire you to delve deeper by reading these books yourself. Number thirty-four on the list is "The Opposable Mind" by Roger Martin (2009). Sometimes staying with the model you have for doing things, or dressing up what you have as something different, isn't the best way to go. Sometimes it doesn't have to be a choice between this or that, either or. And sometimes you just have to step back and think about what you're doing, about things like strategy. This book provides a counterweight to the bias toward action and execution by focusing on the significance of thinking and strategy. It explores the cognitive processes that produce our actions and lead to the choices we make so we can make better decisions. Martin proposes integrative thinking as the thinking process for innovation. This approach is a discipline of considering two opposing ideas at the same time and producing a synthesis, or a new idea altogether, that is superior to both. It is essentially an application of Hegelian dialectics to business processes. "We were born with an opposable mind we can use to hold two conflicting ideas in constructive tension," p. 7. Martin calls this integrative thinking, which he defines as "The ability to face constructively the tension of opposing ideas and, instead of choosing one at the expense of the other, generate a creative resolution of the tension in the form of a new idea that contains elements of the opposing ideas but is superior to both," p.15. Integrative thinking as a process has four distinct steps: Salience - the features that are most important, ie what do I value most. Take a wider, inclusive view that embraces complexity, and resist the current bias toward simplification and specialisation. Causality - the way these features relate to or influence each other, ie how do I make sense of what I see. Look at the complexity of multi-directional and non-linear relationships between variables, rather than take a simple view of linear connections, and create a causal map that will help you gain insights into new possibilities. Architecture - the components of a path toward making a decision or achieving an outcome, ie what do I have to do and in what order. Take a holistic view of the problem and don't lose sight of the bigger picture. Resolution - the outcome, ie how I know when I'm done. Martin challenges our views of reality. "Our factory prese of the human mind is a tendency to assume that our models of reality are identical with reality itself," p. 50. He reminds us that what we see is our perceptions of what we think is there, not what actually is there, or what could be. Martin's "knowledge system" for integrative thinkers comprises the different stances (beliefs or principles) we take, tools we can use, and the experience that creates our platform. Everyone takes a stance that sums up their unique view of the world and their place in it (ie who you are and what you're aiming to accomplish). Integrative thinkers believe that: My existing models do not represent reality; they are my constructions of reality. "Very little in life should be viewed as incontrovertibly real. We're usually connected to reality by our model of it," p. 123. Martin also talks about "the mistaken belief that [our] narratives and reality are one and the same," p. 115. I will leverage opposing models or conflicting approaches to problems, not fear them. All models reflect reality in some way from a particular angle, so at the same time they can be both in conflict and contain elements from which we can learn or benefit in some way. There are better models that I can't see yet. "The optimistic model seeker doesn't believe there is a right answer; just the best answer available now," p. 126. All models are fallible and the best current model will be eclipsed in due course. This is part of the open source ethos. Rob McEwen suggests we find the fundamental, underlying, unquestioned assumption that everyone in the industry grows up with, question it, redefine the problem differently from everyone else, and generate alternatives that no-one else is thinking about. I am capable of finding a better model. Martin encourages us to question the thinking that goes into our decisions by asking what was salient, what causal relationships were inferred, and whether we lost our focus on the whole by emphasizing particular details. He also suggests reverse engineering our thinking, starting with the conclusions we had reached, that came out of the architecture of a model, based on causal connections, drawn from salient data, and see where this logical audit trail takes us. I can wade into and get through the necessary untidiness and complexity to the other side with the resolution I'm seeking. To help us do this, Martin challenges us to reflect on how we think, by looking at our thinking, actions and outcomes, and then reverse engineering the outcomes and linking them back to actions, and our actions to thinking. I have time to create a better model. This is all about patience. This inherently optimistic stance is supported by Martin's belief that with hard thinking and patience we will find a better outcome. I will not accept any trade-offs that the rest of the world tells me are unavoidable. Martin quotes Tim Brown from IDEO saying that he aims to satisfy users' functional and emotional requirements simultaneously, without trading off one for the other. Martin writes about three tools for integrative thinking: Generative reasoning - inquire into what might be rather than what is, rather than debate the truth or falsity of a given proposition. Use the data from multiple prototypes and iterations to leap beyond available data and generate a new model. Martin discounts deductive logic (from an established framework) and inductive logic (infer from the preponderance of data from experiences and observations) that depend on a pre-existing theory or model, and champions abductive logic (infer from observations what might be without reference to current premises). Causal modeling - see the model as a complex, dynamic system of material and teleological variables, and use "multi-directional feedback loops that accelerate relationships between variables" to ensure we don't overlook or misread causal relationships. Martin also talks about using radial metaphors for the business or organization, such as family or a sports team, to help keep the coherent whole in mind. Assertive inquiry - clarify and understand the salient data and causal assumptions that underlie the model. Instead of just defending one model and so ensure we never learn anything from other models, combine advocacy with inquiry. "Repeated and intensifying advocacy does not broaden salience, make causality more sophisticated, or facilitate holistic architecture. It crowds out the conditions necessary for creative resolution," p. 166 Martin highly values experience that takes time to accumulate, particularly experiences that "deepen mastery and nurture originality." "You need a wealth of experiences to hone your sensitivities and skills," p. 190. We can then ask ourselves, what experiences do I need to have in order to build my repertoire of sensitivities and skills. Sensitivities are defined as the capacity to make distinctions between similar conditions. Skills are defined as the capacity to carry out an activity so as to consistently produce the desired result. AG Lafley from P&G features in Martin's book (they wrote "Playing to Win" together). Martin writes about some of AG Lafley's principles: Don't accept your model of reality as reality, see it as a hypothesis No work is acceptable until it reaches an unyielding high quality standard Take personal responsibility for finding a solution Rethink the entire problem from the ground up Question the assumptions that people take for granted Look outside your own organization (as well as inside) Don't accept unpleasant trade-offs, think harder instead Martin challenges us to question the models we take for granted and create something better. He acknowledges that all too often we staunchly hold onto what we are most comfortable and familiar with even though it may no longer serve us well. "Typically we [find that we] maintain our beliefs by engaging in contented model defense," and "Invoking divine authority neatly blocks any search for inconsistent or disconfirming data - such a search would be tantamount to blasphemy," p. 129. One of many quotes that sums up the spirit of the book is from Pablo Picasso, "I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it." Martin urges us to refuse to settle for mediocrity and half measures, and encourages us to look for patterns, connections, causal relationships and valuable collaborators. "Truly creative resolutions spring from complexity," p. 77. Above all, he believes in honesty and the power of thinking things through. Thank you, Roger Martin! Cliff Fuller, Wellington, New Zealand?

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