



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

S E R I E S

THE NUTSHELL OF BALANCING ACT

By Dr. Andrew Temte
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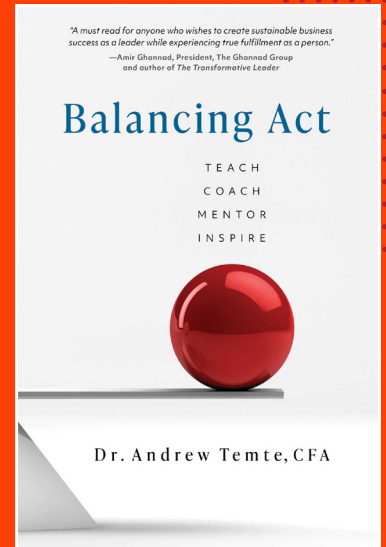
Introduction

Success without balance is often more disastrous than failure with balance. When the unbalanced achieve victory, it often serves to further destructive habits. When the balanced suffer defeat, resilience and perseverance grows. Throughout this book, I look forward to helping you explore the balancing acts you and your teams play.

Part 1: Leadership for the Next Generation

We're in the midst of a tectonic shift in what it means to be an effective leader. Businesses are powered by humans. While not always the case, a key goal for most businesses is growth with profitability. As the business grows, teams expand, and the level of intimacy among team members begins to erode. I believe that if we all learn that regression to disorder is a natural process in most companies and begin to fight entropy earlier in the life cycle of the company as it grows, we will see more high functioning teams, fewer artificial silos, improved trust, and ultimately, better business performance.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Andrew Temte, CFA is the former CEO of Kaplan Professional, an author, host of The Balancing Act podcast, and a thought leader on issues related to organizational health, continuous improvement, and workforce reskilling.

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Part 2: Education and Lifelong Learning

There are four key competencies that I believe everyone needs in order to work effectively across departments, understand how their individual contributions fit into the bigger picture, and ultimately thrive in a future of increasingly advanced technology: financial acumen, data literacy, commercial acumen, and human skills. This is not to suggest that every employee should be an expert in these areas, but understanding the bigger picture—how the activities of the organization fit together within the broader marketplace—however, can help individuals become better contributors, break down silos between departments, and rally employees around objectives that are bigger than their individual roles.

Part 3: Effective Communication

Businesses are made up of people, and, in order to succeed, those people need to be able to *hear* one another, have difficult but necessary conversations, *listen* to logic and reason, and have the strength to set their egos aside. Miscommunication in our personal lives can destroy relationships, just as miscommunication in the workplace can destroy careers, business opportunities, partnerships, client relationships, sales prospects, and economic value. If we are able to bridge the gap in communication skills by even a few degrees, the value creation to society would be immense.

Part 4: The Whole Self

When I discuss my philosophy for balanced work, I'm really discussing a philosophy for a balanced life, of which work is one aspect. Today, I've got six words that I use as a guide to my interactions with other

humans and to how I approach solving the problems I face. When I get into a difficult situation, whether at work or at home, I pull out my list: *Calm. Consistent. Persistent. Thoughtful. Agile. Industrious.* Then I pick one or two that apply to whatever I'm doing with, take a few centering breaths, and think about how I can turn those words into action to move forward. Since late 2008, I've relied on three more to help shape my interactions with strangers, friends, colleagues, clients, and family: *Grace. Dignity. Compassion.*

Part 5: Alignment

In my experience, the most common reasons for collaboration failure are the lack of standardization in process, procedure, and data, as well as a misalignment of goals and incentives across teams. Even when two teams get together with the best of intentions, failure occurs due to the lack of standardized tools and information. Faulty collaboration is not because one team is not “cooperating,” but often occurs when the receiving team's goals don't fit with those of the requesting team. I posit that a necessary condition for effective teamwork and collaboration is to strike a balance between leadership and followership.

Part 6: Leader Standard Work

The tools of continuous improvement, when applied to a business environment, can be extremely effective in keeping teams focused on identifying and rooting out waste, respecting team members, and keeping the customer at the fore. When continuous improvement tools are applied on a personal level, mistakes are recognized and corrected more rapidly. Over time, your eyes become accustomed to seeing fault points and recognizing the impact of your ac-

tions on others. This involves asking two simple questions: “How will I be a better person today than I was yesterday?” And “Am I making progress toward my goals?”

Part 7: Leading Through Times of Crisis

Leading others is both a responsibility and a privilege. We accomplish what we do through others—our role is to direct, to support, and to care. That last point is crucial. We don’t have to be friends with everyone we lead or even get along with them, but we must care about them. The most important thing a leader should model is the purpose of the organization. Leaders must live the cause. They must be in the center of the fight. I’m incredibly fortunate to know clearly the purpose of our organization and I work to model it each day.

Conclusion: Learning from Our Past

As a continuous improvement leader, I believe mistakes and errors are only failures if we refuse to use them as learning opportunities. Becoming more aware of the balancing acts we constantly play will help us to be better colleagues, leaders, friends, and family members. Polarization, fixed mindsets, and operational silos are destructive to corporate value and damage relationships of all kinds. My aim is to elevate the concepts of self-awareness, mental agility, active listening, two-way communication, and bringing one’s “whole self” to work to drive improved alignment and outcomes for both the organization and its people.