

Life Balance

Love Your Life by Finding Mental,
Physical, Emotional and Spiritual
Abundance.

Rodolfo Menjivar

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ISBN: 1544186932
ISBN-13: 978-1544186931

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to you. To the one reading this. I wrote this for you in hopes that you can find something within these pages that will help you move forward in life. Hopefully, it will also open you up to a new perspective on what it means to be healthy. Thank you for saying yes to moving forward on your journey to a healthy lifestyle.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are so many people I would like to thank that I could write a book just based on that. I want to thank everyone that has cheered me on through this process. You all gave me the energy and motivation to keep pushing on the days that I wanted to quit. I want to thank Annie, my editor, without whom this book would not have been finished. Most importantly, I would like to thank my mom! Without her, I would have never made it this far in life, and I don't even want to think of where I would have ended up.

Introduction

The Life Balance book is designed to be an introduction to how to start leading a healthy lifestyle. It will help people get one foot in the door of living a healthy life.

It will help you begin to understand what being healthy means and what it takes to get there. It will give you the necessary information and tools to get you started and to keep you moving forward.

The book will take you through what I feel are the four significant areas of life. The mental, physical, emotional and spiritual. I feel that each of these areas play a prominent role in our overall health. Health has to do with a lot more than just the physical aspects of exercise and what we eat.

I will start by discussing our mental health as I feel that without a healthy mind and mindset we will not get very far in our journey towards health. We must be able to filter out the negative influences in our mind and fill it with positivity and reaffirming words. Our minds are potent tools that, when used in our favor, can make the impossible possible. We must use these tools to their fullest potential to get the most out of our lives.

I will then proceed to discuss our physical health. I believe having an active and healthy body is of the utmost importance. I do not mean that we all need to be bodybuilders or anything like that. What I do mean is that we must have healthy immune systems that can function properly and keep us healthy. We should treat our bodies like a temple as we only get one and we spend all our time in them. By being mindful of what we put into our bodies, we can choose the quality of life we will have.

I like to look at it with the analogy of our bodies being a race car. Life is like the Daytona 500, where we must go through 200 laps to complete, and it is not just a quarter-mile sprint. Are we

going to fuel up on premium fuel or on regular? Are we going to get routine maintenance done or are we just going to wait for the engine light to come and then deal with the problems? Are we going to take pit stops to refuel and change our tires or are we just going to push through and eventually run out of gas? We are bound to get further in life if we avoid health problems in the first place.

I will then move on to emotional health. I feel like this is the area that is the least talked about today. At least in my world, it is. Emotions are taboo for men to talk about, as we have been conditioned to believe that expressing emotion is weak. We do not want to be viewed as vulnerable. We are taught to put on a strong face and show no cracks in our armor.

As I have done a lot of work in recent years on my emotional health, I now feel that entirely the opposite is true. Showing emotion and vulnerability is a sign of strength and not weakness. Only a real man can stand up in front of others and say that he was hurt. Only a real man can show the scars and declare to the world that although he was hurt, he is capable of healing and also be willing to forgive. When we give ourselves the freedom to express our emotions, we also give ourselves the freedom to be who we are.

I will then discuss spiritual health. When I talk about spiritual, I do not mean anything religious. To me, spirituality does not include or exclude religion. They can go together for some people and for others they are separate.

To me, spiritual health is about having a practice that helps you be aware of the bigger picture and your place in it. Being aware that there is something out there that is bigger than all of us and is here to support us. Something that connects us all and gives us purpose and passion in life. Spirituality is all about finding that connection and letting it guide us in life.

Lastly, I will talk about balance. Balance in life and balance in the four key areas. If we choose to ignore one of the areas,

resistance will come up, and it will manifest in the other areas. Each area is connected to the others, and when there is an issue or ignorance in one area, it will show in the others. There is no way to avoid this. This is why balance is so important.

My aim in writing this book is to empower people to make changes in their lives to become healthier and happier. My goal is to help people find meaning, purpose, and passion. I want to help people to see they have the tools and knowledge to always move forward in life. Life will still be a series of ups and downs, but I want to help you know how to turn the downs into ups. If I can do this, for even one person, then I will have fulfilled my purpose of this book.

Happy reading.

Rodolfo Menjivar

Part 1

Mental Abundance

Chapter 1 - Mindset

“Once your mindset changes, everything on the outside will change along with it.”

— Steve Maraboli

I believe having the right mindset is the most important thing to do on the road to living a healthy, balanced lifestyle. Mindset includes attitude, willpower, knowledge, motivation and much more. Confucius was right when he said “He who thinks he can and he who thinks he can’t are both usually right.” What we put into our minds will determine the kind of mindset that we have. Make sure you fill it with information that will push you to grow and move forward in life.

Motivational talks are equivalent to filling your mind with premium fuel. Listening to other people who have been where you are now and how they overcame their struggles will give you the faith and confidence to believe that you can do it too. Autobiographies of successful people are also excellent fuel for your mind. Fill your mind with success stories and things that make you feel good.

Even different forms of entertainment can be considered premium fuel for your mind. Watching documentaries instead of the latest Hollywood flick can be extremely beneficial. Find a topic that interests you, and go online to search for documentaries under that category. A lot of documentaries have great producers and directors and are just as entertaining as they are educational. Even rotating educational and entertainment programs will have an impact on the quality of your mind.

It is essential that you fill your mind with positive content that keeps you in a positive mind state. If you are always watching the news or “reality t.v” your mind is being programmed for you. The news is designed to keep you in a state of constant fear and worry. Reality television is designed to have you act and think in specific ways. They teach you how to speak,

how to treat others and what is important based on an image. These are called television programs for a reason. They are programming your mind to think and behave in a certain way.

It is crucial to learn something new every day. Learning keeps your mind sharp and young. A mind that is continually working and being challenged is a healthy mind. I believe the quote, “Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death” by Albert Einstein, sums it up perfectly.

An excellent place to start is by committing 20 minutes a day to reading. By reading 20 minutes a day, you are exposing yourself to over 3 million words a year and will automatically place yourself in the top 90% of society.

I would recommend reading non-fiction as, in my opinion, they are the most educational books. I love to read about philosophy and history because studying the behavior of humans, the meaning of life and the events of the past can be extremely beneficial. Fiction can also be helpful as it gets your imagination running. I have learned some valuable lessons from the few fiction books that I have read.

I believe that investing in yourself is the most significant investment that anyone can make and will give the highest return. If you are always looking to become better, smarter, stronger, and more understanding than you were yesterday then you will, by default, also be able to accomplish more than you have ever achieved before. It can be no other way. This will take time, money, a great deal of effort and commitment but I can guarantee you that it will be worth every second, penny and every drop of sweat.

What does investing in yourself mean? I will give you examples from my own life. Before writing this book, in November of 2016, I had spent almost the last four years of my life enrolled in Personal Development classes. These classes have been an investment in many different ways. They have cost me in the thousands of dollars and taken lots of time and energy.

I have also taken other classes outside of the above mentioned. There are many free university classes available online to anyone who wishes to take them. I took courses in public speaking and philosophy. I continuously go to weekend seminars on a variety of topics including motivational workshops. I have also read so many books that I now need to invest in a bookshelf!

To make these investments, I have also had to make many sacrifices in my life. I have had to miss soccer games, birthdays, social gatherings, and other kinds of events. I have had to say no to new shoes, phones and even to vacations to make sure I had enough funds to keep on investing in myself. Many times I signed up for classes having no idea how I was going to pay for them, but it always worked out one way or the other.

This may seem like a lot to some people, and it was a lot for me to handle when I first began this mission of investing in myself. I spent time stressing about money, wondering what I was getting out of it, feeling guilty for missing events and wondering if it was all worth it.

What has been my return on all of these investments and sacrifices? I now have a better understanding of myself and why I am the way that I am. Why I believe in certain things and why I act, feel and think in the ways that I do. I have a better understanding of others, and I can see things from their point of view and be more empathetic. I have better relationships with the people I care about and most importantly a better relationship with myself.

I have a deeper understanding of the world and my place in it. I know what I can and cannot control. I have learned to forgive and let things go. I have learned about the power of cooperation and how to make a difference in each other's lives and the world.

I could go on and on about what I have learned and how I have grown and evolved due to investing in myself. I now focus

on the benefits of possible investments instead of focusing on the costs.

A lot of people tell me that they want to change yet find it so difficult to do so. The reason it is so easy to keep doing the same things over and over is that it is ingrained into your very being since birth. Most of our behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs are formed when we are very young, and they continue to run the show to this day. We have become perfect and efficient at doing what we do. It is like the old saying goes “Practice makes perfect.”

Habits can be difficult to break, but they can be broken. It takes a right amount of effort, willpower, and consistency to do this. Studies have shown that it takes 21 days of practicing a new habit to break the old habit and reinforce the new one as the only habit. This is 21 days in a row without skipping days or without using the old habit at all.

The key here is consistency. There will be challenges and times where you want to give up and resort back to your old habits. You must use your willpower and think about why you want to change this habit in the first place. Think of the result and how much you will grow from letting go of the old habit. It will take effort on the days where you feel lazy or tired and don’t want to push yourself. These are the most critical days in which you must really harness your willpower and push through.

Breaking an old habit and replacing it with a new one that will serve you better can be very rewarding. You will have more self-confidence, and you will feel a sense of accomplishment that will allow you to move on to the next challenge feeling capable of taking it on.

I will give you some simple tips and tools that you can use to successfully break old habits and create new ones that serve you better. Again, I remind you that consistency, willpower, and effort will be crucial to your success.

The first tip is to start simple. I cannot stress this enough. For example, if you want to run 5km every day, but do not currently run now, then it would be best to start with 1km or 2km a day and work your way up. Set yourself up for success. If you try for 5km on the first day and do not make it, it can be very demotivating and likely cause you to give up before you even get going.

Next is the importance of scheduling it into your day. Make sure you plan time for your run every single day. Do not just say that you will run when you feel like it because that is a recipe for disaster. Slot in the run into your day and do your best to do it at the same time every day. This will help with consistency, and it will start to become automatic for you. Scheduling is essential.

Find an accountability buddy and know that it may not be perfect. An accountability buddy is someone that you can share your goal with, and that can check in with you and see how it is going. Buddies are important because people often find it easier to let themselves down than letting others down. A buddy will help keep you on track. Also, when challenges do arise, a buddy can provide extra motivation or help talk you through it. Do not expect to be able to change every habit right away but also do not give up. If it takes three tries, then it takes three attempts. This is where willpower and effort come in.

Do you know that everyone talks to themselves? Do you also know that the kind of conversations you have with yourself is critical? The way you talk to yourself is much more important than anything anyone else could ever say to you.

The way you talk to yourself is so meaningful because you are the one running the show. You decide how you feel, you decide what you do and do not do. You choose what risks to take if any. You decide what kind of life you are going to live and the friends you are going to have. You decide everything. So if you are always telling yourself that you are ugly or stupid, do you think that might affect the types of decisions you make?

We are powerful beings who are capable of anything we put our minds to. Therefore, if we believe that we are not capable of something, then that stops us from realizing our real power and potential. It is important always to tell yourself you are capable. Even if you do not know how to do something at the moment, you can learn how to do it.

If you are anything like me, then you most likely spend a lot of time talking to yourself, possibly even more than you speak to others. Make sure these conversations are serving you and helping to motivate you.

Many people will testify to the power of affirmations. “I am” is the most powerful creative tool in existence. Whatever you choose to put after that statement, if repeated enough with faith, will come true. Throughout our lives, we have been using this statement for both our support and to our detriment. A lot of what we choose to put after this statement depends on external factors like what people around us tell us. If our teachers keep telling us that we are wrong, we may choose to keep telling ourselves that “I am dumb” and continue to say this throughout life. On the other hand, if one of our coaches tells us that we are an amazingly talented soccer player, we may choose to end that statement with “I am amazing.”

Take Muhammad Ali for example. His affirmation statement was “I am the greatest!” He told himself this and proclaimed it to the world over and over again. Few would argue against him.

It is vital that when you are making affirmations that you root them in the present and prefix them with the “I am” statement. Even if you do not already have what you want, you must still use the present term. For example, if you want to run 5km in under 30 minutes but it currently takes you 35 minutes, your statement could read “I am so grateful to be able to run 5km in 29 minutes.” You must root it in the present, attach emotion to it and always begin with “I am.”

Another critical aspect of changing your mind and having the

right mindset is gratitude. Simply put, gratitude is just being thankful for what you have. Appreciating where you are at in life and being happy about it.

Gratitude is an emotion that comes from love. Gratitude shows that you have evolved to the point where you can choose how you will feel in any given circumstance. Expressing gratitude can instantly change your mood into a positive one and has also been shown to lead to better sleep and a stronger immune system.

Expressing gratitude for what you have is important because it shows that material possessions are not what makes you happy. If that were the case and you did not express gratitude, then no amount of possessions could ever satisfy your need. Greed is why so many people in western society are unhappy because we have been conditioned to be consumers and always want the newest phone, or the latest pair of shoes. We are conditioned to compare ourselves to others and value ourselves based on what we own.

One way to start practicing gratitude is by starting a gratitude journal. This can be easy and done in five minutes or less. At the end of each night, I reflect on my day and write down what I was grateful for on that day. It can just be point form. This gets you into the habit of focusing on your blessings. Involving other people in your gratitude is a great way to start as well. Share with them what you are thankful for and spread the joy. You can even go as far as telling someone, or writing them a letter that you are grateful for them.

A focused mind is a sharp mind. Like the saying goes “keep your eyes on the prize.” It is important to keep free from distractions. Scheduling is also an excellent way to keep you on track and focused on your goal. By setting blocks of time for specific activities, it allows you to be more productive and efficient. When you know you have to work for two hours, then you have recreation time for an hour, then work again for two hours, it gives you motivation and determination to stay on

schedule. When you do not have a plan, it is easy for distractions to put you off track.

A couple of other tips for keeping focused and staying away from distractions is setting restrictions on technology. A lot of people work on computers, and the internet is, most likely, the number one distraction of all time. Getting an app that will block certain websites for an allotted period is an excellent way to make sure you are working and not scrolling through Facebook. Another option is to turn your phone off for specific periods of time. Phones are huge distractions too. 90% of the time when I take my dog out I leave my phone at home or in the car. I want that time to be just ours and free of distractions. Be in the moment. I make our time together meditative.

Decision making is another key trait that successful people have. The reason it is so important to be able to make quick decisions and stick to it is that usually, your first thought comes from your intuition and that usually points you in the direction you need to go. It means you trust yourself; you trust your abilities and skills to get the job done. You usually know right away whether or not you are capable of taking on a task and completing it.

Doubt and excuses start to creep in when people take too much time to think about the decision. The more time it takes to make the decision, the more doubt will get in the way and the less likely you are to do it. Even when the decision is made quickly but then you begin to second guess yourself, it starts to hurt your confidence and self-trust. This will spill into other areas of your life. Doubt is a disease that must not be allowed to spread.

A great example of quick decision making comes from Napoleon Hill. He is the author of one of the best-selling books of all time called "Think and Grow Rich." Andrew Carnegie is the one who set him up for this monumental task of writing that book. When Carnegie presented him with the idea and asked him to make a decision, he had only one minute to decide. Writing

the book would require interviewing hundreds of people and take years to complete. Napoleon Hill decided in under a minute, and the rest is history.

Imagination is another critical tool to be able to keep a positive mindset and to be in the right frame of mind. Imagination is crucial to success because we need to be able to see the person we want to become before we are there. This allows us to attach emotion to it and to feel what it would feel like to be that person. When we connect passion to our goals, it becomes real and gives us more motivation to stay focused to make it a reality.

This is why vision boards and visualization exercises have become so popular over the years. When you can see something in front of you, it all of a sudden becomes very real. If you do not already have a vision board, I would recommend you make one and put it somewhere that you are going to see it a lot. I also have other small signs around my house. I have a sign that says \$100,000 on my bathroom mirror and next to my bed. The more I see it, the more real it gets. I want to keep it in my mind.

This is where the famous Law of Attraction comes into play. The basic premise of the Law of Attraction is that what you focus on will come to you.

This builds on using your imagination and attaching emotion to it as well. Without passion, it is just a nice thought. When you connect emotion, it becomes the magnetizing factor that will draw your goal to you. This is why it is the Law of Attraction. You are attracting what it is that you want to you. Our emotions are very magnetic and are always drawing people, experiences, and events to us.

An excellent way to experiment on this is to practice it with small tasks. One that I like to do is when I am going to the soccer center I will visualize where there will be an open parking spot for me when I arrive. I imagine how great it will feel not to have to walk far and get the spot I want. There are many simple tasks

like this that you can do to test it out. Practice makes perfect and the more you use it, the better you will get at manifesting what you want from life.

Having fun is another way to make sure you stay in a positive mindset. Fun is also a great way to lighten your load and make your goals more realistic. When you are being serious all the time and overthinking too much, your tasks start to become cumbersome and undesirable. When you are having fun, you are full of energy and motivation to keep pushing forward. Keep it simple and make sure fun is involved in all your situations.

Laugh at your mistakes, laugh at yourself. Give yourself the freedom and permission to laugh and enjoy yourself. Work and life do not have to be so serious all the time. Life is meant to be enjoyed, and everything starts to flow with ease when you are enjoying it. Time goes by faster, and the work seems more natural.

Schedule activities into your life that you love and enjoy. For myself, I have soccer two nights a week, and I love it. If I feel down or angry, I take my dog to the park and just let the emotions go. She is always a blast to spend time with as dogs are the perfect example of what it means to live in the moment. My point is to still make sure, no matter what, to schedule some fun time in your life.

The last point about mindset is progress. I feel that growth is the ultimate motivator and indicator of where you are at with life.

Everyone loves to check things off that to-do list. Everyone likes to hit that weight goal they had or to hit a new personal best. Everyone loves to score the winning goal or reach the top of a mountain. It makes you feel competent and capable of achieving all of your dreams. It gives you confidence and a sense of accomplishment.

Progress shows others and, more importantly, yourself, how

far you have come and what you are capable of doing. It shows that you are not just working for nothing and that you are getting somewhere and achieving what you set out to achieve. It is an excellent indicator of whether or not you are going to be successful.

Setting goals is a great way to monitor progress in life. Setting short-term and long-term goals is important. People love to know that they are moving closer to their goals. This gives people great confidence and motivation to hit the targets. When one is motivated, it is much harder for distractions to sneak their way into our lives.

It is imperative to have a system to track your progress. Be able to check on how you are doing. If you are not hitting your goals, then you can make the necessary adjustments to keep pushing forward. If you are hitting your targets, then make sure to congratulate yourself or even reward yourself. You earned it, and there is no reason why you should not enjoy everything you have accomplished, no matter how big or small.