

AUTHOR

Guide book to feeling better

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of light. He was a student of the Ostrovzia Rebbe in Poland. Mandel studied extensively with her father.

Giving people happiness is "what's running through my veins genetically," said Mandel. She uses her family name, Eisenstadt, to keep it alive and believes there is a relationship between the tattoo on her father's arm, A18, and his name. Eisenstadt had been anglicized when he became a citizen; it was originally spelled with an "A," and 18 was for life ("chai") since he was the only family member that survived.

Drawing on her past, she believes the children of survivors are a special breed. Said Mandel: "I don't want to just survive, I want to live, and I want to live in the moment."

"Why are we so tired after work?" she questions. "We take our parents, our kids, with us; we don't just live in the moment. We wouldn't be tired if we were just in the moment."

Her book is an attempt to put together feelings, spirituality, intellect and physical well being, and be "in balance as a totality."

"It's the little stressors every day that cost us in health," said Mandel, believing everything to have a mind/body connection. Both her parents contracted Alzheimer's in their later years, and Mandel is convinced that it was a result of their having been exposed to the stresses and trauma of the Holocaust.

In her book, she examines 29 critical life situations, including divorce, trauma, insomnia, and burnout and offers ways in which to transcend them and pull yourself out.



Debbie Eisenstadt Mandel

Author

"It's not about the dark side," says Mandel. "You need to take failure and learn from it, explore your limitations and see your capabilities and then develop those capabilities. One needs to say, 'Okay, I'm limited here but I can compensate and develop and learn from it.'"

In the chapter entitled "For the Times You Live a Life of Quiet Desperation," (i.e., depression), Mandel draws on the unique Jewish experience emerging from darkness into the light (the Holocaust). Then, she offers mind/body prescriptions with concrete, sensible advice, such as "draw the blinds to let sunshine into the room," or, "go swimming; you'll be surprised at your ability to stay afloat." In the chapter about dealing with fear, she suggests you "speak up and reveal your honest opinion."

The next section offers original meditations. Here, Mandel calls upon her Kabbalistic background and has you assume a tree-of-life yoga posture.

Finally, there are the

exercises, each of which is specific to the stressor.

"You have to physiologically image the muscle doing it, and not be on a cell phone," says Mandel. The objective of the exercises to overcome depression is to transform that feeling into a "lightness of being." You feel very clean and pure and very much in the moment, she says. Furthermore, "if you keep doing something, it becomes your nature."

The workouts were devised by Mandel's personal trainer, Frank Mikulka, from the Hollywood Atrium Club in Lawrence. Since Mandel believes there are definite relationships between Kabbalah, the doctrine of the Dali Lama, and Western medicine, the Zen vision put forth by this fitness consultant create effective movements "designed to reduce stress, increase focus and strength, and they're fun," she said.

Mandel has an extensive literary background. After graduating from The Yeshivah of Flatbush High School in Brooklyn, she

attended Brooklyn College and received her Master's Degree in literature from N.Y.U. Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. She also passed her doctoral exams in English literature and has "all but her dissertation." She was an adjunct lecturer in English for 10 years at many of the City universities, and then taught English literature and writing full-time at the Yeshivah of Flatbush High School for 17 years. (She was known as the "rewrite teacher" because she would work with her students on their papers until she was satisfied.)

With something for everyone, the book even includes a chapter on "Training for the Years of Gold" for seniors. In it, a section on movements is intended to improve stability, coordination and balance. The exercises are appropriate for every level — from beginners to the most advanced.

An avid gardener, Mandel believes that God was our first physical coach. "You have to work by the sweat of your brow." (Genesis) She even wears a honeybee necklace, both for her name, Debbie (D'vora = bee) and because the bee lives in the garden.

The emblem on the cover of her book, "Busy Bee group," describes the synergy of the team effort required to create the book. Mandel hopes that "the book brings a lot of good to the team and that everyone gets noticed and appreciated for his or her contribution." The illustrator had experienced her own bout with trauma, which Mandel believes gave her greater insight, which she incorporated into her work.

Although she loved teaching very much, Mandel left to write full-time. She is hoping to publish a personal novel, "Spilled Wine," a book about Alzheimer's as well as a sequel to this book. Mandel's next goal is to have "Turn on Your Inner Light" ultimately translated into Hebrew and market it in Israel.