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NEWS

THINKING THROUGH THE NOSE

...“Breathe through your nose—in, out, in, out. Hold a mirror in front of your nostrils. You'll find the pools of condensation from your two nostrils are different in size. Peculiar, isn't it? At any given moment you see with both eyes, hear with both ears, yet breathe mainly through one nostril. This dominance lasts anywhere from one hour to more than three hours, then reverses over a period of minutes. The yogis of ancient India first discovered this subtle rhythm and its mental correlates more than 5,000 years ago—though the 'nasal cycle' itself wasn't documented in the West until the late 19th Century.... My colleagues—Floyd Bloom of the Scripps Clinic & Research Foundation in La Jolla, California, and Deborah Werntz of U. California, San Diego—and I...investigated a supposed relationship between the nasal cycle and a rhythm in brain hemisphere dominance.... It seems that the hemispheres alternate in a steady rhythm. On the average, our dominant mode of thinking shifts from left to

right hemisphere and back again about 10 times every 24 hours. That means you may have more luck balancing a checkbook during an episode of left-brain dominance and enjoy the arts more when your right brain is 'on.' Our studies show that you can tell which side of the brain is dominant at any given time. You just test which nostril you're using most. Right-nostril dominance goes with left-brain activity, left-nostril with the right brain. But beyond that, by forcing a switch in your breathing you can actually stimulate the less active hemisphere. A person breathing through the right nostril can activate the right hemisphere simply by forcing air through the left nostril, and vice versa.”

[(David Shannahoff-Khalsa (President, Khalsa Foundation for Medical Science) in *American Health* 5(9): 16-18, Nov. 86) Reproduced with permission from Press Digest, *Current Contents*®, No. 49, December 8, 1986. Published by the Institute for Scientific Information®, Philadelphia, PA, USA].
