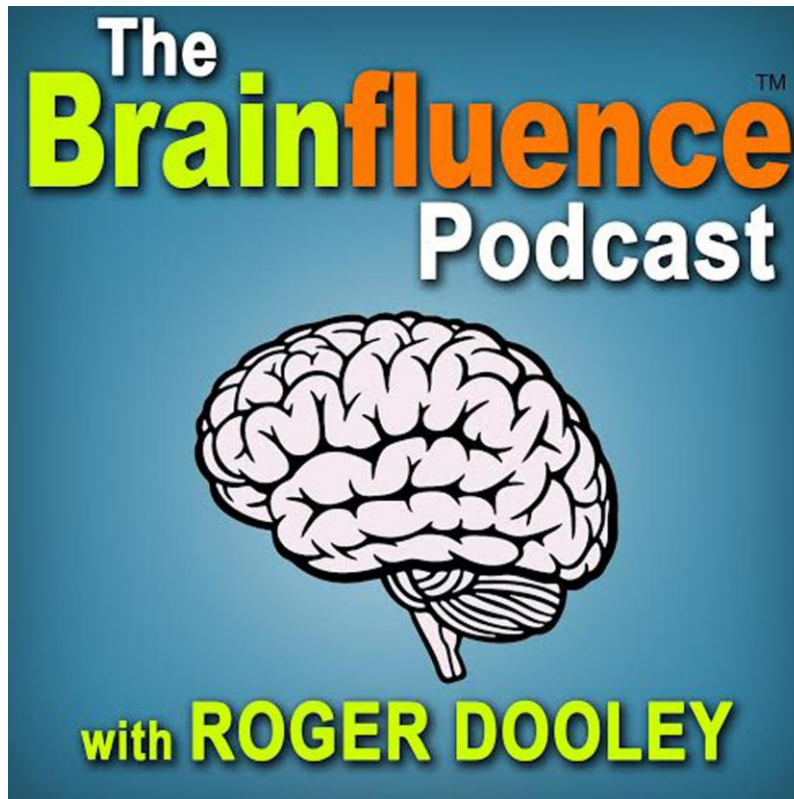


Ep #129: Draw to Win with Dan Roam



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host



Roger Dooley

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Welcome to the *Brainfluence Podcast* with Roger Dooley, author, speaker and educator on neuromarketing and the psychology of persuasion. Every week, we talk with thought leaders that will help you improve your influence with factual evidence and concrete research. Introducing your host, Roger Dooley.

Roger Dooley: Welcome to the *Brainfluence Podcast*. I'm Roger Dooley. My guest this week is likely to be more uncomfortable than most of the authors and thought leaders we talk to. That's not because he's intimidated by the vast size of our audience but rather because he's an expert in visual thinking. He's totally at home in front a whiteboard holding a marker or two. That's a great skill to have but it doesn't adapt all that well to radio.

Back to our guest, Dan Roam is the author of the international bestseller, *The Back of a Napkin*, the most popular visual thinking business book of all time. That book has been named the creativity book of the year by *Fast Company*, *BusinessWeek*, and others. Dan teaches visual thinking to organizations like Google, Walmart, Boeing, and even the U.S. Senate. Dan has a brand new book out now, *Draw to Win: A Crash Course in How to Lead, Sell, and Innovate with Your Visual Mind*. Dan, welcome to the show.

Dan Roam: Thanks, Roger. It's a pleasure to be here.

Roger Dooley: Great. Do you think that you'll be able to cope with the audio-only format for just our short time here?

Dan Roam: Roger, it's such a lovely way to introduce things because, yes, I'm the visual guy. I will admit I've learned to talk without a whiteboard in hand. The trick there, and this is going to be true for a lot of us when

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we're having conversations over the phone, is how can I draw pictures in your mind? Because I still want you to be visual even if we're basing those on the words. It's going to be an interesting challenge, but I think we're up to it.

Roger Dooley: Great, excellent. Hopefully I'll learn something and maybe something that I can use in future podcasts too because creating those mental images is really important.

Dan, what career path brought you to the point where now you're teaching visual thinking to the biggest companies in the world?

Dan Roam: I'll give you the very shortest version. The long version is full of all kinds of interesting stories, but let's go brief. I am one of those people like I'm sure many of the folks that are with us now, I always drew when I was a kid. That's not unusual because most children draw. I was just the weirdo that kept drawing all the way through high school and through university.

I got a double degree. I got a degree in biology and a degree in fine art, in painting. You can imagine I got out of university and functionally unemployable. Great, I've got a degree in biology and one in painting, what are you going to do with that?

Roger Dooley: You could have been an illustrator for science books.

Dan Roam: I did. I could do that. I went into graphic design. It was a trade that I knew. If you think about it, the language of graphic design is the language of sketching. It's very difficult to imagine putting together a poster, a newspaper, a magazine without sketching things out.

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When you're in the graphic design world, everybody draws all the time, or at least they used to. What was strange was I then moved into management consulting. It's a long and circuitous story but I moved into management consulting which meant I spent a lot of time in big rooms, in meetings, in conferences doing consultative sales, working on technology and business strategy. The one thing though that made me a little unique was I never gave up on the drawing. I shifted from drawing pictures of things to then going into these board rooms and drawing pictures of ideas.

I was that guy, and you've seen me in meetings, who couldn't wait to go up to the whiteboard the moment someone started talking and say, "Wait. If I understand correctly what you're saying, it looks like this." I would draw a circle up here and I would say, "This is our firm." Then I'd draw another bigger circle over here on the right. I would say, "This is our competitor."

Then I'd draw maybe a very large cloud surrounding both circles and say, "This is the market space and we own this part of it and our competitor owns this part of it. What you're talking about, if I understand you correctly is moving your circle from here over in this direction to take over this new part of the market." I hope I'm describing this well in such a way that people can picture in their mind's eye what this might look like because it was the act of doing that, and doing it viscerally, visually, with an actual pen in hand at the whiteboard.

Roger, I'm sure you can imagine this. It would completely change the tone and the temperature of the meeting. What would have been a typical sales

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meeting where someone is expecting me to sell something to them, it changes into a conversation. It's a conversation that is triggered by our mind's eye, by what we're actually physically able to see evolving and emerging on the wall in front of us.

I'm going to throw a bunch of terms at you as we go but one of my favorites lately, this is a term that's derived from a legitimate term in the cognitive sciences. There's this notion of distributed cognition. Another way of saying that is talking. Distributed cognition recognizes the idea that when I'm cognating, when I'm thinking through a thought, that's a process that's taking place in my mind as ideas are formulating. They're emerging as pictures and words in my head.

The concept of distributed cognition is when you and I, right now for example, are having a conversation, the thing that we're talking about emerges as kind of a cloud somewhere in the air between us. I say, "Hey, Roger, think about a green cow." You'll think about a green cow. Now that image of the green cow is kind of in the air in between us. We've now distributed the cognitive load. We're both thinking about a green cow.

What I've added on to that is this idea of visually distributed cognition. The other fancy word for that is simply drawing. The idea there is what would happen if you and I were talking and we had a piece of paper between us, or a virtual piece of paper if we were doing this with video and I actually drew a green cow? Now you'd be able to see exactly what I meant. Maybe it would be a pretty ugly cow, it probably would. I don't know how to draw a cow very well but I'll bet if I drew

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something and labeled it “cow” and colored it green, you’d get the idea that that was now a green cow.

What we’ve done is we’ve visually distributed the cognitive load. Now I hand you the pen and you start working on the green cow. You could add horns to it or you could put it in a pasture or draw a barn behind it. Now the conversation that’s taking place between us has entered an entirely different dimension. It’s become visceral. It’s become shared. It’s become visual.

That is a longwinded way of saying, that’s what I tried to do in business meetings. Where most people are talking at each other, I would try to amplify the critical pieces of the conversation by adding this visual element. It would work.

Roger Dooley:

I think one thing too that maybe you're leading up to is that if you say, “Think of a green cow,” I can probably think of a green cow. It may not look exactly like the one you're thinking of but it’s something that I can form a mental image of fairly easily.

If you say, “Think of the competitive environment,” that’s something that my brain certainly is not going to immediately put into some kind of clever image. In fact, it’s just going to be probably a big cloud mess that I’m trying to get my arms around, thinking about numbers and market shares and names of competitors, but definitely not any kind of an image.

Dan Roam:

That’s exactly it, Roger. Now, let’s capture it as an image. I’ll take the lead on this one. I’ll say that the competitive landscape is what we were describing before. It’s a circle which contains your business and

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three or four or five other circles, maybe similar in size, maybe different in size, that represent your competitors.

Now we've established each one of those circles represents a business. The size of those circles represents perhaps the revenue or the market share, whatever quantitative information we're trying to share. What we can begin to do is because now we look at it, we can say, "What would happen if this circle shrunk? What would happen if we moved in the way of this circle, completely blocking their access to our market?"

What was initially just a concept, and a concept that we think we understand well. If I say the "competitive landscape" anybody who's saturated in any level of business experience or business speak has an idea of what that means, but guaranteed, my idea of the competitive landscape is different than yours. So now what we've just done is we've created one which is shared and it is similar. We're seeing the same thing.

You may have come at it from a different perspective, which is great because now I hand you the pen and I say, "Roger, your view of the competitive landscape, what would you add into these circles that I've already created?" You might say, "Gosh, I've never thought about them as circles at all. I imagined it as a series of squares or as a bunch of checkmarks. Each checkmark representing one of my competitors." I say, "Okay, draw that."

Now what we're doing together is we're building again this shared model. This to me is the real beauty of all of it and what I've pursued, and what probably brings my little story at least up to a close where we are now.

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I just love the fact of what happens when we see the same image.

We'll talk about this later I'm sure, cognitive biology, the neuro-mechanics of vision, which is something I've become quite saturated in. I just love it. We know for a fact, we know for an absolute fact, that when we're sharing words, that's powerful. But when we are sharing the same pictures and those pictures are complemented by our words, now true cognitive magic is happening. That can be turned into sales magic. That can be turned into leadership magic. When people can see what you're saying, literally see it, changes everything.

Roger Dooley: I would think at the very least too it would help get you on the same page because if you draw a picture of the competitors and you've got a tiny little circle for a competitor that I think is actually the most important one, maybe they're not the biggest in size but they've got the best new technology or something, then that could come out of that discussion where otherwise it might not be apparent. Where I say, "That circle needs to be way bigger because those guys are the real threat in this environment."

Dan Roam: Exactly. Roger, think about what that does to our conversation. If in the past you had an idea in mind of a competitor and I had an idea, now our conversation isn't so much about do we agree or disagree. It's, "Oh my gosh, you think that that competitor is that influential? Wow. That never occurred to me. Roger, why do you think so? Why'd you draw it like that?" You say, "Well because they've got a better technology." I say, "I had no idea."

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Now where we were talking past each other, hopefully trying to build on each other but probably missing a lot, now we're not missing anything. I'm seeing what you mean and you're seeing what I mean. Yeah, literally as you say, we are now on the same page because we're drawing on that page.

Roger Dooley: One central thought in both *Back of the Napkin* and *Draw to Win* is that everybody needs to draw but I've got to believe in every training session that you go into or every conference you speak at people tell you, "That's great but I cannot draw. I'm horrible at drawing. I can barely draw a circle much less anything else."

What do you do with somebody like that who may indeed lack artistic skills? If you ask them to draw something it would be almost unrecognizable.

Dan Roam: From a data point perspective I would say that roughly 70 percent of people that I meet, and I meet thousands of people a year, probably 70 percent of people in business say exactly what you just did. "Dan, this sounds great. I'd like to be more visual but I can't draw." Of course, I have lots of thoughts on that.

Number one, you can draw. I can show you how in three minutes. You pick up a pen. You take a piece of paper. You put your pen on the paper. You make a little swirl. You just go in a circle, see if you can draw yourself a circle. If you can do that, which everybody can, great. Now label that. Call it something. Call it "me." Call it "my business." You've started your drawing.

Now let's draw another circle over here, bigger or smaller. This is my competitor or my product. "Oh,"

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people say, “I thought you wanted me to draw pictures of things. I don't know how to do that.” I say, “No, no. The drawing I’m talking about is not an artistic process. I don’t care if you're artistic at all. It’s a thinking process.” If you're capable of thinking clearly, you are absolutely capable of doing every type of drawing that we’re talking about.

Drawing is nothing more than connecting a series of dots to create a very limited elemental series of shapes: circles, squares, triangles, lines, dots. Everybody can draw those. If you just start to combine them in increasingly elaborate ways, pretty soon you're going to find that, wow, what do you know, if nobody is threatening you with saying, “That drawing doesn’t look right,” then the mind does find itself back in the very familiar territory of when we were kids and we did try to draw things out because we lacked the ability to write them at that time, back to kindergarten and things like that. It’s a very comfortable place for our brain to be when we’re in a safe environment.

When I’m doing training, when I’m doing a keynote, something like that, I do try to create an environment that is safe for people to re-explore the power of their visual mind. One of the ways I do that is I do start out with some data points, typically in business, especially people who might say, “I’m not artistic, I’m not creative.” Okay, I don’t believe you, but I’ll take that on faith for the time being. Let’s start out with something that people are comfortable with.

Most people in business, most of us are pretty comfortable with numbers, in one way or another. So I say, “Let’s take some data points. Here’s the first one.”

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Roughly 33 percent of your entire brain, every single one of the billions of neurons that you have in your brain, roughly one third of those are dedicated entirely to help you process vision. A remaining one third of your brain, all those neurons, are there to help you process vision in conjunction with other sensory inputs. So with auditory processing, with smell, with touch, with balance and sense of space. Leaving about one third of your brain to do everything else, all this other thinking type stuff.

If you just imagine that in terms of a pie chart. Draw a circle again in your mind. Fill in one third of it, that's vision. Another third of it is vision plus other sensory inputs. One third left for everything else. Those numbers are right. More of our brain is dedicated to processing vision than any other thing that we do. Orders of magnitude more neurons are involved in processing vision than pretty much any other function that we have, vastly more than in processing any type of spoken language.

Tells us a couple of things. Number one, vision is a very data-intensive process, which it is. It involves billions and billions of photons entering our eyes constantly. Color, shape, position, size. The fact that we're able to see at all is a miracle. How our systems have evolved to enable us to having increasingly sophisticated levels of vision as you go through the animal kingdoms and the evolution of vision, it's a miracle that the process works at all.

What's even more mind blowing is that it works without any conscious effort on our part. Roger, you or anybody who's listening to this right now, I'd challenge

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you to open your eyes for a moment and look at any corner of the room where you are. If you're driving, look out at the road, which I hope you already are. Imagine for a moment the extraordinary amount of processing that's going on in your brain to make that happen. This translation of photons, electrical impulses of light into meaning in your brain thousands of times a second constantly. That's where the cognitive load of our brain is going. That's data point number one.

Data point number two is let's look at this thing called the brain for a moment. The brain comes in about two, two plus pounds in most people. Two and a half, three pounds represents about 2 percent of our total body weight in most people. About two percent goes to your brain. Yet your brain consumes about 20 percent of all the calories your body is burning when you're at rest. Think about this. Your brain, a pretty small organ, is consuming vastly more energy than any other organ in your body. At least one third, close to half, of that energy is being consumed with helping you see. Those are the data points. I like to say that right up front.

When people tell me they can't draw I say, "Can you see?" They say, "Yes." I say, "This is not an artistic process. This is a thinking process. We can draw. Let me show you how." It takes about three minutes.

Roger Dooley: An aside here, is there a YouTube video or something of you doing your three-minute training?

Dan Roam: I have many, many YouTube videos available. If someone was to go to YouTube, just simply look up my name, Dan Roam, R-O-A-M.

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More importantly though and to the point, something I'd like to—it's promotional, but what the heck—is four years ago I created something called the napkinacademy.com. It's one word, napkinacademy.com. This is a paid service but there are many videos that are there for free. I have subscribers, we've got about 3,500 people around the world. This is my online training course. It is built of a series of videos. It's about 140 videos now which sounds like an overwhelming amount but they're categorized into beginning, intermediate, advanced, and master. They follow all of the lessons that are in my books.

If someone is interested in getting a deeper video sense, go to napkinacademy.com. Take a look at the free videos. That will give you a little bit of a flavor of what's in there. So yeah, lots of videos. I absolutely believe in the power of video.

Roger Dooley: I left that door wide open, didn't I? That's great, Dan. We will link to that in the show notes as well.

When talking about the brain and seeing, this reminds me of something that I did a long time ago, many years ago. I picked up the book that I'm sure you've seen, it's sort of a classic even though it's decades old now which is *Drawing with the Right Side of the Brain*.

Dan Roam: Dr. Betty Edwards. I know it well, inside and out. Absolutely.

Roger Dooley: Of course her thesis is that you basically have to stop thinking about what you're drawing. If you want to draw a picture of a hand, you don't think about a hand because it's going to come out looking like a three-

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year-old drew a hand, at least if you're as skilled an artist as I am, that's what it would look like.

Instead, you are keeping the hand concept out of your mind and drawing lines and angles and light areas and dark areas. It was really remarkable—my drawing level was pretty much the stick figure level—but after playing with that book for a while, I actually produced some sketches that certainly would not hang in any museum but were at least very recognizable as to what I was drawing, things like a hand or an old sneaker or something like that. People could very readily recognize them, which was remarkable for me.

The reason I'm making that point is because really what you're saying is you're trying to turn these concepts like market share or next quarter sales, or whatever it might be, into visual elements. At the same time, it seems like to draw effectively, they sort of have to turn off that part of the brain. How does that reconcile in what you're suggesting people do?

Dan Roam:

It's exactly the right question, Roger. I take a very different path than Dr. Edwards did. You described *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* perfectly. I take a very different approach. My approach is stick figures. Draw what you think something looks like. I don't care what it actually looks like because then you're moving into the area where people get very threatened by saying, "I can't draw that thing because it doesn't look like that thing."

Dr. Edwards' book is magnificent. It was life changing for me when it came out in the mid-1980s because more importantly it was the first time I had ever heard of this concept of right brain and left brain thinking

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which we can talk a little bit more in detail because there's also so much hogwash out there about what right brain and left brain thinking is.

It's a fascinating concept and a fascinating fact that the two hemispheres of our neocortex, right and left, do appear to have evolved to serve slightly different functions. They split the load as well in interesting ways. The more critical point to me, I think it's really important, I want you to draw a stick figure. I want you to draw a six-year-old's version of a human hand. I'm not interested in what the thing looks like. I'm interested in what your brain thinks it looks like.

What we're trying to leverage off of is the extraordinary capacity we have to remember visuals. Most of our memories are not stored as words. Words are a terrible thing to try to remember. You put in a tremendous amount of memorization effort for very little return when it comes to words. However, images are stored immediately. They're stored readily and they're stored with almost no conscious effort.

There's all kinds of tests we can do that are really fun. When I do my workshops I run some of these where I'll show a series of just random images, typically anywhere from 30 to 50 images. Show them to the audience. Just random stuff that I pulled off of Google Images, no rhyme or reason. Just pictures of everything you can imagine from cats to rifles to ribbons to skies to pyramids, doesn't matter.

Show them to everybody in the room, but they fly by at about a quarter of a second each. You can imagine the images are going [makes sound pacing the images] at about that pace. At the end of it, it lasts 15, 20

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seconds, you say, “How many people can remember every image that we just saw?” People raise their hand and be able to, “I remember the pyramid. I remember the rifle.”

Then I say, “Let’s forget about that.” I go onto something completely different for the next 45 minutes or sometimes an hour or sometimes a day. At the end of the session I say, “Let’s go back and look at those pictures again.” What I do is I take two images side by side. One of the 30 that we saw before and one that we did not. I say, “Which one did we see before?” 100 percent of the room, 100 percent of the time, is able to identify within one-tenth of a second which is the one we saw before. That was without any context. That was without any preparation.

It’s just a quick little example of the fact that pretty much everything we’ve ever seen we’re going to remember. We certainly have the mental capacity for it. The cognitive scientists are getting closer and closer to this realization that it is not true that you will remember everything that you’ve ever seen, but it is looking increasingly true that you will probably remember or have access to the memory of pretty much everything you have ever seen in your life. It’s probably all in there somewhere. It’s just the right trigger to bring it out.

This is a longwinded answer to although I love Dr. Betty Edwards’ work, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, I take a different path. What I want to do is key off of what you think something looks like so that as fast as possible you can capture it on a piece of paper so we can now have the conversation about the

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human hand or the pyramid or the tractor or the market share or the business strategy. Does that makes sense, what I'm saying?

Roger Dooley: Yeah, I think so. In fact, when you think about the way a four-year-old or five-year-old might draw, one of the things that sometimes comes out of those drawings are insights. If they're asked to draw a picture of their family, they might draw a mom and a dad and then sort of a giant baby. Of course, it's not a realistic drawing of what the family looks like because the baby is quite small but because the baby is demanding so much attention, that comes through in the illustration itself. So I think that there's maybe a truth that comes through when you are not being photo realistic.

Dan Roam: Absolutely. I love stick figures. In fact, in *Draw to Win* there's an entire part of a chapter on the right way to draw a stick figure. I say that facetiously but I have done a rigorous scientific analysis of stick figures that people seem to look at and don't question. They say, "Yes, that's a stick figure drawing of someone clapping" or "That's a stick figure drawing of someone holding a baseball bat about to hit a ball," or whatever. As opposed to those stick figure drawings that people look at and say, "That is sure the ugliest person I have ever seen in my life."

It comes down to proportion. This is going to be interesting. There's a little bit of story, so give me a second to walk through this. A stick figure that simply looks right is based on what I'd call the rule of thirds. The head is a circle that is about one third the entire height of the figure. The body is a line that's one third.

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Then the legs are two lines that are the remaining third.

If you imagine three pieces stacked on top of each other, a circle, a line, and two lines representing the legs. The arms sit off the body at the same length. The rule of thirds. You might think that's crazy because an actual human adult, the proportions are much closer to seven to one. That is if you were to take a photograph of an average adult human, that person's head is about one seventh of their body height.

Why is it that if you were to draw a stick figure with a head one seventh of the height, it looks terrible? It looks absurd. Because in our minds, from the time that we were infants, we don't think people look like what people really look like. Here's the theory: When you're an infant, long before you are verbal, from the moment that you pop out and you are seeing the light of day, your visual system is beginning to kick into gear, saying there's light coming in. I need to figure out what to do with this.

The very first thing that you are looking for and hopefully you see is a face. That ideally should be the face of your mother because as an infant your number one instinct is I need safety. I need a mother to take care of me right now. What you do is you look up into your mother's face and it fills your entire field of view. Again, the science, the research appears to be indicating that this is true, that as an infant you believe that your mother's face, the simple face—eyes, nose, mouth—is enormous because that is the thing that you're looking for.

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So why is it then if you ask a kindergartener to draw a stick figure are people's heads so big? Because children believe that people's heads are that big because that's the amount of capacity that we dedicate to trying to see someone's face. I'm just saying we're grown-ups now, if that worked when you were little, work it now. It's exactly the reason, Roger, you were just talking about. The child who draws the baby big. Not because the baby is physically bigger but because the baby demands so much attention.

Isn't that exactly the conversation you and I had ten minutes ago where we were talking about this shared drawing of our competitive marketspace? I had drawn a small circle to represent the competitor and you drew a big circle because that competitor has the newest technology. So even though in revenue space they're the smallest in terms of potential, they're the biggest. I mean, aren't we just having the same conversation again? This is what's so amazing to me about this application of simple pictures to our ideas.

Roger Dooley:

There's also some neuroscience that shows that exaggerated features are much more able to engage our emotions quickly. Weirdly, I just saw an article about the neuroscience of clowns if you will and why people find clowns repulsive and frightening. It's because of their exaggerated features. Our brains process that clown face emotionally faster than we can rationally figure out what it is. That's one reason why clowns are creepy. That's why I mention there's some truth to when you exaggerate the features in a drawing.

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Dan Roam: I'm going to add another point to it because science, and my background, biology, or some connections between science and business, there's a term that you learn when you're in undergraduate biology. One of the classes that you take, everybody does, is evolution. Trying to understand Darwin's theories and how do organisms and systems evolve over time, natural selection, all that kind of good stuff. There's a term that comes up in that called neoteny. The term neoteny means grown mammals that retain attributes of infants as they grow up.

The human mammal, unlike say a chimpanzee or gorilla, shows a high level of neoteny. Meaning that a mature adult looks more like a baby in any other mammal. It appears to have very powerful selection ideas in that amplified features, exaggerated features, eyes and mouth, parts of the body, appeal to us because they are exaggerated. Big eyes represent openness, trustworthiness. They're very appealing. If you go back to people like—Morris, was it Richard Morris? Who wrote *The Naked Ape* a long time ago? Roger, do you remember?

Roger Dooley: That sounds right.

Dan Roam: Desmond Morris.

Roger Dooley: Yes, yes, that's it.

Dan Roam: That's it. There's nothing new about what we're talking about. The idea being people who make really good seductive advertisements know perfectly well which attributes of a person face to exaggerate in order to draw you in.

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So you and I aren't talking about anything new here. We're just talking about applying those sorts of thoughts to making clear what we're thinking and trying to emphasize what parts of drawing—what parts of my competitive market space do I want you to look at? Those are the parts I'm going to exaggerate. Is this making any sense?

Roger Dooley: Yeah. Let me ask you about *Draw to Win*. What do you think the key takeaway or key point that you wanted to make in *Draw to Win* that you hadn't made in your previous *Napkin* book?

Dan Roam: Roger, thank you. That is the real question. The way I think about *Draw to Win* is *The Back of the Napkin* is a book that I started working on ten years ago. The book came out almost eight years ago after two years of first time author work, takes a long time to get that first book out. I was very pleased that *The Back of the Napkin* did as well as it did. International bestseller, that was incredible for a first time author.

Draw to Win is a different book. What *Draw to Win* does is I take everything that I have learned over these last ten years, 700 different presentations, working with 110 plus different clients. What I've tried to do is distill down everything that I have learned in these last ten years about what works in a business setting, for sales, for leadership, for innovation, from a visual perspective and cut it out from what does not.

Draw to Win is based on ten chapters, call them if you will sort of the ten commandments of powerful visual thinking, visual applied thinking. It's the ten rules that you need to know. I would say two or three of those rules were introduced in *The Back of the Napkin*. The

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remaining seven come from things that I've learned since that I didn't even know at that time that are based on additional learnings in of course the cognitive sciences and following along the literature there.

More importantly, just practice. When I go into a client and I do my training or I do a consulting project, when I say what works what I mean is what picture did we create that moved the needle in a measureable way? That had people clearer than they were before? What actually works. Or I needed to increase my sales. Which pictures literally worked to help increase sales? Or what active drawing? Or innovation? Which pictures did we create that led to the greatest breakthrough in coming up with new ideas?

So that's it. *Draw to Win*. The title says it all. To me, winning is of course a subjective idea. There's lots of ways you can win. There's personal things. There's professional things. I'm coming at it from a business perspective with the basic idea that if you want to be a leader in your business, if you want to make more sales in your business, or if you want to be really considered a good innovator in your business, all three of those to me are a win. Here's the way, the simple way, to use your visual mind to do that.

Roger Dooley: One thing I think that you bring when you draw in front of a group or in front of another person even is what psychologists call visual salience. What is in front of you that you're looking at directly is always more important than stuff that you aren't looking at.

Say in a big meeting room, when you get up from that chair down near the end of the table and go up to the whiteboard. It's sort of centrally placed and everybody

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is looking at you. You are going to make a more powerful impression simply because you're in front of the people. Obviously, there's a whole aspect of visual communication too. I think that the whole process, and also the motion when you are drawing on the screen or on the whiteboard or whatever it is, that motion is going to hold people's attention far better than you simply mouthing words.

Dan Roam: Roger, I want to run with that for a moment. This isn't specifically in the book but I'm already thinking about the next book because constant learning. You just hit it right on the head.

Roger Dooley: I expect a spot in the acknowledgements.

Dan Roam: Absolutely. Think about this. What we're trying to do in a business meeting is get attention. Hopefully we're trying to get good attention. We're using good attention as opposed to bad attention. But let's face it, if this is a business meeting where decisions are going to be made and we have an opinion or we have some skin in the game, we want attention.

In the corporate world there are certain things that never happen in a meeting and never would happen in a meeting. You can't get attention by singing. Nobody sings in a meeting. You can't get attention by reciting poetry. Nobody ever recites poetry in a business meeting. One of the things that never ever happens is you can't get up and do interpretive dance to help push people towards your strategy. Never happens.

If you think about it, what is the one quote/unquote artistic act that you can do in a business meeting for exactly the reason, Roger, that you just described that

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draws good attention to you? There is only one. Drawing. It is your only option.

In a meeting, you have two things you can do. Well, three things I suppose. You can talk and listen. You can move, your body language, your gestures. But those are very forgettable. Those are very ephemeral. There's nothing left in the room after you've finished your speech other than, "That was a great speech." Or, "That was a terrible speech." But there's nothing physically left. What is the one artistic/creative thing you can do in the room, is you can draw. That's a new reason that I'm coming in to realize why you want to do it.

Roger, I want to run with this just for a second more because again, where this takes us, back to this notion of drawing to win—I don't want people to take this wrong, as solipsistic or narcissistic or something. The reality is, we've all been there. In a meeting, there is a battle for attention. If you want to win, you know this, you need to capture attention.

I know that you're into neuroscience of selling and how do you appeal to people's emotions, and of course, because you're trying to get attention in the right processing centers in someone's brain. If you want to win, here's a new trick: draw. You're going to capture attention. Now, you need to practice because you only have a brief period of time as you get up there and start drawing before attention is going to waver.

That's where a book like *Draw to Win* comes in because it teaches you specifically when you do move to the front of the room, when you've shown the courage to stand up and go to the whiteboard, you now

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own the room. Nobody else does. You do. It's like having the mic. It's been given to you. If you're the person who stood up and picked up the pen to draw, all attention is now focused on you. I want you to be prepared for that moment.

How do you prepare? Learn what are the basic elemental drawings that resonate in business. Go to chapter four in *Draw to Win* because the six elemental pictures are spoken about right then. Practice drawing them so that spontaneously when you're hearing someone say in a meeting, "The objective of this meeting is to try to reach the deadline on time, making sure that we get everything done." Bing. You're brain goes, "He just said timeline. The picture that I'm going to draw is a timeline. I know how to draw that. That's elemental picture number four. I know how to do it." You go up to the whiteboard and you immediately start drawing a timeline.

Practice these basic tools so that when you do have that moment with the pen, when all attention is upon you, you have the confidence to know what to draw. And, with a little bit of practice you'll also realize that nothing, nothing, nothing is more important than talking while you draw. Now you're hitting both the visual processing and the verbal processing centers and the emotional processing centers all at the same time.

What you want to do is not only practice what are the simple pictures that I would draw but also get comfortable with the idea that you're going to narrate as you draw. You're going to say, "I'm drawing a circle. This represents our business today. I'm labeling it 'us.' Now I'm drawing a circle over here to the right. This

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represents our competitor number one. I'm labeling it number one. Now I'm drawing this cloud around both circles. This cloud represents our potential market. I'm going to label it as M for market." I'm going on, Roger, but that's the trick right there. Draw while you talk. You will own the room for as long as you want.

Roger Dooley: That seems like a really good place to break off. Great information, Dan. Let me remind our listeners, we are speaking with Dan Roam, author of *The Back of the Napkin* and the new book *Draw to Win: A Crash Course in How to Lead, Sell, and Innovate with Your Visual Mind*.

Dan, how can folks find you and your content online?

Dan Roam: Easy. Danroam.com or napkinacademy.com. I'm on Twitter @Dan_Roam. In terms of books, the whole series of books are all available on all online sellers and all brick and mortar sellers around the world.

Roger Dooley: Super. We'll link to those places as well as your books, Dan, and any other resources we talked about on the show on the show notes page at rogerdooley.com/podcast. We'll have a text version of our conversation there too. Dan, thanks so much for being on the show.

Dan Roam: Roger, my pleasure. Thank you.

Thank you for joining me for this episode of the *Brainfluence Podcast*. To continue the discussion and to find your own path to brainy success, please visit us at RogerDooley.com.