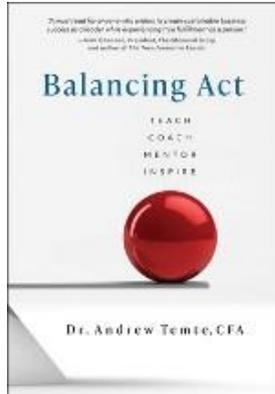


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Balancing Act: Teach, Coach, Mentor, Inspire***

Author: **Andrew Temte**

Publisher: Kaplan Publishing

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Reviewer: **Elena Scoggin**

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Introduction

"Success without balance is often more disastrous than failure with balance," says Andrew Temte in his new book, *Balancing Act*. *Balancing Act* addresses areas of leadership all too often ignored: emotional intelligence, continuous improvement, and lifelong learning. Through a mixture of personal anecdotes, careful research, and intense introspection, Temte urges leaders at every stage of an organization to look beyond their own narrow perspective and strive to weather even the harshest storms with empathy, professionalism, and unshakable focus.

How the book is organized

Temte divides *Balancing Act* into seven distinct parts, each focusing on a different aspect of leadership and personal growth. He writes about the importance of investing in employees and always making the effort to learn, grow, and develop. He then delves into effective communication and the importance of introspection and "the whole self." Temte highlights the role that trust plays in an organization and describes times when a leader must relinquish control and become a follower. He concludes his book by discussing the function and challenges of leadership during both normal and trying times, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. He closes by urging the reader to always act with grace, dignity, and compassion, no matter where life might take them and their organization.

Highlights

Temte kicks off the book by focusing on the lifeblood of every organization: its employees. He warns against the dangers of disengaged employees and the importance of cultivating the "light" in their eyes. "If middle managers can't or won't

identify those who could match or surpass them," Temte says, "the best and brightest individuals won't get the recognition or opportunity they need and deserve."

Temte goes on to emphasize the importance of lifelong learning and effective communication. In order to grow, leaders must view themselves as both teachers and lifelong learners. They must always ask themselves how they can grow, what more they can learn, and impart that wisdom to their employees so that they may grow as well. To effectively impart this wisdom, leaders must tailor their style of communication to their audience, and be willing to face difficult conversations head on with grace and dignity.

Temte then delves into the concept of the whole self, which he says is important for achieving and maintaining balance in and outside the workplace. To ensure he is caring for his "whole self," Temte lives by six core concepts: calmness, consistency, persistence, thoughtfulness, agility, and industriousness. These concepts have evolved over time, Temte says, and help steer his everyday interactions. By regularly reminding himself of these six words, Temte is able to more quickly center himself and remind himself of his purpose and values.

Temte describes times in his life when he deviated from his values and the negative impact it had on either his organization or his personal life. He emphasizes the importance of trust, even when one thinks they "know better" due to either age or experience. Leaders always have something to learn, even from their subordinates.

He talks about the challenges of remaining calm, centered, and decisive, especially in times of crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic brought into stark relief the organizations built on trust and those built on fear. The ones built on trust adapted more quickly and seamlessly to the new normal, while the ones built on fear and distrust struggled with allowing their employees to work from home and have consequently been more eager to open back up. Distrust fosters fear and uncertainty, which are ultimately bad for business, while trust bolsters productivity and cohesion.

Temte does an admirable job of owning his mistakes, demonstrating how he has learned from them, and tying these lessons to business development. However, Temte's advice frequently gets bogged down by endless recounts of personal experiences, which detract from the main message of the book and make the reader feel awkward and out of place. While the use of anecdotes can often help personalize a message and show how the same concept can be relevant in different situations, Temte's overuse of this mechanic is tiresome and frustrating.

What I liked most

I appreciate his analysis of different communication styles and his emphasis on tailoring messages to fit their audience. He recognizes that everyone comes to the

table with different experiences and perspectives that color their decision-making process. He points out that through continuous improvement and by delivering the same message in a variety of ways, organizations can overcome these obstacles and truly work as a team.

Who might benefit from this book?

Leaders and managers at every stage of their careers will find useful advice in this book, especially with regard to the "soft skills" like emotional intelligence. Anyone who is having difficulty connecting with their employees or who feels frustrated and unheard will benefit from Temte's advice to remove the blinders and practice active listening. If you're just beginning your career, *Balancing Act* is a great reminder to keep learning and listening as you gain experience and lead many different teams. If you're a more seasoned professional, Temte's words serve as a helpful reminder to stay focused, humble, and compassionate.

Conclusion

Ultimately, *Balancing Act* offers an insightful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses faced by leaders across many organizations, as well as advice on how to address them. Temte's humble, approachable style makes for an easy read, but unfortunately makes the book come across as less of a self-help book for leaders and more of an autobiography. However, no matter your place in an organization, Temte's relentless push for compassion, growth, and introspection can help us all achieve a greater balance in both our personal and professional lives.

For more about this book, go to: <https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Balancing-Act/Andrew-Temte/Kaplan-Test-Prep/9781506276649>

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Elena Scoggin holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from Eastern Illinois University and a Certified Associate in Project Management from PMI. She currently resides in Frisco, Texas, where she works as a project assistant.