

Mariëlle de Natris

# Conscious Interconnection

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Volume **1**

See to your Balance;  
Body and Mind Basics for  
Healthy Living and Working

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## Foreword

After a career of working as a psychologist connecting through direct, face to face dialogue with my clients, I now face the challenge of connecting with you through the written word.

Without the luxury of your direct feedback I hope to get my message across as an invitation to learn. I aim to offer gradually more expansive and inclusive information so you can learn at your own pace.

Learning, I have always loved it. I always and still have a drive to 'go beyond'. This attitude has presented me with a lot of knowledge throughout my personal and professional endeavours. And I think, a lot of applicable wisdom too.

This 'ongoing learning attitude' has also offered me lots of reasons to consider stopping with this endlessly ongoing 'going beyond'. I have been confronted by many emotions, feelings, thoughts and health issues that have made losing momentum and 'staying put' for a while seem very attractive. So when I finally took my long longed for sabbatical I only found myself in an even bigger whirlpool of inspiration and added eagerness to go out into the world and go beyond the familiarity of my psychological practice room.

I tried to stay put, believe me. But I could not get away with it, even being my own 'boss' in my own practice and also during my sabbatical, I continued to have the drive to include more and more into my life. I guess I am endowed with a very strong enthusiasm and drive to make things 'work out for the best' for myself and for others too.

I love making things work as transparently and fluidly as possible. I love being practical in mutual inspiration, creating the best unity possible while interconnecting the presented diversity of life.

I would love to take you on a guided tour of possibilities and obstacles. So you can assemble your own cocktail of choices necessary for living in a healthy, happy, meaningful and fulfilled way as far as you possibly can.

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## Reaching out

I am reaching out to myself to evolve from a mainly psychological approach to include my interests and experience in spirituality, health, learning, thriving, and making a meaningful impact on the world together. I am convinced the best way to do so is by reaching out to you in your role as a participant in the workforce.

I am reaching out to you as a whole, unique being, wanting to live happily and to thrive together with your loved ones.

I am reaching out to you to participate in the process of making this world a better place for all to prosper.

I am reaching out to you in your capacity of being a group member, an unmissable part of an organisational whole: if you don't thrive the organisation will lose and you will lose too.

When you and your organisation join forces the effect can be huge. It will at the very least, be bigger than anything you could achieve on our own

Every change begins with one person, you.

Every change brings further development and inclusiveness.

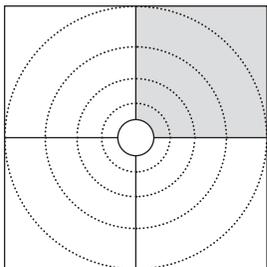
You can take a break or stop your evolvment and involvement whenever you want.

But why stop too soon? I invite you to read on and align and apply this small book to your personal situation and purpose. I hope it gives you a taste for more.

*Mariëlle de Natris, April 2015*

# Part One

## Basics of Balance



## Why your Balance is vital On Vitality, Happiness and Burn-out Prevention

In this day and age daily adult learning, professional development and conscious living seem inevitable. In the future more and more will be expected of your flexibility, team spirit and participation.

Personally balancing the different aspects of your inner and outer world plays an essential role in finding your way in a universe that seems to be growing more complex in ever faster ways. In addition, mutual involvement and care provided by your organisation are very important factors to keep you from slipping or plummeting into a burn-out.

A burn-out is a situation in which one feels increasingly mentally exhausted. Eventually 'all fuel is burned' so to speak, including all your reserves, leaving you completely empty, without any energy at all. This affects you physically and emotionally, including your sleep, behaviour and attitudes, amongst others.

Currently there are countries where 1 out of 3 people get a burn-out. And no longer only those above the age of 35 as was most common in the 20th century. After a burn-out 25% of people suffer chronic rest problems such as sleeping and concentration problems or fatigue.

Most of the 1800 clients I worked with spent a large amount of their time at their workplace. Burn-out, stress and depression were often reported as their biggest problem.

Become aware of the signs indicating you are heading for a burn-out. When you 'See' where you are heading you are also capable of 'Seeing to' a course correction.

### ► **Loss of vitality and happiness as signs of a pending burn-out.**

Usually others see it more clearly than we do ourselves: 'something is the matter, something is seriously off'. In most cases the process is very gradual. Coping strategies appear to be working and the stress manageable. Some people can live with ongoing stress more easily than others. Some people end up burned-out when faced with stressors for a longer period of time. Coping becomes trying to cope, becomes enduring becomes total depletion. I am convinced that nervous break-downs and depressions are also a sign of un-balance that needs attention.

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Knowing the signals of impending burn-out are helpful to take timely action. In general an ongoing loss of vitality and happiness are clear indicators. Though sometimes people cannot even feel fatigue anymore because they keep on going on adrenaline evoked by willpower only. The result will be the same: you will burn-out.

Notice whether more and more of the following signs of change in balance occur: The overt overdrive version (the tension is felt inside and shows on the outside):

- Rushed or frantic ongoing activity but not getting anything finished
- Seeming pro-active but not producing any results anymore
- Task-hopping
- Hardly taking breaks anymore
- Cannot sleep in as you feel the ongoing drive to 'get thing done'
- React more negative or cynical

The covert overdrive version (the tension is felt inside and does not show that clearly):

- Feeling tired and restless at the same time
- Waking up tired in the morning
- Not feeling energetic or vital anymore
- Feeling much older than you are
- Don't smile or laugh so much anymore
- Getting slower all the time
- Sighing a lot
- Crying more frequently
- Being upset more often
- The weekend does not seem long enough anymore
- Don't feel like doing sports or going out anymore
- Cannot stand noises and busy places anymore
- Lose your passion and sense of involvement
- Peaks of despair or panic (can look like irritation)
- Things that used to be fun just take too much of an effort to bother doing them anymore
- Every set back leaves you feeling less well, bit by bit
- You just don't seem to snap back into your normal cheery or 'okay' self anymore after a disappointment
- Possibly revert to familiar numbing (alcoholism, overeating) or 'pep' habits (too much coffee, energy drinks or chocolate) to conceal you are dragging yourself through the day

Both the overt and covert versions tend to share the following signs:

- A feeling of ongoing bodily turmoil
- Sleeping pattern changes
- More and more knee jerk reactions, especially;
- Getting cranky more often when confronted with a setback or an extra request

- Cannot concentrate well anymore
- Efforts become more chaotic
- Body starts hurting (at the weakest point first; lower back pain, stomach ache, headache)
- And eventually; exhaustion! Either of the mind (brain-block) or the body (physical-collapse)

Please visit your physician when you think you have or are close to a burn-out. When you check of a lot of the above signs without feeling restless it is also a good idea to check with your physician. You might suffer from a depression.

The following diagram shows what can happen over the years when you don't see to your balance:

- Your basic stress level grows higher and higher and eventually crosses the 'red line' on a daily basis. In other words: you are heading for a burn-out
- Eventually you drain your energy reserve buffer and you 'cannot take it any more'

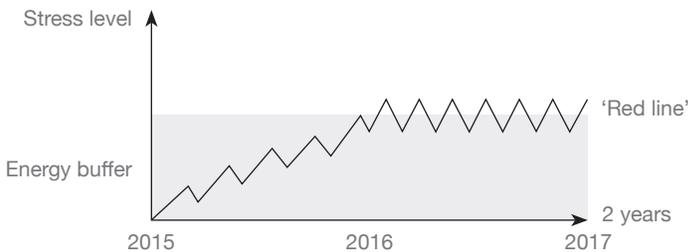


Figure 1: Heading for and reaching a state of burn-out

The next diagram shows what happens when you actively engage in life and balance it with taking time to eat and move healthy, taking timely breaks and enough rest.

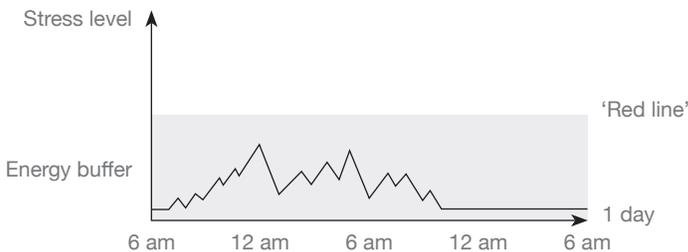


Figure 2: Balancing your daily stress level

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Don't cross your very personal 'red line' of energy depletion.

Your personal basic tension levels and energy buffer size can differ a lot from others.

Your personal intensity of reaction to stimuli can differ a lot from others.

When you have a higher basic tension level, living closer to the 'red line', Body & Mind balancing is more acutely important for you to prevent burn-out.

When you are a more intense responder to life, living higher peaks and lows, good Body & Mind balancing will do well for the quality of your life anytime.

► **Close to a burn-out?**

Life is about ups and downs. Life is not a flat line. The art of living is to balance these fluctuations in ways which are appropriate for you. Not losing the ups. Not losing the downs. When a sense of fulfilment is absent for too long there is an energy leak; there is more energy going out than coming in. To prevent this leak from leaving you stranded without the fuel and energy to go on, it is important to be sensitive to and aware of the signs which tell you that something is 'not right'.

Burn-out feels wobbly; too many fluctuations with too many stress highs and mood downs.

Whenever you feel wobbly:

- First take a deep breath.
- Dare to take the time to go 'Back to Body Basics' first. (Both the food and motion aspects, see part 2).
- Then choose the area of your life that needs a change to re-structure your life on a deeper level.

It is important to know what to do when you think you are dealing with a (near) burn-out:

- Take time to acknowledge, process and integrate what is happening to you.
- Please ask a professional to help you to regain your balance before you 'cannot lift a pack of butter anymore'.
- When you are too wobbly or too tired to go back to applying some of the body basics mentioned in this book, it's time to seek assistance. Otherwise it will take years to get well again and you might belong to the 25% who have to suffer chronic consequences.

There is no doubt in my mind that a burn-out can lead to transformation and growth. But often there is a high price to pay. I favour burn-out prevention.

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In the dictionary prevention is defined as: ‘the act of stopping something from happening’. In health issues focusing on a ‘negative’, stressful thing like the possibility of a burn-out or diabetes is not the optimal strategy. It is more helpful to make a vision of what you **do** want, of a welcoming positive outcome, like ‘feeling energised for 10 hours a day or ‘having a healthy weight of ... kg’, and consciously move towards it. That way you see when you lose the optimal direction towards that chosen goal. By making healthy choices you ‘course correct’ keeping you on course heading towards your chosen goal or purpose (10 hours of energy or maintaining a healthy weight) and thus naturally stop going in an unwanted direction (heading for a burn-out or becoming overweight or diabetic).

So the best way to prevent burn-out is not by focusing on it but rather by realigning yourself to pursue your chosen health goal.

It is best to make this conscious alignment with your health goal and the necessary healthy habits a daily practice.  
Prevention is better than cure.  
Asking for help is a strength not a weakness.

► **What needs to be balanced to prevent burn-out?**

- Requests from your body
- Requests from your mental voice about responding to new information and life events
- Requests from others
- Requests from the organisation you work in
- Requests from your Soul’s calling to bring passion, joy and meaning into your life

That’s an impressive list of requests and it is not even complete. And you cannot ignore any or the items without paying a price. Sooner or later.

When you notice you are losing out on vitality and joy you probably ignored smaller or bigger requests from your body, mind, relationships, organisation, your deeper calling, or all of them. You can get away with that for a while. Claiming you are prioritising well or some other rational and plausible reason. But ignoring burn-out signs will leave you with a very long tedious healing process.

Don’t let it get that far. Learn to be aware of your own choices in responding to life’s requests without self-sabotaging.

► **Take one step at a time**

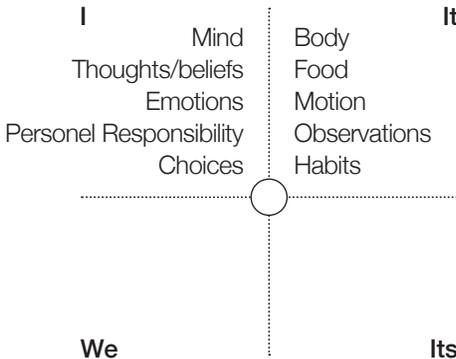
Volume 1 introduces you to the 4 Integral Quadrants on a basic level. Balancing these 4 interconnected quadrants is bound to improve your quality of life. This book series aims to shed light from my personal and professional experi-

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ence on the 4 Quadrants, their interconnectedness and how understanding this can help you get more out of your life.

Volume 1 and 2 basically speak from the upper two quadrants, It and I, which I translate for convenience's sake as Body and Mind. The first 2 volumes will invite you to **See** (both observe and see to) and get to **Know** some basic Body and Mind requests. The other 3 kinds of requests (from others, organisation, inner calling) and the 2 lower quadrants (We and Its) will be added in volume 3 and 4.

The main subjects of volume 1 as shown in the 4 Integral Quadrants:



*The first step* is to practice yourself to See, observe, become more aware:

- Acknowledge the requests of your Body
- Make a start to recognize requests of the Mind that prove themselves to be non-appropriate, non-effective survival modes (so-called illusions)
- Read the signs when your choices don't prove to be healthy balancing one's

► **Balancing work ethics and work requests**

Ethics is: to do the highest we are capable of at the current moment.

Work ethics is contributing the best of what we have to offer. Whether working with our customers as solo entrepreneur or in as part of a joint venture within the collective of an organisation. Balancing work ethics and work requests means giving our best without neglecting our personal life and without depleting our energy buffer.

This means guarding our personal energy reserve. This reserve is only meant to be called on for incidental 'emergencies'. NOT on a daily basis, as in that way it cannot replenish itself.

Some of us have more energy available than others or are more vulnerable to the consequences of disregarding our unique cocktail of conditions necessary for balance.

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If your work seems to require depletion of your energy reserves, talk about it. You have to find out:

- if too much is asked of you by your organisation
- if you ask too much of yourself
- if a life-event (like revalidating from a car accident or an illness, the sudden serious illness of a loved one, marital problems lasting longer than a few weeks) add to a 'requests-versus-available-energy-unbalance' and can leave you seriously short-changed

In any case, something has to change to prevent burn-out.

Talk about it in time in order to achieve the best balance possible under the circumstances. Ignoring an ongoing overload does not make it go away.

► **Please take into account:**

- Today we can be excellent for our own current skill level. We may keep honing our skills to achieve even more excellence tomorrow. Many organisations offer opportunities to do this. Requesting excellence at a skill level we are only just growing into is a sure road to disappointment and will deplete our energy.

- What we can do and be is the highest level of our own current stage of psychological development. We can keep evolving. The key to this is training awareness and exploring different views. We are not capable of performing at the highest level of a developmental stage which comes next. Why? Because we don't have the necessary insights. These will emerge automatically when growing into that next level. (More on that in Volume 2.)

- We can be true to our personality type.

We cannot excel at things our type does not resonate with. For example, some people thrive in the spotlight, others don't. Some people thrive at exploring; others thrive at supporting the home base the explorers return to. Some people are good at initiating and inspiring new purposes, ventures and possibilities. Many of us join the action when these new possibilities are presented and match our potential. We seem to collectively think we all must be initiators or leaders (of a group).

- Leadership in the sense of acting as an initiator or 'puller of the cart' for a group has become a kind of 'must be'. Remember that you can lead without overtly initiating. And I would not advise making pulling a collective cart your purpose in life, since it is utterly exhausting. I like Fred Kofman's words: 'Leadership transforms human potential into effective performance'. We can all take the Personal Responsibility to transform our potential into action and lead a wonderful life. We can participate in a shared purpose without the necessity of managing or leading a group of other people to feel good about ourselves. We are not all called to be a CEO or a world leader. That is fine.

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- We can acknowledge that for the time being most organisations use a system that is dependent on the interaction of leaders and followers, where the leader has more authority in the organisation and the follower less. In my view we are evolving into a next stage where most people are becoming autonomous leaders of their life and work. Conscious business gives examples of the societal development of systems building on aware and self-authoring co-workers who cooperate to achieve a shared purpose. I enjoy seeing this positive change, since a perceived lack of autonomy and authority and conflicts in work relationships are important factors which can lead to a burn-out.

- A wise leader does not make requests on an ongoing basis which does not resonate well with someone's typology or predominant life values since that will create a dis-balance. That's the same reason why an excellent leader will not make requests far exceeding any person's current capacities and insights. A small difference in the level of requests and current skills can show confidence in another's potential. It will boost self-esteem through achieving something new successfully.

Too big a difference in requests and skills activates survival modes, either overtly or covertly.

An aligned and aligning leader does not ask a duckling to swim faster than a mature duck. Or ask a duck to dig a rabbit hole. Nor will a rabbit be thrown into the water with the words: 'Swim because I say so.' Or: 'Swim, because if I can do it you can do it.' Self-esteem will suffer and burn-out gets closer.

- A wise organisation does not build burn-out factors into its structure. To avoid the most important burn-out promoting factors it is wise to incorporate the following:

- pay for quantity and quality of work in a way that does not evoke feelings of powerlessness helplessness or unfairness
- offer opportunities for promotion and growth
- respect personal and cultural ethics and values
- facilitate alignment of personal and collective purpose and mission
- give personnel opportunity to share views on organisational policies and strategies
- listen to what the people on the production floor express about the balance between deadlines, costs and quality of the requested results or what they need to fluidly meet the results

- In general: all matters which may promote a continued experience of helplessness are bad for the organisation and co-workers involved. When you are treated like an impersonal part of a machine and it does not seem to make any difference at all however hard you work, how you feel or what you think, your mood and motivation drops and sick leave and turn-over rates rise within the organisation. Neither do people like to feel treated like 'assets' or 'human resources'. Believe me, if the work culture does not value human factors like

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constructive feedback, passion and purpose, it will be felt. And it will show. People will tend to look for another employer in an attempt to feel acknowledged and appreciated. Or will stay out of necessity with the risk of passive-aggressive reactions taking over to protest silently against the perceived lack of respect and freedom. This has a negative influence on the work culture as you can well imagine

Burn-out prevention is at its best when personal and organisational responsibilities are interconnected and well-balanced, when self-organisation and collective organisation are a good match.

► **Bonus information on personal differences**

I would like to stress the existence and importance of acknowledging personal differences once more.

Please do not assume everybody is the same or should be or should do the same. Everybody has their own personal balance which is dependent on many factors. Everybody has Personal Responsibility for their own balance. We can kindly inform each other about what we See when observing another's state of balance, it is however not healthy to try to 'take over' another's Personal Responsibility.

Your response-ability depends on the outer context of your life in combination with the inner you. The same goes for everybody else. As we all have a unique inner life we all react and respond differently to requests in life. Similar requests may have very different consequences for different people.

You know best about your balance. I know best about mine. Sometimes this knowledge is blocked by survival modes that create blind spots, things we cannot See clearly (see Part 3). Others might See these spots better than we do ourselves. It can come in handy to work in a culture where a safe space is created to give constructive personal feedback given with humility, not in a trail blazing way or 'let me fix this for once and for all' way.

► **Bonus information on preferring a specific perspective**

I will get back to this in Volume 3 but for those interested in this beyond basics of the Integral Quadrants:

Personal differences can show up as using the perspective we are most comfortable with. Is it the personal, interpersonal, or impersonal aspects of a situation that you see first? And what words do you use? Do you talk about 'me' and 'I think' the most, or about 'we' like in feeling connected to others, or do you rather stick to facts and numbers to keep 'it' simple?

The 4 Integral Quadrants each represent a certain perspective and we tend to have a 'primary quadrant', meaning a perspective we feel the most familiar with. Every perspective goes with a kind of 'lens', with a way of Seeing the world.

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Although we all have all perspectives in every moment the most familiar one will attract our attention first. So we tend to see the world primarily as full of interesting facts to be gathered or physical sensations to be felt (a world of It), problems to be solved or emotions to be experienced (a world of I), relationships to be nurtured or social causes to be served (a world of We), art to be created or other visions to be explored (a world of Its). It is practical not to assume everybody has or should have the same perspective. Diversity is strength.

A group of co-workers in an organisation that value and combine impersonal (It and Its) interpersonal (We) and personal (I) perspectives give the organisation a better chance of recognising great business or social opportunities as well as drawbacks like blind spots or stagnation. The different perspectives can create a great deal of tension when they are not aligned towards the same purpose and each try to set up shop for themselves so to speak. It is great when several people in the organisation know how to translate the different languages of the different perspectives into making the most sense for achieving the shared goal.