Review: Zone Mind, Zone Body: How to break through to new levels of fitness

Until I read Roy Palmer's Zone Mind, Zone Body, How to break through to new levels of fitness and performance-by doing less, I was clueless as to what athletes mean when they describe their performances as being in The Zone. What is this unique and mystical place where their performances are exceptional and consistent and furthermore how do we go about reaching it? To answer these questions I turned to Palmer's Zone Mind, Zone Body and I was not disappointed in what he had to share with his readers.

Palmer in his introduction states that the methods he uses to reach The Zone are based on The Alexander Technique. This is a technique that basically teaches us to make a new choice in spite of established patterns, by studying the kinesthetic sense. Palmer refers to it as the world-renowned system for developing what he calls intelligence in action. Palmer has drawn upon his ten years of experimenting, observing and applying the Alexander principles to his own sports of martial arts and running as well as working with sports people in other fields. It should be noted that the technique's applicability is not only used in sports but also in other activities. In fact, my musician son indicated to me that he was very familiar with the Alexander Technique and has used it to enhance his singing performances.

Palmer strikes just the right tone: direct and upbeat without sounding too preachy as he creates for his readers a map that will lead to The Zone. His probing analysis is very convincing as he divides his book into nine sections beginning with a definition of the elusive zone and ending with living in The Zone. According to Palmer, there are seven characteristics that comprise The Zone and these are: you are totally absorbed and focused on your activity: you experience an inner clarity and understanding of what exactly is required as well as the skills that are matched to the task: there is a sense of ecstasy or being outside everyday reality: you are `being in the moment' or focusing completely on the present and you are unaware of time passing-a sense of time slowing down: you have a deep passion for the activity that leads to a higher level of performance: there is a sense of serenity where there is no anxiety and no ego, thus there are no worries about the outcome of the action: there is no sense of effort and where the activity becomes easy, as well as getting out of the way. All of these will permit us to attain the level of mind/body harmony that will aid us in achieving our goals. All are crucial if we wish to consistently and successfully perform. According to Palmer, The Zone is a primitive ability and thus it is an "automatic function triggered by circumstances."

After defining and elaborating on these seven principles, Palmer elucidates why we are prevented from reaching The Zone. Readers are given the key to creating their own matrix or as he states, "a set of rules that ultimately establishes the limits of performance." From here we learn about the procedures that will help us in identifying some common causes that make are movements more difficult than it needs to be by adding unnecessary actions of our own. Once we are in The Zone, Palmer shows the way as to how to become a regular `zoner.' Other topics explored and that are necessary in reaching and staying in The Zone are concentration, dealing with anxiety and prevention of panic, the technique of enjoying the present, using emotions constructively, and consistency.

Palmer's Zone Mind, Zone Body will no doubt prove to be a valuable contribution in helping us reach the performance of our life at a time where there is no shortage of self-help books devoted to enhancing performance. Moreover, he gets top marks as the book is an excellent in-depth and useful workbook with practical procedures to follow for the novice as well as those who are familiar with The Alexander Technique and The Zone. He has done a great job in laying out facts and details that are clear and concise with examples, images, activities and exercises that permit his readers to apply what they have learned and perhaps even serve as guides for further research. Readers will certainly emerge better informed and perhaps even changed and that is a keen accomplishment for a book that contains 167 pages.

About the Author

This guide contains valuable information about how exercise and proper. The first three chapters of this book explain what exercise and physical.

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