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FOREWORD

In this wonderful and informative book, The Perfect Balance Diet: 4 Weeks to a Lighter Body, Mind, Spirit & Space, written by Chopra Certified Instructor and relationship expert Lissa Coffey, readers are inspired and encouraged to bring balance into their lives and return to their true essence of health and wholeness. With compassion and humor, Lissa provides readers with a life guide for mind, body and spirit, far beyond just a diet book. The practical tools offered in this book enable us to know our inherent nature, so that we can personalize the recommendations to be our best selves. This is a book about listening to our inner wisdom and celebrating our individuality, rather than depriving ourselves of the satisfaction of life. It incorporates the ancient wisdom of Ayurvedic lifestyle techniques to optimize our health, paying particular attention to not only what we eat, but also how we eat and how to enhance our digestive capacities.

Having guided thousands of patients in these techniques at the Chopra Center for Wellbeing in Carlsbad, California, I have personally seen the benefit of the approaches outlined in this book. It is my belief that understanding one’s true nature and utilizing the tools for balance described in this book will allow the reader to gain improved health and vitality in mind, body, and spirit. Many of my patients have found that this type of lifestyle approach has allowed them to have a more comfortable relationship with their body and with food and to achieve a naturally balanced weight. Others have finally gotten restful sleep or solved their digestive problems without having to rely on prescription medications. Whole person balance also means being in mutually nourishing
relationships and having the ability to manifest our intentions and desires. If you are excited to embrace all that nature has bestowed upon you, I encourage you to allow the wisdom in these pages to guide you in this journey.

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The Perfect Balance Diet

4 Weeks to a Lighter Body, Mind, Spirit & Space
By Lissa Coffey

INTRODUCTION

Imagine you’re outside, by a beautiful lake, enjoying the perfection of your surroundings. You feel comfortable, relaxed, as if you are an important part of it all. You are so in tune that it is as if you can hear nature speaking to you.

You see a swan glide past, and the swan is thinking to itself: “How wonderful it is to be a swan. I can take my time; life is serene. I am graceful and lovely. All is right with the world.”

And then you notice an eagle flying high overhead, and the eagle is thinking: “Ah, what a joy it is to be an eagle. I am strong, and free. This is the life!”

A hummingbird flits past, and you can hear the hummingbird is thinking: “I’m having so much fun on this glorious day. There’s so much to see and do. I’m so glad I’m a hummingbird and can move easily to all the things I love.”
Everything in nature has a purpose. We’re all connected. Sitting amongst the trees and looking at the clear blue sky you know that you are an important part of this connection. You breathe deeply and feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude and peace.

Now, imagine you’re in that same place, same time. When you hear nature speaking to you things are a bit different.

You see a swan glide past, and the swan thinks to itself: “Oh, my. Why am I stuck being a swan? I would so much rather be like that little hummingbird. I want to flit around like that! I feel so dumpy just floating here on this silly lake.”

Then the eagle flies overhead, and you read its thoughts: “Wow. Look at that swan down there. He’s got the good life. Why can’t I just hang out on the lake? Instead I’m up here working so hard. This isn’t fair. I’d rather be a swan.”

Then the hummingbird flits by and thinks: “Really? That eagle is so lucky. She’s way up there with a great vantage point. She can go so far without even flapping her wings. I’m down here pumping away a million beats a minute! Man, I want to be an eagle.”
Somehow, this second scenario just doesn’t make sense, does it? Because this is not how nature operates! And yet, this is exactly what we do as human beings all the time. We fight our own nature. We compare ourselves to one another. We think we need to always be thinner, more beautiful, more successful, more something, anything! When the truth is that we are inherently perfect. If we are carrying around excess weight, or stress, or feeling bad about ourselves it is because we are out of balance, our lives are out of balance in one way or another. We can find that perfect state of balance, and regain our strength and confidence and energy to be the best that we can be.

The most important thing we can do for ourselves, to be our healthiest and happiest, body, mind, and spirit, is to know who we are. Some of us are swans, some of us are eagles, and some of us are hummingbirds. Each being is valid, each being has value, and each being brings his or her unique gifts to the world. When we know ourselves, and our own nature, we allow the best of ourselves to shine through. Nature operates through us. So why are we fighting it?

The goal of the Perfect Balance Diet is to help you be the best YOU that you can be. Honestly, “skinny” isn’t for everyone! It would be like trying to get that swan to fly like a hummingbird. It would be totally against that swan’s nature and only cause frustration to even attempt such a thing. The idea is to feel good – to be healthy, beautiful, have tons of energy, and be happy and comfortable in our own skin. When we are at this point in our lives, then we are naturally at our ideal weight.
A big part of achieving perfect balance is knowing that “perfect” is not some specific number or size or any one particular thing. We’re not striving to be some image that we cut out and put on the refrigerator. The Perfect Balance Diet is about understanding that we are each perfect in our imperfections, in our unique qualities. Our flaws, quirks, and idiosyncrasies help to make us the beautifully imperfect beings that we are. We are perfect in our imperfections! There is an ancient art from Japan called “kintsukuroi.” Kintsukuroi is the art of repairing broken or cracked pottery with gold or silver lacquer and understanding that the piece is more beautiful for having been broken. Yes, there are changes we want to make to our lives, and we know that these changes aren’t to “fix” ourselves, they are to let our natural beauty shine through in every way.

More than a diet, The Perfect Balance Diet is a lifestyle shift. It’s not a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather a very personalized program that keeps us in balance. We don’t need to create a “new you” – we need to bring you into balance to be your best you – the you that you already are but may not even know it!

There are a lot of things that take us away from our state of balance. We are overstressed and overworked. We overeat, and are overweight. We over exert ourselves, and overspend so that we end up tired, hungry, in debt and living in a mess. Look at all the extra “stuff” we carry around with us. We need to lighten up! We need to shed the stress, the pounds, the debt, and the distractions and focus on what is good for us, what
serves us. Food is a huge part of all this. We use food to soothe our emotions, to fill up our tummies when we feel a lack in some part of our lives. We fall into habits, with food and otherwise, that we think are easy, and they become mindless and robotic so that we don’t see any other possibilities or potential for ourselves.

Maybe you’ve tried some of the many diets that are out there, had some success, only to gain back all the weight. Most of these diets put excess strain on us. We have to count calories, get on the scale, monitor portions, and restrict ourselves with unrealistic limits. The Perfect Balance Diet is not about any of that! This is not about depriving yourself. This is not about losing weight, but rather about gaining balance. It is about celebrating yourself! It is about honoring you, and loving yourself. It’s about listening to your body, following your instincts, and living in harmony with nature. The Perfect Balance Diet is about taking care of yourself so that you can express the true you, looking good, feeling great, functioning optimally and absolutely loving life!

In The Perfect Balance Diet you will learn about Ayurveda, the 5,000 year old Science of Life. You will learn how to identify your unique dosha, or mind/body type, so that you can customize your lifestyle so that you can be your very best. I’ll get you started on a 28-day program that you can use as a template for living for the rest of your life.
The ancient Indian texts explain that there is much more to us than our physical bodies. There are four areas of our being that make up who we are, and how we live. No “diet” is complete if we are looking just at our physical body. We need to take a holistic approach and address all four areas of life: body, mind, spirit, and space. We have to look at what we are eating, what foods we are taking in, what nourishment we are giving our physical bodies. We also need to look at what we are taking in mentally, intellectually, what we are thinking, what we are learning, what images we look at, how we spend our time. We need to look at our relationships, and our activities. We need to understand how the choices we make affect our feelings and emotions. And we also need to look at our space, our environment, which is also our extended body. The energy in this space affects the other aspects of our lives in profound ways. What do we surround ourselves with? How do we care for our space? How is this indicative of how we care for ourselves in other ways?

The Perfect Balance Diet brings all of this together into a routine that you can integrate into your life and use every single day. You’ll learn about how to express your personal style, and to create a healthy and happy environmental space – at home, in your office, anywhere you go. I’ll show you how to give your kitchen a make-over, and give you recipes for meals that feed your body and soul.

We’ve got a four-week plan – one week for each of the four areas of life. Just 28 days where when we stick to a balanced routine we start getting used to how feeling good
really feels. These four weeks will help to get some good habits going, so that we are eating, thinking, behaving and expressing in a more mindful, healthy, nurturing way. Throughout this book and as days go on you’ll see how the scales are tipping back into balance and that you are becoming, or getting back to being, that person you were always meant to be, the real you. We feel lighter, not just in terms of weight but in terms of attitude. The world is just a little brighter, we feel a little less burdened, we feel a little freer.

After you’ve read the book, and incorporated the plan into your lifestyle, you may want to join our club, where you’ll get menus, recipes, shopping lists, meditations, videos, and lots more. It’s a great way to make Perfect Balance a part of your life every day. Check out our website for all the information: www.PerfectBalanceDiet.com

“Dharma” is a Sanskrit word meaning “purpose.” The Perfect Balance Diet is meant to help you fulfill your purpose, to express your unique talents, to contribute to the world, and to feel good about yourself body, mind, spirit and space. There’s no better time to start than right now, no better place than right here. Let’s go!
CHAPTER 1

The Balancing Act

The best and safest thing is to keep a balance in your life, acknowledge the great powers around us and in us. If you can do that, and live that way, you are really wise.

- Euripides

The Perfect Balance Diet is based on the principle that everything is connected. When we are out of balance in one area of our lives, it shows up in other areas of our lives, too. We might not recognize it, or understand that the two things are related, but one thing affects the other nonetheless. We might attempt to “fix” the second thing, but if we don’t fix the first thing, the thing that caused it to get out of balance in the first place, it will just come back again. And usually, we end up with so many little imbalances that we don’t know which came first. We could spend years working on symptoms, but until we get to the cause, the root of the imbalance, then we’re wasting our time.

So, how do we start? We start by looking at where we want to be. We remember what it looks like and feels like to be in balance, to be comfortable, and content, and healthy. And then we strive for that. We work to bring ourselves back into that state of perfect balance. It’s not about losing anything. It’s about gaining balance. It’s about being in harmony with nature. When we look at nature as our guide, we don’t see many overweight animals out in the wild. Can you imagine a giraffe, or a dolphin, or kangaroo hopping on a scale every day to check their weight, or putting themselves on a diet to lose weight? There’s no need! These creatures follow their instincts. They know what to eat,
when to eat, and how to eat. They know how to adapt to their surroundings. They know how to take care of themselves.

As humans, this should all be easy for us, right? But it’s not. As time has gone on and we’ve evolved into this modern society, we have many, many more choices available to us than we have ever had. And some of those choices are not the best ones for us. With the added convenience of transportation we have learned to move less, so we’re getting less exercise. With the advent of technology we are at our desks more, and getting less sunshine. Our foods can come to us ready-made to save time, and yet they’re often frozen and microwavable which discounts many of the nutrients our bodies crave. We’re a global society, so we can work odd hours yet doing so messes up our sleep cycle.

To get back into balance, we need to be reminded of our own true nature.

AYURVEDA

Ayurveda, the “Science of Life” from India, dates back more than 5,000 years. The first written records of Ayurveda are found in the Vedas, the oldest and largest body of knowledge in history. But Ayurveda is even older than this, because it started as an oral tradition, with the knowledge being passed down by the rishis, who studied nature and its laws and how these laws relate to human beings.

Ayurvedic knowledge spread into other parts of the world as time went on. Eventually, it made its way to Greece, where it had a profound influence on the development of
medicine there. Greek medicine later evolved into Allopathic medicine, which is the type of medicine most practiced today.

Fast forward to centuries later, when here in the west, we started learning about Ayurveda from the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Deepak Chopra, Vasant Lad and other scholars. Now we are lucky to have many fine schools where we can study Ayurveda in the U.S., including the Maharishi University of Management, the California College of Ayurveda and the Ayurvedic Institute. Ayurveda is a sister science to yoga and meditation, and they are best practiced together. Now that yoga is so prevalent in the west, people are embracing Ayurveda more and more.

According to Ayurveda, there are three operating principles of nature, or doshas, that we can call mind/body types. The doshas are made up of the five elements (air, space, fire, water, and earth). Since every one of us has all five of the elements in our physiology, we each have all three doshas as well, just in different proportions.

**THE THREE DOSHAS**

While we cannot see these doshas, we see the effect that they have on our mind and body. They operate as "metabolic principles." Each person is born with a unique combination of each of these three doshas, which make up his or her mind/body type. The goal is to find your particular mind/body type and keep it in balance for optimum health and happiness. This balance is achieved through diet, exercise, and lifestyle.
Our dosha is like our fingerprint, unique to us. We all have the three doshas in our physiology, just in different proportions. The idea is to find out which dosha is most dominant for you, and how you can strive to keep yourself in balance using the various recommendations for your dosha.

Vata is made up of air and space. Vata-type people are generally thin and find it hard to gain weight. Because of this, Vatas have very little energy reserve and can tire easily when they overextend themselves which them gets them out of balance. Vatas need to get sufficient rest and not overdo things, stay warm, and keep a regular lifestyle routine. The hummingbird is an example of Vata in nature.

Pitta is made up of fire and water. Pitta-type people are generally of medium size and well proportioned. They have a medium amount of physical energy and stamina. They also tend to be intelligent and have a sharp wit and a good ability to concentrate. The eagle is an expression of Pitta in nature.

Kapha is made up of earth and water. Kapha-type people tend to have sturdy, heavy frames, providing a good reserve of physical strength and stamina. This strength gives Kaphas a natural resistance to disease and a generally positive outlook about life. The swan is a very Kapha-like creature.

Here is a list of just some of the qualities that come along with each dosha. Take a look and see which dosha fits you the most. Because we each have all three doshas in our system, you might have two of the dosha come up equally. Many people are “double
doshas” in which case you’ll want to follow the routine for your dosha according to the seasons. For a most specific assessment, you may choose to consult an Ayurvedic practitioner, who will find your natural state of balance and current state of imbalance through traditional ayurvedic diagnostic tools such as pulse reading.

VATA

____ My hands and feet tend to be cold.

____ My skin tends to be dry.

____ My hair tends to be dry.

____ I like to be active, “on the go,” I find it hard to sit still.

____ My appetite varies

____ I tend to eat quickly; I have a delicate digestion.

____ I get worn out easily.

____ I am fairly flexible, mentally and physically.

____ When conflicts arise I can be anxious and restless.

____ My moods change quickly.

PITTA

____ My hands and feet are usually warm.
____ My skin is soft and ruddy, or freckled.

____ My hair is fine, thin, reddish, or prematurely gray.

____ I enjoy physical activities with a purpose, especially competitive ones.

____ I feel uncomfortable skipping meals.

____ I have a strong digestion; I can eat almost anything.

____ I am fairly strong and can handle various physical activities.

____ I am fairly muscular.

____ When conflicts arrive, I can become intense and irritable.

____ My moods change slowly, but I can snap when agitated.


KAPHA

____ My hands are usually cool.

____ My skin is oily and moist.

____ My hair is thick and wavy.

____ I like leisurely activities best.

____ I like to eat but can skip meals easily.

____ I eat and digest slowly.
I have good stamina and a steady energy level.

I am fairly solid and big-boned.

When conflicts arise, I can get lazy or depressed.

My moods are mostly steady, I’m pretty easy-going.

TOTAL: VATA PITTA KAPHA

Being in balance not only means being healthier and happier, but also being the best person you can be. Here are some of the character traits of doshas when they are in balance versus when they are out of balance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VATA</th>
<th>PITTA</th>
<th>KAPHA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When in Balance You Are:</td>
<td>When Out of Balance You Are:</td>
<td>When Out of Balance You Are:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td>Restless</td>
<td>Affectionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alert</td>
<td>Fatigued</td>
<td>Steady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Constipated</td>
<td>Methodical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td>High stamina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talkative</td>
<td></td>
<td>Resistant to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsive</td>
<td></td>
<td>illnesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loving</td>
<td>Perfectionist</td>
<td>Dull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Frustrated</td>
<td>Prone to oily skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligent</td>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>Prone to allergies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate</td>
<td>Impatient</td>
<td>Possessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courageous</td>
<td>Irritable</td>
<td>Oversleeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prematurely gray or have early hair loss</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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To get an idea about what the doshas look like here are some examples of celebrities and their dominant doshas:
VATA:

Barack Obama, Megan Fox, Jim Carrey, Uma Thurman, Steven Spielberg, Celine Dion, Ashton Kutcher

PITTA:

Madonna, Donald Trump, Julianne Moore, Brad Pitt, Jennifer Aniston, Hillary Clinton, Katie Couric

KAPHA:

George Clooney, Jennifer Lopez, Oprah Winfrey, Placido Domingo, Angelina Jolie, Deepak Chopra, Beyoncé

SEASONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Weather and seasonal changes affect our balance. Everyone can benefit from adapting his or her routine to the season. November through February in the Northern Hemisphere, when it is cold and dry, is Vata season. When wind, cold, and dry weather continues, Vata accumulates in the environment, which can cause a Vata imbalance in the body. During this season, it is a good idea to adopt a more Vata diet and routine to keep Vata in balance. Stay warm, eat warm foods, and don’t wear yourself out. To stay in
harmony with nature, eat foods that are fresh during these months, like apples, pears, broccoli, endive, kale, pomegranates, pumpkins, and Brussels sprouts.

Pitta season comes during the summer, July through October in the Northern Hemisphere, when the weather is hot. To keep Pitta in balance during this time, eat cool foods, such as salads. Drink cool, not ice cold, liquids, and avoid too much sun. Melons, berries, corn, cucumber, peaches, squash, and sweet peppers are all fresh and abundant during the summer season.

Springtime, March through June in the Northern Hemisphere, is Kapha season, when it is cold and wet. This is the time you are more likely to get a cold from a Kapha imbalance. Stay warm, eat light meals, and get enough regular exercise to help keep Kapha in balance. In the spring you’ll find fresh snap peas, scallions, oranges, lettuce, cherries, grapefruit, and new potatoes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VATA</th>
<th>PITTA</th>
<th>KAPHA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Season:</td>
<td>Fall/Winter (Cold &amp; Dry)</td>
<td>Summer (Hot)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just as we are influenced by the doshas during the seasons, we are influenced by each dosha as we age. There are seasons to our lives.
KAPHA

Childhood has all the qualities of Kapha. This “season” of our lives lasts from when we are born until about age 20 or so. As children, we are more Kapha-like. We may have a little bit of baby fat; we’re more calm and carefree. We place an emphasis on friendship and love to be cuddled.

When we are children, it might take longer for us to learn things, but once we learn them, we never forget. It might have taken quite a while to learn the alphabet, to get all 26 letters in the right order. But I think we’ve all got it down now, even though we don’t practice every day!

When we’re very young, we take a lot of naps, and sleep long hours at a time. Then we go through another stage as teenagers where we sleep a lot, too. This is all very Kapha-like behavior.

Kids also tend to get a lot of colds, especially during the pre-school years. Colds and congestion are Kapha imbalances. Like increases like, and kids share their germs freely when they gather together on a regular basis. Kapha associated with Kapha produces more Kapha, and too much Kapha leads to imbalance. Getting kids on a Kapha balancing routine during these times helps to balance them out.
PITTA

Sometime around age 20 our Pitta nature starts taking over. We might be in college, or just entering the working world, and our ambition becomes important to us. We become more competitive, we want to get ahead. We start thinking about money, and wanting those luxury items like fast cars.

At this age we are very busy building our careers, we are super work-oriented. We’re in the thinking and planning phase of our lives. We’ve got this fire burning inside us, so we’re a little more aggressive in going after what we want. We can be impatient.

This is the time when we use our intellect more than any other. Whether we’re studying for exams or learning about our chosen field, we are constantly thinking. We’re also strategizing and positioning ourselves. We look at where we are and where we’re going. We like being in control.

As a part of this planning stage, we’re also looking for our lifetime partner. We’re discerning in this process, sorting out our priorities. We have lots of choices to make, but we know what we want – or at least we think we do! Our sexual desire is at its peak.

VATA
Then at about age 40 Vata comes strongly into play, and we become more Vata-like as we grow older. We start noticing that we don’t remember things as well. At this age, our attention is also divided between work, family, community and other responsibilities, so we naturally have more on our minds. As we get older, more of Vata’s physical ailments present themselves, too. Our fertility decreases. We may begin to have digestive problems, and our hearing may get a little worse. All these things are the effects of more Vata present in our system. This is the time for us to adapt our diet and exercise programs to include more Vata foods and activities.

Sometime after age 60 we may become more Kapha-like again. We slow down and want to surround ourselves with family. We’re more concerned with comfort. It may be more difficult to stimulate ourselves physically to keep in balance, but we can certainly stimulate ourselves mentally, by taking classes and learning new things. We can continue to do things that we enjoy and engage in conversations with people we respect.