

Optimal Living 360: Smart Decision Making for a Balanced Life

Sanjay Jain

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With humor and humility, Jain blends common sense with valuable research in this all-encompassing guide to life.

Covering all the bases, from finances and decision-making to relationships and spirituality, *Optimal Life 360* is a tune-up for a life that may be exhibiting signs of average wear and tear.

It was once popular to say “life doesn’t come with an instruction book.” Perhaps now, with motivational speakers, celebrity life-coaches, and books for finding love, handling losing loved ones, investing, spending, and dieting, it has far too many. While seekers can usually find just the right text tailored to their specific problem, Sanjay Jain has developed a perfect manual for the rest of us.

Optimal Living 360 is a clean and well-designed book with a polished and inviting cover, sensible page layout, and design elements that enhance rather than distract from the purpose of the text. Incorporated tables and graphs are clear and appropriate. Every element of the book has been put in good order, which is encouraging when its purpose is to help the reader to do the same for his or her life.

With a medical degree and an MBA, Jain’s approach is based on “return on investment” and “core asset protection strategies.” A little gimmicky at the outset, this system of organization proves easy to follow and entirely customizable. If you consider time and energy to be the currency you have to spend, Jain can help allocate your funds to achieve a more balanced life.

Thankfully, he doesn’t do this by simply telling you what you should do. Each chapter begins with a piece of Jain’s own story. He isn’t writing a memoir but connecting to his readers in a meaningful way by saying, “I’ve been there. Here’s what I’ve learned.” Combining personal experience, academic and professional credentials, and the narrative voice of father and friend, Jain’s book is the one you want to give to the young adult going off to college or the good friend you wish you could give better advice to.

The chapters on health and fitness, money management, and decision-making are Jain’s strong suit, although they may lack some measure of readability. Readers may find themselves skimming back and forth to the snippets of information that stand out. Sections that discuss the less measurable areas of spirituality and relationships are not as successful from the organizational point of view, and the author himself admits to the use of too many slogans. But, with good humor and humility, he quickly summarizes his points, as in the section on first dates: “for Pete’s sake, think before you talk.”

Whether it’s the uses of common herbs in home remedies, how to figure dollar cost averages in investing, or just needing to hear one more person tell you to wear a helmet when you ride your bike, *Optimal Living 360* puts common sense and valuable research into one resource. Even if you don’t think your life needs a tune-up, you should still have a copy of this book for your proverbial glove box.

SARA BUDZIK (August 17, 2013)

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