**Background**

***The idea***

The *33Day*-Diary is based on *The Five Minute Journal*, a well-known work in the field of positive psychology. The concept revolves around two fundamental insights:

*1. Your real actions are strongly influenced by your subconscious mind. You make far fewer decisions by thinking about them than you realize.*

*2. You can do things to influence your subconscious mind in desired ways.*

The world around you offers an abundance of opportunities and resources. Your personal development is not constrained by adverse external conditions, but rather by obstacles in the subconscious, like expectations, convictions, crutches and fears.

The most effective way to grow is therefore to cultivate your subconscious mind. To help you do this, *The Five Minute Journal* and the *33Day-Diary* use the principles explained in the following section.

* **Writing your notes by hand** *is critical because it embeds the statements much deeper into your mind than if you simply type them or dictate them. A diary like this would not have the same effect in the form of a smartphone app, for example.*
* *It helps to steer your attention towards* **helpful thoughts** *and positive aspects. Like everyone else, your brain seeks out problems and drama, but it is you who decides whether to focus on destructive or constructive thoughts.*
* *You will promote the achievement of your goals if you* **visualize** *your goals and the route to them at the start – that is, by seeing them in your mind’s eye.*
* *The* **formulation** *and grammatical structure of a sentence determines how your subconscious mind absorbs it. For example, “alive” and “not dead” mean the same thing logically, but your subconscious mind doesn’t follow logical negation. When you read “not dead”, your brain registers “dead”.*
* *There are proven positive effects from a* **gratitude journal** *like the one integrated into the* 33Day*-Diary. For example, people who use them report an increased experience of happiness in their lives.*
* *When you make positive statements about yourself (also referred to as* **affirmation***), you boost your self-image, which in turn increases your self-confidence and improves your attitude towards life.*
* *When you see things as better than they are, you encourage your subconscious mind to close the gap with your reality. Gaps like this are also referred to as* **cognitive dissonance***. Your subconscious can move you towards even the most outrageous claims, like “I live in my own private castle in Scotland.”*
* *To achieve the goals you have envisioned in your mind, you need to be able to* **concentrate***on just a few things. You should see very clearly what are the most important things now, and let go of everything that is “just” important.*
* *Your (subconscious) conviction that anything (including you) is unchangeable will be the very thing that makes it impossible for you to change it. To* **grow***, you need a mind that is attuned to change and that can concentrate on the things that it can influence.*

***Going further***

In the *33Day*-Diary we build on the approach used in *The Five Minute Journal* to give you exercises that can take you even further.

* *The fundamental challenge of personal development is overcoming fear. The main thing you need to practice is* **leaving your comfort zone***. You have to do this in small steps, over the long term, and staying in touch with your emotions. The first statement is training your subconscious to transform fear into positive experiences.*
* *It’s not easy, but it’s extremely important that as you go through your daily routine you keep sight of your medium and long-term goals and underlying personal values. Visualizing and writing them daily helps you make your* **goals and values** *a reality. The second statement heightens your awareness of the relevance and the* why *of any activity.*
* *Building* **strengths***is going to help you more than ironing out weaknesses. The daily affirmations in the fourth statement help you be aware of how to use your personal strengths.*
* *“***Implementation intentions***” have been proven to help you in achieving your plans, and these are framed in the fifth statement. Producing an “if-then” statement is ideal for building positive habits.*
* *Your conscious mind is always working, even while you’re asleep. One thing it’s doing at this time is transferring your experiences from your short-term to your long-term memory. When you’re falling asleep, whether your thoughts are occupied with the problems of the day behind you or the* **opportunities tomorrow will bring** *makes a big difference. The sixth statement will help you prepare for each new day without fear and be proactive from the moment you wake up.*

***Recommended reading***

The books on the following reading list will introduce you to the philosophy behind the *33Day*-Diary. This list is far from complete, and not every book on it is academic in nature, but it offers a broad perspective on the subject and all the works on it are inspiring.

**Courage**

These books can help you recognize and overcome your fears:

...

**Clarity**

These books can help you figure out where you are and where you want to go:

...

**Focus**

These books can inspire you to set priorities consistently, say “no” more, and concentrate on your strengths:

...

**Gratitude**

It has been scientifically proven that gratitude plays an important role in mental health and happiness, and that a gratitude journal is an effective tool for developing this quality. Ultimately, gratitude and appreciation come from complete acceptance, which comes from precise and judgment-free observation, i.e., from true awareness.

...

**Growth**

These books can help you understand how your mental attitudes and even your tiniest habits influence your life:

***We Want You!***

We are constantly updating and improving the *33Day*-Diary, and the most important part of doing this is your feedback. If you would like to see something else in this book or you have suggestions for improvement, please tell us!

And if you liked the *33Day*-Diary and would like to order more copies, just let us know!

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