

## Balance 20/20: Six Keys to a Harmonious Life

**George Bartko**

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Imagine creating a life as a great movie, complete with main characters, supporting cast, plots, and interweaving sub-plots. Drama. Adventure. Idylls. Passages.

The author, a time management expert, recognized that his own life was unbalanced. This dissatisfaction initiated change; he created a more satisfying life scenario for himself, which grew into this book. With marketable management strengths, Bartko, CEO of a New York-based company, prioritized six “pillars,” representing essential lifestyle arenas that can enable people to take charge of their destinies.

Bartko's time management system begins by urging the use of such common tools as calendars, date-based task lists, address books, and binders. He encourages readers to schedule all life tasks first and then, business tasks. When business tasks are put first, he says, life tasks tend to get done “when we have time.”

The six priority pillars are: Connections, Mind, Motion, Fuel, Spirit, and Business. Bartko warns the reader that until time is organized, it can never be one's own. He recommends breaking priorities down into manageable parts. Each pillar includes an explanation and self-test, with clarifying questions. Further exploration is followed by simple, concrete activities pointing toward balance. Sensitive photographs emphasize the author's points, while engaging more of the reader's senses.

Bartko's abundant ideas create identification with activities or stimulate other possibilities. Following the first pillar (Connections—creating and maintaining loving relationships) is Mind—stimulating the intellect, cultivating creativity, and developing a power of reflection. These become foci for breaking down patterns into bite-size pieces and reframing them according to priority.

The section on physicality stresses active relaxation, followed by spiritual connections in the natural world. Fuel or nutrition is also put on the table for consideration. Bartko creatively stimulates evaluation of the reader's diet, including meal planning and how to implement food choices. The book concludes with a to-do list, an organized approach to the personal business of finance, home, medical, insurance, and auto related matters. This section is juicier than it sounds.

Balance, says Bartko, is an ongoing journey achieved through an overall organized system and heightened awareness of the value to place on important life elements. The author hopes to help others achieve balanced living by applying time-tested techniques and by recognizing the value of neglected or ignored areas. An encouraging, well-written read containing elements for both right and left brains. Virtually everyone will find good hints for getting and keeping life dreams on track and directing their own life movie.

SOPHIA TARILA (September / October 2004)

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