

calls this the “cool system,” as contrasted with the limbic system’s fight-or-flight “hot” responses. The limbic system is all about instantaneity—the now—while the prefrontal cortex is all about the future.

Tracing the marshmallow test’s history and urging public-policy interventions aimed at improving poor children’s executive function, this book also offers strategies for improving self-control at any age. These include “if-then plans” based on identifying our triggers: e.g., “If I’m about to start screaming at my partner for hogging the newspaper, then I’ll simply ask for the Style section.”

“We can try in our halcyon days to connect with our future selves,” Mischel ventures, “to keep who and what we are trying to become in mind.” And then—here’s the hard part—making choices. —ANNELI RUFUS

Yoga and Body Image

25 Personal Stories about Beauty, Bravery & Loving Your Body

Edited by Melanie Klein and Anna Guest-Jelley

LLEWELLYN WORLDWIDE

YOGA AND BODY IMAGE is a book that every yoga teacher should read. This collection of 25 reflective essays frankly addresses what too many modern yogis gloss over: diversity.

Its authors are not the spandex-clad models celebrated on yoga magazine covers. Instead they include a self-described fat black yoga teacher, a middle-aged Asian marathon runner, two instructors with cerebral palsy, a recovered drug addict, a queer-identified trans man, several new mothers, and celebrities who struggle to maintain authenticity under the spotlight. Throughout the anthology are simple but powerful suggestions for yoga teachers who wish to make their classes more “body positive” and accessible to people of all types.

In one essay, Vytas Baskauskas shares powerfully about men’s body image issues and how a dedicated yoga practice can repair a life shredded by addiction and low self-esteem. Teo Drake describes finding yoga five years after beginning the transition from female to male. Yoga gave him practical skills for dealing with dissociation and allowed him to feel comfortable in his skin for the first time.

Many of the writers are students of Seane Corn, an internationally renowned yoga teacher who strives to use her platform to dismantle beauty myths. Corn, who is approaching 50, shares her experience of aging publicly in the yoga community and repeatedly refusing to allow magazine editors to Photoshop her wrinkles away.

“Thanks to the highly competitive world we live in,” writes Joni Yung, “yoga has become a beauty contest and an athletic competition.” But, as she and the other contributors have found, it’s possible to push past that veil and discover yoga’s enduring gift—a sense of one’s true self. —SHANNON WIANECKI

This Life Is Joy

Discovering the Spiritual Laws to Live More Powerfully, Lovingly, and Happily

By Roger Teel

TARCHER/PENGUIN

BEFORE TELEVISION (and televangelists), New Thought spiritual leaders relied on the traditional publishing world to spread their teachings beyond the pulpit. Unity’s Myrtle and Charles Fillmore, Religious Science’s Ernest Holmes and Raymond Charles Barker, Divine Science’s Emmet Fox, and others enjoyed a wide following and perhaps even a modest fortune from their writings. Many of their books, despite the arcane language and outdated paradigms, are considered classics today and are still treasured in New Thought communities.

In *This Life Is Joy*, Roger Teel delivers a welcome and long-overdue refresh of the century-old classics. Even New Thought literature junkies will find some—well—new thinking in his interpretation of progressive spirituality.

Teel enlivens his seven pillars of truth and nine portals of transformation with engaging, though perhaps apocryphal, stories that are relevant and encouraging. Tackling real-life challenges like forgiveness, judgment, fear, change, and uncertainty, he avoids easy platitudes and trite solutions, instead offering compassionate perspectives and constructive opportunities for resolution through prayer and spiritual practice. For example: “Fears are a natural part of our journey into spiritual empowerment,” he writes. “Forgiveness is one of the highest expressions of self-love.” And, “In our judging we are secretly yearning for assurance.”

Teel is the spiritual leader of Denver’s Mile Hi Church, an honest-to-God “megachurch,” where he inspires thousands of members with engaging and contemporized interpretations of so-last-century spiritual teachings. Now 21st-century seekers can enjoy a precious reminder that faith is a quality worth cultivating, that prayer works, and that life really may be a joyful adventure. —DONNA MOSHER

