

UNIVERSAL SENSE



THE BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

By Balasa Prasad M.D.

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UNIVERSAL SENSE THE BLUE PRINT FOR SUCCESS

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A few words:

The essence of our existence on this planet is survival—the struggle to lead secure, productive, and gratifying lives in a constantly changing and complex world. In times marked by rising unemployment and cost of living, a fragile economy, and global competition for limited resources, the quest for survival becomes even more challenging. It is therefore a breath of fresh air to discover a method of success that requires only applying specific principles and strategies to one's life—the principals and strategies of Universal Sense. *Universal Sense: The Blueprint for Success* is a practical guide designed to help all people navigate life's challenges.

We have developed and electronically distributed this book free of charge with the intention of sharing this common-sense wisdom with the world. Universal Sense can be used by any human being under any circumstance, hence enabling those with a willingness to learn and apply these principles to succeed in whatever they do. Although some of the information may not be new to you, we hope you find the ways in which we have woven the ideas together unique, powerful, and above all, practical. Our wish is that every person who journeys through the pages of this e-book arrive at a new level of insight and thereby a better life.

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Introduction

What is Universal Sense?

What is success? Is it making a billion dollars in a lifetime, attaining a powerful position as head of a company or country, or earning a Nobel Prize? I posed this question to a group of colleagues and employees at my workplace, expecting a straightforward answer. A few people equated success with wealth—earning lots of money, owning a nice home and a fancy car, and taking exotic vacations. Others believed that the manner in which one accumulates wealth is more important than wealth itself. They cited Bill Gates as an example of success, unlike drug kingpin Pablo Escobar of Colombia. Fewer people took a philosophical view, stating that success is having peace of mind and good health. In the end, while the question was simple, the answers were not.

If power, prestige, and privilege are not true indicators of success, then what is? While I pondered the question, I remembered a conversation I had had with my mother long ago. I was a brash young man who had just graduated from medical school, and I boldly presented my ambitious plans to my mother. I told her that I would seek out the best surgical training and open up my own center. I would author brilliant research papers, conduct seminars, and in short make lots of money. Maybe the world would recognize my accomplishments and a Nobel Prize would be in the offing!

My mother listened patiently to my rambling ideas. Then she gave a small smile and commented, “Son, listen to me carefully. If you want to be successful in life, *don’t chase after fame and fortune.*” I was taken aback by her remark, but I cared for, respected, and admired her too deeply to ignore her advice. After recovering from my initial shock, I asked her, “If I’m not supposed to chase after these things, what should I do? After all, aren’t fame and fortune the measure of true success?” She replied with an emphatic “No.” She said, “If you chase after fame, fortune, power, and privilege in life, you will remain a slave to them. Instead, behave in a noble fashion by utilizing your god-given talents and opportunities to make this world a little better, while at the same time protecting your self-interest. Then fame, fortune, power and privilege will chase after you and beg you to own them.”

She saw that I was even more confused and further explained, “Son, true success is a state of mind that is reflected in your outlook and attitude, not in the trinkets, prizes, and wealth that you amass. Strive to heal the illnesses of your patients because you care for them and are sympathetic to their pain and suffering. Only after you have thought of them should you think about your bank account.” She continued, “Son, you are a bright

boy and a hard worker, and I am already proud of you! You do not have to win medals or build mansions to impress me or anyone else.”

That conversation left an everlasting impression on me. Over the years, the combination of my mother’s advice and my own knowledge and experience has culminated in the following insight into the true meaning of success:

Success is the elation and excitement triggered by a sense of accomplishment.

“Accomplishment,” however, is a relative term. Individuals feel a sense of accomplishment based on their own priorities and expectations. For example, a recreational golfer who enjoys the game and the social camaraderie that goes along with it is less likely to be disappointed about his performance compared to a professional golfer whose livelihood depends on the caliber of his game.

With my mother’s advice still fresh in my mind, at the ripe age of twenty-three, I left India with my eighteen-year-old wife in pursuit of a successful career and a bright future in England. But I was off to a shaky start, disheartened when I failed to obtain a residency in medicine or any surgical specialty. After months of hard work, I was offered a temporary assignment in a psychiatric residency program. Psychiatry was my last choice for a residency. Thus I experienced my first taste of patience and humility, which are the two most integral components of Universal Sense.

My options were to either accept the assignment or return to India. After due consideration, I chose to stay and accept the residency for several reasons. First, if I returned home to the security my parents provided, I would be acting as a dependent child rather than a grown man. Instead, I wanted to bear the responsibility of providing for my own family. Second, the world was unlikely to ever bend over backward to accommodate my whims and fancies; I would have to work hard for what I wanted. Third, I would have to make the best of the opportunity presented to me while waiting patiently for the opportunity of my choice. Fourth, in the face of adversity I could not afford to get upset and give up on my goals. Finally, looking down on the residency I had been offered—or anything or anyone, for that matter—was a mistake. I didn’t know it at the time, but it was this

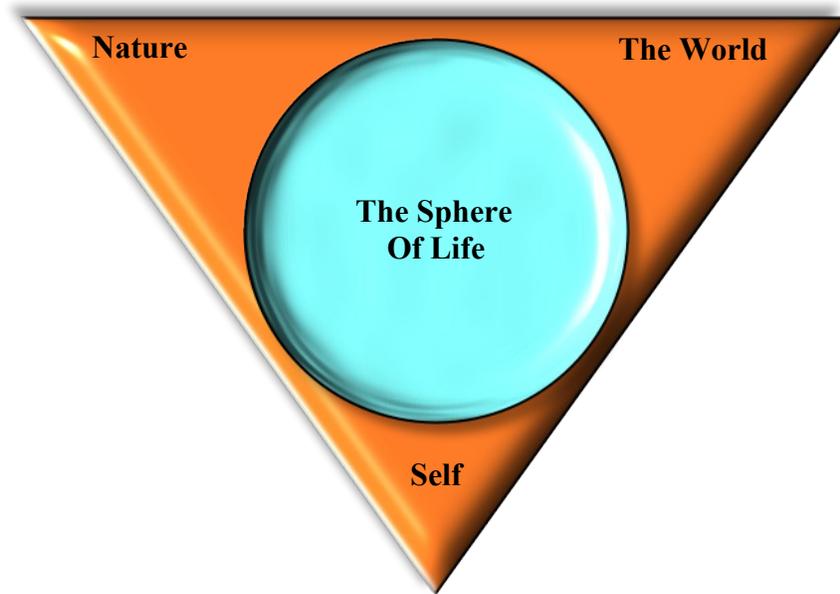
training in psychiatry that would enable me to have clear insight into the human mind. In fact, this book is the culmination of my experience and the knowledge I have gained by helping thousands of patients to combat stress and conquer addictions, fears, and phobias over the past twenty-eight years.

It was my patience and perseverance that enabled me to complete a psychiatric residency and a subsequent medical residency to become a general practitioner in one of London's prestigious family practice centers. A few years later, I completed an anesthesia residency program in New York and shortly thereafter became the chairman of the anesthesia department in a community hospital. I am proud of my accomplishments in all aspects of my life. I firmly believe that if I can succeed, anyone with pride, patience, and perseverance can be successful in his or her life.

I owe my success to Universal Sense. Universal Sense is an English translation of the Sanskrit phrase *vishwa jnanam*. *Vishwa* means "all pervasive," and *jnanam* means "knowledge." Universal Sense reflects the laws of Nature, the awareness of which can empower an individual to lead a secure, productive, and gratifying life. Once a person becomes truly aware, he or she can then choose the correct path toward success. According to the principles of Universal Sense, when one is fully aware, success comes naturally, which is why Universal Sense is "the blueprint for success."

We have no say about our arrival or our span of time on this planet. However, we have absolute control over how we lead our lives until we exit this world. Like it or not, here we are at the behest of our Maker, and we must make the most of what we have been given. To complete this assignment successfully, we must first comprehend the three dimensions that influence our lives on this earth: Self, Nature, and the World. Imagine your passage on this earth as a sphere, which I call the Sphere of Life, suspended in the center of an inverted triangle with little wiggle room. (Diagram 1)

Diagram 1



Your task is to master the art of balancing this sphere forever within the tight space, standing alone at the bottom of the triangle. The other two corners are occupied by Nature and the World, which exert considerable impact on the Sphere of Life.

Be savvy and smart and take advantage of input from Nature and the World to better balance the Sphere of Life. If you approach the task as a chore, you will be disenchanted, disillusioned and discouraged. Eventually, you will end up drifting aimlessly—from one job to the next, one relationship to the next, one place to the next. Your search for easy answers might even cause you to seek out relief in the form of prescription medications or addictive drugs. But if you consider the balancing act a worthy challenge, you will forever maintain your spirit and stamina. Take the simple example of learning to ride a bicycle. Balancing on a bike is difficult if you've never ridden one. But if you give up without succeeding, not only will you never enjoy a bike ride, you will also never experience the pride and confidence that results from completing a challenging task. If you perceive balancing the Sphere of Life as a challenge rather than a burden, and if you persevere until you master the skill, the possibilities of what you might accomplish are infinite.

As we work to balance Self, Nature, and the World, our minds need an irrefutable, sensible system to guide them in their interactions with the universe, just as the body needs a strong backbone and a pair of legs upon which to stand. Universal Sense is such a system. It provides insight into the realities of life, enabling anyone who uses it to develop the necessary patience, foresight, and fortitude to reach his or her full potential.

Universal Sense reaches beyond religious differences, beyond ethnic distinctions and beyond geographical boundaries. Through Universal Sense, you can acquire, among many other things:

1. The skills to reach your full potential as a parent, athlete, or professional.
2. The wisdom you need to weigh the risks and rewards associated with crucial decisions.
3. The understanding you need to overcome obstacles on the road to success.
4. The discipline to combat adverse situations—including addictions, such as overeating, smoking, alcohol, cocaine, and gambling.
5. The strength to conquer fears, phobias, and insecurities.

Universal Sense can be achieved in four steps:

Step 1: Acknowledge Nature (Our Maker)

Step 2: Understand Nature's Mandate

Step 3: Know Yourself

Step 4: Find Your Place in the World



[Life's every moment is a precise calculation]

Chapter 1

Acknowledging Nature

(Our Maker)

Traditionally, humans have looked to God to answer unanswerable questions, such as “Who made us?” and “Why are we here?” Unfortunately, when pious humans conceived of God, their conception was limited to a God they could see and touch, a higher power with whom they could actively interact. They assigned to God a physical form, a gender, and emotional attributes, thereby planting the seed for organized religion.

God in organized religion is often portrayed as a glorified human being—omnipotent, compassionate, and forgiving. The problem with the God of organized religion is that different groups identify God in unique physical forms, assign Him various characteristics, and create sets of rules to which they pledge their allegiance. Those who disagree with and question the veracity of one group’s concept of God become a threat to that group’s identity, beliefs, and security. Naturally, any group devoted to a certain God would protect their particular beliefs and interests at any cost.

Throughout history, priests and kings—men with influence—have used organized religion to advance their own agendas. They have found ways to control the masses by tapping into basic human insecurities and stoking passion in the name of God. In many instances, organized religion has been used by leaders as a political tool to enhance a particular powerbase. This use of religion has done a grave disservice to humankind by polarizing religious groups and nurturing mistrust among people, rather than uniting people under one banner to work for a common good.

How have we allowed religion to play such a negative role in human history? How have we failed to fix the problems that spirituality might so readily address? Religion, like a mother tongue, offers an individual identity and a sense of belonging. For fear of losing these benefits, we are reluctant to challenge an established religious ideology. We are usually unwilling to confront an entrenched concept unless it poses a direct threat to our survival.

While religious zealots were busy selling their version of God to the masses, a few intellectuals went on a spiritual expedition to understand our Maker as it exists. These philosophers and seekers remind us that neither we nor our ancestors created this world or the universe. In fact, with all the progress we have made in science and technology, we have yet to fathom the basic secrets of Nature. Consider a simple concept like gravity, which took a long time for us to theorize. Even now, we are unable to explain the source of gravity and the exis-

tence of dark matter that prevails in the universe. Who designed the universe? How do we explain our existence—the energy source that animates our bodies (i.e., our souls) and the time, place and circumstances of our arrival and departure from this earth? When we recognize the sheer number of inexplicable aspects surrounding us, in our own world and beyond, most of us conclude that there is a force much greater than us at work in the universe. I call this force Nature or our Maker, and I believe it is responsible for creating, regulating, and managing the universe and its inhabitants.

Once we acknowledge Nature and understand its attributes, we have the option to shape our actions accordingly. We all need a spiritual reference point to guide our thoughts and actions. Our Maker, Nature, serves this purpose, drawing a clear line between right and wrong. The absence of direct and corroborative evidence of our Maker's existence does not mean it does not exist. Belief and faith in a higher power is a mainstay of human cultures the world over, despite the absence of absolute proof of its existence. We might even argue that spiritual belief is an inescapable part of human culture. Believing in a perfect and absolute higher power is a crucial step in life if any of us is to enjoy stability, as it is faith that offers a firm anchor to our thoughts and a balance to our baser tendencies. Belief in our Maker encourages us to both to care for ourselves and to think of how our actions affect our fellow human beings.

Belief in a higher power takes many forms. A Catholic and a Muslim both believe in one God and the possibility of a rewarding afterlife. A Jew believes in an Old Testament God and atonement during this lifetime. Hindus and Buddhists believe in God and reincarnation. While an atheist might reject the idea of God, he or she most likely has faith in the power of the Higher Self. Underlying the specific differences in these spiritual philosophies is a desire to hold individuals accountable for their actions. Good-natured Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and atheists strive to make this world a better place by holding themselves and others accountable for the good of society. Accountability balances the opposite human tendency toward selfishness and irresponsibility. Accountability is the cornerstone of an individual's healthy attitude and the crux of a civilized society. When both individuals and cultures value accountability, the result is a peaceful, prosperous and productive world.

Let us examine what would happen if we felt accountable only to ourselves. History shows that the abuse human beings perpetrate on one another knows no boundaries. Many individuals even take advantage of a situation by asserting their belief in the greater good of humanity but acting in a way that benefits only them. We cannot expect individuals to police themselves and be accountable for their actions; the result would be disastrous.

We also cannot hold each other accountable on a spiritual level, since it is humanly impossible to survey each other's thoughts and intentions. If an individual is cunning and crafty, he or she can commit venal acts without detection, thereby escaping any legal or social penalty that might exist. The very idea that one individual can cheat another and get away with it is temptation enough for many people to act on their selfish impulses. As a result, our ancestors came up with the following strategy: let each of us be accountable to a higher power—God.

This strategy would work without a hitch if only we could demonstrate how God handles the issue of accountability. Unfortunately, there are many instances in which a crafty villain cheats, loots, commits despicable acts, and lives happily ever after incognito. It would appear in these instances that both society and God have failed to recognize the misdeeds of that individual and hold him or her accountable. But has such an evildoer truly escaped from our Maker?

No two human beings are born with the same advantages or disadvantages in life. Some lucky individuals are born healthy, attractive, talented, and surrounded by loving, caring, affluent families. For these individuals, just by virtue of the circumstances they are born into, many opportunities are available to them, and they tend to enjoy stress-free, happy, wonderful lives. On the other hand, many unlucky individuals are born with mental, physical, spiritual, and situational challenges. For instance, a baby born to an irresponsible, immature, selfish drug addict or prostitute has to fight every step of the way just to survive. Unlucky individuals may ask what have they done wrong to deserve this kind of treatment. They might wonder why are they being punished for no fault of their own. The real question here is why are some people born with all the advantages while others are not?

To explain this inequity, some religions argue that our Maker punishes an individual soul for its past deeds through reincarnation. The idea of reincarnation says that after death, each of us returns to this world or another to pay the dues for our misdeeds in this lifetime. No one can demonstrate scientifically the validity of this concept. However, logic above even spiritual certainty compels me to believe in reincarnation. This concept has certainly put me on notice and prompted me to be accountable for my actions in every area of my life. My belief in reincarnation discourages me from behaving as I please without regard for the well-being of others.

Let us now, regardless of our individual religious beliefs, entertain the possibility that our ancestors made an unfortunate error in assigning human attributes to the force that made the universe and us, its inhabitants. Let us consider the possibility that our Maker is an enigmatic, eternal, invisible but invincible entity with an agenda of its own: justice in its purest form, light in its brightest form, energy in its cleanest form, and the truth in its absolute form. Our Maker is the one and only perfect force that permeates the universe. Its domain is beyond our comprehension. Our Maker, Nature, is not human or humanoid. It has neither a physical form nor a compassionate disposition. We are accountable to Nature; Nature is not accountable to us. Nature has set terms and conditions for the existence of this world and its inhabitants. Its priorities are not the same as ours. For instance, species have come and gone over the ages, but life has continued to exist in one form or another. While we should care about the preservation of other species to protect our own interests and the balance of life on our planet, we should also understand that Nature is concerned not with any specific life form, but only with the existence of a life form.

It is in our best interest to understand Nature as it exists and relate to it on its terms. Nature is a perfect force; therefore forgiveness is not a necessary part of its vocabulary. Forgiveness is in fact human rather than divine. Because we are human and thus imperfect, we make mistakes. Resolution of our mistakes does not come from Nature. The only resolution is to acknowledge what we have done wrong, correct it if possible, and learn a valuable lesson from it. Most importantly, we must endure the consequences of our mistakes with courage and strength. Finally, we must forgive ourselves and one another to close the chapter and move forward. We must strive to be perfect like Nature but at the same time understand that we never will reach that goal. It must be enough for us to improve—to learn and grow—knowing that perfection is not possible in this lifetime.

It is not uncommon or unrealistic, however, to expect our hard work to pay off within our lifespan, although we must keep in mind that Nature's awareness of time is vastly different from our own. The time between a human birth and a human death is a speck compared to eternity. Indeed, future generations often reap the benefits of a current generation's hard work. We must understand that despite all our efforts, progress may be delivered to us piecemeal or otherwise not in the manner we expect. Building beautiful lives for ourselves while also trying to make this world a better place may take a very long time, because progress is scheduled on Nature's timeline, not on ours. Once we realize the nature of progress, we are suddenly able to keep sight of the noblest of goals, to move forward with patience rather than disappointment or discouragement. Acknowledging Nature helps us to focus on the process and not distress over the final outcome.

Connecting with our Maker, Nature, helps us to recognize the realities of human life on Earth. It encourages humility. It helps us to avoid the kinds of mistakes that come with characterizing God in human terms, and it also gives us the courage to accept responsibility when we do make mistakes. The more fully we understand Nature and the closer we are aligned with it, the more refined our behavior will be, and the happier we will be in our lives.



[Our Maker is the one and only perfect force that permeates the universe]

Chapter 2

Nature's Mandates

(The Laws of Nature)

Our Maker, Nature, is responsible for the creation of the universe and all its inhabitants. It has set the fundamental guidelines for our survival. While ultimately our Maker will remain a mystery to us, when we connect with it on a personal level, we gain valuable insight into its terms and conditions for our existence. Our Maker has provided each of us with a powerful imagination. By utilizing it, we can recognize our Maker's true intentions and use them to our further our missions. Because each of us is unique, we each have a unique relationship with Nature. Therefore, we must each connect with Nature alone, without relying on our fellow human beings' interpretations of how to carry out Nature's mandates.

What if an individual is incapable of recognizing the mandates of Nature by virtue of a mental or physical disability? It is an unfortunate and bitter reality of life that an individual born with a disability is destined to struggle more than the rest of us and to depend more upon the mercy of fellow human beings just to survive. We are obligated to remember that Nature has created—for its own reasons and purposes—those of us with disabilities. We must also remember that lucky people born with few or no disabilities have the added responsibility and duty to care for and protect our less fortunate human counterparts. Rendering assistance to a less fortunate individual without expecting any kind of reward is the most refined form of human behavior.

What of those of us who are not confident in our understanding of our Maker, Nature? When we are comfortable with ourselves, we can rest assured that our interpretation of our Maker's rules is as good as or better than that of other people. Comparing notes with other people about this issue is tantamount to the blind leading the blind. Although the majority of us instinctively understand the rules our Maker has designated, many of us do not like them. Thus, we try to ignore them or interpret them to our liking. A person who is willing to recognize, accept, and implement Nature's fundamental rules and regulations without manipulation will have fewer problems in life. For instance, if Nature has provided a person with a healthy body, according to Nature, it is that person's primary duty to take good care of that body if it is expected it to serve the person well. Is it difficult to understand this fundamental rule of our Maker? No. Yet many people disrespect their bodies in more ways than one and take their health for granted.

One does not have to be a rocket scientist to understand, for example, that the lungs are designed for specific purposes—to provide vital elements such as oxygen to the body and to remove unwanted toxic gases such

as carbon dioxide from the body. Yet, in spite of warning labels and the possibility of arrest, people in cultures the world over continue to smoke poisons such as tobacco, marijuana, and crack cocaine, which harm their bodies and, often, their chances of success in the world. Why? Many people find ingesting chemicals soothing or thrilling to the mind, and they are less inclined to pay attention to the long-term effects these substances have on the body. Similarly, people who overeat focus on the pleasure they derive from eating food rather than paying attention to their physical health. Sensible eating is another fundamental rule of our Maker. Most of us understand this fact but are unwilling to follow it because it is not to our liking. People often indulge in behavior whose reward is immediate gratification rather than paying attention to the long-term effects of such behavior.

In addition to food and chemical substances, power, prestige, and privilege are major factors that corrupt people and prompt them to manipulate Nature's ground rules. These three *p*'s are indeed appealing and enticing, especially in the political and corporate arenas. Acts of political corruption and corporate greed are purported by none other than the elite—the well-educated, sophisticated, and intelligent—members of society. These perpetrators need no lessons in Nature's mandates. They understand the rules all too well, but they have chosen to ignore them, perhaps because they see themselves as exempt from such moral regulations. However, one of the fundamental rules of Nature is that we must not hurt others for explicit advantage. Similarly, Nature forbids us from hurting ourselves, for when people do not care about hurting themselves, how can they truly care whether they hurt others? Unless we respect ourselves, we will be incapable of respecting others.

Individuals, such as terrorists, who commit atrocities in the name of God, are the worst kind of cowardly barbarians. They claim they are doing God's work to make this world a better place, but they are motivated not by Nature's mandates but by their own agendas, causing tremendous damage to others and to this world. Despite their declaration of holy work, such people—like all of us—will be held accountable for their actions. By the same token, their followers who may not have directly committed any violence will be held equally responsible for blindly supporting these individuals. Our Maker never bends or alters its mandates of survival to accommodate anyone.

In reality, it is not difficult for an average person to understand Nature's straightforward, fundamental terms and conditions, but it is not so simple to follow them. Our Maker has given us the freedom and privilege

to define our missions and choose our goals in life, but it holds us accountable for following the path that it has laid out for every goal we choose. If we attempt to reach our goals but fail to take responsibility for our actions, not only do we suffer a great deal, but the world also suffers. Even though we are Nature's own imperfect specimens, we cannot expect our Maker to come to our rescue when we make mistakes. Nature is an unfettered, rigid, and perfect force. What irony—that we exist as an imperfection within the perfection that is Nature.

The principle is clear: we can accept Nature's terms and utilize our talents wisely to make the most of our limited time on earth, or we can attempt to live carefree, exciting lives on our own terms and hope for the best. Unfortunately, most people opt for the latter choice and are rudely awakened when faced with the consequences of their decisions and actions. Nature applies the law of cause and effect across the board without exception. A clever few explore a third option: they accept and abide by the laws of Nature that appeal to them and ignore those that don't, hoping to lead a healthy, happy life. The truth of the matter is that we cannot break the laws of Nature and spend life behaving just as we please and expect to come out ahead. Nature's mandates forbid it.

At times, we might feel that certain rules of Nature are unfair. As has been established, Nature does not concern itself with what is fair or unfair on human terms. When we meet our Maker, we are free to present a list of grievances. But there will very likely be a long line with no sympathetic ear at the end of it. Human beings do not have the luxury of taking action based solely on our likes and dislikes. We must instead base our actions on what is and what is not in our best interest. Consider, for example, the two most common self-inflicted problems that face affluent societies (such as the United States)—alcoholism and obesity. An alcoholic who wishes to tackle his addiction has two choices. The first is based on his terms, which are fraught with cheap excuses and explanations such as:

1. My body craves alcohol due to its genetic disposition, making it impossible for me to quit.
2. I enjoy the effects of alcohol on my psyche—it is soothing, comforting, and relaxing. Even though I've gotten traffic tickets for driving while intoxicated, and my drinking has disrupted my home life, work performance, and finances, I'll try to reduce my alcohol consumption, but I am not willing to cut it out of my life.

3. Many of my friends can control their liquor consumption, so I can, too.

These individuals are trying to have their cake and eat it, too. They break every law of Nature in attempt to reach their goals of comfort and ease, only to fail miserably in the end.

If you are tuned in to Nature, it will teach you valuable lessons at every step of your life. Brilliant individuals learn such lessons the easy way; intelligent people learn them the hard way; and ignorant people never learn any lessons and blame the world for their misery. Learning lessons from Nature is not only a gratifying experience, but also a humbling one. An alcoholic who is committed to cleaning up his act must follow the laws of Nature, which dictate:

1. We must acknowledge that ultimately we are responsible for bringing any scourge into our lives—not our genetics or environment.
2. Nature will accept no excuse or explanation for human inability or unwillingness to take proper corrective measures. It holds us responsible for our actions and dispenses consequences accordingly.
3. It is impossible to control an addiction to our liking. We must instead conquer the addiction by *accepting* that we must give up the addiction, such as alcohol consumption, permanently, without asking any questions. The recovering alcoholic may miss alcohol for a short period of time, but he or she, once having accepted Nature's mandate, will never have to face strong urges to indulge in alcohol again.
4. Nature requires that we make adjustments in our temperament, disposition, expectations, and lifestyle to succeed in beating an addiction permanently.
5. Alcohol might have helped an alcoholic to relax, to unwind from a hard day's work, to be more creative, or to enjoy a good social life. But in return it demands an individual's soul. No one should sell his soul for any kind of benefit—mental, material, or monetary. In order to retrieve her soul, an addict must stop caring for her addiction and command it to exit her life permanently.

6. There is no free ride. Nature dictates that we must give something to get something back in life. When we give up an addiction, we are giving up the pleasure, thrill, or comfort in return for our health, peace of mind, and prosperity.
7. The philosophy of reincarnation characterizes alcohol, cocaine, heroin, and other addictive substances as devils. Whether we see these things as devils on a literal or symbolic level, we must remember that bargaining with a devil will never work out to our advantage.
8. As no two human beings are identical, no two addicts are identical. The bond between addict and addiction is defined by the individual and not by the substance. Each alcoholic must first understand the reasons for drinking and the need to drink. He or she must then design corrective measures that will suit his or her mental disposition and lifestyle. Only then will it be possible to renounce the addiction forever.

Similarly, the overweight among us may offer cheap excuses and explanations for their problem such as slow metabolism, time constraints, or unwilling to part with favorite foods. We look for shortcuts—appetite suppressants and fad diets—the first indication that our desire to maintain a healthy weight is not a commitment, but wishful thinking. If we are truly committed to maintaining a healthy weight forever, the laws of Nature dictate:

1. Food is primarily nutritional fuel for our bodies and not an emotional pet.
2. Our relationship with food must be determined by the body's need for fuel rather than emotional needs. Some people burn more calories per day while others burn fewer. Through trial and error, we learn our bodies' caloric and nutritional needs. Then we are free to select the type and quantity of food that also results in mental satisfaction.
3. Ultimately, caloric balance is a simple equation between input and output. When we eat more calories than our bodies burn, we gain weight; when we eat fewer calories, we lose weight; when we eat just the right amount, we maintain weight. We must resist turning this simple law of nature into a complex mathematical or chemical puzzle.

4. Our bodies need fuel on a daily basis. Therefore, those of us who tend to use food in ways other than as Nature intended must be vigilant and monitor why we eat, what we eat, when we eat, where we eat, and how much we eat for the rest of our lives. It is a difficult task, but those of us who struggle with obesity can't escape it.
5. Our bodies need physical activity, and exercise makes it easier to maintain a healthy weight. Set aside at least thirty minutes a day or 3.5 hours a week for some form of physical fitness routine. Remember, the more weight we have on our bodies, the more difficult it is to exercise. We must avoid the catch-22 excuse—that we cannot possibly exercise until we lose some weight, and that we cannot lose weight until we exercise. The bottom line is that without an exercise plan we can neither lose weight nor maintain proper weight.
6. Whether a prominent or ordinary citizen of the world, managing a healthy weight has to be a daily, ongoing ritual forever. The sooner we embrace this concept, the sooner it will become a comfortable routine.

Let's consider another example to illustrate how Nature's mandates work in our lives—raising a family. Raising a family is an enormous challenge for all involved. If the trials of family life are taken in stride, it can also be a wonderful experience. When we entertain the idea of raising a family, there are many things to consider beforehand:

1. It is important to do our homework and take as much time as necessary to pick a compatible partner.
2. We must develop solid bonds with our partners through mutual caring, mutual respect, and mutual trust before we embrace the idea of bringing children into this world. If any one of these three aspects is missing in a relationship, the partnership will likely dissolve.
3. Both partners must be ready and willing to take on the task of raising a family before that task is begun.
4. To provide a safe and sound family environment for the arrival of children, we must make the necessary adjustments to our lifestyle.

5. Despite good intentions and preparations, taking care of children and guiding them toward a strong and productive adulthood is an on-the-job learning experience for any parent. However, parenting is more fruitful if there is a good understanding and working relationship between parents.

Parental infighting, parental addictions, and parental separation have great negative impact on the psyche of a child. A disruptive family environment fosters confusion and insecurity, which can lead to learning disabilities, poor social skills, lack of interest, lack of focus, and inability to engage in and complete a task. Ultimately, a child may withdraw from his immediate surroundings to escape the confusion of the home environment. To make matters worse for the child, such behavioral problems are often incorrectly labeled as depression or ADHD and treated with medications, the effects of which lead to more mental and physical problems. Unfortunately, children of dysfunctional homes suffer serious consequences through no fault of their own and pay a heavy price for the rest of their lives. Make no mistake, parents' emotional and behavioral problems certainly visit themselves on their children. The younger the child, the greater the impact.

A few lucky children survive disruptive homes unscathed, but they are in the minority. Most children grow to be adults with adjustment problems. For these children and the adults they become, learning to abide by Nature's mandates, whether through philosophy or psychotherapy, can address these adjustment problems. However, unlike adult behavioral difficulties such as obesity, some children's behavioral problems are not the result of their environment but of genetic or innate deficits. Still other children have a combination of innate and behavioral deficits. It is important for the sake of a fulfilling family life that we understand these deficits and how Nature's mandates can help overcome them.

Based on my study and experience, all behavioral issues stem from deficits in the brain, in the mind, or in a combination of the two. A computer model is useful in describing how the brain works, where the physical brain acts as the hardware, and the mind acts as the software; they are two separate but interdependent entities. Hardware problems—such as autism—are innate, whereas software issues—such as some mood disorders—are acquired. These differences make it imperative that we identify the roots of a childhood behavioral problem and treat it accordingly.

Many parents despair to learn that no device or drug can treat autism, since nothing can correct the traits in the brain that cause this ailment. Only intense personal attention and psychotherapy can make an appreciable improvement in an autistic child's behavior. It is a tragic fact that the stress involved in managing autistic children has broken up many families. When both parents of an autistic child share the responsibility and support each other, however, the child can only benefit.

Similarly, evidence suggests that clinical depression is due to a chemical imbalance or defect in the hardware, or the brain itself, and should be treated with appropriate medication, supported by psychotherapy. However, the sensitive among us may react to disappointment and disenchantment with behavior resembling depression, which is frequently diagnosed as clinical depression and treated with medication to no avail. In such cases, it becomes apparent that the problem is a problem of the mind and should be treated instead through philosophical psychotherapy.

Generally, ADHD is treated with medications such as Adderall and Ritalin, because these conditions are considered to originate in the hardware, or brain. However, many children have been misdiagnosed with ADHD, and thus when they are treated with such medications, the results are disappointing. I have come to believe that many of these behavioral conditions are mainly software problems and have little to do with hardware. In these cases where hardware problems have been ruled out, psychotherapy based on the laws of Nature is an appropriate approach and yields gratifying results. However, many individuals with ADHD are too young to understand and adapt sound philosophical ideas. They may therefore need some form of pharmacological therapy until they are mature enough to make the best use of psychotherapy.

Nature's essential message is clear: in this complex and complicated world, we can drum up excuses and rationalizations for refusing to take charge of our lives and as a result struggle needlessly and to no good end, or we can choose to look clearly and honestly at what Nature requires of us, simplify our struggle for survival, and enjoy our short passage on this planet.

Chapter 3

Knowing Yourself

It may seem absurd that we need to make time to understand ourselves. Yet many of us have little or no idea who we are. We are under the impression that self-knowledge should happen automatically. As we have established, the onus for balancing the Sphere of Life lies with each one of us. We must first know ourselves before we take on the world. Taking the time to understand ourselves enables us to develop a set of personal views—namely, who we are, how we are different from others, how we might balance our strengths and weaknesses, and what we would like to accomplish in this life. We cannot shy away from objectively and sensibly taking full measure of our assets, our shortcomings, our interests, and our values. However, we must also understand that our view can only be one-sided and incomplete. To make this perspective complete and meaningful, we can compare it to Nature's view.

Begin your own self-evaluation with your physical appearance—stand in front of a mirror and take a good, hard look at yourself. If you are lucky, the image you see is appealing in various ways. If you see nothing attractive about your reflection, first consider that your expectations might be unrealistic. Nature endows each of us with gifts. Even if you cannot approve fully of what you see in the mirror, accept what our Maker has given you to work with. Learn to respect your body's strengths and tolerate its shortcomings. Then proceed to improve upon those aspects of your appearance that you might improve upon without harming yourself in any way. Don't concern yourself with what others say about your looks. Comfort with the appearance Nature has given you leads to freedom and self-confidence.

A person distressed about his or her appearance becomes anxious and self-conscious in public settings. Eventually, such anxiety leads to exhaustion, bitterness, and depression that affect other areas of life. Such a chain reaction is triggered by a *vanity complex*, the irrational concern with physical appearance, which can transform a person into a socially awkward, professionally inadequate, sexually inhibited, and spiritually deprived individual. Naturally, such a person isolates herself or insulates himself from the world, perhaps by turning to alcohol or other prescription or non-prescription substances to soothe insecurities. This path is not what Nature has in mind. Acknowledging and accepting the physical body Nature has given you is an indispensable step in the quest for success.

Additionally, you must evaluate your physical health. The human body is a durable and amazing piece of machinery, aptly designed by Nature to meet its obligations. However, you must take good care of your body if you expect it to serve you well. Don't overlook the nutritional aspects and physical activities that are vital to maintaining your health. Good health only occurs if you appreciate the body with which you are blessed and never take it for granted, regardless of what you see as its shortcomings. If you have been born with disabling attributes, understand and accept that these attributes are no fault of your own. All of our attributes are simply a reality of life. Clinging to bitterness or resentment over any shortcoming, real or imagined, can only make life more difficult. Capitalize on whatever physical strengths you might have, and whenever possible and appropriate, take advantage of sophisticated technology that mitigates your disability. Regardless of what Nature has given us, we are obligated to be the best we can be.

Next, explore the talents Nature has bestowed upon you. Most of us are born with a variety of talents and skills. By tapping into them, we develop tools for our survival. However, we should also aspire to go beyond our own survival and consider how we might utilize our talents to make this world a better place. We are all human beings trying to get by. Some of us are born into comfort and plenty, while others are born into hardship. But we occupy the same planet and all depend upon its vast resources to survive. Because we are all connected by this need, each of us is obligated to safeguard this world and help those who are less fortunate. This effort is hardly empty altruism, since the survival of our species depends upon our care for one another. Find ways to affect others in a positive way, and you will find a wonderful smile on your face. That sense of satisfaction is the key to experiencing unadulterated peace of mind, perhaps the most valuable commodity one can possess.

Determining our talents is relatively easy compared to the task of converting them into marketable assets. Before you can begin this task, you must first understand the internal dynamics of your mind—that mysterious entity capable of devising ingenious maneuvers to help us survive a harsh and ever-changing world. Your mind's job is to protect your interests and to manipulate environmental factors to its advantage. When it fails to do so, your mind has no choice but to adapt grudgingly to the environmental requirements in order to survive. Unfortunately, when the environment and the goals of the mind are incompatible, the mind suffers, and the indi-

vidual pays a heavy toll in health, happiness, and even survival. Obviously, the mind has an extremely difficult assignment, with little room for error.

The mind has three divisions—instinctual, intellectual, and emotional. Let's examine the three divisions and the interplay among them to better grasp the role of the mind in relation to Nature and human survival.

THE INSTINCTUAL DIVISION: The instinctual division is the unconscious counterpart of the intellectual and emotional divisions. This part of the mind plays a crucial role in our struggle for survival, as it holds directives from Nature. Nature expresses its intent in the instinctual division via three basic directives:

1. Protect the self
2. Preserve the surrounding environment to support the self
3. Propagate the self

These fundamental directives operate in our minds as basic instincts: to secure shelter, to eat, to drink, to procreate. However, Nature has also made this division of the mind home to countless acquired or learned habits that help us fulfill Nature's directives.

For lower-order animals, whose learning capacity is limited by meager intellect and a narrow range of emotions, instinctual behavior is much more prevalent than learned behavior. Humans are the opposite. Our wide range of advanced emotions complement an array of primitive emotions, both of which are interpreted by a powerful and versatile intellect. In this context, our learned behavior is not only capable of overshadowing instinctual behavior but also of modifying it. On an individual basis, we humans are even capable of interpreting Nature's directives and then choosing which habits we'd like to acquire in order to carry them out.

THE INTELLECTUAL DIVISION: This division harbors the pragmatic component of the mind, which we know as human intelligence. The components of this intelligence include reasoning, judgment, logic, discretion, calculation, imagination, analysis, and anticipation. By virtue of these components, the intellectual division is also known as the rational division of the human mind. It is the most complex and evolved section of the mind. Each aspect of the intellectual division exhibits a unique, natural gift of its own which comes in handy in fulfilling the responsibility of the intellect. The intellect is responsible for absorbing and analyzing the barrage of sensory information it receives from the environment and to program an appropriate response.

If the input from the environment were processed only in the intellectual division of the mind, without any interference or influence from the emotional division, the impression would be uniform and universal. Even people of diverse ethnic and geographical backgrounds would interpret a similar environment in the same way, as long as they were of similar intellectual caliber. But in reality, while many of us possess similar intellectual abilities, no two human beings are alike. We have not had the same life experiences. We do not have the same interests or make the same connections between data. We see the same set of facts from individual perspectives. Such diversity is caused primarily by the influence of the emotional division.

THE EMOTIONAL DIVISION: The emotional division of the mind, which we might characterize as the conscious counterpart of the intellectual mind, accommodates two sets of emotions—primitive and advanced. Primitive emotions include anger, rage, pain, pleasure, comfort, thrill, fear, fright, and selfishness. Humans share the capacity for primitive emotions with almost all larger (macroscopic) terrestrial organisms. Advanced emotions include love, caring, affection, passion, compassion, concern, grief, deceit, jealousy, hatred, greed, pride, and prejudice. We share advanced emotions with animal species of a higher intellectual order, such as primates and cetaceans. The type and the number of advanced emotions are determined by the level of intelligence of the animal species. On Earth, human beings are the only animals who display all levels of emotion, but the primitive emotions often remain the most potent. Love, affection, compassion, and concern are refined and under stress take a backseat to more powerful, primitive emotions, such as jealousy, greed, hatred, and vengeance. The human propensity to wage war comes from acting upon such primitive emotions.

All human beings are born with the same capacity for feeling and expressing emotions, but the influence of different emotions on the mind varies between individuals. For example, in some people rage and anger may have a stronger influence than compassion and tolerance. Likewise, in others, greed, jealousy, and selfishness may mute the influence of other advanced emotions. The emotional division, then, defines an individual's overall disposition, attitude, and outlook. In fact, it is the emotional division that shapes each person's character, response to the environment, and drive to initiate action. Without emotions, human beings would remain passive reactionaries. With emotions, we are often aggressive activists.

Human beings with intellect but no emotions would be closer to robots collecting data than human beings—expressionless, mechanical zombies programmed to survive. To illustrate, suppose a person crashes a car into a group of people, causing many injuries and deaths. Obviously the car, being a mechanical contraption, cannot show any emotion. It is under the control of the driver and does what it is directed to do. The driver, being in possession of an emotional division, might exhibit various responses to the accident, including grief, sorrow, fear, remorse, and self-loathing. In the aftermath of the accident, the driver may feel an overwhelming sense of fear for his safety. He might be overwhelmed by the physical, legal, and financial consequences of the accident. In this case, the emotional division of this person's mind might, in order to ease its distress, direct the intellectual division to flee. Fear, an emotion, sets the tone, but the actual flight response is concocted in and implemented by the intellectual division. In an alternative scenario, the driver's feelings of grief and compassion might lead the intellectual division to choose a different action—helping the victims and calling for an ambulance.

Our emotional division is like an orchestra, where different musicians represent different emotions. As we know, each musician and instrument in an orchestra is important. However if the musicians were not organized by virtue of their instruments' pitch and tone, and if they were not in sync with the maestro and one another, the result would be pure cacophony instead of a melodious composition. Universal Sense, like an efficient maestro, knows how to organize each and every emotion, making sure that each emotion exerts the appropriate amount of influence on the policy-making process that is beneficial to the individual. Thus, Universal Sense maintains a balance within the emotional division and maintains harmony between the three divisions of the mind.

Understanding the internal dynamics of our minds enables us to recognize that talent alone is not enough to guarantee success in this world in our chosen field. Sometimes, Nature gives us intellectual talents and emotional interests that do not match. Unfortunately, it is only when the intellect and the emotions are playing in harmony that we can both recognize our talents and use them as tools of survival. With the backing of our emotions, the intellect can sharpen our innate talents and utilize them to our advantage. When an individual's innate talent coincides with his interest, he will easily sharpen that talent into a marketable tool. On the other hand,

when a person's interests do not align with her talents, she will experience an internal conflict between her emotions and her instincts.

Consider, for example, a person who dreams of being an accomplished musician, but is born with little or no musical talent. Instead, she has the talent to become a good engineer. This person has three options: Option A: She accepts the disparity between her talent and her passion, and pursues an engineering profession. However, she may never rejoice in her achievements as an engineer, because her heart is not in it. Option B: She ignores her lack of natural talent and pursues her passion for music. But she must be prepared for disappointment if she is unable to reach her professional goals. This option may make her slightly unhappy, but she may also be at peace with herself and her choice. Option C: She disregards the disparity and agonizes over the cards that she has been dealt—feeling trapped and never finding her purpose in life.

The most prudent way to handle this dilemma—the way dictated by Universal Sense—is for her to utilize her talents and build an engineering career. Simultaneously, she can pursue her musical passion as a hobby and accept whatever level of musical proficiency she attains. In this scenario, she accepts and utilizes the strengths Nature has provided rather than becoming crippled by her shortcomings. Living with constant internal conflict saps our physical, mental, and spiritual energy. It is imperative that we connect with Nature in order to resolve any internal conflict between our strengths and weaknesses, our passions and priorities before we attempt to find our place in the World.

Remember, we are what we make of ourselves. You can choose to be either your own best friend or your own worst enemy. All your strength must come from within, because no external source can provide it. Nature has given you the strength you need. Now you must learn to believe in yourself. Take an in-depth inventory of your strengths and weaknesses. Take the time to understand who you are, what you stand for, and what you intend to do with your life. Now that you have assessed your body, mind, and spirit through Nature's eye, and armed yourself with Nature's mandates, you are qualified to make your way in the World.

Chapter 4

Finding Your Place in the World

Even if we are fortunate enough to have close family and friends, the reality is that we come into this life alone, we fight our battles alone, we endure consequences alone, and we die alone. Yet, in order to survive, we must find where we fit in this World and how to persuade it to work in our favor whenever possible. The World is made up of everything around us—both animate beings, such as people, animals, and plants, and inanimate objects, such as our homes, cars, and other material possessions. The World runs on cultural, political, and economic forces, which result from our interaction with each other and our environment. As we embark on our lifelong journey, it is important to understand the World as it exists according to Nature. As you assessed yourself in chapter 3, now take a good, long look at the World in which we live. Where might you best fit in? How might you serve others while also advancing your own cause? No one can answer these questions but you.

We live in an age of marketing, and in this arena you must know your product—yourself. You must also be able to appraise the marketplace before you release your product into it. This World is not a playground as many would have us believe. Instead, it is a battleground in which the rules of engagement are constantly changing. It might comfort us to remember, however, that one factor has remained constant throughout the ages: human nature. The dynamic between an ever-changing cultural context and unchanged human behavior is one of the most striking features of our relationship with the World. In the past, human beings killed or hurt each other for trivial reasons, using sticks, stones, and knives. We continue to do so today, the only difference being that we use more accurate, sophisticated, and lethal weapons. To be successful in such a World, we must be alert, agile, affable, and assertive. These attributes lead to success even in the most fiercely competitive environment.

Even in the twenty-first century, humans continue to be as selfish, jealous, ambitious, belligerent, prejudiced, and short-sighted as ever. Even as we resist internal change, we have actively and enthusiastically affected change in the World. The climate has changed. Old species have disappeared. We have changed our lifestyles dramatically through the expansion of science and technology—fast, fancy cars, space shuttles, computers, cell phones, and fast food. Life in this century moves more quickly and offers more conveniences compared to previous centuries. Yet the basic struggle for survival has remained an uphill battle. We have not solved world hunger or civil unrest. Our peace of mind has been battered most recently by worldwide economic downturn and a visible upsurge of unrest and violence.

Two famous corporate slogans should come to mind when we consider our place in the World—*Shape up or ship out* and *Move up or move out*. Irrespective of the number of years you have loyally served an organization, if you don't anticipate the changes around you and make necessary adjustments in your skills, temperament, and disposition, you will be out of the game in no time. In the medical field, the introduction of fiber optics, miniature cameras, powerful microscopes, and laser technology, to name a few, have changed the dynamics of diagnosing and treating many illnesses. Whereas a surgeon in the past treated gastrointestinal ailments such as perforated gastric ulcers or colon cancers through major surgery, the advent of endoscopies and powerful cancer drugs has eliminated the need for surgical intervention in many such cases. Certainly, this is good news for the patient, but the surgeon must be retrained in more current, less-invasive procedures using the latest technology, such as bariatric surgery, if he or she intends to survive.

In a rapidly changing environment, what you learn today may be obsolete tomorrow. However, we need not fret over this aspect of our struggle, because it is an unavoidable reality of life. Instead we can be vigilant to the changes occurring in the World around us and proactive in keeping up with those changes. As dictated by Nature, the World will never bend over backwards to accommodate our needs, and to expect it to do so is to be utterly disappointed. We must prepare ourselves for a tough fight in order to succeed. To paraphrase Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist George Will, it's not the size of the dog in the fight that counts, it's the size of the fight in the dog.

We can create strong, comfortable, binding relationships with this World by responding to life's challenges with patience, tolerance, perseverance, and realistic expectations. We must never expect the World to concern itself with our goals, our agendas, or our missions. If the World cooperates with us, it will be on its terms rather than on your own. The sooner we accept this reality, the easier it will be to work toward our goals. Living successfully in the World requires that we cooperate with rather than antagonize it. If we are to expect others to cooperate with us as we strive to reach our goals, we must first establish our own credibility in the World and evaluate the credibility of those with whom we are working. Being credible means expressing beliefs, goals, and intentions in a straightforward manner. While we can establish our own credibility by behaving whenever possible in an honorable manner, we cannot, unfortunately, always trust others who insist that they are

credible. We can never be sure of another individual's true intentions, because we cannot read each other's minds. The information we receive from another person is only as credible as the source—most information should be taken with a grain of salt. People will usually tell us what they think we want to hear rather than the truth, which is what we need to hear. Some people are masters at concealing their intentions and feelings. Trust is therefore a rare and precious commodity. If you can trust only one other individual without any reservations, consider yourself lucky. You must rely on yourself to judge whom you can believe, whom to trust, and what to realistically expect a person, based on his or her character and past behavior. When we expect the most from ourselves and little from the World, and we will find that we are rarely disappointed, but often pleasantly surprised.

This World will cooperate with you in full force only if your task is beneficial to the World. If you have a project and need the World's help to complete it, take the time to prepare a comprehensive presentation to convince the powers that be that it is in their best interest to cooperate with you. Preparing such a presentation will also help you to see clearly the strengths and weaknesses of your proposal. If your presentation is successful, not only will the necessary participants cooperate with you, the World might deliver your success to you on your terms. Your window of opportunity, however, will exist only for a limited time. If you intend to convince the World that it needs you as much as you need it, consider that the human attention span is shorter than ever. Expect to hold your audience's attention for no longer than five minutes. Within that time frame, create a presentation that is informative, interesting, and to the point.

On certain occasions, we need little or no help or cooperation from others to reach our goals. Such tasks are strictly "internal affairs" and require a different kind of concentration in order to be successful. Any task we undertake will fall into the domain of either internal or external affairs. For example, if you decide to open a restaurant, irrespective of your talents, interests and desires, you need the cooperation of the world to make your business a successful venture. If people enjoy the cuisine and ambiance, you will stay in business. Tasks requiring the World's participation and cooperation are classified as external affairs. When opening a restaurant or working on other external affairs, you have partial control. You can study the demographic of the area in which your restaurant will be located. After opening, you can do your homework to learn the tastes and eating habits

of your customers and make the appropriate adjustments to your menu. You can do your best and hope to succeed in your endeavor. But you must also accept, without fear or despair, that many factors influencing your business are out of your control.

Managing your internal affairs, on the other hand, is entirely up to you. Internal affairs include phobias, addictions, insecurities, and other ways of thinking and feeling that hinder our progress in the World. In addressing these issues, we must count mainly on our own convictions, commitment, and perseverance rather than on the World. People who live in the public eye—politicians, businesspeople, actors, musicians, and professionals—often appear to be handling their external affairs successfully but then fall victim to one or more internal ailments, such as stress, insomnia, addiction, or mental illness. Ultimately, if an individual is unable to keep his internal affairs in order, he will lose command of his external affairs as well.

Although there is only one participant involved in the process, managing internal affairs is far more difficult than managing external affairs. While external affairs involve the visible, concrete World, internal affairs involve our emotions and spirituality, intangible aspects of who we are. In this age of instant gratification, it is tempting to focus on the tangible, momentary thrills—money, material goods, drugs—and lose sight of the peace and harmony that are integral to our mental and emotional health. At every stage of life we must frequently examine our priorities in relation to our internal and external affairs. We must align these internal and external aspects of our lives with the realities of the World and the laws of Nature. We must work to hide nothing from ourselves. Finally, we must revel in the fact that opening ourselves to the truth of our place in this World can be enormously invigorating and exciting.



[We must prepare ourselves for a tough fight in order to succeed]

Chapter 5

Defining Your Mission and Executing It

Balancing our internal and external aspects is the main mission of human life on Earth. Unlike other animal species, we possess consciousness and a powerful imagination. As a result, we have developed a complex, demanding, and often convoluted lifestyle comprised of eight major sectors, four internal and four external.

Internal Sectors	External Sectors
1. Physical	5. Professional
2. Biological	6. Personal
3. Spiritual	7. Financial
4. Emotional	8. Social

In examining these aspects of our lives, it is incumbent upon each of us to recognize their relative significance. Part of our mission is to be vigilant in monitoring the ongoing activities in each sector, so we can manage and balance them appropriately, in our best interest. Unfortunately, few of us remain sensible and humble enough to keep all the sectors of our lives balanced. Success in one or two sectors often goes to our heads, and we assume that these strong aspects can support the other, weaker sectors and carry us forward without a hitch. This approach to life is, however, short-sighted and unrealistic. Even physicians, lawyers, scientists, and engineers, who are successful by virtue of their intellectual talents rather than their physical talents, have to pay attention to the biological and emotional sectors of their lives in order to protect their health and sanity. Similarly, while appearance may not be a crucial factor in their professional success, it is in their best interest to follow a proper dress code and a neatly manicured appearance to maintain credibility.

1. The physical sector is comprised of physical traits such as height, weight, hair and eye color, and complexion. To make a decent living, an individual who is in show business or politics needs to pay careful attention to the physical sector, whereas, physicians, scientists, and engineers must rely on their intellect more so than their appearance. Simple measures, such as exercise and nutrition can help manage this sector during our youth. However, in our current culture, in which a youthful appearance is exalted, the aging process cannot help but affect those who make a living based on physical appearance. Television and movie actors often resort to minor plastic surgery and hair coloring to keep them competitive.

Professional actors, models, and other public figures have an incentive to manage the physical sector as long as they are making a living out of it. Once they retire or lose popularity, many become depressed and socially isolated, possibly gaining an unhealthy amount of weight or falling into alcoholism or drug addiction. Such a reaction indicates an imbalance among the eight sectors of life. Even when people who depend on their physical appearances are at the height of their careers, they must also pay attention to and properly manage the other aspects of life, especially the spiritual, emotional, and financial sectors. In doing so, they will guarantee that their spirits will remain intact and they will be financially secure even if they are no longer popular.

2. The biological sector includes the functioning of our physical bodies—the proper workings of the heart, lungs, kidney, brain, and other organs. Those of us who have biological issues, for example diabetes, must pay more attention to this sector and adjust accordingly, whether that means monitoring our diets, exercising, and learning how to maintain normal blood-sugar levels. Anyone with chronic health problems, no matter how successful he is professionally and financially, must manage this sector carefully, or it will cause his downfall. Of course, the healthy among us must monitor this sector as well, but we will not need to devote so much time to it.

3. The spiritual sector refers to our relationship with our Maker. Having a personal connection with a higher power is a must for individuals from all walks of life, at all times, on all occasions. There is no exception to this rule. Feeling the presence of such a power puts our ego in its place in the scheme of things. Only when the ego has been tempered can we see ourselves, Nature, and the World with clear vision.

4. The emotional sector of a successful individual includes a pragmatic outlook and a healthy attitude that set that person apart from a failure. For example, a smoker knows rationally that cigarettes are bad for her health. But she will not succeed at quitting smoking until she believes this argument on an emotional level. Knowing facts is different than believing them, because knowledge is the rational intellect's domain, whereas belief is the domain of the irrational emotions. Our beliefs rather than our knowledge drive us to take action and win battles. When we are balanced emotionally, we consider input from instincts and intellect as well as emotion in order to make proper decisions in our own best interest. When all three divisions of the mind cooperate with each other, no task—including quitting smoking—is too big. On the contrary, a lopsided emotional sector

controlled by the pursuit of pleasure and the thrill of danger overpowers the intellect and will not allow it to stop smoking.

While every emotion we possess has a crucial role to play, balance is key. For instance, jealousy has the reputation of a leper. But a touch of jealousy inspires us to best the competition. On the other hand, jealousy that dominates the emotions causes us to lose sight of right and wrong, and could produce disastrous results. Consider fear: An appropriate amount of fear in an appropriate context encourages us to be cautious. However, fear run amok can only incapacitate us.

There are emotions, however, that should never prompt action, including guilt, desperation, and vengeance. Guilt is the deep sadness and despondence we feel when we perceive that we have made a mistake. It is a byproduct of compromised values and virtues. It is important to recognize the origin and source of our guilt—which are like two peas in a pod—in order to move beyond it. Guilt originates in our sense of right and wrong—and our perception that we have crossed that line. The source of guilt is more specific. For instance, those of us who are overly sensitive, sentimental, compassionate, and generous may feel guilty for not doing enough to stop the pain and suffering of others—whether in relation to homelessness, world hunger, or other social ills. In such cases, our overzealous, good-hearted nature has prompted an irrational response. Our guilt blinds us to one of our limitations as human beings—specifically that we cannot help everyone to our satisfaction. Instead, we must balance our irrational goals and unrealistic desires with the kinds of sensible and rational ideas that allow us to do what we can and feel satisfied by our action.

Indulging in guilt is pointless. Guilt devours our spirit from the inside out, like a termite. It destroys our resolve and persuades us to believe that there is no solution to our predicament and hence no salvation. Guilt triggers stress, self-loathing, and self-deprecation. It encourages self-pity. Guilt-ridden, we lose interest in life, experience memory loss, low self-esteem, and lack of confidence. Eventually, persistent guilt produces an overpowering sense of inferiority, which can lead to the quicksand of alcohol and drug addiction.

How do we disconnect from guilt and move forward? Having made a mistake, we have several choices. We may, at the first sign of regret and remorse, attempt to reverse the misdeed. If we cannot undo what we have done, or if too much time has passed to resolve the situation, we may try to make amends in other ways. Wheth-

er or not we can make amends, we must accept responsibility for our mistake and move on, hoping to have learned from the experience.

Similarly, it is inadvisable to act out of desperation, because desperation makes us irrational, illogical and impatient. When we are desperate, we make mistakes, cut corners, and eventually regret our actions. In a spiritual sense, acting out of desperation is equivalent to selling your soul for a cause, which will never work to your advantage. Realistically, we need never feel desperate. We are here on this earth for a short period. If we adjust our priorities to be in tune with the realities of Nature and the World, we will understand that nothing on this earth is worth trading our souls and our freedom for.

Vengeance is another emotion that should never motivate us to act. Vengeance strips away our objectivity, prompts us to cross ethical boundaries, encourages us to adapt an attitude that the end justifies the means. Through vengeance, we may accomplish our goals but pay a dear price. If someone has hurt you badly but is no longer capable of inflicting harm on you or anyone else, then lick your wounds, be cautious in the future, and move forward. If, on the other hand, your enemy still remains a potent threat, you have a right and a responsibility to neutralize that threat. But in this case, you are acting for the right reason. However, in planning and executing your actions be objective, focused, cool, and calculative, and never, ever cross ethical boundaries.

5. The professional sector, or the "bread and butter" sector, if managed well, helps you earn a living. This sector is one of the most difficult to manage, because we live in an extremely competitive, dog-eat-dog world, and we must be vigilant, innovative, thoughtful, and proactive in order to be successful here. None of us can earn a decent living on our own terms alone; it has to be done on mutually beneficial terms with the World.

To manage this sector efficiently, we must follow several basic guidelines. Without exception, they apply to anyone, from any walk of life, who wants or needs to work for a living. First, keep your mind, eyes, and ears open and your mouth shut. As a physician, I learned to follow this advice a long time ago. If I listened carefully to my patients with an open mind and resisted the urge to interrupt them, they would give me clues that would help me diagnose and treat their ailments. Even today, when I diagnose, I rely more on my patient's history, physical signs, and symptoms rather than on the wide array of sophisticated gadgets I have at my disposal.

Second, you must be honest with yourself without being transparent to a fault to the World. Third, you must believe in your mission and your agenda, and you must trust your instincts. Fourth, you must feel good about yourself and be proud for the right reasons—that is to build a better world for others while trying to secure your survival. Fifth, know whom to trust and not to trust. However, remember that when it comes to trust, an individual is untrustworthy until he or she proves otherwise, for trust must be earned. Finally, you must pursue your life's work with passion. Put your heart and soul into your work, not just your mind, because the task that you undertake—however big or small—must be important to you. By following these guidelines in the professional sector, you will achieve a string of successes that inspire your confidence and instill courage in you to take on even tougher tasks.

For the leaders among us, especially those working in a corporate environment, the following principles help manage the professional sector:

- a.** Form a tight knit inner circle of people you trust to carry out your agenda.
- b.** Don't trust yes-men, because anyone who agrees with you without questioning the veracity of your statements is most likely either dishonest or stupid.
- c.** Behave in a way that will win your employees' trust.
- d.** Learn to assess your employee's strengths and weaknesses without prejudice. Choose the right individual for the job, assign appropriate responsibilities, offer that person a free reign, and hold him or her accountable at every step.
- e.** Never ask others to do that which you have not demanded of yourself.
- f.** Prove to your associates that you are with them and not above them.
- g.** Command respect and loyalty from others by treating them with consideration and respect.
- h.** Set a good example through deeds rather than through rhetoric. Mean what you say and say what you mean.
- i.** Be willing to safeguard your integrity at any cost. We live in an imperfect world, one in which it is tempting to lie for personal benefit, but it is a certain truth that the lies that give you an initial advantage will catch up with you and cause your downfall.

- j. Be a caring, compassionate, and a good-hearted human being. However, make clear that your goodness is not a weakness. Discipline the people who work with you when the situation calls for it, but do so without ever insulting them or treating them badly, as that would be a poor reflection on your abilities as a professional.
- k. Never mix business with pleasure—they have different agendas. It is a mistake for a professional to develop a personal relationship with a business associate. He will lose objectivity, sets a bad example for others, and eventually the personal relationship will cloud his judgment. Never do business with close friends and relatives, because your relationship with both will most likely suffer.
- l. Remain humble and keep the other sectors in sight and balanced, even at the height of your career.

6. The personal sector includes our relationships with family and friends. We are obligated to have a healthy relationship with our family and friends and to extend a helping hand to them when possible. In the personal sector, we must attend to our domestic responsibilities, relationships, and habits—both good and bad. We must also pay attention to the ways in which our internal affairs, such as physical or emotional habits, affect the personal sector. Imbalances in other sectors of our lives can have a dire impact on the personal sector. There is, for example, a direct and intricate relationship between the personal and professional sectors. Those who manage the personal sector well are usually successful professionals. For instance, if a professional takes his spouse for granted or treats her badly, she will get back at him and make his life miserable. The tension between the couple will in turn have a stark, negative emotional impact on their children. Many of my patients are successful individuals who fall victim to various addictions because they have made messes of their personal lives.

Those of us who care more about career than family should not marry and have families. They should instead enjoy the freedom of single life and focus on professional development. The risk inherent to this strategy is that one day the single professionals among us decide that they are lonely and have nothing to look forward to. As a grandfather, I can tell you nothing beats the pleasure that I get from playing with my six-year-old

grandson. A better approach might be to balance a reasonably successful professional career with a pleasant personal life.

For instance, a professional woman who also wants a family may have to put her professional aspirations on hold or tone them down temporarily until the children have been born and have grown to be relatively independent. While she may during those years lose out on some advantages in the professional sector, she might consider that loss an acceptable compromise. A professional man has, by virtue of his gender, certain distinct advantages over women in the professional sector (i.e., he cannot get pregnant). He also has an obligation to understand the plight of a female professional, whether it is his wife or a colleague, and to extend his cooperation to help her fulfill her responsibilities. A professional man should also contribute to childcare and help out on the domestic front so that his wife is able to handle both the professional and personal sectors in the same way he does.

Finally, it goes without saying that whether you are a successful professional or not, you must manage your personal sector well. Former President Clinton, while a good-hearted man with excellent ideas, managed his personal affairs very poorly. Perhaps he was surprised to actually win the presidency, and when he did, the success went to his head. As a result, his personal and spiritual sectors fell strongly out of balance. He could have gone down in history as one of the greatest presidents of the twentieth century; instead he will be remembered as a womanizer and a liar. On the other hand, the leaders of the Republican Party who exploited his personal weaknesses to their benefit were no angels either. They went after Clinton on a personal vendetta, ignoring the nation's best interests. The resulting spectacle negatively affected our country by shifting the focus from important domestic and foreign affairs to the president's personal issues.

7. When assessing the **financial sector**, we must be careful to never try to catch up with the Joneses, because there is no end to such a goal. Instead, we must take stock of our finances and live within our means. If a financial deal seems out of reach or too good to be true, then it probably is. We must in these cases act according to our best interests and save ourselves the unnecessary aggravation and frustration of chasing a pipedream.

8. If managed properly, the **social sector** adds value to our lives. Social activities provide a pleasant diversion and help us to unwind after a grueling day at work. Those who are married and have families are ad-

vised to include their family members in at least some of their social activities. The social sector can also enhance other sectors if it includes relationships between fellow professionals that lead to career advancement. For example, playing golf allows us to enjoy a game outdoors while also bonding with other professionals.

More often than not, adolescents and young adults mismanage the social sector. They are usually immature, cocky, adventurous, and unequipped to think about the consequences of their actions. They act first and think later. As a result of poor judgment, this group of youngsters might choose social activities and companions poorly. Young adults who make poor social choices that lead to breaking the law or injuring themselves or others may suffer the consequences for the rest of their lives. It is a pity to see that many intelligent young individuals with bright futures ruin their lives for a few moments of thrill and excitement.

Some parents or guardians cite peer pressure as the culprit for irresponsible behavior in young adults. That reasoning seems a cheap excuse. While young adults' judgment is not fully mature, it is also true that if every parent and guardian took a genuine interest in the welfare of their children, the peer pressure excuse would disappear like a puff of smoke. Unfortunately, many adults responsible for children are themselves immature or negligent, and they fail to see the tragic events that can result from lack of supervision and caring. Nevertheless, our Maker holds us all accountable for our actions. The early tone we set for this sector can benefit us or hinder us for the remainder of our lives. Handled properly, the social sector can be an enormous asset to building powerful social networks, which will not only help the individual but also the rest of the world.

Each of the eight sectors has an important role to play in the overall quality of our lives. When a sector is neglected, poorly managed, or out of balance with other sectors, it has a negative impact on the other sectors. For example, I knew a conscientious and intelligent lawyer who took fifteen years to build a successful law practice. He was happily married with two children, and he enjoyed a gratifying lifestyle. While building his practice, he rarely drank or socialized. However, when his professional and financial sectors were finally secure, he started to drink alcohol with his friends and colleagues in a social setting. He enjoyed this downtime away from a strenuous work schedule, believing he had earned this privilege.

Three years later, he had become a binge drinker. His failure to properly supervise his emotional and social sectors eventually cost him his driver's license due to several traffic tickets for driving under the influence,

his professional license, his practice, and, when his wife divorced him, his family. It is critical to our success and stability that we attend to and closely guard the integrity of all the sectors of our lives. Start with your physical, biological, and spiritual sectors, because they are easier to manage, and then systematically attend to the sectors that remain.



[Let the rhythms of nature color your life]

Conclusion

Your progress on this earth will be judged by two opposing forces—you and the World. You can only judge yourself based on your actions, intentions, dedication, and commitment, irrespective of the results. However, the World judges you based solely on the results of your performance—certainly the unfair reality of life. Despite all your efforts, the results of your actions may not be to your liking and may not meet the World's expectations. Be honest when evaluating yourself, take solace in knowing that you did your best, brace yourself to endure the consequences, and move on.

As you struggle to balance the Sphere of Life, the World can set obstacles in the way of your progress. If you want to reach your full potential and complete your mission successfully, follow these three important steps to address such obstacles:

1. Engage our Maker with humility on its terms to ensure that your plans are aligned with Nature's terms. This move will boost your courage and confidence. It will also provide solid, fertile ground for your actions.

2. Evaluate and negotiate with yourself as objectively as possible. The most difficult step toward self-actualization is to understand that the only person you can trust to have your best interest at heart is you. To this end, keep your body as healthy and strong as possible by paying attention to nutrition and physical fitness. Mitigate any physical disabilities you may have by whatever means at your disposal. Adjust your expectations and change direction to accommodate the reality of your physical self. Keep your brain clear of both legal and illegal drugs, since unnecessary substances can only weaken the body, dull the senses, and cloud the judgment.

Promote harmony in your mind through sound philosophical concepts that balance your emotions. Restive emotions interfere in the communication between the three divisions of the mind. For example, fear of failure is like a death knell to your performance, whether you are an executive or an athlete. Fear of failure prevents the intellect from retrieving learned skills from the instincts, thereby preventing a flawless and natural sequence of thoughts or actions. In athletes, fear of failure is especially detrimental, because it shifts focus from actions to results, causing a loss of rhythm, concentration, composure, and confidence. Fear of failure demands successful results, an impossible guarantee.

To conquer fear of failure, we must focus on doing the right thing regardless of the consequences, which we can celebrate or cope with later. Most of the time, fear of failure stems from overblown, brash, and adamant

egos. Occasionally, it also stems from low self-esteem, lack of confidence, or a shortage of courage in the face of the realities of life.

3. Negotiate with the World with a savvy and sensible attitude, on mutually beneficial terms. Do so, and the World may even cooperate with you on your endeavors. Don't expect opportunity to knock on your door. You must seek out opportunity if you intend to be successful.

Developing Universal Sense is a lifelong process. Use the knowledge you gain from this philosophy to create a system of checks and balances in your life. You must first achieve mental harmony if you are to be in command of your performance. At times, such harmony may be difficult to maintain—especially if you struggle with addictions, fears, and phobias—because you must convince your emotions to cooperate with your intellect and your instincts. If you have attempted to balance your life to no avail, see Appendix A for an alternative medical treatment that has been shown in my own practice to help conquer persistent emotional imbalances.

Universal Sense will guide you in coordinating the three dimensions of your existence—Nature, Self, and the World. This simple and fundamental way of thinking can transform your life—freeing you from enslavement to destructive habits, enabling you to rise above your disappointments, and emboldening you to embrace your life and face your death without fear. Take life head-on, in good stride, and with enthusiasm. Finally, if your performance—regardless of the results—brings a broad smile to your face, you will know you have become a truly successful individual. If the results of your performance bring you a feeling of satisfaction and meet the World's expectations, too, you may safely consider yourself one lucky individual!



[Take life head-on, in good stride, and with enthusiasm]

Appendix A

es



Conquer Your Stress. Don't Manage it!

Transform yourself through Naturization. Be Stress Free Forever. Over 35 years of condensed knowledge is in this course!

★★★★★ 0 ratings, 0 students enrolled

Instructed by Balasa Prasad Personal Development / Personal Transformation

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Lectures	98
Video	7.5 Hours
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Includes	Lifetime access 30 day money back guarantee! Available on iOS and Android Certificate of Completion

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Course Description

This is an **Easy to Follow** Course in simple language and a **fresh new approach** that will change your life forever.

Did you know you can live longer and healthier when you are **Stress Free**.

No more struggling with problems associated with Stress. Arm yourself with the tools needed, "which is the knowledge" to Conquer Stress.

This course will change your **Mindset** and help you take charge of your life. You will be able to tackle any kind of life challenges that comes your way.

If you want to *Manage* Stress then this is **not** the course for you.

This course is for parents, teachers, business entrepreneurs, students, employees and any individuals looking to **Conquer Stress** and live a peaceful, productive pleasant life.

This is **the only course** that **does not** talk about the usual band aid methods of managing Stress.

Learn new concepts like **Naturization** and ideas that you have never heard of before. Enjoy listening to general and practical philosophies of life.

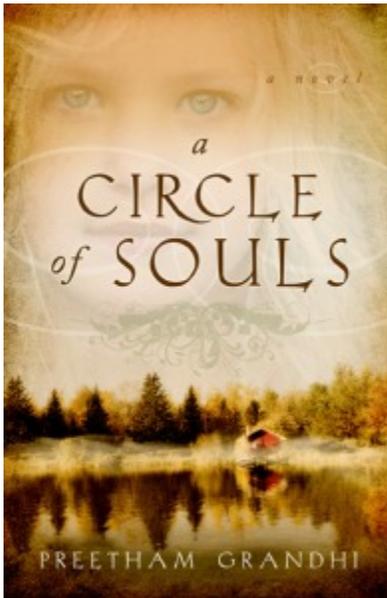
Use Naturization to make a **personal transformation** and be Stress Free Forever.

Learn about special topics such as Addictions, Fears & Phobias and the infamous Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Remember, there is no shortcut to dealing with Stress. You have the limitless potential of improving your life exponentially if you follow these simple steps.

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Can your dreams save you?

Find out in [A Circle of Souls](#), Preetham Grandhi's debut novel published. In A Circle of Souls, a little girl is found brutally murdered and the town's top detective, perplexed by a complete lack of leads calls in FBI agent Leia Bines. Meanwhile, Dr. Gram, a psychiatrist, searches desperately for the cause of Naya's devastating nightmares. The situations confronting Leia and Peter converge when Naya begins drawing chilling images of murder after being bombarded by the disturbing images in her dreams. Against her better judgment, Leia explores the clues in Naya's crude drawings, only to set off an alarming chain of events.

"The seminal work of this fine author kept me glued to my chair until the adventure was over and the mystery solved. A great read!" --**Judge Judy Sheindlin**, author of "Don't Pee on My Leg and Tell Me It's Raining," and star of the "Judge Judy" TV show.

"A fascinating debut- this novel takes the reader to the darkest places in the human soul, from a writer with the authenticity to lead us there. A stunning thriller and an important read." --**Linda Fairstein**, best selling author of "Killer Heat" & "Bad Blood."

Title: A Circle Of Souls
Author: Preetham Grandhi
Publisher: Cedar Fort
Genre: Fiction / Thrillers
Reading Level: 16 & up
Binding: Trade Paperback
Publication Date:
 June-2009
Price: \$15.99
Size: 5.5x8.5
ISBN:
 978-1-59955-235-4
Pages: 352
Website:
www.acircleofsouls.com

"A Circle of Souls is pure psychological suspense. A novel that opens the reader up to the mysteries of the human spirit and the darkness of the human mind. A compelling novel that does more than make you turn the pages, it makes you think."--International Bestseller **M.J. Rose**, author of "The Reincarnationist" & "The Halo Effect."

"What a crowning achievement for a new novelist to transform his vivid imagination into a unique & captivating thriller. A superb page turner!"--**Balasa Prasad M.D.** author of the book series "Stop Smoking for Good," "Stop Gambling for Good" & "Stop Overeating for Good."

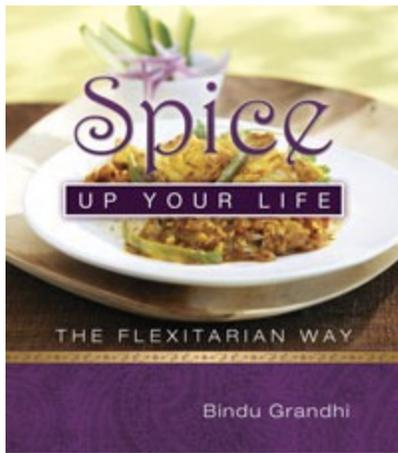
"A Circle of Souls is a rare combination of horror and hope. Preetham Grandhi has seamlessly sculpted a fierce page-turner"-- **Paul Castro**, Original writer/creator of the hit feature film "August Rush" & UCLA screenwriting professor.

About the Author: [Preetham Grandhi M.D.](#) was born and raised in Bangalore, India. After he finished medical school in India he moved to the United States to pursue a career in psychiatry. Since completing his child psychiatry training at Yale, he has been working at New York City Children's Center, New York. He has incorporated his experiences and complex views of psychological phenomenon from both an Eastern philosophical and Western psychiatric perspective. The book was first published by iUniverse. iUniverse presented the prestigious Publisher's Choice and Editor's Choice awards for "A Circle of Souls." The book is now available in stores. He is the co-author of "The Turning Point: Conquering Stress with Courage, Clarity and Confidence."

About Cedar Fort: Cedar Fort, Inc. has built a solid catalog of uplifting fiction and non-fiction books that are known across the globe. The company continues to seek ways to serve better. This includes improved production values and Internet access. CFI's staff continues to grow with many talented people. For more information visit www.cedarfort.com or call 1-800-SKYBOOK

To arrange a book signing or interview, contact Preetham Grandhi at drpret@acircleofsouls.com

###



The spice is right!

Spice Up Your Life: The Flexitarian Way takes healthy, low-fat recipes and dresses them up with savory herbs and spices. Taking a flexitarian approach to eating, it focuses primarily on grains, fruits, and vegetables, with proteins such as seafood and poultry mixed in sparingly. This diet has been proven to have numerous health benefits, and with these delicious, flavorful dishes, there is no sacrifice in taste!

With a helpful section on tips and techniques you're guaranteed a delectable, yet healthy, dish every time you cook. Spice up your Life is what all chefs need to add that little dash of something to their everyday cooking!

“An incredible collection of well-seasoned, flavorful, and healthy recipes. It will truly spice up your life!”

- **Emeril Lagasse,**

Celebrity Chef & Top Rated Restaurateur

Title: Spice up your life:

The flexitarian way

Author: Bindu Grandhi

Publisher: Cedar Fort

Genre: Cookbook

Binding: Paperback

Publication Date:

August 2009

Price: \$17.99

Size: 7.5x8.5

ISBN:

978-1-59955-273-6

Pages: 184

Website:

www.theflexcook.com

About the Author:

Bindu Grandhi developed a passion for flavorful flexitarian cooking in her early 20's. Her knowledge of good health and nutrition comes from her mother, Vasantha Prasad, author of “Indian Vegetarian Cooking from an American Kitchen” (Random House) and her father, Balasa L. Prasad, a physician and author of “Stop Overeating For Good” (Avery). In her first cookbook, she touts the health benefits of eating a flexitarian diet comprised primarily of vegetables, legumes, whole grains, spices, fruits and nuts with an occasional serving of chicken and fish. She believes that eating a tasty and satisfying nutritional meal is exactly what our mind craves and body needs.

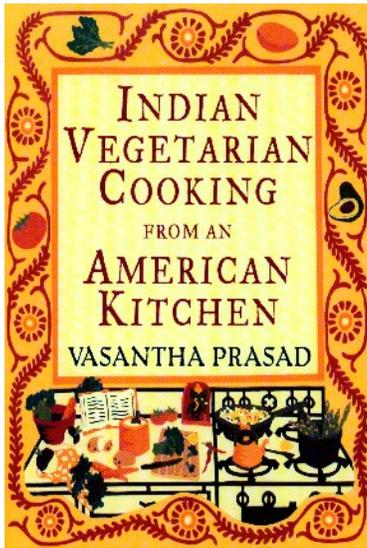
She has an MBA from NYU along with 10 years of corporate experience. She works part-time and lives with her family in Westchester County, New York.

About Cedar Fort:

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To arrange a book signing or interview, contact Bindu Grandhi at bindu@theflexcook.com

###



Indian Vegetarian Cooking Made Easy!

Whether you're a novice or an experienced cook, [Indian Vegetarian Cooking from an American Kitchen](#) shows that the basics of cooking Indian fare are simple - cook with your senses. Author Vasantha Prasad combines flavors such as sweet and sour, hot and cool, using spices, fresh vegetables, fruits, yogurt, grains and legumes to create sumptuous delights like Samosas, Red Lentil Soup, Okra & Yogurt Salad, Roasted Eggplant in Tomato Sauce, Sweet Saffron Rice with Cashews and Raisins, Vegetable Upma, Mango Milkshake and Carrot Halva Pudding. Vasantha has adapted the recipes for an American kitchen by providing substitute ingredients when Indian ingredients are unavailable as well as preparing flat breads and dosas on a regular non-stick skillet in lieu of a tava or tandoor. The author does a wonderful job making the home cook comfortable & confident in using spices or ingredients that may be unfamiliar, as well as how the dish should look, feel and taste with clear and easy to follow directions. The delicious recipes in [Indian Vegetarian Cooking from an American Kitchen](#) will entice you to run out to your kitchen and jump right into these recipes!

“A remarkably skillful job of bringing authentic Indian flavors to the American kitchen.”

--**David Rosengarten**, author of *The Dean & Deluca Cookbook* and host of *Taste* (TV Food Network).

“Vasantha Prasad’s book is a must-read for anyone who loves healthy Indian vegetarian fare. Her recipes are wonderful and use all five of the senses!”

--**Nina Griscom**, co-host of *Dining Around* (TV Food Network)

Title: Indian Vegetarian Cooking from an American Kitchen

Author: Vasantha Prasad

Publisher: Random House

Genre: Cookbooks

Reading Level: 18 & up

Binding: Trade Paperback

Publication Date: May-1998

Price: \$18.00

Size: 6 x 9

ISBN: 0-679-76438-0

Pages: 249

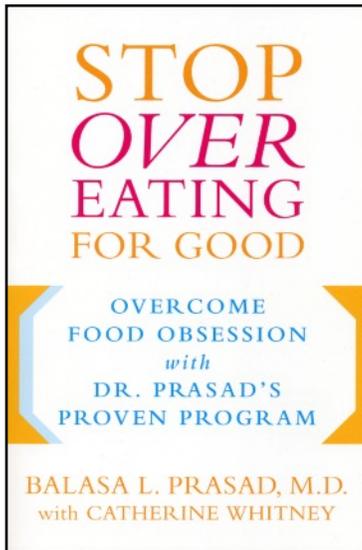
Website:

www.indianvegetarian.com

About the Author: Vasantha Prasad was born in Bangalore, India and developed a passion for vegetarian cooking in her late teens. Living in a country renowned for its exotic spices and wide variety of vegetables, she learned to prepare healthful and tasty vegetarian delights. She came to the United States in 1972 and dreamed of writing an Indian Vegetarian cookbook tailored to the American kitchen. This is her first cookbook and she is in the process of writing her second. She also conducts cooking classes at the local schools and community centers. For six years she produced and hosted her own cooking show “Vasantha’s Vegetarian Cooking” on LMC-TV, and currently has a series of cooking demonstrations on YouTube. She works as a full-time office manager and lives with her family in Westchester County, NY.

To arrange a book signing or interview, contact Preetham Grandhi at drpret@acircleofsouls.com

###



Break Free from Yo-Yo Dieting & Make Peace with Food!

In the last fifty years, a remarkable shift has occurred in our society regarding our attitudes and behaviors around food. We live to eat instead of eat to live. We crossed the line of enjoyment to indulgence and as a result food has lost its true identity as a source of nourishment. Most Americans cannot recognize hunger signals and instead follow their appetite. They supersize with abandon. Nearly every activity is accompanied by food - malls, sporting events, movie theatres. Meanwhile we're sending our children the message that they must be constantly eating and drinking in order to be satisfied.

The laws of nature will not hear excuses about why a person overeats. If you want to stop overeating for good, **the answer is in your mind, not your body.** In [Stop Overeating For Good](#), psychiatrist and addiction therapist, Dr. Prasad offers a proven and practical five-step program which helps the reader through insightful questionnaires identify their overeating profile to understand why they use food as a crutch and why they must stop. He shares the simple secret to losing weight forever and his Reality-Based Eating solution. By deprogramming old eating habits and reprogramming new eating habits, the reader learns the art of eating right, how to avoid the temptations that can lure them back to overeating and change their relationship with food forever. As a bonus, The Stop Overeating for Good Journal in the Appendix serves as an invaluable tool to help the reader track their goals and progress.

About the Author: Balasa L. Prasad, M.D., is a psychiatrist and anesthesiologist who for over 30 years has helped hundreds of patients overcome their addictions at his behavior management clinic in Mount Vernon, New York. He has also written "Stop Smoking For Good" and "Stop Gambling For Good. He has been featured in the New York Times, New York Post, "O" magazine, Elle Magazine and "W." He lives with his family in Westchester County, NY.

To arrange a book signing or interview, contact Preetham Grandhi at drpret@acircleofsouls.com

Title: Stop Overeating For Good

Author: Balasa L. Prasad, M.D.

Publisher: Avery

Genre: Self Help

Reading Level: 18 & up

Binding: Trade Paperback

Publication Date:

September 2006

Price: \$11.95

Size: 6 x 9

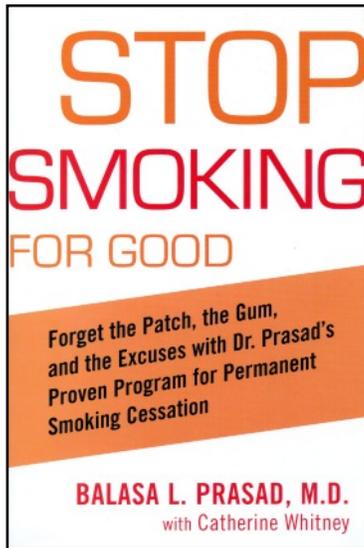
ISBN: 1-58333-268-5

Pages: 132

Website:

www.addictionandphobia.com

###



Last Puff to No Puff - Quit Smoking Permanently!

For those smokers who have tried and failed to conquer the smoking habit with patches, gum, medications or hypnotism, will find the answer to permanent smoking cessation *[In Stop Smoking For Good](#)*. Psychiatrist and addiction therapist Dr. Prasad states that nicotine is not the culprit and if you want to stop smoking, you have to abandon the crutches that only attempt to wean you off nicotine and address the underlying psychological triggers that enslave you to smoking. His radical approach offers an inspirational and practical 6-step plan for first-time quitters and those who have failed with other methods. The reader will find out what is their addictive profile with the help of insightful questionnaires, which in turn helps them understand the depth of their addiction and the obstacles they will face when trying to quit. He puts the reader on the path to becoming a comfortable nonsmoker by avoiding the temptations that lure many back to the habit and eliminate the mentality of addiction so that they find closure and leave smoking behind permanently. As a bonus, Dr. Prasad provides a frequently asked questions section based on the hundreds of patients he has helped to quit smoking for good.

“This book is for smokers who are serious about kicking the habit forever. Dr. Prasad meticulously dissects the smoking habit and, most important, shows how to beat it. He did it for me and it changed my life and the lives of those around me.”

--**Judge Judy Sheindlin**, author of “Don’t Pee on My Leg and Tell Me It’s Raining,” and star of the “Judge Judy” TV show.

About the Author: Balasa L. Prasad, M.D., is a psychiatrist and anesthesiologist who for over 30 years has helped hundreds of patients overcome their addictions at his behavior management clinic in Mount Vernon, New York. He has also written “Stop Overeating For Good” and “Stop Gambling For Good. He has been featured in the New York Times, New York Post, “O” magazine, Elle Magazine and “W.” He lives with his family in Westchester County, NY.

To arrange a book signing or interview, contact Preetham Grandhi at drpret@acircleofsouls.com

###

Title: Stop Smoking For Good

Author: Balasa L. Prasad, M.D.

Publisher: Avery

Genre: Self Help

Reading Level: 18 & up

Binding: Trade Paperback

Publication Date:

October 2005

Price: \$11.95

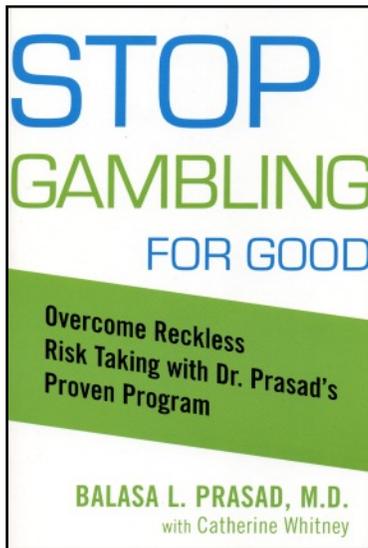
Size: 6 x 9

ISBN: 1-58333-234-0

Pages: 152

Website:

www.addictionandphobia.com



Break Free from Reckless & Compulsive Betting and Risk Taking

What distinguishes a recreational gambler from a reckless and compulsive gambler? Why do some people gamble away their savings in hope for that one big payoff, or spend countless hours playing poker online, or max out credit cards for things they don't even need? In *Stop Gambling for Good*, psychiatrist and addiction therapist Dr. Prasad explains that simply avoiding casinos, card games or the mall isn't enough to solve the problem - you must face your underlying psychological drive to take risks. In his 6-step plan, he helps you discover that freedom holds a greater thrill than addiction. He shows that even if you failed in the past to break free from the gambling habit, you can learn to take responsible risks in life without losing security, money or happiness.

Gambling is merely a visible behavioral manifestation of a deeper craving triggered by the emotional center of the mind. By focusing on the mind of a pathological gambler, and not on the gambling activity, Dr. Prasad helps a gambler to identify their addictive profile with insightful questionnaires, make the break from reckless gambling, and become a responsible gambler by learning to make balanced and well-reasoned choices in life. As a bonus, he includes a section on frequently asked questions based on the numerous patients he has helped to overcome this destructive habit. Dr. Prasad states, "When you liberate yourself from the mental slavery, you can experience a full, and satisfying life, free from addiction."

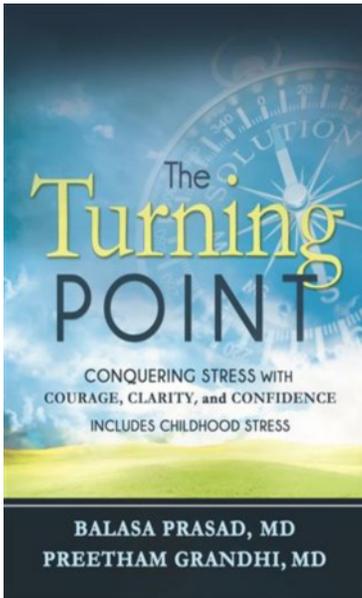
About the Author: Balasa L. Prasad, M.D., is a psychiatrist and anesthesiologist who for over 30 years has helped hundreds of patients overcome their addictions at his behavior management clinic in Mount Vernon, New York. He has also written "Stop Smoking For Good" and "Stop Overeating For Good." He has been featured in the New York Times, New York Post, "O" magazine, Elle Magazine and "W." He lives with his family in Westchester County, NY.

To arrange a book signing or interview, contact Preetham Grandhi at drpret@acircleofsouls.com

Title: Stop Gambling For Good
Author: Balasa L. Prasad, M.D.
Publisher: Avery
Genre: Self Help
Reading Level: 18 & up
Binding: Trade Paperback
Publication Date: October 2005
Price: \$11.95
Size: 6 x 9
ISBN: 1-58333-235-9
Pages: 134
Website: www.addictionandphobia.com

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Conquer Stress in 3 Steps



Title: The Turning Point: Conquering Stress with Courage, Clarity and Confidence

Authors: Balasa Prasad, Preetham Grandhi

Publisher: Cedar Fort

Genre: Self Help/Mind

Reading Level: 16 & up

Binding: Paperback

Publication Date:

December-2011

Price: \$12.99

ISBN:

978-1462110957

Pages: 176

Website: theturningpointbook.com

What do we all have in common? *Stress*. Can't make ends meet? *Stress*. Addicted to unhealthy habits? *Stress*. Are you feeling trapped? *Stress*. Stress is the principal nemesis of human beings and an equal opportunity tormentor. It dampens your spirit and distracts you from reaching your goals. No one escapes the stressors of life.

Tired of managing stress? Don't manage it, Conquer it! Use 3 bold steps Courage, Clarity and Confidence to conquer stress and take charge of your destiny. Use 'The Turning Point' to guide you step by step with real life examples. You will identify the source of stress and neutralize it forever. People usually look at stress from their own and the world's perspective, and therefore cannot grasp the dynamics of stress. This book introduces a new, ground breaking concept; **Naturization**. Naturization is the missing link in the fight against stress. Naturization provides a third perspective, nature's perspective, a key and an essential tool to conquering stress.

"Dr. Prasad, one of the country's most successful and original addiction specialists has now offered us a road map for kicking stress."

Steve Kroft - 60 minutes CBS News correspondent

"A highly personal and insightful account of new approaches to conceptualizing stress and its reduction. This book will be of interest to both general readers and professionals focused on stress disorders."

Fred R Volkmar, M.D. - Irving B. Harris Professor

Director - Child Study Center, Yale University School of Medicine, Chief of Child Psychiatry Yale New Haven Hospital

"Dr. Prasad makes a strong case not just for managing stress but for banishing it altogether from your life. I agree completely that any stress is bad stress, no matter what the headlines tell you. This new book will show you that the stress-free life is indeed possible."

Robert Epstein, Ph.D., former editor-in-chief, Psychology Today
author of "The Big Book of Stress Relief Games"

About the Authors: [Balasa L. Prasad, M.D.](#) is a psychiatrist and anesthesiologist who for over 30 years has helped hundreds of patients overcome their phobias and addictions at his behavior management clinic in Mount Vernon, New York. He has also written "Stop Smoking For Good," "Stop Gambling For Good" and "Stop Overeating for good." He has been featured in the New York Times, New York Post, "O" magazine, Elle Magazine, Inside Edition and "W."

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