The *33Day*-Diary

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**Introduction**

This is not your ordinary diary, and it’s not for everyone. In fact, it’s not really a diary at all. It’s not something to read later when you want to immerse yourself in the past, recall the long-lost everyday details of days gone by, or get lost in a dialogue with yourself. The *33Day*-Diary is a meditation exercise meant to challenge and transform your awareness.

If you let yourself go with the experiment and follow the instructions, you will see a positive change in your life in *33 days*. You will find yourself achieving your potential happiness and success better and better, moment by moment, day by day.

The *33Day*-Diary can become one of your best habits. Here’s how: every day has two pages devoted to it. In the morning, when you get up, you fill in the page on the left-hand side; in the evening, before going to sleep, you fill in the page on the right. This will take about five to ten minutes each day.

The system is the same every day, and it will quickly become automatic for you. In the end, the important thing is not what you’ve written down on the page, but rather what you are thinking and feeling as you’re doing it. In essence, the questions are little meditation exercises.

The next section gives you some guidelines to help you, and at the end of this book you will find a general summary of the psychological basis of the *33Day*-Diary.

***Guidelines***

In 33 days, you can turn an action into a habit. They don’t even have to be consecutive days, and if you don’t manage to make an entry in the evening, it’s all right – you can do it the next day.

Each exercise is designed to train a different mental quality. These are explained in this guideline section. Each explanation begins with an example. If you have any thoughts about them as you are reading, you can jot them down in the space provided at the end of the book.

**Courage**

*Yesterday, I overcame this (small) hurdle: I rang up an old friend who I hadn’t spoken to for a very long time. Afterwards I felt like this: relieved, connected, surprised, acknowledged.*

Recall all moment yesterday that you forced yourself to accomplish an unpleasant but important task. It could be something as simple and small as getting out of bed. Everyone has little victories every day, even if sometimes they are the lessons learned from making a mistake.

Try to bring back the feeling you had when you were forcing yourself to get the job done, especially the pleasant aspects that you felt afterwards.

**Clarity**

*Today I’m taking a step towards this major goal: me being my own boss, working when and where I want to, and earning seven times as much as I did last year.*

Think about what meaning this day should have. What’s the medium or long-term life goal you are devoting this day to? Keep in mind that these dreams and goals don’t change day to day, so it is perfectly okay if you enter the same thing here most of the time.

Sometimes it’s enough to link certain aspects of your day to a worthwhile intention. The meaning that you can assign to a day full of unavoidable and tedious meetings might be that you want to show others that you are someone who can make that kind of meeting a funny and productive event.

You can also concentrate on private and social goals. Spending an entire day with your partner might have the meaning of making you both happy, deepening your relationship, or simply living a balanced and enjoyable life.

For this exercise/meditation, you should be aware of your personal values and goals. If you need help with this, at the end of this book you will find some resources that can help you find clarity about the direction you want to go.

**Focus**

*For today to be an excellent day, all I need to do is:*

*1. Finish task X for project Y*

*2. Talk to person X about starting a collaboration*

*3. Work out, meditate*

*In doing the tasks above, I am practicing the following strengths:*

*I am systematic. I have a good feeling for people/I am able to find common ground quickly. I feel good physically and I have fun doing sport X.*

Think about up to three tasks that you will complete today. What’s really important for this day? Concentrate on the minimum necessary to bring you a little closer to the goal you’ve just written down.

This is about setting priorities very much as described in Stephen Covey’s well-known matrix (see the recommended reading at the end of this book). Tasks that are goal-oriented but not urgent take priority over seemingly urgent issues! Without a heightened awareness of this aspect, and without a plan of action, most people do things the other way round.

Which of your personal strengths will help you achieve your objective today? Choose no more than three, and then imagine how you will use them in the achievement of the tasks you wrote down. It will help to formulate this in affirmative statements like, “I am...”

**Gratitude**

*Today, or in general, I am thankful for:*

*1. When I crashed on my bike today, I wasn’t hurt, and it reminded me that I need to buy a helmet.*

*2. I almost finished task X and I caught some really critical errors in time.*

*3. Despite the miserable weather, I convinced myself to go outside and do my run.*

*4. I’m surrounded by wonderful people.*

*5. I had a really fabulous cup of coffee this morning.*

Write down five things that you can be thankful for. These might be little moments that you experienced today, or they might be aspects of your life situation or the world in general.

Just a few key points are enough. The important thing is to really concentrate on every one of your points for a moment and experience each of them as the gift that it is.

When you fully perceive something, you fully accept it. And full acceptance leads to full appreciation. In other words, practicing gratitude starts simply with observing what is happening, completely and without judgment.

A grateful attitude can teach you that seemingly negative experiences can be valuable, if you take the time to observe them fully.

**Growth**

*In the future, I will do the following things better:*

*When...*

*the alarm clock goes off early in the morning and I just can’t get out of bed,*

*...then...*

*I’ll remember two things: (1) I can accept being tired today. (2) After my morning routine I know I’m going to feel a lot better!*

Looking back on today, or further into the past, you can surely think of a moment that you would do differently if you could do it over again. A different decision you would make if you knew what you know now, a task you avoided, or a good habit that fell by the wayside.

Now think very clearly about such a situation. How would you do it better next time? To get the most out of this exercise, choose a situation that occurs frequently and one that you can improve the result of by minor behavioural adjustments.

This is about building good habits. That’s why it’s fine to keep coming back to the same situations and thinking of the same desired responses. If you would like to learn more about the practical impact and the psychological mechanism of habit-forming, consult the recommended reading at the back of this book.

**Initiative**

*I’m looking forward to tomorrow, because:*

*No appointments, plenty of time to work on my project without interruption.*

*The weather’s going to be good… maybe I’ll get some cycling in?*

*In the evening Y and Z are coming over.*

Think a little bit about what’s ahead of you tomorrow. Maybe even take a look in your calendar. How is your day going to start, and what might be the highlight of the day?

Instead of letting yourself get caught out by the events and the unexpected that tomorrow brings, you’ll be prepared and in control of the way you go through your day.

**Are you ready?**

The book you’re holding has the potential to change your life. But that can only happen at the right time. If you’ve read these guidelines and you feel like you’re ready to take an active approach to improving yourself and take off on an adventure, let’s go!

But if after reading this far you feel pressured and put off, that’s okay too. Just put the book down for a while and come back to it when something is telling you: “Now’s the time!” Or, consider browsing through the recommended reading at the end of this book – you might find something to inspire you.