

Physical Well-Being & The Force

Part Four: Realization & Continuance

A Jedi should recognize that learning is a lifetime labor and that one will never acquire all of the knowledge in the universe in a lifetime but the search for it is a worthy and rewarding endeavor. The same can be said for physical fitness and, most certainly, a greater and more meaningful connection to the Force.

At some point, if a Jedi keeps the flame of desire, mentioned throughout this lecture series, alive with one's drive to improve and through measured discipline then eventually he or she will arrive at goal realization. This can be one of the most satisfying moments in one's life. Whether it be getting down to a goal weight, completing a marathon or achieving a personal record with regards to a specific weight lifting movement, or even if it's just fitting into a certain size of clothes, the feeling of personal satisfaction that comes with hard work and determination is near impossible to beat. However, the most important thing to celebrate other than the achievement, whatever it may be, is that one has mastered him or her self. This generates feelings that one can accomplish anything if determined to do so. This is the root of the confidence that I spoke of in the earlier installments and it will serve one in all endeavors in life, especially in the pursuit of knowledge in the Force. One now has the keys to any door before him or her. By overcoming the base, selfish desires of the self can one only overcome the most severe challenges in life.

This success is like the peak of a mountain. After the elation that comes with accomplishment, one may find the summit suddenly quiet and lonely and ask him or her self, "what now?" This can be a dangerous place. Some may slide back down the slope from whence they came, their flame of desire slowly dwindling as they settle back into their selfish, hedonistic ways from a misplaced sense of reward for obtaining one's goal. However, the first step in a life of continuance of improved physical well-being, once obtained, is maintenance.

In this uncertain time, maintain the new, desired status quo by executing the same healthy actions that brought one through to goal realization. Refine the processes and work on things such as technique of whatever skills that were practiced. This will keep the flame of desire alive and also hone one's discipline further. However, during this time, one may feel free to indulge in the items and practices that they once denied themselves as a reward but only with severe moderation. This can be a cheat meal or a couple of days off the physical training routine. Before venturing into this practice, one needs to set strict ground rules in order to reinforce personal discipline that could still be shaky. An example for this would be to have one "cheat meal" a week comprising of self-denied and wonderfully awful food items that begins once one sits down at the table and it ends when one has finished and rises. It would also be beneficial to have this "cheat meal" on a training day to offset any negative impacts. One may be surprised at feeling guilty at the end for indulging but, a Jedi should not judge oneself. Carry on to the next day with renewed purpose and energy. Over time, one may be surprised that he or she no longer crave unhealthy foods because one's taste buds have changed. The mind and body will learn to crave nourishment from the Force.

Regardless, the maintenance phase should not last very long and one should move to the next and last step: Setting a new goal. At the summit of an accomplishment one only need look to the horizon to find new mountains to climb- new challenges to overcome. Such is life and the way of the Force. When one arises to a challenge, a new one tends to arrive to meet him or her. However, the difference with personal growth sometimes is that the Force

may not offer one this challenge, it is up to the individual, the Jedi, to place it upon oneself. A successful Jedi must push his or her boundaries of knowledge, wisdom and physical capability in the absence of any outside stimulus in order to continue to grow. In the realm of physical well-being, this may be a further continuance of the original goal or a whole new one based on newly acquired capabilities. If one finished a 5k race, one may wish to now do a half marathon or maybe will want to branch out into other aspects of fitness such as swimming, biking or weight lifting. Whatever a Jedi chooses, he or she should always seek out knowledge before attempting a new goal. The flame of desire will burn brighter yet.

As life changes, so does the body. The feats one was capable of in youth can no longer be done in dotage, or at least without great discomfort or risk of injury. A Jedi should always know one's capabilities and limitations. This personal inventory of one's capacity for physicality requires true knowledge of the self and the Force. There is a fine line between pain and injury. Pain can be good and is a teacher that should not be avoided. It is indicative of growth both physically and mentally and will reveal one's capacity for physical ability. The greatest triumphs are rooted in persisting through it. Injury, on the other hand, is damage to the body and it has a high probability to occur if a Jedi trains hard enough, especially in the beginning phases of any regimen. If one becomes injured it is necessary to stop training, seek medical attention (if required), rest and recuperate before attempting further training. During this time where the body is repairing it is necessary for a Jedi to reflect on what went wrong, resolve to fix it, and do not become discouraged. Once healed and in possession of greater knowledge and understanding of the problem, ease back into training and stay the course. A Jedi does not feel sorry for him or her self but recognizes that this injury was a lesson, given by the Force, to be learned. The same can be said for failure and illness. Upon falling down, one needs to get up and try again as the old maxim goes.

As this lecture series concludes, I only hope that I have inspired action in the Jedi who read this. I want the very best for each and every one of you. To love oneself and achieve a stronger, more natural connection to the Force. I can only speak these words of encouragement based in personal lessons learned but a Jedi must do this for him or her self. If you are struggling with your health, know that I've been where you are now and I found the power to overcome just as you can. As Luke Skywalker once said, "You have that power, too..." It is possible to change for the better. Anything is possible in the Force and if a Jedi believes in oneself. I know I spoke a lot of discipline and denial of enjoyable things but I want everyone to enjoy life, too. There is nothing wrong in seldom indulging or idleness as long as it's countered with sufficient amounts of discipline and planning on either side of it. Discipline is the key to success. I cannot stress it enough and I believe it to be the true mark of a Jedi.

I look forward to your questions regarding this lecture series and further enriching it through discourse on the Ways of the Force Forum thread located here: <http://wayoftheforce.boards.net/thread/11/physical-force>

May the Force be with you. Always.

-Skystriker