



## ***A Sense of Alignment***

**by Brian Tracy**

Your most important aim in life is to be happy, to be calm, confident and relaxed and to feel in complete control of every aspect of your life. Just as your car runs more smoothly and requires less energy to go faster and farther when the wheels are in perfect alignment, you perform better when your thoughts, feelings, emotions, goals and values are in alignment.

Nature demands balance in all things. You see balance all around you, from the most distant stars in the universe down to the individual cells of your body. Each of your billions of cells contains hundreds of chemicals, each of which is carefully regulated and kept in balance by your autonomic nervous system to ensure your health and longevity.

The wonderful thing is that balance is the norm in your life. Your body has a natural bias toward health and energy. It's built to last for a hundred years and to perform smoothly and efficiently for most of that time. It's only improper maintenance and incorrect operation that, in most cases, cause your body to get out of balance and lead to disease and pain, rather than ease and pleasure.

Emotionally, you also have a natural bias toward happiness and enjoyment. In fact, you have a natural barometer inside of you that tells you when you're doing the things that are just right for your unique personality and temperament. This is your inner voice, your intuition, and it's manifested in your level of peace of mind. Whenever you feel at peace with yourself and the world around you, you know that you're doing the very things that you're meant to do and that your inner and outer worlds are properly balanced and in alignment with each other.

There are two major areas of balance that you need to be concerned with on a daily basis. They are the physical and the emotional. You need to adjust your behaviors in such a way that you enjoy high levels of physical health and energy most of the time. Even the richest person in the world is at a tremendous disadvantage if he loses his health. You need to guard your health like a sacred object. From the time you get up in the morning to the time you go to bed at night, you need to think about the things you can do to assure that you live a long, healthy life, free from the diseases and the debilitating illnesses that are causing our health-care outlays to be the highest in the world.

A study was conducted over a period of 20 years on 8,000 men to determine what physical habits they had that caused them to live longer lives or caused them to die earlier than their peers. This study, The Alameda County Study, discovered that there were seven common habits practiced regularly by the people who seemed to be the healthiest, live the longest and have the fewest sick days per year. The first of these seven habits is eating regularly. Researchers found that people who ate irregularly, at different times and in different amounts throughout the day, were far more likely to be fatigued and have physical ailments than were those who ate on a regular basis.

The second habit is eating lightly. We know today that foods high in fat, sugar and salt are very bad for us. The more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean sources of protein you incorporate into your diet, the better you will feel, the deeper you will sleep, the fresher you will be and the better your whole life will be.

The third habit, which also involves diet, is not snacking between meals. The researchers found that when a person eats snacks between meals, the introduction of new food interrupts the ongoing digestive process and leads to drowsiness and improper digestion.

The fourth habit for longevity is not smoking. Smoking is so detrimental to the entire human system that it alone causes more illnesses than all the other environmental or hereditary factors put together. Researchers have identified at least 32 forms of illness, including a variety of cancers, that are caused by or aggravated in some way by smoking. The very act of quitting smoking can do more to improve a person's overall health than a change in any other single health habit.

The fifth habit identified in the Alameda study is consuming alcohol moderately. This is a fairly narrow range that suggests not more than one or two drinks per day, and fewer is desirable. Since the number one cause of premature death up to the age of 40 is automobile accidents, and as many as 50 percent of automobile accidents are alcohol-related, this is a good piece of advice.

The sixth habit for longevity is sleeping seven to eight hours every night. Keeping yourself properly rested is one of the most important things you can do. If you allow yourself to become overtired for any period at all, your immune system begins to break down, and you become susceptible to a variety of illnesses, including colds, flu and even pneumonia. Getting regular rest is one of the most important things you can do to keep your physical life balanced.

The seventh habit identified in the Alameda study is exercising regularly. The rule with regard to your body is "If you don't use it, you lose it." Regular exercise, even moderate exercise, can have a tremendous impact in helping you to feel better, digest better, sleep better and be a happier and more positive person.

Since the Alameda study was completed, insurance companies have identified two additional habits: first, wearing automobile seat belts, to reduce the possibility of harm in an automobile accident; and, second, deep breathing each day, to improve your digestion, increase the amount of oxygen going through your brain, and enable you to relax into a "state of alpha" on a regular basis.

One of the very best ways to engage in the process of "centering" is to take a few moments prior to any event of importance to breathe deeply six or seven times. Deep breathing causes you to relax and makes you feel more confident and more in control of yourself and the situation. It brings your inner world into better alignment with what is going on around you.

In fact, whenever you face a stressful situation, you can better prepare yourself to deal with it by taking a few moments to breathe deeply before you say or do anything. When you prepare yourself in this way, your words and actions will be far more effective than they would if you had just reacted when the situation came up. You will feel more in balance. And the more you act as though you are in balance, the more it becomes a habit for you to behave in a balanced way.

Vince Lombardi once said, "Fatigue does make cowards of us all." When you are physically out of balance for any reason, when you are tired or you have eaten too much, or too much of the wrong foods, your emotions, your level of energy and your reactions to the various situations around you are adversely affected. When you are in excellent health, well rested, properly exercised and properly fed, you tend to perform at your best.

The second area of balance that is important to you is your emotional life. We know that how you feel emotionally has a dramatic impact on your physical body. The field of psychosomatic medicine deals with the impact of psycho-, the mind, on soma, the body; according to studies in this area, 80 to 90 percent of all your physical illnesses are mentally and emotionally caused.

How can you tell if you are out of balance emotionally? it's easy. Just listen to your body and your emotions. Like a doctor, take a stethoscope to your life and listen intently to how you feel about how things are going on around you. When you are in balance, you feel calm, confident, relaxed, poised and at peace with yourself and life. When you are out of balance, you feel unhappy, stressed, anxious, angry, resentful, negative, pessimistic and depressed.

In each area of your life, you will have a different set of feelings. In some parts of your life, you will be perfectly happy. In other parts of your life, you will feel uneasy, tense and sometimes frustrated. Your job is to go through your life, like going through your closet to weed through old clothes, and take the time to develop a strategy to deal with each part of your life that is detracting from your happiness.

The most important breakthrough in psychology in the 20th century may have been the discovery of the self-concept. You have a self-concept, as does everyone else. This self-concept is the master program of your personal computer. it's made up of all the ideas, experiences, decisions, emotions, knowledge and beliefs that you've developed from infancy, and possibly from even before that. This self-concept forms the operating instructions for your computer, and you always behave on the outside in a manner consistent with your self-concept on the inside.

You cannot change anything in your outer world permanently unless you first change your self-concept. You have a self-concept for the kind of person you are, for your personality and your attitude and your values. You have a self-concept for the kind of life you lead, for your income, your home, your car and the type of work that you do. You have a self-concept for your health and your weight and your level of fitness, for how well you perform in any athletic endeavor.

You have a self-concept that governs your level of creativity, intelligence, sense of humor, memory, ability to speak to a public audience and level of competence in everything else that you do. And you always act on the outside consistent with this self-concept. To get your life into greater balance, it's essential that you examine your inner world in relation to your outer world; compare both worlds to find where there is incongruence or imbalance that might be causing you to perform poorly or, more importantly, to be unhappy and frustrated.

Your self-concept is made up of three parts. The first part is your self-ideal. This is the person you would most like to be. This is a description of the values that you feel are the highest you can have and live by. Your self-ideal is made up of a combination of all the qualities that you most admire in yourself and in other people. Sometimes, you can define your self-ideal by asking yourself what you would look like, and how you would be described by others, if you developed yourself into the finest human being you could ever become.

The second part of your self-concept is your self-image. Your self-image can be defined as the way you see yourself in the present moment. Your self-image is a combination of how you see yourself, how others see you and how you think others see you. All three may be different. That is, you may see yourself in a certain way, you may think others see you in a different way, and, then, others may see you differently from your perceptions.

You always perform on the outside consistent with the mental picture that you have of yourself on the inside. If you see yourself as positive and happy and confident, competent and capable in your personal life and your work, you'll behave like that on the outside, toward other people. You can always tell what your self-image is, in any area of your life, by examining how you feel when you're with people. A person with a positive self-image is relaxed and confident with others. A person with a negative self-image feels insecure and inferior with others, especially with people he feels are ahead of him or better than him in some way.

Now, here's the interesting thing about your self-image. When your self-image is fully integrated, the way you see yourself, the way others see you and the way you think others see you all are the same. And the more you're living your life consistent with your values and ideals, the more integrated your self-image is, and the better you perform at everything you attempt.

The third part of your self-concept is your self-esteem. Your self-esteem can be defined as how much you like yourself and respect yourself. it's your reputation with yourself. it's how you think about yourself relative to the world when you're in the privacy of your room. it's the emotional component of your self-concept and is more important than anything else.

Your level of self-esteem determines your personality, your level of stress, how much enthusiasm and excitement you have in life, how happy you are, how positive you are, and how well you get along with people.

Psychologists today have come to the overwhelming conclusion that your self-esteem is the real measure and monitor of your personality and largely determines everything that happens to you in your interactions and relationships with others.

And what is the key to high self-esteem? The key is simply this: When your external behaviors and your highest values and ideals are consistent with each other, your self-esteem goes up. When your ideals and values are clear, and when the qualities and behaviors that you most admire are the same qualities and behaviors that you manifest in your interactions with others, you like yourself better. You respect yourself more. You feel happier.

Whenever your inner world and your outer world are in alignment, whenever your activities and your values are congruent, whenever your activities are in balance with the highest values that you hold, you feel terrific and perfectly centered in your life.

If you say and do one thing while you admire and respect another set of behaviors, you feel unhappy and dissatisfied. You feel out of balance. You feel a sense of incongruency.

It's not easy to attain a sense of balance and equilibrium. It requires effort on your part. It requires that you think through who you are and who you want to be. It requires that you take the necessary steps to do more of the things that are consistent with the actions of the very best person that you can imagine yourself becoming, and that you simultaneously stop doing and saying the things that are inconsistent with your best ideals and aspirations.

You achieve a greater sense of balance by, first of all, determining your values in each area, in regard to your health, your relationships, your work, and so on. Next, you examine your behaviors and identify the things that you're doing and saying that are not consistent with those values. And then you resolve to change them, one by one. In bringing your behaviors into alignment with your innermost convictions, you start to feel wonderful about yourself; you start to feel more in balance; you start to feel happier and healthier.

Just as a car with perfectly aligned and balanced wheels runs more smoothly down the highway, you also will run more smoothly down the highway of your life when you've taken the time and made the effort to bring everything that you do and say into balance and alignment.

#### **About the author:**

**Brian Tracy** has been empowering business and sales professionals by sharing his knowledge all over the world. His techniques will allow you to reach your goals and achieve the unthinkable. Brian, a former Edmontonian, has graciously allowed us to access and share from his vast wisdom and experience.

Please visit Brian's website and invest in yourself by adding some of his value-added books and other programs to your success library. Visit: [www.BrianTracy.com](http://www.BrianTracy.com)