



Living Intact: Challenge and Choice In Tough Times

Mark Steinberg

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The secret to “living intact,” according to psychologist Mark Steinberg, is learning “to see yourself as being more the potential of tomorrow rather than the product of yesterday.”

Living Intact: Challenge and Choice in Tough Times is a how-to for conquering some of the common issues that affect people, among them anxiety and depression, breaking stubborn habits, and developing compassion and emotional control. He outlines five “secrets of intact living” and addresses the “self habits” that allow people to live intact lives.

Steinberg describes intact living as “...an active and systematic engagement with life’s challenges, using the potential of the challenge process to resolve the inherent breakdowns, dissatisfactions, and discrepancies that result from our desires for what life should be and our actual experiences living life.”

Intact living requires being grounded in reality and viewing the world as it is, not as we would like it to be. Desires and expectations must be balanced with what is “possible and likely.” “Challenge is what gets you to recognize the bridges and to cross them.... [C]hallenge is integral for living intact,” Steinberg says.

Steinberg, whose expertise is in clinical, educational, and neuropsychology, says nothing unique, but he goes into significantly more detail in 400-plus pages than does the typical self-help book. He describes his own efforts to pull his life together, along with anecdotes of patients who have been helped by his methods.

What sets *Living Intact* apart from the self-help pack are the primary therapeutic treatments Steinberg advocates. EEG neurofeedback and Thought Field Treatment (TFT) are approaches that target chemical imbalances within the brain without the use of pharmaceutical intervention.

Patients practice neurofeedback by playing a video game and directing the action with their brainwaves, while learning to control anger, anxiety, depression, and disturbing thoughts and behaviors. TFT is a curative exercise where the patient rhythmically taps specific parts of the body in order to disrupt “perturbations” in the thought field, with positive results often in minutes, according to Steinberg.

Skeptical? Steinberg writes: “You might imagine the consternation and dismissive attitude on the part of those who believe this seemingly silly and innocuous treatment could not possibly work. Yet...TFT is scientifically based, highly researched and replicated, and continues to gain adherents who benefit from its simple, natural, and effective methods.”

Having converted to Christianity from an Orthodox Jewish background decades ago, Steinberg makes it clear from the start that the book has “spiritual substrata.” His text is interspersed with quotations from both the Old and New Testaments.

But, he writes, “Rest assured that I am sensitive to the problem of spiritual stridency...and the potential for alienating those with different beliefs.” It is his hope that those of all belief systems will find the content beneficial.

Steinberg's treatments are not dependent upon faith, and it's possible to read for content, ignoring the scriptural quotes, but it is likely Christians who will more fully appreciate *Living Intact*.

RUTH DOUILLETTE (April 27, 2011)

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