

# Talent In Motion - December 2002

books

## TURN ON YOUR INNER LIGHT

### *Turn on Your Inner Light:*

#### **Fitness for Mind, Body, and Soul**

A Review by Amy Christensen

**Turn on Your Inner Light: Fitness for Mind, Body, and Soul holds true to its name. I have to admit that as a self-proclaimed sedentary agnostic with the spirituality level of a toad, I was a bit skeptical going into this book.**

**The idea of transforming my already-scant fitness routine into a spiritual journey did not bode well with me—it's hard enough to get myself into the gym and onto the Stairmaster, let alone to start an inner-self navigation. But surprisingly, I found Debbie Eisenstadt Mandel's book inspiring, informational, and even therapeutic.**

The book is organized in twenty-nine easy-to-read chapters that provide a sort of recipe for living. Each chapter focuses on physical, mental and spiritual training for common life situations such as dealing with people who push your buttons, learning to love yourself, to facing your fears, and teaches techniques to help overcome negative conditions like insomnia, divorce, and relieving psychosomatic pain, to name a few. Mandel focuses on the positives of life and teaches the reader how to better appreciate and attune oneself to skills like handling money, intimacy, the golden years, and my personal favorite, having fun.

Using witty anecdotes to relate to and captivate her audience, Mandel maintains her voice at a friendly tone rather than at a self-righteous, preachy one as so many other self-help books on the market tend to do. Her technique is creative and unique in that she combines interesting information, meditations to create serenity and workouts tailored to each topic to create a merger of spirituality and fitness. It can be read as a reference tool to be used for

handling specific situations or as a motivational guide to inspire you to get off the couch and into the gym.

Some of the fitness routines seemed to be randomly associated to their topics, i.e. performing abdominals and obliques while training to love yourself. While I certainly am not in love with my bountiful waistline, I found the association of doing sit-ups to loving my inner-self a bit askew.

While some of the exercises appeared a bit routine (no pun intended!), Mandel's original meditations were truly inspiring. As I sat cross-legged on the floor amidst a circle of burning candles listening to Ravi Shankar in an attempt to get in touch with my non-existent spiritual side while practicing her meditations, I found myself breathing, relaxing, and getting in touch with a more focused and calmer me. Surprisingly, I found that things that had been bothering me before—negative thoughts, nagging to-do lists, and my general perspective of skepticism began to fade to the back of mind. I began to get in touch with my positive attributes and focus on my strengths.

The workouts range from beginner to expert level and the meditations are for everyone. I found myself taking notes in my journal on things like how to train for insomnia. (Mandel says to identify the obstacles that can disturb sleep, such as exercising too close to bedtime, daily upsets like a problematic project at work, and eating foods that contain tyramine—a brain stimulant—such as caffeine, bacon, spinach, eggplant, sugar, and tomatoes. She offers practical remedies including specific exercises to combat insomnia to be performed three to four hours before bedtime, keeping a journal containing your daily anxieties, and eating foods rich in tryptophan such as yogurt, turkey, figs, and tuna, for dinner.)

All in all, *Turn on Your Inner Light* is a good read. Packed with useful information and inspirational meditations and workouts, it's a perfect book for anyone seeking to learn more about fitness and spirituality. Although I have not yet converted to Taoism and have no such plans to do so in the near future, I do have a better understanding of how to get in touch with my new spiritual side and workout simultaneously. I feel better about myself and the world around me after having read Mandel's motivating book.

FOREWORD BY  
BERNIE S. SIEGEL, M.D.

DEBBIE EISENSTADT MANDEL