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Preface

*Life isn't about finding yourself.
Life is about creating yourself.
George Bernard Shaw*

My search for better balance began while I was living in Honolulu, Hawaii, in the late 1990s. A good friend and I were making observations about how the mind, body, and spirit are connected. We discussed how our life experience reflected our state of balance. The more balanced we were, the more serenity and peace we felt.

21 Days to Better Balance is based on those initial conversations and subsequent years of writing, research, and observations about the world and the colorful array of people in it.

During my years of study I found a recurring theme: Being balanced is *natural*. Returning to this natural state means removing the barriers to balance within us, many of them created by our own thoughts and behaviors. I knew there must be a way to break old patterns and return to a healthier balanced state. In this book, I highlight several of the ways I've found that have had the largest impact on my balance. Sometimes the best teacher is our own experience.

The mind, body, and spirit were designed to work in harmony and unity with one another. My hope is that the personal observations, insights, and analogies that I've used to find better balance in my life will help you find better balance in yours.

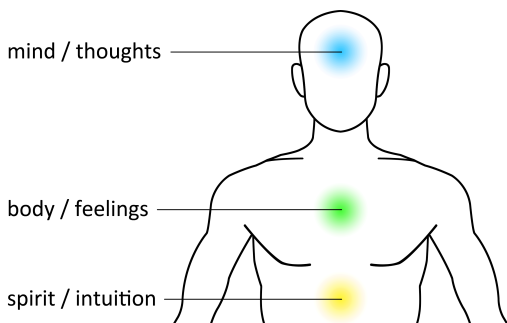
To your best balanced life!

Michael Thomas Sunnarborg
July 2011

Introduction

It takes 21 days to make or break a habit. Over the next 21 days, I'm going to lead you through a three-step process of awareness, alignment, and activation designed to gently shift your perspective, remove barriers, and help you find better balance in your mind, body, and spirit. At the end of the process, you will have established new habits that will help to keep you moving in the direction of a balanced life.

Throughout this book I will be associating the mind with *thoughts*, the body with *feelings*, and the spirit with *intuition*. These associations help to identify how you might experience your mind, body, and spirit in more tangible ways.



There are three chapters in the book, each focusing on one of the three steps of awareness, alignment, and activation. Each chapter leads you through seven days of the balance process. At the end of each chapter are exercises to help reinforce that stage of development.

Each of the 21 days has a theme. At the end of each theme are questions for a Balance Plan and an affirmation for the day:



Balance Plan questions



Daily Affirmation

You might find it useful to journal about the questions, or simply mull them over during your day. They can also serve as a useful meditation focus; simply bring the question into your mind during your regular meditation practice and notice the thoughts that float up in response. Repeating the affirmations can help you internalize the lessons from each day. You might post them on your bathroom mirror or computer monitor. I know one person who posts each day's affirmation in the middle of her car's steering wheel so that she remembers it on the way to work and on her way home.

The steps and themes are progressive and will be best-understood if read in order—at least the first time through. Then after you've completed the book you can return to any of the themes or exercises to refresh yourself as needed.

The content in this book is very direct. If any of the introductory text feels overwhelming, try skipping down and reading the analogy before re-reading the larger messages. This may help you set the appropriate context for the daily theme.

Along with the informative messages, this book will help you create a Balance Plan. You can download a form at 21daystobetterbalance.com, or you can create your own. The plan is meant to help

you apply the insights contained in this book. Start by thinking of a current problem or situation in your life where you'd like to create better balance—for example, your job, your finances, or a relationship—and use the plan to document your answers to the daily questions. Your plan can help shed light on the situation and support you in brainstorming potential solutions.

Remember: The power to make changes in your life is *always* in your hands. Make a commitment to start paying closer attention to your thoughts, feelings, and intuition and create the momentum for better balance in your life today.

Let's get started!

Chapter 1: Welcome to Awareness

Awareness

*Let us not look back in anger, nor forward
in fear, but around in awareness.*

James Thurber

Humans are multi-sensory beings. Our powerful consciousness is absorbing and processing everything in our environment—sights, sounds, and smells—whether we realize it or not. In order to find better balance in our lives, we must first become aware of the factors that influence our balance.

The next seven days will be spent taking a closer look at awareness. Raising our awareness helps us reconnect with our natural state of balance and reminds us that the power to change our lives is always in our hands.

Day 1: Thoughts

Awareness

The ancestor of every action is a thought.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Thoughts are most often associated with logic, cognition, reasoning, and the mind. The mind is the source of our thoughts. Although the mind is a complex and vast resource of knowledge, memories, and perceptions—a metaphorical scrapbook of our life experiences—it is not our thoughts. Thoughts are only energetic vibrations created in the mind. But in the process of creating, thoughts are powerful tools.

All thoughts contain energy. When you think a thought, you send out an energetic signal, and that signal produces an effect. As the thought process continues, the energy around the thought will grow and begin to manifest in your experience. Whatever you pay attention to will expand. Have you ever thought about someone and then seen or heard from them shortly afterward? Have you gone to sleep with a problem and woken up with a solution? These are examples of how powerful our thoughts can be.

Our thoughts are affected by everything that we encounter, and we have the power to sort, prioritize, and control our thoughts. When we take control of our thoughts, we can choose which thoughts to focus on—we can literally *change our minds*. When we change our thoughts, we will change our experiences. We are in control.

***Being aware of your thoughts allows
you to choose them and control their power.***

Thoughts are like advertisements. Each day we are bombarded by a variety of messages designed to

bring us information and persuade us to take some sort of action. But most of us only take action on a small percentage of advertisements. We have the ability to tune out advertisements by turning off the radio or TV, putting down the newspaper, or simply choosing to ignore the message. We are in control.

Similarly, each day we entertain thoughts bringing us information and persuading us to believe something or take some sort of action. But for the most part, we only take action upon a small percentage of the thoughts we think. Just as with advertisements, we can decide how to respond to our thoughts. We have the option to accept or dismiss a thought, choose a new thought, or slow down our thoughts through relaxation activities such as deep breathing or meditation. Again, we are in control.



How do your thoughts help you today? Where do your thoughts get in your way? How have your thoughts been helpful or harmful in your current situation?



How could a shift in your thinking help you to support yourself in a healthier way?



I am able to control my thoughts and choose to focus only on those thoughts that serve me.