

Top Tips for Spiritual Fitness

If you believe physical fitness is important, then you should take a look at what spiritual fitness is. Both are vital to health.

Physicians and physicists alike are turning their attention to an area long neglected — the health of the human spirit and soul. With the understanding that there is a link between stress and disease, and an appreciation for the healing power of the human spirit (e.g., spontaneous remission of cancer), practitioners in all areas of health and fitness are beginning to acknowledge what the sages and wisdom keepers of all ages and cultures have been saying — to be healthy, one must acknowledge and nurture the human spirit.

People who have endured nothing less than catastrophic life experiences have often come out victors rather than victims. When asked, “What was it that got you through your crisis?” each gives a similar answer. What they describe is what I have coined “muscles of the soul,” those inner resources which help dismantle and transcend the roadblocks on life’s journey. These include everything from the ex-boyfriend from hell and cancerous tumours, to alcoholic parents or a flat tire during rush hour.

The muscles of the soul include courage, faith, humour, patience, compassion, imagination, humility, forgiveness, intuition, creativity, optimism, honesty and love. These are the resources people draw upon in times of crisis. They are not gifts for a chosen few. They are birthrights for each and every one of us. But, like our physical muscles, they will atrophy if not used. And while they’ll never disappear, in a weakened or inactive state, they will be as ineffective as the muscles of a sedentary person attempting a marathon.

We each have the potential to be spiritually healthy. Perhaps spiritual health can best

be described as using our potential — to engage the spiritual muscles on a regular and frequent basis. In times of change, which often produce stress, we are called upon to use inner resources to come through each situation victoriously. Our spiritual muscles are there for the asking. Spiritual health is flexing these muscles and feeling the strength they provide when needed.

Source: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0675/is_n3_v16/ai_20652043

How do you train for spiritual fitness?

1. Be open to the possibility that there might be more to learn in life than you know right now.
2. Search for friends who challenge you to live a little better tomorrow than you lived yesterday.
3. Take a little time every day to be silent — turn everything off and just listen.
4. When you hear something in the silence, examine it and see whether there is a message of challenge or comfort in it.
5. Figure out what *you* think and believe independently of what the media or friends tell you.
6. Practise forgiving small slights or insults... let it go because it doesn’t matter enough for all that negative energy!
7. Seek out a group of like-minded people who can support you in your fitness goals — maybe try the church or faith background you grew up with or your family is most familiar with.

Contact UBC Chaplains for more information or just to talk. We are at Place Vanier on Tuesdays, Totem Park on Thursdays from 5–7 pm. We are all personal spiritual fitness trainers.

Written by UBC Catholic Chaplaincy