

Lesson 1

Spiritual Fitness

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Spiritual Fitness – Lesson 1

AGENDA

- The Concept of Spiritual Fitness, What does it include?
- Muscles of the Soul
- What is Right for You? Create your “5 muscle plan”
- Spiritual Activity – The Breath (includes handout)
- Activity, Journaling - Daily Commitment
- Summary – Know you can grow at your own pace
- Resources for growth

Spiritual Fitness Defined

- Spirituality describes a person's authentic sense of self and a higher connection.
- Alignment of life purpose & values to one's thinking and actions = a lifespan of continuous health & wellness.
- Spiritual alignment includes both physical, emotional and mental growth.
- Spiritual fitness for health and wellness gives each individual a fulfilling and joyful life both internal and external.

Spirituality – Muscles of the Soul (Seaward)

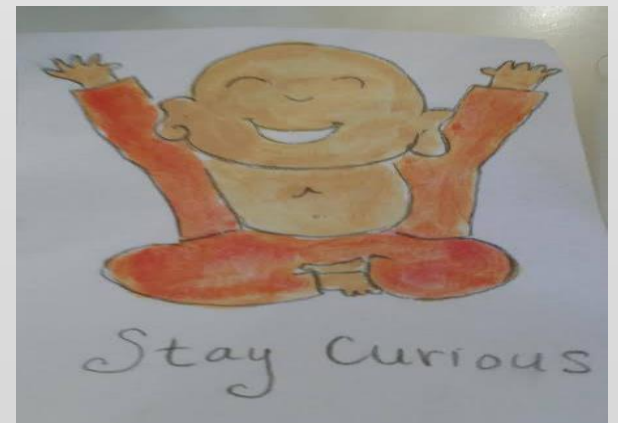
- Within each of us are inner resources for enhancing our life.
- Our inner resources are especially helpful “to cope with stress gracefully”.
- In *The Ego and the Soul*, Seaward, B describes these inner resources as “Muscles of the Soul”.
- During our demanding life “we must learn to exercise these muscles frequently.”
- Upon strengthening our spiritual muscle, we are ‘becoming the best we can be’ for our family, our workplace, our school and ourselves.

Spirituality – Your Deepening Plan (Muscles of the Soul)

- Our **spiritual potential is vast**; the most common muscles for deepening our potential include:
- Acceptance, Optimism, Compassion, Unconditional Love, Forgiveness, Faith
- Integrity, Patience, Humbleness.
- Curiosity, Creativity, Humor
- Persistence, Courage, Intuition
- What “muscles” do you want to concentrate on?

Activity – More on Deepening Muscles of the Soul

- **Acceptance** – Present moment awareness. This trait is one of the more difficult to develop.
- How to discern between that which we can change from that which we must **accept**.
- **Curiosity** – to make improvements for the betterment of our self and others well being.



Spirituality – Your Deepening Plan (Muscles of the Soul)

- **Persistence** – not to be confused with being aggressive, even in the face of adversity allows us to grow in spirit.
- **Courage** - it take courage to change, it take courage to develop muscles of the soul, it takes courage to discuss your internal conflict with a confidant.



Spirituality – Your Deepening Plan (Muscles of the Soul)

- **Integrity** – Is an integration of many muscles of the soul.
- Doing what you say you are going to do.
- People described as having integrity generally are doing the right thing, at the right time, all (most) of the time.
- Strive to know when to admit a mistake

INTEGRITY IS
choosing
COURAGE OVER COMFORT;
CHOOSING WHAT IS RIGHT
over what is
FUN, FAST, OR EASY;
AND CHOOSING TO
PRACTICE OUR VALUES
rather than simply
PROFESSING THEM.

Activities - How to Deepen Muscles of the Soul - continued

- Breathing Exercise for centering and creating present moment awareness
- Starting with morning and evening using 4-7-8-breathing to start – See handout
- Let's try this exercise now, so you can do it at home

Activities - How to Deepen Muscles of the Soul

- The act of journaling, different than an event diary
- Journaling includes daily writing which gives you focus to what you are working on, what you believe
- A more mindful state naturally develops when you know you will journal about how you handled specific interactions or situations
- Based on this lesson – journal your awareness of the five muscle areas you are working on
- Journaling works best for some people end of day and others to focus their day in the morning

Daily Commitment Checkpoint

- Learning to create habits and get them to stick.
- If we simply take life and continue to do the same thing, we will not create our best spiritual muscle.
- This is where commitment comes into play
- For change and spiritual muscles to develop we must do what we may not feel like doing
- From now until our lesson next week, I challenge you to twice a day 4-7-8 breath and journaling.

Spirituality Program Possibilities

- In summary, building soul muscles is a commitment
- How can we take action to make it happen
- Discussion groups build our spiritual muscles
- Format – Discuss specific life events or situations
- Get input on how to best handle from a spiritual standpoint
- Quest for muscle building - each group member takes the “stage” to explain their progress within the spiritual muscle framework

Spirituality Wellness References

This is the source of our breathing handout. Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine. (2010) 4-7-8 Breath – Relaxation Exercise. <https://www.cordem.org/globalassets/files/academic-assembly/2017-aa/handouts/day-three/biofeedback-exercises-for-stress-2---fernances-j.pdf>

In addition to the handout, the YouTube link provides Dr. Andrew Weil the founder of Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine. This is a must watch to practice the breath along with Dr. Weil. Weil, A. M.D. (2017). Andrew Weil 4-7-8 Breathing Technique. Retrieved from https://youtu.be/_-C_VNM1Vd0 Weil, A. M.D.

Written to learn more about why and how to create time for inner work. Borysenko, J. PhD. (2001). Inner Peace for Busy People. Hay House Inc.

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Breathing techniques and mental exercises for an immediate sense of calm and well being. Anness Publishing Limited. Hudson, J. (2001). Instant Meditation for Stress Relief