

# In Balance

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Expert advice to enrich your life + inspire your best self



## THE BOOKSHELF

### Feeling the Stress?

*Put down the to-do list and get reacquainted with yourself*

Women aren't just stressed out, they're *addicted* to stress. That's the conclusion of stress management specialist and radio talk show host **DEBBIE MANDEL** in her aptly titled new book, *Addicted to Stress: A*

*Woman's 7 Step Program to Reclaim Joy and Spontaneity in Life* (Jossey-Bass). Mandel says that despite their gains over the past few decades, many women are still driven by a constant need to prove their self-worth and show their value to others. Other women are simply lost in the hectic maze of motherhood, work, and marriage, always moving forward to the next obligation, never savoring the moment. Mandel likens stress addiction to identity theft: It affects us so deeply that we lose the sense of who we used to be. "Eliminating the stress in your life involves turning your focus inward and getting reacquainted with who you were before you became a wife, mother, and caregiver." Her seven steps include revisiting your hopes and dreams, taking better care of your body, rebooting your libido, and, above all, finding the time to laugh about it all. *Addicted to Stress* is very much a girlfriends' guide, including workbook-style questionnaires, quizzes, and relaxation techniques. Her authorial voice is inspiring and straightforward, the perfect cocktail for all us overtaxed, exhausted, stressed-out workaholics.

WENDY R. WALKER

## Mirror, Mirror

*Our quest to stay forever young, and what that says about us*

Have you ever looked in the mirror, pulled your skin back, and let thoughts of Botox and Restylane drift through your mind? Sneaked a quick peek into *How Not to Look Old* at your local Borders? And did you kind of hate yourself for it, even as you were intrigued? **BETH TEITELL** understands. As she writes in her new book *Drinking Problems at the Fountain of Youth* (William Morrow), "I didn't consider myself the *kind of person* who has work done." Even so, as with many women, the thought has crossed her mind. If you're female, between the ages of 20 and death, and simultaneously disturbed and amused by 21st-century beauty culture, this is the book for you.

Teitell explores the world of Botox, jeans shopping, acupuncture face-lifts, and \$600 haircuts. More to the point, she examines the increasing social and economic pressures (mostly on women, but men get a chapter, too) to stay impossibly youthful and attractive. Contrary to the old stereotype, the kind of person who gets work done these days isn't a vain so-



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This month's pick, the memoir *Not Buying It: My Year Without Shopping* by Judith Levine, comes from A.J. Lane of Laguna Hills, California: "The author, a *New Yorker*, went a whole year without buying things that were not necessary for survival.

What an eye-opener! Of course, she bought groceries, but she didn't buy any trivial items. Imagine saving enough to pay off an entire credit card—Levine did that and more. This is such an inspiring book in these difficult economic times. It makes you think, "If she can do it, why can't I?" Her candid insights into her personal life offer a voyeuristic approach to combating 'affluenza.' She states that 'consumption is an exercise in hope.' My only hope is that I can eventually pay for what I have. Refraining from shopping is unheard of here in Orange County, land of infinite conspicuous consumption and multiple holiday trees, but I'm going to try."