

Spiritual Fitness Leader's Guide



U.S. Marine Corps

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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

22 July 2026

CHANGE 2 TO MCRP 6-10.1

SPIRITUAL FITNESS LEADER'S GUIDE

This publication has been changed as follows:

Page 1-1: Removed the definitions of Spiritual Readiness and Spirituality.

Page 2-4: Revised the definition of Personal Faith.

Page 2-5: Revised the definition of Foundational Values.

Page 2-7: Revised the definition of Moral Living.

Reviewed and approved this date.

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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

18 September 2024

CHANGE 1 TO MCRP 6-10.1

SPIRITUAL FITNESS LEADER'S GUIDE

This publication has been changed as follows:

Changed definition of spiritual fitness on page 1-1 from “Spiritual fitness is the identification of personal faith, foundational values, and moral living from a variety of sources and traditions that help Marines live out core values of honor, courage, and commitment, live the warrior ethos, and exemplify the character expected of a United States Marine” to “Spiritual fitness is *inner strength from higher purpose*. Spiritual fitness is the identification of personal faith, foundational values, and moral living from a variety of sources, such as a connection to the Divine, participation in a transformative community, the pursuit of meaning and significance, shared sacrifice for a greater good, and a commitment to character and a life of honor. Spiritual fitness helps Marines live out the warfighting ethos with character and honor.”

Addition on page 1-4. Added ALMAR 020/24 from General Eric M. Smith.

Addition on page 1-5. Added two ALMAR 020/24s to Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resource.

Change on page 3-1. Change “spiritual fitness” to “inner strength from higher purpose.”

Change on page 4-1. Corrected graphic error to Figure 4-1.

Addition on page 5-3. Added the following question to the *Lead the Discussion* section. “What higher purposes do you draw inner strength from?”

Reviewed and approved this date.



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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

21 June 2023

FOREWORD

Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 6-10.1, *Spiritual Fitness Leader's Guide*, is designed to equip leaders with the information needed to understand and lead in spiritual fitness. This will enable leaders to grow in their own spiritual fitness as well as to lead, teach, and facilitate periods of instruction, professional military education, and professional spiritual fitness discussions.

This guide provides leaders with evidence-based information that outlines the benefits of spiritual fitness both on an individual and unit level. While the word “spiritual” has historically been associated with religion, spiritual fitness takes a broader perspective and considers religious and non-religious beliefs, principles, and values needed to persevere and prevail. This guide will help leaders understand and communicate the cultural shift that has occurred that defines spirituality as encompassing non-religious and religious belief systems, and that both are approaches to spiritual fitness. This publication complements Marine Corps Tactical Publication (MCTP) 3-30D, *Religious Ministry in the United States Marine Corps*.

Reviewed and approved this date.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric R. Quehl', with a stylized, flowing script.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Spiritual Fitness: Precedence and Battlespace Significance

Definitions	1-1
Spiritual Fitness	1-1
The Priority of Spiritual Fitness	1-1
Commandant of the Marine Corps Guidance	1-3
ALMAR 033/16 Spiritual Fitness	1-3
ALMAR 027/20 Resiliency and Spiritual Fitness	1-3
ALMAR 020/24 Spiritual Fitness	1-3
Spiritual Fitness in Marine Leader Development	1-5
Spiritual Fitness in Warfighting	1-6

Chapter 2. Establishing a Spiritual Fitness Foundation

Tangible and Intangible Factors	2-1
Internal and External Influences	2-2
Three Elements to Spiritual Fitness	2-4
Personal Faith	2-4
Foundational Values	2-5
Moral Living	2-7

Chapter 3. Self-Assessment

The Spiritual Fitness Self-Assessment Process	3-1
Step 1: Know Your Influences	3-2
Step 2: Exercise Three Elements	3-2
Step 3: Evaluate Seven Indicators	3-2
Step 4: Determine Fitness Level	3-3

Chapter 4. Challenges and Resources

Correcting Common Misconceptions	4-1
Spiritual Fitness and Religion in Culture	4-1
Spiritual Fitness is not the Sole Domain of the Chaplain	4-2
Moral Injury	4-2

Seeking Help for Low Levels of Spiritual Fitness	4-3
RACE Suicide Prevention	4-5
Suicide Warning Signs	4-6
Suicide Prevention Resources	4-6

Chapter 5. Leadership Considerations

Using Stories to Lead Spiritual Fitness Discussions	5-1
How to Lead a Spiritual Fitness Discussion	5-2
Preparation	5-2
Select Discussion Questions	5-2
Choose a Time and Location	5-2
Lead the Discussion	5-3

Chapter 6. Integrations with Other Fitness Domains

Purpose of Integration	6-1
Integration with the Physical Fitness Domain	6-2
Integration with the Mental Fitness Domain	6-3
Integration with the Social Fitness Domain	6-5

Appendices

- A. Stories that Illustrate Personal Faith
- B. Stories that Illustrate Foundational Values
- C. Stories that Illustrate Moral Living
- D. Spiritual Fitness Guide Printout
- E. Useful Website Links

Glossary

References and Related Publications

CHAPTER 1.

SPIRITUAL FITNESS:

PRECEDENCE AND BATTLESPACE SIGNIFICANCE

DEFINITIONS

Spiritual Fitness

Spiritual fitness is *inner strength from higher purpose*. Spiritual fitness is the identification of personal faith, foundational values, and moral living from a variety of sources, such as a connection to the Divine, participation in a transformative community, the pursuit of meaning and significance, shared sacrifice for a greater good, and a commitment to character and a life of honor. Spiritual fitness helps Marines live out the warfighting ethos with character and honor.

THE PRIORITY OF SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Marines develop strong mental, moral, spiritual, and ethical understanding because they are as important as physical skills when operating in the violence of combat.

—Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 7, *Learning*

Spiritual fitness is foundational to the making of Marines, sustaining the transformation, and returning quality citizens to society. It is an inextricable component of the DNA that makes a Marine a *Teufel Hunden*, a *Devil Dog*. It is ultimately that invaluable component that integrates and ties together the physical, mental, and social components of the human person in a holistic way, the summation of which is much more powerful together than apart. Spiritual fitness energizes a Marine holistically, leading to the creation of a tenacious, yet ethical warrior, who will accomplish the mission with honor, but is more concerned for fellow Marines than him/herself. This is a Marine who completes every combat task by applying the responsible use of force and makes tough decisions under stress and pressure—characteristics critical in battlespaces today and in the future. Such Marines maintain our esprit de corps by adhering to a higher standard of personal conduct.

Leaders at all levels are responsible for preserving the physical, mental, spiritual, and social fitness of the Marines and Sailors entrusted to their care. This responsibility applies to every link in every chain of command from small-unit leaders to commanding officers. The Marine Corps' success during times of competition and the conduct of war depends on leadership that balances mission accomplishment and troop welfare. The small-unit leader is the key to building and

maintaining unit morale and efficiency. To maintain a high level of morale and efficiency in combat, small-unit leaders must understand how to exercise and maintain their own spiritual fitness while leading Marines and Sailors to do the same. While the word “spiritual” has historically been associated with religion, spiritual fitness takes a broader perspective and considers religious and non-religious beliefs, principles, and values needed to persevere and prevail. Leaders will need to understand and communicate the cultural shift that has occurred which defines spirituality encompassing non-religious and religious belief systems, and that both are approaches to spiritual fitness.

Spiritual fitness is imperative for a Marine's overall mental health. A May 2021 study published by the Cost of War Project reported that since the events of 11 September 2001, the United States has lost 7,057 Service members to war operations and an estimated 30,177 Service members and veterans due to suicide. In other words, when compared to combat related deaths, suicide has claimed the lives of four times more of our nation's Service members. Deficiencies in spiritual fitness are known contributors to the range of suicide risk factors. However, based on the available evidence from public academic institutions and published science journals, being spiritually fit (including religious involvement) translates to having fewer destructive behaviors. For example, research shows that a person practicing individual spirituality is 62 percent less likely to die by suicide, while those who practice spirituality within a faith community are 82 percent less likely to die by suicide. Therefore, leaders must encourage Marines and Sailors to pursue spiritual fitness and make use of the command religious programs (CRPs) at their discretion. Now more than ever, the spiritual fitness of Marines and Sailors must be placed on the forefront of every leader's mind.

Effective leaders take care of their Marines' physical, mental, and spiritual needs. They also care about the well-being and professional and personal development of their Marines. The leaders' responsibilities extend to the families as well. Additionally, leaders must know their Marines: where they are from, their upbringing, what is going on in their lives, and their goals, strengths, and weaknesses.

While Marines at every level are responsible for spiritual fitness leadership, small-unit leaders must be equipped with the language and framework to articulate spiritual fitness elements and be able to recognize when one of their Marines or Sailors is struggling. A decline in a Marine's or Sailor's spiritual fitness has the potential to disable the most courageous Service member and jeopardize mission accomplishment. General David H. Berger, 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps, notes how critical Spiritual Fitness is to the character development of our Marines, and the priority he attaches to its pursuit:

While the importance of physical, mental, and social fitness is more recognizable, spiritual fitness is just as critical, and specifically addresses my priority to build character and instill core values in every Marine and Sailor.

Research shows evidence that 18–24-year-olds experience a surge of spirituality, resulting in a desire to explore the meaning and purpose of life and connect with the transcendent. Marines in this age group comprise about 65 percent of the Marine Corps and are in a state of spiritual formation where they may or may not choose to adhere to religious beliefs. This is the time when they are asking questions that will form their worldview:

- What is the nature of reality?
- Are there transcendent beings such as God or other higher powers?
- What happens when I die?
- What is the meaning and purpose of life?

Young adults' answers to these questions form a lens through which they view life events. Marine leaders must understand this innate drive in their young Marines and seek ways to foster these questions. Leaders can develop spiritual fitness by providing a safe, non-judgmental framework to assist Marines and Sailors in asking and answering these questions. The CRP assists leaders to facilitate spiritual exploration.

Investing in physical, mental, spiritual, and social health increases resiliency, the probability of mission accomplishment, and operational success across the competition continuum. Just as incorporating weightlifting sets and repetitions into one's routine can make a person physically fit, incorporating certain spiritual "sets and repetitions" into one's routine can make a person spirituality fit. This guide discusses some spiritual fitness practices that can be put into place.

COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS GUIDANCE

ALMAR 033/16 Spiritual Fitness

On 3 October 2016, General Robert B. Neller, 37th Commandant of the Marine Corps, released All Marines (ALMAR) message 033/16. This message emphasizes the need for every Marine and Sailor to focus on all four domains of fitness for essential well-being, while highlighting the key role of spiritual fitness. The message states, "By attending to spiritual fitness with the same rigor given to physical, social and mental fitness, Marines and Sailors can become and remain the honorable warriors and model citizens our Nation expects."

ALMAR 027/20 Resiliency and Spiritual Fitness

On 20 December 2020, General David H. Berger, 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps, released ALMAR 027/20. This message stressed the importance of all Marines and Sailors optimizing their overall fitness to maintain the necessary toughness and resiliency needed for mission accomplishment. The message states, "leaders must champion efforts to instill spiritual fitness in order to advance character development across the Marine Corps and in support of my Commandants Planning Guidance (CPG)." General Berger concluded that chaplains are uniquely qualified to assist Marines in developing their spiritual fitness through religious ministry, confidential counseling, and care for all individuals regardless of belief or background.

ALMAR 020/24 Spiritual Fitness

On 22 July 2024, General Eric M. Smith, 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps, released ALMAR 020/24. This message further developed the theme of spiritual fitness established by prior Commandants. The message succinctly defined spiritual fitness as inner strength from higher purpose. The message acknowledged that spiritual fitness emanates from religious and non-religious sources, which may include a personal faith, a search for meaning and purpose,

living values and character development. The message notes that those who engage in religious faith or spiritual practices are 60-80 percent less likely to take their own lives, saying, "Spiritual fitness reinforces and sustains resiliency and readiness."

Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resource

Leaders can use the following excerpts from the ALMAR 033/16, ALMAR 027/20, and ALMAR 020/24 with the accompanying discussion questions to facilitate dialogue on the importance of spiritual fitness:

1. ALMAR 033/16 states, "Research indicates that spiritual fitness plays a key role in resiliency, in our ability to grow, develop, recover, heal, and adapt." How does one's spiritual fitness impact resiliency?
2. ALMAR 033/16 states, "By attending to spiritual fitness with the same rigor given to physical, social and mental fitness, Marines and Sailors can become and remain the honorable warriors and model citizens our Nation expects." What are some ways and means to attend to spiritual fitness with the same level of effort we give to physical fitness?

Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resource

3. ALMAR 027/20 states, "Together with the other domains of fitness, spiritual fitness permits Marines and Sailors to draw upon collective spiritual resources in order to maintain their resiliency and demonstrate their character." What spiritual resources have proven to be effective in yourself or successful Marines and Sailors you know?
4. ALMAR 020/24 states, "Spiritual Fitness is 'inner strength from higher purpose.' While grit and determination are crucial, Marines and Sailors find greater strength from looking beyond themselves to higher, more enduring sources of meaning and purpose." What are some examples of higher purposes an individual can use to find meaning and purpose?
5. ALMAR 020/24 states, "Spiritual Fitness emanates from religious and non-religious sources and traditions for strengthening one's inner self. Some examples may include religious faith, community, the search for meaning and significance, values and character development, shared sacrifice for a greater good and more." What are examples of other sources and traditions one may find to strengthen Marines and sailors inner selves?

SPIRITUAL FITNESS IN MARINE LEADER DEVELOPMENT

Leaders must ensure Marines are well-led and cared for physically, emotionally, and spiritually, both in and out of combat.

—General David H. Berger
(38th Commandant's Planning Guidance)

Marine Corps Order 1500.61, *Marine Leader Development*, is a comprehensive approach to leadership development at all aspects of a Marine's personal and professional life to sustain the transformation instilled at entry-level training. Marine leader development provides a framework to be used by Marines at all levels. This framework consists of six functional areas of leadership development: fidelity, fighter, fitness, family, finances, and future. This publication addresses the various aspects of fitness.

Fitness is a holistic approach to physical, mental, spiritual, and social balance. Well-rounded Marines who address the spiritual, social, and mental aspects of fitness have more than just high physical fitness and combat fitness test scores; their morale, cohesiveness, and resiliency are also higher, helping them overcome the toughest challenges and facilitate a faster recovery. Marine leaders who understand and exercise their spiritual fitness ensure the proper development of their character, which upholds and complements Marine leadership development and embodies the 15 leadership traits and 11 leadership principles.

Leadership Traits	Leadership Principles
• Bearing. • Courage (both physical and moral). • Decisiveness. • Dependability. • Empathy. • Endurance. • Enthusiasm. • Initiative. • Integrity. • Judgment. • Justice. • Knowledge. • Loyalty. • Tact. • Unselfishness.	• Know yourself and seek self-improvement. • Be technically and tactically proficient. • Develop a sense of responsibility among your subordinates. • Make sound and timely decisions. • Set the example. • Know your Marines and look out for their welfare. • Keep your Marines informed. • Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions. • Ensure tasks are understood, supervised, and accomplished. • Train your Marines as a team. • Employ your command in accordance with its capabilities.

Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resource

Leaders can visit the Marine Leader Development website (links to all websites are listed in Appendix E) to become familiar with the available leader development resources that cover the six functional areas of Marine leader development.

SPIRITUAL FITNESS IN WARFIGHTING

One essential means to overcome friction is the will; we prevail over friction through persistent strength of mind and spirit. While striving ourselves to overcome the effects of friction, we must attempt at the same time to raise our enemy's friction to a level that weakens their ability to fight.

—MCDP 1, *Warfighting*

Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1, *Warfighting*, provides the foundation for the relationship between leadership and spiritual fitness. Military professionals are charged with the defense of the nation; therefore, Marines must not only be experts in the art of war, but also individuals of action and intellect, skilled at accomplishing all tasks. They are resolute and self-reliant in their decisions, energetic and insistent in execution. Marine leaders have a tremendous responsibility; the resources they will expend in war are human lives. Therefore, it is essential for leaders to harness the intangible factors of combat to maximize total destructive force against the enemy. MCDP 1 lists these intangible factors as morale, fighting spirit, perseverance, and effects of leadership. Spiritual fitness would also be counted among these factors. The leader's capability to instill spiritual strength in the modern Marine and Sailor will serve to overcome friction, increase lethality, and achieve combat victory.

General John A. Lejeune commented on the critical link between spiritual fitness and resiliency, human performance, and combat effectiveness:

There is no substitute for the spiritual in war. Miracles must be wrought if victories are to be won, and to work miracles men's hearts must be afire with self-sacrificing love for each other, for their units, for their division, and for their country. If each man knows that all the officers and men in his division are animated with the same fiery zeal as he himself feels, unquenchable courage and unconquerable determination crush out fear and death become preferable to defeat dishonor. Fortunate indeed is the leader who commands such men, and it is his most sacred duty to purify his own soul and to cast out from it all unworthy motives, for men are quick to detect pretense or insincerity in the leaders, and worse than useless as a leader is the man in whom they find evidences of hypocrisy or undue timidity, or whose acts do not square with his word.

General Lejeune's words articulate the affects a spiritually fit Marine or Sailor can have on warfighting and mission accomplishment. There is a spiritual component to the conduct of war, and the Marine or Sailor who is willing to engage in the intangible dimensions of humanity will be the one who is able to demonstrate the spiritual dimension that General Lejeune describes as having no substitute. Leaders who ensure the spiritual readiness of their Marines and Sailors for the conduct of warfighting can better prepare them for the future operating environment.

Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resource

Leaders must become familiar with the myriad content available on the Marine Corps Resilience website (links to all websites are listed in Appendix E). The site contains information and resources on physical, mental, social, and spiritual fitness to assist Marines and Sailors in the pursuit of total fitness. Some resources include the following:

- Marine Total Fitness Self-check Tool.
- Videos covering physical, mental, spiritual, and social fitness.
- Recommended reading lists.
- Discussion guides.

Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resource

Leaders can use the following excerpts from MCDP 1 to facilitate discussions on spiritual preparation for combat:

1. Friction (pages 1-5 and 1-6): "One essential means to overcome friction is the will; we prevail over friction through persistent strength of mind and spirit." Question: What is meant by a strong spirit? Discuss the role of a strong spirit in the conduct of war, as well as how to develop a strong spirit.
2. The human dimension (pages 1-12 and 1-13): "It is the human dimension which infuses war with its intangible moral factors." Discuss how a Marine or Sailor may be impacted by the moral dimensions of war.
3. Physical, moral, and mental forces (pages 1-14 and 1-15): "War is characterized by the interaction of physical, moral, and mental forces." Discuss the mental and moral issues a Marine or Sailor may encounter in war.
4. Combat power (page 2-18): combat power is made up of both tangible and intangible elements. "Some may be wholly intangible such as morale, fighting spirit, perseverance, or the effects of leadership." Discuss the intangible elements a Marine or Sailor may experience in the conduct of war, and how each may impact an individual.
5. The conduct of war (page 4-7): "It requires a certain independence of mind, a willingness to act with initiative and boldness, an exploitive mindset that takes full advantage of every opportunity, and the moral courage to accept responsibility for this type of behavior." Discuss what moral courage is and why it is necessary in war.

CHAPTER 2.

ESTABLISHING A SPIRITUAL FITNESS FOUNDATION

TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE FACTORS

All of life is experienced through two factors. There are tangible (physical) factors and intangible (non-physical) factors. As shown in Figure 2-1, intangible factors include matters that pertain to the heart, mind, and spirit; these factors include such things as thoughts, ideas, emotions, personality, behaviors, social skills, relationships, and spiritual connections. Tangible factors include matters that pertain to our bodies and the environment and include our five senses. All these factors interact with one another and impact one's decisions and ability to persevere and prevail in life. The Marine Corps values of honor, courage, and commitment are intangible factors that are taught and expected of every Marine, regardless of duty status.

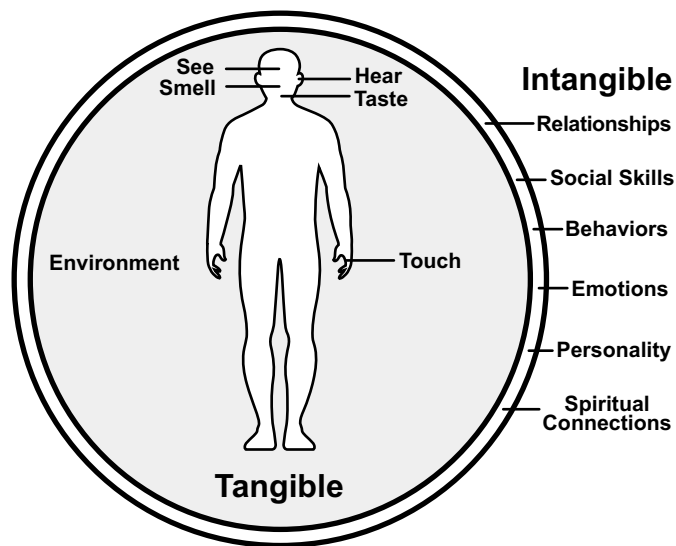


Figure 2-1. Tangible and Intangible Factors.

The spiritual fitness of a unit is most easily expressed in the term *esprit de corps*, which means “spirit of the body.” It has long defined the Marine Corps’ sense of camaraderie across the battlespace. *Esprit de corps* describes the spirit of the unit, something intangible in nature but experienced in very tangible ways. It is the common spirit reflected by all members of a unit, providing group solidarity. It implies devotion and loyalty to the unit and all for which it stands, and a deep regard for the unit's history, traditions, and honor. *Esprit de corps* is the unit's personality; it expresses the unit's will to fight and win despite seemingly insurmountable odds. *Esprit de corps* depends on the satisfaction the members get from belonging to a unit, their attitudes toward other members of the unit and confidence in their leaders. True *esprit de corps* is based on the great military virtues: unselfishness, self-discipline, duty, honor, patriotism, and courage.

Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resource

Marines might remember being shown a series of benefit tags by their recruiter when they were thinking about joining the Marine Corps and might be able to recall which tags impacted their decision to stand on the yellow footprints. Each of these benefits can be categorized as either a tangible or intangible benefit. Leaders can use this list of benefits as a conversation starter with their Marines and Sailors to demonstrate the tangible and intangible parts of our humanity:

- Pride of belonging.
- Self-reliance, self-direction, self-discipline.
- Travel and adventure.
- Challenge.
- Physical fitness.
- Courage, poise, self-confidence.
- Technical skills.
- Financial security, advancement, and benefits.
- Leadership and management skills.
- Professional development and opportunities.
- Educational opportunity.
- Patriotism.
- Pride and honor.
- Career variety.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

—Sun Tzu
The Art of War

One of the principles of Marine leadership is to “know yourself and seek self-improvement.” Every Service member enters the military with unique traits, perspectives, and experiences. The first step Service members can take in knowing themselves and understanding their spiritual fitness is to examine the influences that impact their daily decision making. These influences, which can be internal or external, greatly shape how Marines and Sailors view the world and how they make daily decisions, both personally and professionally. Figure 2-2 provides examples of influences that can contribute to or detract from an individual's spiritual strength and resilience.

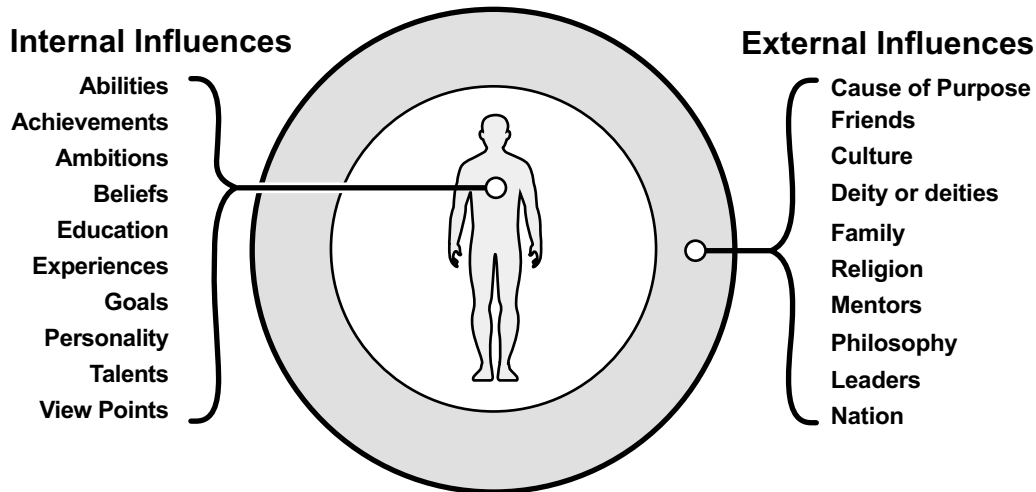


Figure 2-2. Internal and External Influences.

Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resource

Leaders should take time to consider each of the internal and external influences, annotating their impact on spiritual strength, resilience, and decision making. Additionally, there can be influences not found on this list that should also be explored. The better that leaders understand themselves and what impacts their daily decision making, the better they will be prepared to articulate their own spiritual fitness. How one personally answers the following questions will provide insight into one's foundational framework for interpreting information and experiences:

1. What is the nature of reality?
2. Are there transcendent beings such as God or other higher powers?
3. What happens when I die?
4. What is the meaning and purpose of life?

Leaders should consider how to offer opportunities for Marines and Sailors to conduct this exercise. The command religious ministry team (RMT) can provide subject matter expertise on exploring world-view questions and can offer related educational opportunities for Service members and their families.

THREE ELEMENTS TO SPIRITUAL FITNESS

The second step service members can take in understanding and living out their spiritual fitness is deciding how they will maintain three elements of spiritual fitness (see Figure 2-3).

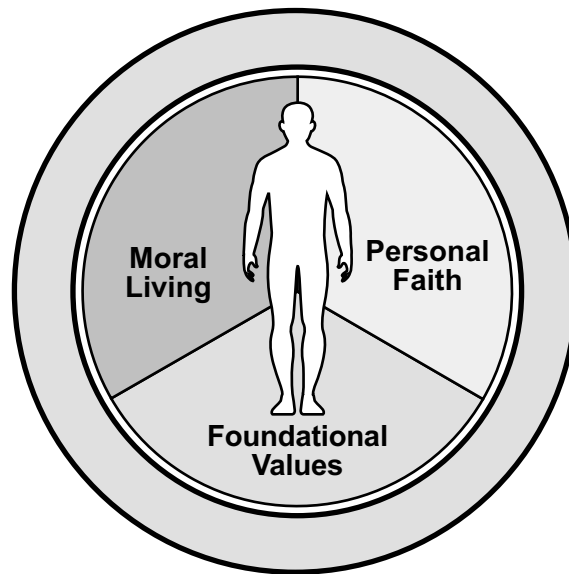


Figure 2-3. Three Elements to Spiritual Fitness.

Personal Faith

Personal faith is a powerful, individual source of strength for every Marine and Sailor. For many, this is rooted in a connection to the Divine, specifically a belief and trust in God or a higher power that provides a foundation for their worldview. This spiritual connection is a profound source of inner strength. For many others, personal faith is not expressed in religious terms but resides in a foundational belief or trust giving life significant meaning. These could include the unwavering legacy of the Corps, the unbreakable bond with fellow warriors, the certainty of training, or a deep trust in the principles of the Constitution that express guiding beliefs. This foundation of fidelity is actively built by every warfighter

Think of personal faith like rappelling. The anchor point is the foundation, whether it is God, the Corps, or the brothers and sisters in arms. The rope, harness, and carabiners are the convictions; they are the tangible connections trusted to link Marines and Sailors to their anchor. However, the real test comes when Service members lean back over the edge, putting their full weight onto the system. That act of leaning back is a choice—a demonstration of trust that turns belief into a source of strength, allowing Marines and Sailors to safely navigate the descent.

From this foundation, convictions arise. The convictions that individuals hold give their lives meaning, fuel their character, and guide their actions. These convictions are the bridge between what they believe and what they do. For a person of faith, this might be living out the values taught by their religion. For another, it is an absolute adherence to the ethos of “leave no one behind” or a relentless commitment to accomplishing the mission. Convictions are not just ideas; they are the principles that fuel warfighters to push through pain, to act with integrity when no one

is watching, and to put others before themselves. As leaders, warfighters are charged with helping their people see the connection between their actions and the core convictions that give their service purpose.

Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resource

To lead Marines and Sailors in spiritual fitness conversations, leaders should find stories of faith and trust, both good and bad. By using annotated examples of faithfulness and unfaithfulness, leaders can better instill what it means to embody Semper Fidelis.

- Look for stories that are applicable to spiritual fitness conversations on Semper Fidelis and how it impacts mission accomplishment. Additionally, personal stories can provide powerful examples.
- Compare the story to the list of influences in Figure 2-2, considering how much faith and trust the main character places in each (small, moderate, great amount, or none). These points will form the basis for the discussion.

Foundational Values

While personal faith is the anchor for the trust individuals build, foundational values are the principles that rise from that anchor to form a moral compass. Every Marine and Sailor brings a pre-existing moral compass with them into the service; these are their foundational values. They are the bedrock principles forged from life, culture, and lived experiences that shape character and guide decisions long before the title Marine is earned. These values are deeply personal. Some come with Service members into the military and others are instilled during entry-level training. Foundational values are the principles that drive individuals to put family first, strive for financial stability, or show up to help neighbors. Understanding these personal core principles is the crucial first step in integrating who a person is with foundational values of the Navy and Marine Corps.

While individuals join the military with their own set of foundational values, the Service deliberately forges a common, non-negotiable set of core values into every recruit. Shared character helps ensure victory during the chaos of war and the ambiguity of daily life. The Service's core values- Honor, Courage, and Commitment - become the unified moral compass that defines how every Marine and Sailor is expected to think, act, and fight. As defined by the 30th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Carl Mundy, these values are:

HONOR: The bedrock of our character. The quality that guides Marines to exemplify the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior; never to lie, cheat, or steal; to abide by an uncompromising code of integrity; to respect human dignity; to have respect and concern for each other. The quality of maturity, dedication, trust, and dependability that commits Marines to act responsibly; to be accountable for actions; to fulfill obligations; and to hold others accountable for their actions.

COURAGE: The heart of our core values, courage is the mental, moral, and physical strength ingrained in Marines to carry them through the challenges of combat and the mastery of fear; to do what is right; to adhere to a higher standard of personal conduct; to lead by example, and to make tough decisions under stress and pressure. It is the inner strength that enables a Marine to take that extra step.

COMMITMENT: The spirit of determination and dedication within members of a force of arms that leads to professionalism and mastery of the art of war. It leads to the highest order of discipline for unit and self; it is the ingredient that enables 24-hour a day dedication to Corps and Country; pride; concern for others; and an unrelenting determination to achieve a standard of excellence in every endeavor. Commitment is the value that establishes the Marine as the warrior and citizen others strive to emulate.

An essential aspect of spiritual fitness is acquiring values that will build character and resiliency. Values are basic ideas about the worth or importance of people, concepts, or objects. Marines and Sailors must determine the values that currently guide their life and adjust in pursuit of a spiritually fit lifestyle. They gain insight by considering the internal and external influences that are the sources of values. For example, a Marine who has a very close family (an external influence), feels strongly connected to them (an internal influence), and values spending time with them, will consider family when making choices on how to spend money and free time. When critical decisions are being made, this Marine will often ask, “how will this decision impact my ability to spend time with my family?” Individuals who take time to list what matters most gain valuable insight into their pursuit of spiritual fitness.

The skill of land navigation provides an illustration for this spiritual fitness element. During land navigation, Marines rely on the numerical values printed on the map and the compass. If any of these numerical values are incorrect, they will soon find themselves off track. Similarly, Service members can live by values that are not aligned with the core values of the Navy and Marine Corps, which can lead them to violate the Uniform Code of Military Justice and take them off track. Reflecting and taking time to ensure values are properly aligned is essential for maintaining spiritual readiness and ethical resilience.

Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resource

Leaders should be able to list the foundational values they have chosen to live by and tell the story of how those values have benefited both life and career. By doing so, leaders can instill in the Marines and Sailors they lead the importance of evaluating their own foundational values. To effectively articulate their spiritual fitness, leaders should consider the following:

- From their list of foundational values, what motivations influence their decisions and behaviors?
- What influences provide the source for their foundational values (review the list of influences in Figure 2-2)? For example, the Marine Corps (an external influence) teaches a leader the core values of honor, courage, and commitment, and the leader has decided to live by these values.
- Recall times when it was necessary to remove a value because it was creating a negative impact. This task includes recording personal stories of realigning values to improve personal and professional success.

Leaders should use personal stories and experiences to demonstrate the importance of foundational values and that show the importance of positive values in decision making and mission accomplishment.

Moral Living

Moral living is the disciplined habit of acting on one's principles. Moral living is the active choice to build a life that reflects an individual's deepest principles. It is the disciplined pursuit of a virtuous character, forged not in a single moment of crisis, but through the consistent habits practiced every day. This can be understood as a form of moral muscle memory. Daily repetitions build a strong and reliable character: choosing honesty when it is inconvenient, showing respect when it is not required, and taking initiative when others hesitate. Daily actions move moral living from a concept to instinctive behavior, shaping character.

Every Marine and Sailor enters the Service with a set of personal values. The opportunity before them is to align those values with the highest standards of the warrior ethos and strive to live with these ideals daily. Moral living is an invitation to exceed the minimum standard and build a character defined by excellence. When personal principles and the Corps' values work in concert, Service members create a powerful and unified moral compass. This alignment transforms daily actions into a constant affirmation of who they are and what they stand for.

Living in accordance with these values requires intentional practice. It begins with taking an honest look at the habits that currently shape an individual's decisions and evaluating whether those habits reflect the person that individual aspires to be. As General Charles Krulak wrote, character is a "moral compass' within oneself." A compass is a tool for proactive navigation; it guides a warfighter toward the objective. By consciously choosing actions and reflecting on decisions, Service members are practicing with that compass. Deeply ingrained habits ensure their course remains steady, strong, and true when the "shifting winds of adversity" strike.

Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resource

Leaders must take time to self-reflect and be able to articulate how they make and evaluate moral decisions and what they use as a source for moral decisions.

Accomplishing this task prepares leaders to instill in their Marines and Sailors the importance of evaluating their own method of moral living. Leaders can start by taking the following steps:

- Examine the way they currently make and evaluate moral decisions, as well as the source or moral compass that guides them. This task includes recording personal stories of moral decision making with the use of a moral compass to lead spiritual fitness conversations.
- Review the list of influences in Figure 2-2 to identify which items are sources for their moral decision making.
- Identify the process they use to reflect upon and evaluate past decisions to inform current and future decisions to learn from them and make better decisions in the future. This task includes preparing to share the moral decision-making process during spiritual fitness leadership conversations.

Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resource

One effective tool every Marine and Sailor can use to assess their moral decision-making process is the observe, orient, decide, act (OODA) loop described in MCDP 1. Though this tool was designed for combat operations, the OODA loop has been used in business, law enforcement, management, education, and it can be applied to spiritual fitness. Service members can consider using this process personally for moral decision making. Consider the below OODA loop definitions, questions, and actions to apply to moral decisions:

- **Observe** your situation by collecting new information.
 - ♦ Observe your past decisions and subsequent consequences and ask the following:
 - Was my decision morally right?
 - What were the consequences of my decision?
 - Am I happy with the decision that I made?
- **Orient** yourself by reflecting on the past.
 - ♦ Orient yourself to your biases, perceptions, and values. Ask the following:
 - What did I learn about myself, about people, and about life in general from the decision that I made?
 - If I could do it all over again, would I make a different decision?
 - Would I adjust any of my morals, ethics, and beliefs?
- **Decide** what your next steps will be.
 - ♦ Decide what to do by considering your observations and orientation.
 - ♦ Remember: deciding is a continuous cycle of making the best judgment based on what is known at that time.
- **Act** by following through.
 - ♦ Follow through on the decision while monitoring the outcome.
 - ♦ Remember: cycle back to orient when needed.
 - ♦ Remember: new information can affect the outcome.

Daily reflection on the decisions made; meeting with a leader, mentor, chaplain, advisor, or friend for guidance and accountability; and setting goals for the future are just a few ways Marines and Sailors can stay on their chosen moral paths.

CHAPTER 3.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

THE SPIRITUAL FITNESS SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

As Marines and Sailors seek to gain a comprehensive understanding of their inner strength from higher purpose, they can use the four steps of the spiritual fitness self-assessment framework (see Figure 3-1).

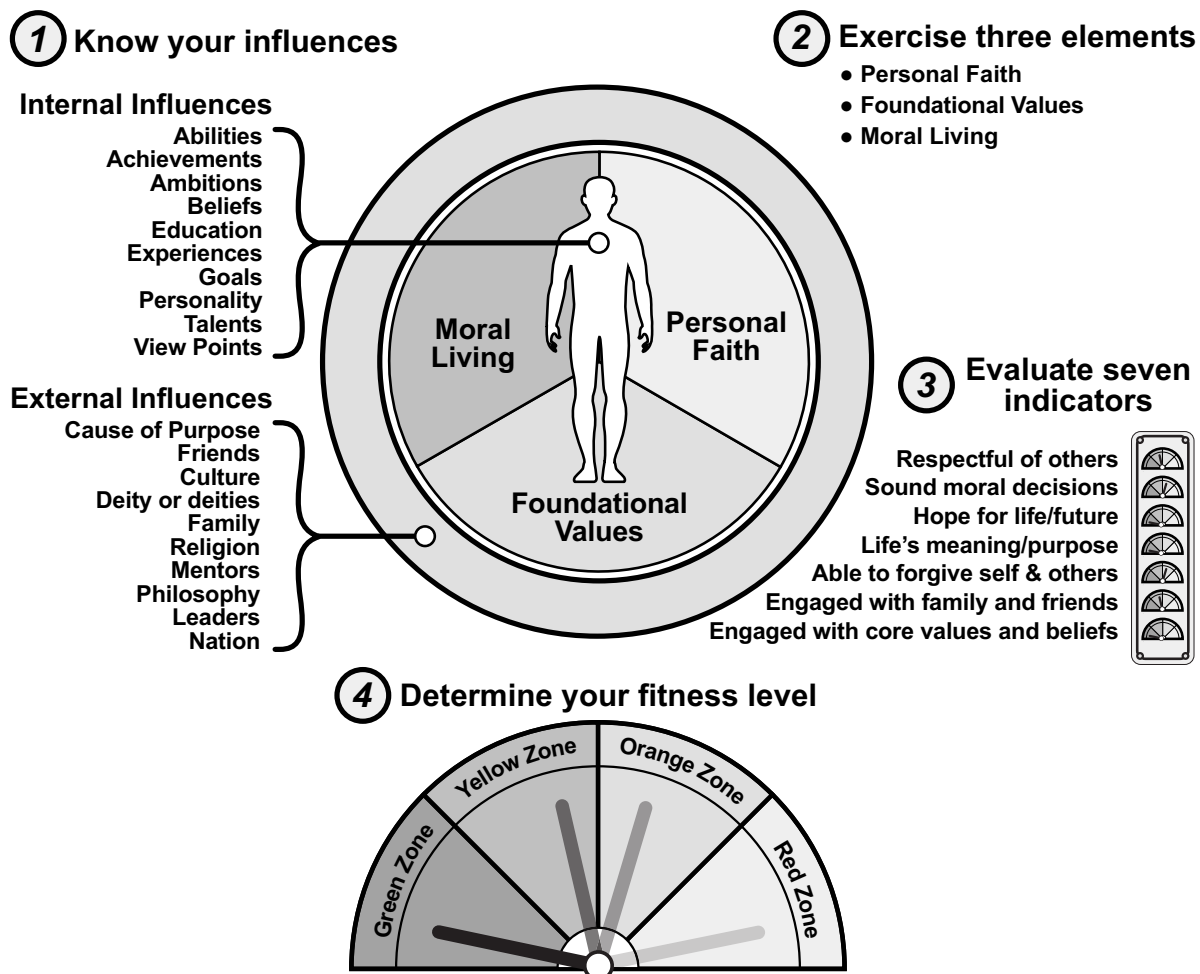


Figure 3-1. Spiritual Fitness Self-Assessment Framework.

Step 1: Know Your Influences

Marines and Sailors will need to take time to list as many internal and external influences that impact life, decision making, and resilience. The list a Service member develops will be dynamic, growing and developing over time, and will serve to provide insight into one's overall spiritual fitness. Read *How I got Here: Master Gunnery Sergeant [Lillian] McLaughlin* (Appendix A). Here is a short list of influences excerpted from the story:

- McLaughlin's father was a Marine who inspired her to serve in the Marine Corps.
- She attended high school in El Paso, Texas, where she learned to love sports.
- She achieved a strong ability to place faith in her family and the Marine Corps.
- She achieved a strong desire to seek self-improvement, which resulted in a paralegal degree.
- She witnessed the 2001 terrorist attack on the Pentagon, which inspired her to love life.

Step 2: Exercise Three Elements

Marines and Sailors must take time to decide how they will regularly exercise the three elements of spiritual fitness: personal faith, foundational values, and moral living. The following three questions can be used to assess how one practically applies each element:

- Personal faith: In whom or what am I placing my faith or trust in? See Appendix A for examples of personal faith.
- Foundational values: What are the values I currently live by? What do I value most? See Appendix B for examples of foundational values.
- Moral living: What are the moral standards I use to guide my decision making? See Appendix C for examples of moral living.

Step 3: Evaluate Seven Indicators

After a Marine or Sailor has completed steps one and two, he or she can move to step three, which is to evaluate one's level of spiritual fitness by reviewing seven potential indicators as shown in Figures 3-2 and 3-3. Think of these seven indicators as potential warning lights on the dashboard of a car. Depletion in one of these areas is a signal that attention might be required, and help might be needed.

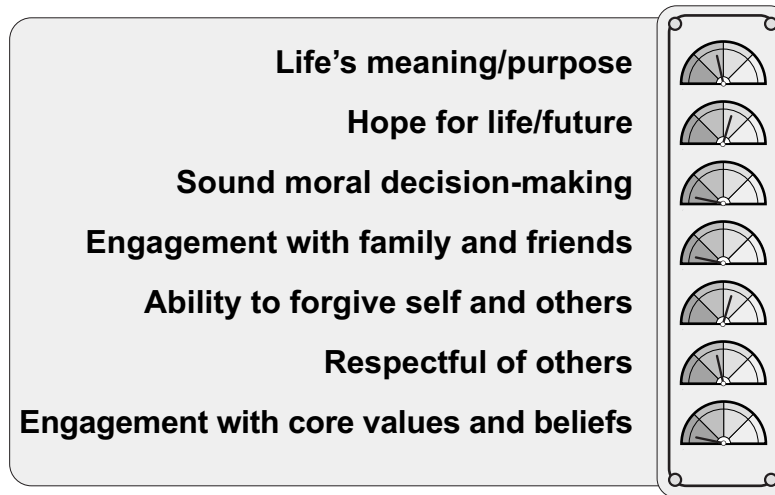


Figure 3-2. Seven Indicators of Spiritual Fitness.

To begin step three, Marines and Sailors should access the Spiritual Fitness Guide found in Appendix D, which is a full-sized, printable document for use within commands. With the guide in hand, Service members will review the seven indicators that are categorized and described in detail. Four fitness zones (green, yellow, orange, and red) are depicted that assist the reader in selecting the description that best represents how they perceive themselves on each indicator (see Figure 3-3).

Green Zone	Yellow Zone	Orange Zone	Red Zone
Potential Indicators	Potential Indicators	Potential Indicators	Potential Indicators
• Engaged in life's meaning/purpose	• Neglecting life's meaning/purpose	• Losing a sense of life's meaning/purpose	• Feels like life has no meaning/purpose
• Hopeful about life/future	• Less hopeful about life/future	• Hold very little hope about life/future	• Holds no hope about life/future
• Makes sound moral decisions	• Makes some poor moral decisions	• Makes poor moral decisions routinely	• Engaged in extreme immoral behavior
• Fully engaged with family, friends, and community	• Somewhat engaged with family, friends, and community	• Weakly engaged with family, friends, and community	• Not engaged with family, friends, and community
• Able to forgive self and others	• Difficulty forgiving self or others	• Not likely to forgive self or others	• Forgiveness is not an option
• Respectful of others	• Less respectful of others	• Strong disrespect for others	• Complete disrespect for others
• Engaged in core values/beliefs	• Straying from core values/beliefs	• Disregards core values/beliefs	• Abandoned core values/beliefs

Figure 3-3. Spiritual Fitness Guide.

Step 4: Determine Fitness Level

The fourth step in self-evaluating one's spiritual fitness is selecting one of the four fitness zones that most accurately describes one's current state for each of the seven indicators (see Figure 3-4).

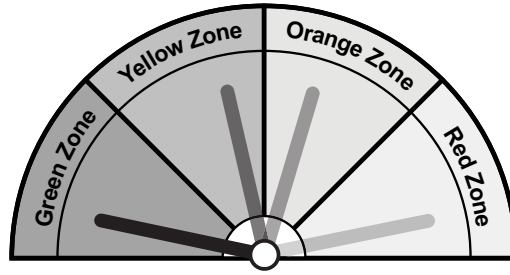


Figure 3-4. Spiritual Fitness Zones.

A Service member with a strong spiritual foundation will generally remain in the green zone on all seven indicators. However, everyone encounters hard and difficult seasons of life where they might find themselves in the yellow zone. A strong spiritual core will enable the warrior to remain resilient during those seasons and successfully recover after the stress has ended. Service members who find themselves in the orange or red zones should immediately seek help. Chapter 4 discusses the challenges Marines and Sailors face and resources available for addressing and developing their spiritual fitness.

Please note that Appendix D can be used as an abbreviated version of the self-assessment process.

Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resource

Leaders should use the spiritual fitness guide to assess their own level of spiritual fitness to determine whether they are in the green, yellow, orange, or red zone for each category. Once familiar, leaders should distribute this tool in digital or print format to their Marines and Sailors and instill in them the importance of using this tool on a regular basis. The command leadership will need to use the following guidelines for implementation:

- Make the Spiritual Fitness Guide in Appendix D available to Marines and Sailors.
- The Spiritual Fitness Guide is for individual use to assist a Marine or Sailor to know when it is time to seek help; it is not designed for the chain of command to evaluate a Marine's spiritual fitness or readiness.
- Commands seeking to employ the chaplain to implement a command-wide spiritual fitness assessment to collect data and produce metrics regarding the overall spiritual readiness of Marines and Sailors may consider using the Consortium for Health and Military Performance (known as CHAMP). A link for this website is listed in Appendix E.
- Commands should not mandate the use of the Spiritual Fitness Guide or require Marines or Sailors to disclose self-assessment results.
- Commands should use RMTs to train Marines and Sailors on the use of this tool.

Religious ministry teams serve as the subject matter experts in the command regarding individual or command-wide spiritual fitness matters and should be used to the fullest extent possible.

CHAPTER 4.

CHALLENGES AND RESOURCES

CORRECTING COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Spiritual Fitness and Religion in Culture

How an individual understands the terms *spirituality* and *religion* will impact their interaction with both. Harold G. Koenig, M.D., Director of the Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health at Duke University and lead author of the *Handbook of Religion and Health*, 3rd edition, is a researcher who has authored more than 600 scientific peer-reviewed academic publications and has contributed greatly to the science of religion and health. In 2008, Dr. Koenig explained how the relationship between spirituality and religion has changed over the years. Historically, spirituality was viewed as a subset of religion as depicted on the left side of Figure 4-1. This historical framework categorizes religious personnel as spiritual and secular personnel as not. However, the cultural understanding of spirituality has shifted to reflect the framework depicted on the right side of Figure 4-1. The modern version of spirituality has expanded to view both religious and secular personnel as having spirituality. For this reason, people might describe themselves as *spiritual* but not *religious*. Leaders will need to be aware that Marines and Sailors who view spirituality as a component of religion will most likely hear the word *spiritual* and immediately equate that term to the topic of *religion*. During spiritual fitness dialogues, leaders should review the cultural shift depicted in Figure 4-1 and be prepared to let their Marines and Sailors know that, while religion is a common means by which to support spirituality, there are also secular sources for spiritual development. No matter what avenue a Service member chooses to pursue spiritual health, the desired end is to remain fit and in the green zone on all seven indicators of spiritual fitness.

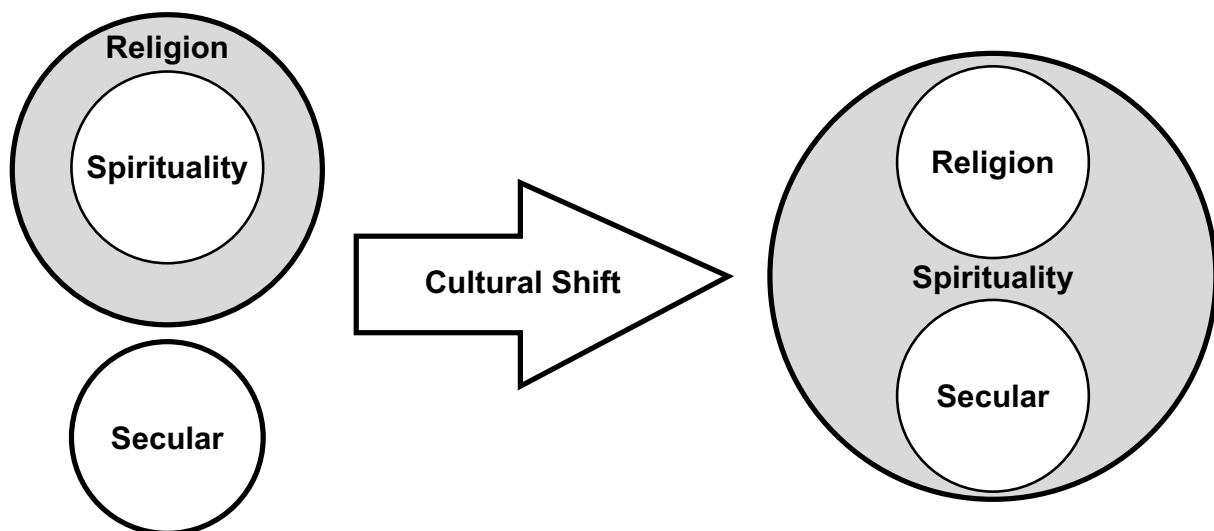


Figure 4-1. Spirituality Cultural Shift.

Spiritual Fitness is not the Sole Domain of the Chaplain

Marine Total Fitness was first introduced to the Marine Corps in 2011, encouraging every Marine to exercise their physical, mental, spiritual, and social fitness. After more than a decade has passed, every Marine is expected to develop the four domains of fitness as expressed by General Berger in ALMAR 027/20 and defined in Marine Corps Order 1500.61. Religious ministry teams, which consists of at least one chaplain and one religious program specialist, serve as subject matter experts on the domain of spiritual fitness. The RMTs support the spiritual fitness needs of Marines and their families by executing the core capability of care and by managing the CRP. As established in Marine Corps Tactical Publication 3-30D, *Religious Ministry in the United States Marine Corps*, chaplains deliver institutional care, counseling, and coaching that attends to personal and relational needs outside of a faith group-specific context. Religious program specialists are trained and positioned to support the delivery of care to individuals and programmatically. Navy chaplains are assigned as special staff officers to assist commanders by developing and implementing a CRP. Chaplains are the principal advisors to commanders for all matters regarding the CRP within the command, to include religious and spiritual needs, morale, morals, ethics, and well-being.

MORAL INJURY

Moral injury, while not a formal diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (known as the DSM-V Manual), is widely accepted across multiple fields as a root cause of stress and trauma symptoms. In simple terms, moral injury is a betrayal of what someone believes is “right.” While research through the years has produced many definitions and descriptions of moral injury (including those from philosophy, spirituality, healthcare, etc.), the following two definitions of moral injury are studied in the military context, particularly among Service members and veterans who have experienced combat:

- “Betrayal of what’s right, by someone who holds legitimate authority, in a high stakes situation.”—Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*.
- “Perpetrating, failing to prevent, bearing witness to, or learning about acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations.”—Brett Litz, William Nash, et al. *Clinical Psychology Review*.

When moral injury has manifested, it presents symptoms like any stress-related or trauma-based incident. However, typical approaches to addressing stress and trauma are often not effective when moral injury is the cause of those symptoms. Moral injury can be caused when one experiences betrayal by a person in authority, which may lead to loss of trust in that authority figure. Moral injury can also be caused when one commits wrongdoing that may result in intense feelings of guilt or shame for the moral violation, or when one violates moral and ethical norms. These can lead to inner conflicts that require spiritual or soul repair. While moral injury might not be completely understood, what is known is that those suffering from it who fail to address it can experience difficulty coping with everyday life, withdrawal from social interaction, have unhealthy relationships, and participate in risky or self-destructive behaviors. Moral injury provides an opportunity to investigate multidisciplinary approaches that include spiritual, societal,

and psychological components. Service members suffering with moral injury should talk with their chain of command or command chaplain for guidance to determine the most appropriate resource. There are several methods to consider for addressing moral injury:

- Spiritual care and counseling.
- Psychotherapy.
- Use of rituals (religious or secular) to provide an avenue for healing, meaning, and pattern to process difficult emotions and experiences.
- Use of writing to externalize and process traumatic experiences, control the level of disclosure, and release painful memories.
- Use of meditation practices, music, and movement.

SEEKING HELP FOR LOW LEVELS OF SPIRITUAL FITNESS

A Service member lacking in spiritual fitness, as described by the orange or red zones of the Spiritual Fitness Guide, might be experiencing inner conflict, loss of focus, mishaps, mission failure, depression, anger, stress-related disorders, substance-use disorders, relationship problems, violation of moral values, aggression, and suicidal thoughts. Inner conflict has been found to be a key indicator for reduced spiritual fitness. Service members may experience high levels of one or more of the following symptoms of inner conflict:

- Guilt.
- Shame.
- Feelings of betrayal.
- Moral concerns.
- Difficulty trusting others.
- Self-condemnation.
- Spiritual or religious struggles.
- Loss of meaning and purpose.
- Loss of religious faith.
- Difficulty forgiving and receiving forgiveness.

Spiritual injuries and struggles require spiritual interventions and solutions. Marines and Sailors experiencing inner conflicts will be unable to find complete healing in medicine or behavioral health alone. Service members seeking resolution and forgiveness for past wrongs or to renew their connection to a higher power require spiritual assistance. Moral injury is an intangible wound that has recently gained traction in the realm of psychology and now is a topic of much study and development.

Service members who identify themselves in the orange or red zone (see Figure 3-3) can take the following actions and use the following resources as a road map to recovery:

- Seek help immediately. The orange and red spiritual fitness zones describe a mindset that has little or none of each indicator for spiritual health. Now is the time to access the resources on the Spiritual Fitness Guide and talk to someone.
- If thoughts of harming yourself or others are occurring, do the following:
 - ♦ Put personal safety first.
 - ♦ Do not keep negative and harmful thoughts to yourself.
 - ♦ Place distance between harmful thoughts and action.
 - ♦ Keep distance between yourself and lethal means (e.g., knives, guns, or medications) by asking a loved one or trusted friend to remove them from your home.
 - ♦ Seek immediate help through one of the following resources:
 - Military Crisis Line:
 - Call 988 or 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1.
 - Chat online at [MilitaryCrisisLine.net](https://www.militarycrisisline.net).
 - Send a text message to 838255.
 - In Korea and Japan: Call 0808 555 118 or DSN 118.
 - ♦ Military One Source counselors 1-800-342-9647.
 - ♦ Community counseling program (check local base listings).
 - ♦ Chaplain 100 percent confidential counseling (unit or base chapel).
 - ♦ Operational Stress Control and Readiness (known as OSCAR) team members.
 - ♦ Family, friends, mentors, leaders, and others you can trust.
 - ♦ Chain of command.
 - ♦ Medical.
- Seek long-term support. After seeking immediate help, long-term support is needed to assist in the journey back to the green zone. This can be accomplished with resources that provide a long-term relationship of assistance and accountability. There is no one-size-fits-all solution as to which resource should be used or for how long. Much of this depends on discovering what will work for the individual Marine or Sailor. Accountability and recovery groups can be advantageous. Consider the following list for seeking long term support:
 - ♦ Chaplain 100 percent confidential counseling (unit or base chapel). Per Secretary of the Navy Instruction 1730.11, *Confidential Communications to Chaplains*, chaplains are not mandatory reporters.
 - ♦ Community counseling.
 - ♦ Mental health counseling and medication.
 - ♦ Medical.
 - ♦ Small-unit leadership and chain of command.
 - ♦ Recovery programs and accountability groups.
 - ♦ Religious community support programs.
 - ♦ Local civilian clergy.

Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resource

Leaders must be properly prepared to care for a Marine or Sailor who is showing signs of depletion in spiritual fitness. Leaders can apply the mnemonic RACE when they suspect one of their Marines and Sailors might be at risk of suicide.

RACE Suicide Prevention

Recognize distress in your Marine or Sailor:

- Note changes in personality, emotions, or behavior.
- Note withdrawal from co-workers, friends, and family.
- Note changes in eating and sleeping patterns.

Ask your Marine or Sailor:

- Calmly question about the distress you observed.
- If necessary, ask the question directly: "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"

Care for your Marine or Sailor:

- Actively listen, don't judge.
- Peacefully control the situation; do not use force; keep everyone safe.

Escort your Marine or Sailor:

- Never leave your buddy alone.
- Escort to chain of command, chaplain, medical, or behavioral health professional.

Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resources

Suicide Warning Signs

Leaders should use the mnemonic IS PATH WARM to recognize suicide warning signs in their Marines or Sailors.

Ideation: Thoughts of suicide expressed, threatened, written, or otherwise hinted at by efforts to find means to suicide.

Substance abuse: Increased or excessive alcohol use or illegal drug use.

Purposelessness: Seeing no reason for living or having no sense of meaning or purpose in life.

Anxiety: Feeling anxious, agitated, or unable to sleep (or sleeping all the time).

Trapped: Feeling trapped, like there is no way out.

Hopelessness: Feeling hopeless about self, others, or the future.

Withdrawal: Isolating and withdrawing from family, friends, usual activities, or society.

Anger: Feeling rage or uncontrolled anger, or seeking revenge for perceived wrongs.

Recklessness: Acting without regard for consequences, or engaging in excessively risky behavior, seemingly without thinking.

Mood Changes: Experiencing dramatic changes

Suicide Prevention Resources

Links to websites with additional resources for suicide prevention are listed in Appendix E.

CHAPTER 5.

LEADERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS

USING STORIES TO LEAD SPIRITUAL FITNESS DISCUSSIONS

Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 7 states that the Marine Corps' learning philosophy "seeks to create a culture of continuous learning and professional competence that yields adaptive leaders capable of successfully conducting maneuver warfare in complex, uncertain, and chaotic environments. Learning is developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes through study, experience, or instruction. Learning includes both training and education." Marines must develop the habit of continuous learning early in their career. This publication also states, "Combat can challenge unit cohesion and present Marines with a variety of moral and ethical dilemmas. Marines develop strong mental, moral, spiritual, and ethical understanding because they are as important as physical skills when operating in the violence of combat." The *Spiritual Fitness Leader's Guide* applies this learning philosophy through stories and practical application to talk about spiritual readiness in a small-unit leadership format.

Leaders need to develop a framework for stories and illustrations to lead Marines and Sailors in spiritual fitness conversations. Consider the following:

- Stories used in leadership conversations should be used solely to illustrate the principles of spiritual fitness presented in this publication and engage learning on the topic of improving spiritual fitness. They should not be used to instruct on a specific method of spirituality. As an example, in the category of personal faith, a story may be used that tells of how Marines adhered to a particular religion to improve their understanding of the meaning and purpose of life, and how this resulted in green zone spiritual fitness. Stories such as these should not be used to instruct Marines or Sailors that they have to be religious. Rather, the story is used to illustrate how one individual exercised personal faith to strengthen his or her spiritual fitness. It will be up to each individual Marine or Sailor to choose the source of their personal faith and where they will place faith.
- The stories provided in this publication are meant to provide a "hip pocket" library of stories to start conversations. Leaders can use these stories, and their own, to resonate with their Marines and Sailors. Stories can be selected from books and articles, personal experiences, or news stories. Stories selected for leadership conversations need to clearly depict:
 - ♦ How internal and external influences impact the subjects of the stories.
 - ♦ How the subjects of the stories exercised one or more of the three elements (personal faith, foundational values, moral living), and how that exercise helped them preserve and prevail.
 - ♦ How the subjects of the stories might have scored themselves on any or all seven indicators of spiritual fitness.

HOW TO LEAD A SPIRITUAL FITNESS DISCUSSION

Leading Marines and Sailors in conversations and discussions on the topic of spiritual fitness requires time to prepare and execute each period of learning. The following sections describe the process leaders should use to implement the content in Appendices A through C of this publication.

Preparation

- Carefully select stories that will resonate with your Marines and Sailors and spark a good conversation on the spiritual fitness topic being emphasized. Consider stories from a variety of sources such as personal experiences, books, movies, television shows, and podcasts.
- Read the selected story and highlight examples that illustrate any part of the spiritual fitness self-assessment (Figure 3-1). Use those examples to explain how the individual in the story connects the dots of the framework of spiritual fitness. Ask the following questions to put together notes for leading the conversation:
 - ♦ What influences (internal and external) are affecting subject of the story?
 - ♦ Which of the elements of spiritual fitness (personal faith, foundational values, moral living) is the subject of the story exercising? How is that person exercising these elements?
 - ♦ How many of the seven indicators of spiritual fitness are in the life of the story's subject? How spiritually fit is the subject on the seven indicators of spiritual fitness?

Select Discussion Questions

- If leaders use the stories in this guide, they will need to read the discussion and reflection questions and answer them from a personal perspective. If leaders use a story from another selected source, they will need to develop questions for soliciting discussion among the group, and another set of questions for personal reflection and consideration.
- If leaders use the stories in this guide, they will need to select questions appropriate for the intended audience or write new questions that will resonate with them. If a story has been selected from another source, leaders will need to choose the questions developed in step one that will resonate with the audience.

Choose a Time and Location

Careful consideration must be given to selecting the right time and location—one that will engage and motivate active participation. Leaders must select a time when everyone can fully participate without distractions or conflicts, taking into consideration current workloads, deadlines, and any prior commitments. Additionally, leaders must select a location that will minimize logistical hurdles, make attendance feasible for the majority, and provide an environment that is best suited for the conversation. Leaders may consider using a historic location on or off base, a spot adjacent to a Medal of Honor recipient or heroic battle memorial site. Choose a venue that facilitates learning and coincides well with a creative conversation Marines and Sailors will not easily forget.

Lead the Discussion

- Leaders begin the conversation with their Marines and Sailors by establishing the following points in their own words:
 - ♦ “What higher purposes do you draw inner strength from?”
 - ♦ “When we hear the word ‘spiritual’ we might immediately associate that term with religion. This is likely based on the understanding that one needs to be religious to be spiritual. Today’s culture now takes a view that all people, both secular and religious, can be spiritual and that religion is one of a variety of ways to express spirituality. We may hear someone say, ‘I am spiritual and not religious.’ Understand that choosing to follow a religion is a matter of personal choice in the effort of pursuing spiritual fitness.”
 - ♦ “It is important to feel comfortable talking about any source of spiritual fitness that we consider as valuable whether it be secular or religious in nature.”
 - ♦ “There are no right or wrong answers to the questions we discuss here today. These questions will be for discussion and ultimately contemplation for pursuit of spiritual fitness.”
 - ♦ “We must not judge each other based on our individual responses. Rather, there should be an attitude of mutual respect for all ideas expressed here today.”
 - ♦ “There are questions that I will ask. Some will be for response and open discussion, and others will be for personal reflection. I will be certain to clarify what kind of question it is before I say it out loud.”
- Read (or have the participants read), tell, or play the audio or video of the selected story.
- Lead the conversation:
 - ♦ Leaders should use the pre-selected questions, being sure to let the group know whether the question being read is for open discussion or personal reflection.
 - ♦ Leaders should not be afraid of silence. Allowing the group to sit in silence and ponder the question may provide answers that will spark conversation. A leader might be tempted to do all the talking and rescue the group from having to share their insights, but this can inhibit the group from learning.

Leaders should try to conclude the discussion in a manner that leaves participants wanting to continue the conversation on their own. Leaders should consider closing with an open-ended question or thought-provoking concept that keeps the audience thinking on the topic once the discussion has ended.

CHAPTER 6.

INTEGRATIONS WITH OTHER FITNESS DOMAINS

PURPOSE OF INTEGRATION

It is not enough to fight. It is the spirit which we bring to the fight that decides the issue. It is morale that wins the victory.

—General George C. Marshall

While leaders throughout military history have long recognized the value of spiritual fitness, some have questioned its utility and worth within the modern war fighting experience. As such, leaders may wonder what interaction spiritual fitness has across the physical, mental, and social domains. Fortunately, the impact of spirituality has been researched by scholars in hundreds of peer-reviewed articles over the past few decades. This research has taken place across a range of disciplines, including medicine, physical and occupational therapy, psychology, religion, spirituality, and even in law journals. The research recognizes a complex relationship existing between the spiritual, physical, mental, and social health aspects of a person, and that spirituality has a beneficial impact on all the other domains. The bottom line is that spiritual fitness correlates to greater physical, mental, and social support, fewer depressive symptoms, better cognitive function, and better physical health. From 10 November 1775 to present day, the history of the Marine Corps supports General Lejeune's assertion that *there is no substitute for the spiritual in war*.

As a result of the emphasis the 37th and 38th commandants have placed on spiritual fitness, the Marine Corps has reaffirmed the importance of spiritual fitness as a vital resiliency factor that builds character, instills core values, and optimizes readiness. The Chief of Chaplains of the U.S. Navy, Rear Admiral Gregory N. Todd, reinforced the direct impact that spiritual fitness has on character when he wrote:

Since the plain of Thermopylae, character is the critical starting point in developing soldierly readiness and will be increasingly important in current competition and future conflicts. Character is, and will be, such a critical element of combat success that all leaders must deliberately approach character development as integral to combat readiness. This is the heart of the spiritual fitness effort in the Marine Corps—preparing the warrior for today's competition and any future conflict.

There is a temptation to view modern warfare as primarily a contest of equipment and technology, rather than seeing humans as the central component. If this were the case, the value of spiritual health would be lost. Famed military strategist and Prussian general, Carl von Clausewitz, understood the importance of the spiritual and viewed military activity as something that was not

just directed against material force alone, but a moral force as well. He is noted as describing the moral factors as the blade of the weapon while physical factors are merely the handle. As explained by Navy Chaplain Paul R. Wrigley, military activity “is always aimed simultaneously at the moral forces that give it life, and the two cannot be separated.” Therefore, spiritual fitness is as crucial to winning battles as it is a moral force that cannot be ignored. A 2019 RAND Study, *Will to Fight*, puts this in perspective with the statement, “war is a fundamentally human endeavor; thus, humans should be the central focus of warfare.” This aligns with Clausewitz’s view that military activity is not directed against material force alone. While this has long been understood within the Chaplain Corps and by unit commanders, leaders at the highest levels of the Department of the Navy and the Marine Corps are now stressing the importance of spiritual fitness for mission accomplishment. Therefore, it is of critical importance to understand how spiritual fitness integrates with the other three domains of fitness (mental, physical, and social) and how they impact human performance.

INTEGRATION WITH THE PHYSICAL FITNESS DOMAIN

“While the importance of physical, mental, and social fitness are more recognizable, spiritual fitness is just as critical, and specifically addresses my priority to build character and instill core values in every Marine and Sailor.”

—General David A. Berger

Physical fitness refers to the ability to physically accomplish all aspects of mission-essential tasks while remaining mission capable and avoiding injury. Physical fitness is a key component of warfighting. It ensures Marines can endure the physical hardships combat demands as well as day-to-day duties in garrison. Spiritual fitness connects and integrates with physical fitness in several ways. For example, spiritual fitness summons the inner strength of a Marine to push themselves physically and endure in great discomfort and the harshest of conditions. For many, the personal application of spiritual fitness allows Marines and Sailors to embrace hardship. It also animates and forms their character—the dedication, self-discipline, and commitment required to achieve and maintain a high level of physical readiness. Decades of scientific studies and research demonstrate that when some form of spirituality is practiced the result is improved physical fitness. Upon examination, the connection between spiritual and physical fitness is clear: a higher sense of meaning, purpose and hope derived from spirituality empowers and leads to an increase in self-esteem, confidence, and greater self-control. This creates an inner sense of strength that becomes a profound force multiplier and positively contributes to virtuous behaviors and well-being, which in turn, impact physical fitness.

Many of the destructive behaviors of our Marines and Sailors can be mitigated by enhanced spiritual fitness. Destructive behaviors, as they pertain to physical fitness, include actions such as substance abuse, driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, domestic violence, and sexual assault. As an example of how spiritual fitness intersects positively with physical fitness, Dr. Koenig has researched the degree to which spirituality reduces destructive behaviors such as cigarette smoking. He found a statistically significant effect of spirituality providing the inner

strength to quit smoking. From a health standpoint, the positive effects a person who quits smoking experiences are substantial. Verifiable health benefits include a reduction in chronic lung disease, lung cancer, coronary artery disease, hypertension, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases. Dr. Koenig also researched the affect spiritual fitness has on reducing alcohol and drug use. His research found significantly lower alcohol and drug use, abuse, or dependence among those who are spiritually fit.

Other examinations of the relationship between spiritual fitness and overall health have shown benefits as well. These include decreased rates of heart disease and stroke, reduced blood pressure, reduced cognitive decline with aging, increased concentration, decreased physical disability, increased immune function, reduced levels of proinflammatory markers, reduced levels of stress hormones, decreased death rates from cardiovascular disease and cancer, and decreased mortality from any cause. His findings have been replicated and published in some of the world's best public health journals by some of the world's top public health research institutions. Spiritual fitness has a powerful effect on physical fitness and leads toward living a healthier lifestyle that results in better physical health and readiness.

INTEGRATION WITH THE MENTAL FITNESS DOMAIN

To ensure the continued health of our collective character and identity and maintain our reputation as elite warriors, I am reaffirming the importance of spiritual fitness. All Marines and Sailors must tend to their individual character to keep the ethos and reputation of our Marine Corps intact.

—General David A. Berger

Mental fitness refers to the ability to integrate and optimize cognitive, emotional, and behavioral capacities to optimize performance of mission-essential tasks and ensure mission readiness. Mental fitness is a critical component in meeting the challenges Marines and Sailors face, whether they serve for one tour or complete 20+ years. Mental fitness leads to a resilient mindset that enables Marines and Sailors to remain mentally tough in order to adapt, overcome, and improvise no matter the odds during times of stress, deprivation, hardship, and danger. This mental toughness is essential for mission accomplishment, no matter the circumstance or situation. Spiritual fitness integrates with mental fitness by helping people deal with all aspects of adversity. For example, Marines needed both the strength of spirit and mental fitness in the battle of the Chosin Reservoir, a brutal 17-day battle with temperatures plunging into negative degrees. Encircled by nearly 120,000 Chinese soldiers, the Marines faced overwhelming odds as they desperately fought the swarming Chinese forces. With dwindling supplies and ammunition, they engaged in fierce hand-to-hand fighting in the intense cold. Despite being cut off from resupply and reinforcements, their strength of spirit and mental fitness proved to be the key to survival for many.

As the battle of the Chosin Reservoir makes clear, being a Marine is mentally demanding. At times, Marines and Sailors experience very stressful situations such as deploying in support of wartime operations, engaging the enemy across the battlespace, and coping with the death of fellow Service members. At other times, the stress involved is based on factors such as the operational tempo; having to respond on short notice to an international or domestic humanitarian crisis; responding to a training accident; being sent away to faraway schools or training opportunities; performing new billet requirements; or being thrust into new leadership roles. Spiritual fitness integrates with mental fitness to assist in reducing anxiety, depression, or distress during times of stress and uncertainty. Mental fitness is always needed, as Marines often have no control of many of the situations they find themselves facing. Carl von Clausewitz's "fog of war" concept describes the uncertainty of combat that occurs when disorder rules the battlespace and the enemies' actions cannot be predicted. Similarly, the entire scope of military service can be characterized by uncertainty and unpredictability, as well as a lack of personal control or the ability to shape external events. However, mental and spiritual fitness enables leaders and their units to make sound decisions and carry difficult missions to the end, despite challenges.

Spiritual fitness is increasingly being understood as a factor that contributes to mental health. Recent studies have found that spiritual fitness integrates with the mental fitness domain by providing resources for coping with stress that can increase the frequency of positive emotions and reduce the likelihood that stress will result in emotional disorders such as depression, anxiety, suicide, and substance abuse. A resilient spiritual fitness is found to protect against mental disorders and/or suicide by increasing the ability to cope with stressors, deepening one's sense of purpose or meaning, and reducing feelings of hopelessness. Religious coping resources include strongly held beliefs that give meaning to difficult life circumstances and provide a sense of purpose. Religions provide an optimistic worldview that can involve the existence of a personal transcendental force (God, Allah, Jehovah, etc.) that loves and cares about humans and is responsive to their needs. These thoughts and beliefs also give a subjective sense of control over events (i.e., if God is in control, can influence circumstances, and be influenced by prayer, then prayer by the individual can positively influence the situation). Research shows that spiritual fitness facilitates coping and mitigates negative events with meaning and purpose that is related to better mental health and reduces the symptoms of depression and risk of suicide. For Marines, the meaningful effect spiritual fitness has on mental fitness is a strengthening against stress and adversity. Spiritual fitness strengthening mental fitness is what allows Marines to overcome all obstacles and to win battles against overwhelming circumstances, as demonstrated at the battle of the Chosin Reservoir.

INTEGRATION WITH THE SOCIAL FITNESS DOMAIN

Regardless of the battle we just fought, we must be ready for our next success. Research indicates that spiritual fitness plays a key role in resiliency, in our ability to grow, develop, recover, heal, and adapt. Regardless of individual philosophy or beliefs, spiritual well-being makes us better warriors and people of character capable of making good choices on and off duty.

—General Robert B. Neller

Social fitness refers to the social context and abilities of individuals, units, families, and communities to leverage resources that promote overall well-being and optimal unit performance. Social fitness allows Marines and Sailors to effectively interact with others by considering other people's social cues and emotions. Social fitness fosters cohesion, belonging, and trust in others, which in turn, creates a deep sense of pride in the Marine Corps and in the identification as a Marine, and a sense of trust and belonging. This develops social identity and cohesiveness which helps build and maintain strong social relationships among individuals, within the unit, and throughout the Marine Corps. Social cohesiveness is a basic human need and the Marine Corps serves as a Marine's community, and even family. In this community, each Marine learns the values of honor, courage, and commitment. Since the first two battalions of Marines were raised in 1775, these values have connected the Marine to the ethos of the Marine Corps and all preceding Marines. This social connectedness leads to a sense of pride and feelings of dignity and honor. The Marine is proud of belonging to an elite fighting force, having earned the honor of being a United States Marine.

Spiritual fitness is associated with greater social support and greater social capital and cohesion. Dr. Koenig notes that there is substantial evidence indicating a relationship between spiritual fitness and social fitness. Studies show that those who are spiritually fit tend to have higher levels of virtues such as honesty, courage, dependability, altruism, generosity, forgiveness, self-discipline, patience, humility, and other characteristics that promote social relationships. Dr. Koenig notes that these prosocial behaviors buffer stress and lead to human support that is needed during difficult times. Spiritual fitness encourages people to help others and emphasizes a focus outside of the self, which in turn increases social connectedness. Research shows that spiritual fitness also promotes virtues such as honesty, forgiveness, gratefulness, patience, and dependability, which help to maintain and enhance social relationships. According to Dr. Koenig, social factors are known to influence both mental and physical health. He concluded the more one remains socially connected to healthy relationships, the better one will self-perceive as physically and mentally healthy, based on the health and well-being scale, and experience fewer depressive symptoms as measured by the depression scale.

Spiritual Fitness Troop-Leading Resource

Leaders should become familiar with Table 6-1 for use in small group spiritual fitness conversations with Marines and Sailors, operational debriefs and pauses, safety briefs, and trainings. Use the following questions to create interactive dialogue on the impacts of spiritual fitness:

1. Reviewing the list of physical fitness benefits received from spiritual fitness, share stories where you have seen similar results personally or in other people. What examples can you provide (e.g., crucible at Marine Corps recruiting depots, etc.)?
2. How might the concept of human will intersect with the “three elements to spiritual fitness” (e.g., personal faith, foundational values, moral living)?
3. How do Marines and Sailors engage or exercise their mental fitness (e.g., reading, podcasts, group discussions)?
4. Reviewing the list of mental fitness benefits received from spiritual fitness, share stories where you have seen similar results personally or in other people. What examples can you provide (e.g., decision-making, value judgments, leadership ethics)?
5. Reviewing the list of social fitness benefits received from spiritual fitness, share stories where you have seen similar results personally or in other people. What examples can you provide (e.g., strong friendships, strong marriage relationships, strong familial bonds, etc.)?
6. How do wars and conflicts stress human relationships (i.e., guilt, stress, broken communication)?
7. Discuss and share examples of where Marines and Sailors collectively engage in social and spiritual community? How might this look in both religious and non-religious environments (e.g., church, synagogue, mosque, clubs, volunteering and charitable organizations, and fire-side conversation)?
8. How can Marines and Sailors prepare themselves and their families to strengthen the intersection of all four fitness domains (e.g., open and honest discussion, develop a plan for accountability)?
9. Are there moral concerns or implications at this intersection (e.g., moral injury, guilt, difficulty reintegrating)? If so, why?

Table 6-1. Positive Effects of Spiritual Fitness.

Physical Fitness	Mental Fitness	Social Fitness
• Longer life. • Lower rates of vast arrays of diseases. • Better coping with pain, disease, and stress. • Faster recovery from injury and illness. • Lower rates of risky behavior. • Better health behaviors (exercise, hygiene, safety, etc.).	• Higher levels of happiness, hope, satisfaction, and well-being. • Lower rates of depression and anxiety. • Lower rates of suicide. • Greater stress resilience. • Greater level of self-control. • Higher achievement in school and work.	• Greater marital satisfaction and adjustment. • Less likely to engage in delinquent behavior. • Lower levels of hostility. • Higher levels of prosocial behavior. • Healthier attachments.
NOTE: Derived from multiple sources.		

APPENDIX A.

STORIES THAT ILLUSTRATE PERSONAL FAITH

HOW I GOT HERE: MASTER GUNNERY SERGEANT LILLIAN McLAUGHLIN

Adapted from story found on the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service website (link is listed in Appendix E).

In 1992, a young woman decided to follow in her father's steps and stand on the yellow footprints to become a United States Marine. Her down-to-earth leadership style and positive outlook made her successful no matter what challenge came her way. Now she is a master gunnery sergeant and the legal services chief at the Legal Services Support Section on Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia. Here we borrow fragments of MGySgt Lillian McLaughlin's experiences in her 22 years of service:

It began with my father. My father was a prior Marine, enlisted. Ever since I was small, it was more of a, "Mija, you're going to join the Marine Corps, right?" I went to high school in El Paso, Texas. I loved school, loved sports but really wasn't looking at going to college. Sure enough, my junior year, I reached out to a recruiter. When my mother and father found out, my dad was ecstatic and immediately contacted the recruiter and the recruiter was invited to dinner.

I went to boot camp on Parris Island in 1992. That was my first experience on the East Coast. I got orders for my first duty station. It turns out that I met my husband there. We got married in 1996, but the Marine Corps realized, "Wait a minute, we haven't sent this Marine overseas yet." So, I went to Okinawa unaccompanied. I had just gotten married. My husband got out of the Marine Corps, stayed in the Reserves, had a job, wanted to go to school, and that's the whole reason he got out—he wanted to go to school.

I honestly figured I was going to hate [Marine Corps] life, but I got to Okinawa, and that really opened my eyes. I decided to re-enlist. I called back home, and I said, "Thinking about re-enlisting, you good with that?" He goes, "Yeah!" So, I ended up going to Kaneohe Bay, Headquarters and Service Battalion and worked at that legal shop. My son and daughter were born in Tripler Hospital. My husband has really sacrificed a lot. With all of my movements and what have you; he wasn't able to latch on to jobs, especially when we got here to DC. He had some hard times finding a job. The kids were newborns, and he's taken a big bite of the bullet on that one.

When I was in Hawaii, I arrived there as a sergeant and left there as a staff sergeant. My staff noncommissioned officer in charge was experienced as Marine security guard (MSG) and as a detachment commander. He told me, out of any other duty assignment that was the one. That was the breadwinner. I went through school; it was a great experience. When it came down to identifying what was available for posting, you get options, just like with anything else. I gave it to my husband and asked, "where would you like to go?" I think Stockholm was his fourth choice. I'm from the southwest, I don't appreciate cold weather. Lo and

behold, what do I get? Stockholm, Sweden, for 18 months. There have been some hard knocks. Stockholm as a detachment commander, that was tough. After Stockholm, another 18-month post was South America—Montevideo, Uruguay. I think that was our best post as far as being on the MSG program. I deployed for just about seven months in 2010. That was rough for the kids. They were alone with dad. Within our [military occupational specialty], it's very hard to deploy unless you're in the right spot. It helps just to stay in communication and just let them know that "hey, it's going to go by fast", and it did. Each area has always been an experience—just being a Marine. Coming in daily to work, helping out and enjoying the time with my Marine Corps family. Just enjoy every single moment, every day.

Master Gunnery Sergeant McLaughlin lists some achievements that helped shape her career:

- Faith and Confidence: "My major achievement is having the faith and confidence in my family and our Marine Corps family. To have the confidence and realization that the family will be there every step of the way means a whole lot in our lives. This is a direct reflection in the working/ethical relationships we establish within the Marine Corps family as well."
- Self-Improvement: "My secondary achievement is seeking self-improvement, not only within myself ... but with the unit cohesion concept as a whole. Working within the Legal Community, for me—it became a matter of having a solid base to ensure Legal Services was continually met within the Corps. The leadership I worked for realized my full potential and allowed me to pursue my personal goals (Paralegal Degree via off-duty education) and formal schooling to advance in the ranks. I was taught that whatever you are faced and or doing in life ... to do your best, at all times."
- Achievement: "Achievement in participation as a detachment commander in the MSG Program and a Legal Services Chief both forward deployed and within the legal services support section. Overcoming [obstacles,] achievement [when] facing the odds, pursuing family goals and realizing there will be hardships. Being a witness to [the September 2001 attacks], attached to Judge Advocate Division within the Pentagon from June 2001 to September 2004), it was and always has been a personal goal of mine to enjoy life every single moment of every day and not to look back."

Discussion Questions

1. MGySgt McLaughlin stated, "My major achievement is having the faith and confidence in my family and our Marine Corps family." What challenges do you think she faced to achieve that goal?
2. MGySgt McLaughlin stated, "To have the confidence and realization that the family will be there every step of the way, means a whole lot in our lives." What can you do to ensure everyone in our unit has someone they can put their faith in?

Personnel Reflection Questions

1. Review the definition of "personal faith." What do you place your personal faith in? How does the source of your personal faith help you persevere and prevail?
2. On a scale of 1-10, how much faith do you feel you are able to place in your family and the Marine Corps family? If your answer is less than 10, what are some reasons for your answer? Are there any other sources of personal faith that help you build your resilience?
3. Are you the Marine that others can lean on during trying times in life?

FAITH DRIVES EXCELLENCE IN NCO OF THE QUARTER

**Adapted from story by Lance Corporal James Gulliver (website link is listed in Appendix E).
1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, California**

The San Diego Padres faced the Philadelphia Phillies while honoring service members and recognizing the non-commissioned officers of the quarter in the San Diego area. Sgt Evan Mendes, a 26-year-old, from Essex Junction, Vermont, looked as if he could be from a Marine recruiting poster, with his perfect uniform and posture. Sgt Mendes stepped forward with confidence, raised his fist in the air, and looked around the Petco Park as thousands of people in attendance cheered for him and his accomplishments.

Sergeant Mendes, a signals intelligence operator with 1st Radio Battalion, was named non-commissioned officer of the quarter of 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group, for his hard work and dedication as the non-commissioned officer in charge of 1st Radio Battalion, Alpha Company.

The Marine Corps has thousands of noncommissioned officers (NCOs). Sergeants are often referred to as 'the backbone of the Marine Corps.' Mendes out-shined his peers by following what he believes will bring him closer to God. When asked why he excelled, Sgt Mendes stated, "As a Christian, I try to glorify God...When I do a good job or not, I've done it for God."

Sergeant Mendes, who was raised in a family of eight children, attributes his work ethic to his family. His mom heavily influenced his faith and his father taught him the values of hard work and honesty by example. Sgt Mendes stated, "My dad is a man of his word... When he says he is going to do something, he'll do it. He's also a very hard worker. I get that from him."

Verity Mendes, Sgt Mendes' younger sister, expressed how he takes care of his family and remains close even when he is thousands of miles away. She also expressed how he acts as kind of another dad. She also describes him as a protector and leader.

"He's a great brother," said Verity, who sounded excited to speak about her brother, a Marine of seven years. "He's my favorite sibling." She explained that he loves meeting new people, engaging with them and listening to their stories, explained Verity. She describes him as a straightforward and outgoing person who goes for what he wants.

"He's also a very religious person," she said. "Even in the Marines where he is a leader, he is with God."

Mendes tries to help his fellow Marines who are Christians or whom he says might be struggling in their faith. He participates in Bible studies with Faith Warrior Ministry, a religious program for service members, and invites his friends and peers along when the opportunity arises.

"Whenever I attend, he's very happy I'm there and he's very welcoming," said Jacob J. Wiseman, a signals intelligence operator with 1st Radio Battalion.

Wiseman, who served with Mendes in the Radio Reconnaissance Platoon, says that Mendes helped him become a great swimmer. He describes Mendes as someone who isn't afraid of a challenge and likes to take everything head on.

"He's not afraid to ask for help, but he definitely tries to do it all by himself," said Wiseman. "He's pretty dedicated to his work." He went on to describe how Mendes, whose exceptionally organized desk is distinguished by his exercise calendar, never has something bad to say about anyone. Mendes' peers have a lot of respect for him, explained Wiseman.

"He'll go out of his way to help you out if you need something with no questions asked," said Kevin Alsop, a signals intelligence operator with 1st Radio Battalion.

Mendes' peers describe him as an example of an outstanding and hardworking Marine who is well deserving of the NCO of the Quarter's recognition. Alsop also expressed how humble Mendes is and how he doesn't seek the recognition, but just wants to get the job done.

"He's really driven," Alsop said. "Once he gets something in his head, he wants to see it all the way through, no matter what."

His hard work and determination awarded him the opportunity to be recognized on the field and meet the San Diego Padres left fielder, Will Venable. He described it as an awesome experience he wasn't fully prepared for.

Mendes, who is also known for his athletic abilities and as a bit of a fitness freak, is in the running with other units' NCOs for NCO of the Quarter of 1st Marine Expeditionary Force this week.

Discussion Questions

1. What actions displayed by Sgt Mendes stand out the most to you, and why?
2. Sgt Mendes chooses to follow the tenets of his religion as his source of personal faith to motivate him in the pursuit of excellence. His decision to pursue excellence is one aspect of his way of moral living. Are you motivated to pursue excellence in any areas of your life? If so, what is your motivation?
3. In what ways has Sgt Mendes adopted the positive values the Marine Corps upholds?

Personal Reflection Questions

1. Review the definition of "personal faith." What do you place your personal faith in? How much personal faith do you place there?
2. How does your personal faith help you accomplish the mission(s) in your life?

RAMADHAN TEACHES CONTROL AND COMMITMENT

**Adapted from story by Corporal Adam Korolev (website link is listed in Appendix E).
Marine Corps Base Hawaii – Kaneohe Bay**

Service members, their families and civilians attended a Ramadhan recent service at the Hickam Chapel aboard Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. The Islamic holiday of Ramadhan is when Muslims partake in a month long fast to demonstrate they are disciplined enough to respect Islam's ideologies. The ceremony offered Muslims and non-Muslims a chance to commemorate Ramadhan, a time of fasting, representing one of the five pillars of Islam.

Gunnery Sergeant Jimi Khamisi, the staff non-commissioned officer in charge of Marine Wing Support Detachment 24, led the ceremony, which began with prayers in Arabic. GySgt Khamisi then explained to the audience the conduct of the month long holiday. Other service members also spoke of the lunar cycle, and how Ramadhan's place on the calendar changes every year.

Chief Petty Officer Abdulhalim Jones, a chief radioman stationed at Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam, said the practice of fasting is a form of repentance during Ramadhan.

"Fasting is what we do during the month of Ramadhan," said the San Francisco native. "In the Quran, (it) says to fast during this month so we can gain self-control, (with) a closer (connection) to God and consciousness. We fast (to be) mindful of necessities and desires, such as food, thirst and our relations with our spouses. Most importantly, though, the focus is on the spiritual connection between us and our Lord."

Before sunrise, and their first of five prayers throughout the day, Muslims may eat whatever they feel will sustain them until they break their fast. They are encouraged to eat dates and drink water. The fast is then broken as the sun sets, where they are urged to eat just enough to be satisfied until the following morning. After prayers, non-Muslims with questions could speak to Sheik Ismail Elshikh, a guest speaker at the ceremony, the fast was broken at 7:18 p.m. and attendees helped themselves to a buffet.

Along with fasting, other forms of self-restraint are practiced throughout Ramadhan. According to Khamisi, hunger and thirst lead to irritability, and controlling one's temper is an important practice among Muslims.

"When you fast, you are not supposed to show anger because anger yields bad decisions," the Oxnard, California, native said. "The Prophet advised Muslims to always control their anger."

Khamisi credits his faith in Allah and his religion's practices to his success at Marine recruit training. Marines are required to partake in a three-day event, known as the crucible. During the crucible, Marines engage in various individual and team building exercises, and are given little food and sleep for a total of six hours.

"When I was becoming a Marine during the crucible, I realized I was able to adapt more quickly, due to the fact I had already been in that type of situation due to Ramadhan," Khamisi said. "As far as being a Marine goes, I think Ramadhan humbles me. I am a gunnery sergeant in the Marine

Corps. But at any time, if I am not in control of my own actions, I could end up as a lance corporal, or even get kicked out. It isn't just (the consumption of) food and water you have to control, but your character. Like the Marine Corps, Ramadhan also requires honor, courage, and commitment."

Discussion Questions

1. Chief Petty Officer Abdulhalim Jones talks about how the discipline of fasting during Ramadan has helped him to gain self-control. As a group, share ways you have seen people use what might be considered a spiritual or religious practice to develop their ability to be a stronger person.
2. GySgt Khamisi stated, "It isn't just (the consumption of) food and water you have to control, but your character." What do you think he means by that? Discuss how purposely choosing to discipline yourself (diet, exercise, etc.) can impact character.
3. GySgt Khamisi stated that, "When I was becoming a Marine during the crucible, I realized I was able to adapt more quickly, due to the fact I had already been in that type of situation due to Ramadhan". Discuss how going through difficult circumstances will prepare you for future hard times.

Personal Reflection Questions

1. GySgt Khamisi identified several benefits he receives from exercising his personal faith, such as self-control, greater focus on relationships, remaining humble, and strengthening his character. Review the definition of "personal faith." In what or whom is your personal faith? What benefits do you receive from exercising your personal faith?
2. Does your personal faith have an impact on your character? If so, how?
3. Reflect upon difficult experiences in your past. Have they served to strengthen you, build resilience, and prepare you for future hardship? If not, consider seeking help from a helping resource.
4. Does your personal faith help you to persevere through difficult time? If so, how?

MARINE OFFICER EXPRESSES HIMSELF THROUGH POETRY

Adapted from a story by Corporal Ed Galo (website link is listed in Appendix E).

II Marine Expeditionary Force, Forward Operating Base Delaram II, Nimruz Province, Afghanistan

Second Lieutenant Chad Grasmuck, 33, from Angels Camp, California, has been writing for most of his life, but while attending college through the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program, he says it helped him find relief and satisfaction.

Grasmuck, supply officer with Regimental Combat Team 6, found that writing poetry and stories greatly helped him deal with the stresses he has faced during his deployments. He has written a book of 47 poems and is working to have them published. He is also writing a science fiction novel based loosely on his experiences and stories from people he has met in the Marine Corps.

"I have been writing poetry since I was a kid," Grasmuck said. "I was taking a class in college about poetry where my professor, who was also my mentor, really helped me get better at writing my poetry. Because of my professor, during my second year of college, my writing became more structured. When my writing became more structured, things (in my writing) came out that I was unaware of, and it sometimes surprised me."

According to Grasmuck, his poetry book titled "by the river gods' edge," followed Dante's trip through hell, purgatory and heaven. He relates his experiences in Iraq as an infantryman, his time back in the United States and his marriage as a metaphor for that trip.

"I wanted to show a growth of the protagonist, and that through love, faith and religion you can overcome almost anything," said Grasmuck, who is a devout Catholic. "I'm very faith based in my writing. Faith carried me through war and after at home. Greek mythology and the Bible play a big role in my writing. "Each poem is independent," he continued. "Sometimes, he is married, sometimes he's not, but the character is almost always a sergeant."

Grasmuck says he usually keeps the protagonist as a sergeant because it's the favorite rank that he's held in his 12 years in the Marine Corps.

"As far as being a Marine, that's where I feel I achieved my manhood," he added. Grasmuck is so proud of earning the rank of sergeant that the name under which he writes his works is S.G.T. Grasmuck. "All my writings are defined by my experiences as a sergeant. The name I use literally means sergeant. I spell it that way so that people think it has more meaning, but at the end of the day, it's just a throwback to the best rank in the Marine Corps."

His latest project, a science fiction novel titled "I, Grunt," is also about combat and war. In the book, the character and his group of fighters wake up years after a war to find that the people they wanted to defend have died. While on a journey to locate and learn more about their foe, they discover who their true enemies are and must deal with the uncertainties of an adversary who is not unlike themselves. Although Grasmuck says he never considered himself a science fiction writer, he considered the idea after hearing a eulogy at a funeral for his priest's mother.

“The priest painted a picture of a very real person,” he said. “He didn’t say the usual ‘She was a saint; she was an angel’ that you would expect at a funeral. He told all kinds of stories about his mother that described exactly who she was.”

After hearing that, Grasmuck saw a way he could talk about things without bashing anyone for their drawbacks or limitations.

“I wanted to talk about certain things but didn’t want to blast anyone or belittle anyone,” Grasmuck said. “Someone may be a great person, but not a good tactical leader. It’s not really their fault. So, I thought science fiction would be a good way to paint a good picture.”

Grasmuck recently entered his book of poetry into a contest that would help him publish it. He was informed that he did not win the contest but still remains hopeful and says he will try to look for other contests to enter his books into. Grasmuck has also shared his work with some of the Marines he has met over the course of his career.

“I think I have read all of (his poems), or at least the ones he’s cared to share or made public,” said 1stLt Jeremy Laux, 33, adjutant, 2nd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, from New Orleans.

Laux, who met Grasmuck during their time in the enlisted commissioning program, talks about his two favorite poems.

“One is called ‘Monsters’ and the other is called ‘Armistice’,” Laux said. “They’re my favorites for a few reasons. They’re written as well as any poem or story from any famous poet or author you’ll find in a library or on a shelf in your favorite bookstore. They’re colorful; they paint a very vivid picture in your mind of a father’s interaction with his children, and you don’t quite know where the poem is going to lead until the very end. You don’t want it to end, but the ending is perfect. And I enjoy these mostly because I can relate. I’ve got children, and I’ve personally experienced the actions and feelings he describes.”

Discussion Questions

1. Second Lieutenant Grasmuck has taken a lifelong hobby of writing and merged it with his personal faith and life experiences to inspire others and pass on what he has learned. What are some ways you have seen Marines use a hobby to help themselves and others develop spiritual fitness?
2. Second Lieutenant Grasmuck mentions that Greek mythology and the Bible played a big role in his writing. What factors do you see greatly influencing Marines today? Of those influences, do you think they are adding to or detracting from spiritual fitness?
3. Second Lieutenant Grasmuck stated that he followed Dante's trip through hell, purgatory and heaven as a metaphor for his experiences in Iraq as an infantryman, his time back in the United States, and his marriage. Is there a story you relate to that you can share with the group that you have found to be inspirational?

Personal Reflection Questions

1. Second Lieutenant Grasmuck chooses to place his personal faith in someone greater than himself within the Catholic religion. Review the lists of internal and external influences in Figure 2-2. From those lists, identify where you place your personal faith. What are the sources of your personal faith? How does your personal faith help you through difficult circumstances?
2. How are you currently maintaining your personal faith?
3. What are some of the ways your personal faith impacts how you live?
4. Do you have any sacred texts, motivational books, or other writings that have been a source of strength for you?

POCKET-SIZED PIECES OF MIND: DEPLOYED MARINES KEEP REMINDERS OF HOME, LUCK AND FAITH CLOSE TO THEIR HEARTS

**Adapted from story by Sergeant Justin Shemanski (website link listed in Appendix E).
1st Marine Logistics Group, Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan**

The young Marine checked his gear for the last time just a few hours before he was to depart friendly lines. The plan was to leave under the cloak of darkness, bound for yet another remote outpost in need of resupply deep in the heart of Helmand province. Regardless of the somewhat safer guise of night, the Marine knew the enemy would be watching, waiting for the perfect opportunity to strike, as they had so many other times during his last few combat logistics patrols.

He wasn't nervous though. In addition to the hundreds of other well-trained Marines equipped with an arsenal of some of the world's most advanced weapons systems, he had a couple more personal items to include. Perhaps even more powerful than any rifle or rocket, he made certain these items accompanied him on every mission outside the wire—reminders of home.

Wrapping a brown leather-strapped watch around his wrist and stuffing a tattered letter into the right cargo pocket of his desert Marine pattern utility uniform—both gifts from a loved one back home—were always the final actions the Marine performed before heading out. As far as he was concerned, these simple reminders of life beyond the combat zones of the Middle East were all he needed to keep mission accomplishment in his sights. Upon a closer look, it appeared he was not the only one who carried such items so close to the heart.

Warriors have carried personal tokens into battle since wars have been waged, and the practice continues among the Marines deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Dangling from a piece of lightly “moon-dusted” trim within a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All-Terrain Vehicle, a set of dog tags accompanied by a small silver and green cross and a photographic metal tag with an inscription that reads “Semper Fidelis—I will always love you” is found.

The items belong to LCpl Zech Stimson, a motor transportation operator with Combat Logistics Battalion 6, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) [CLB-6, 1st MLG (FWD)], who figures it never hurts to have a piece of home around for good luck.

“My wife got it made for me right before I left,” said the 19-year-old native of Lapeer, Michigan. “I told her I would keep it with me at all times and so far it hasn't left my sight. I also keep a photo of her with me too.”

When asked why troops carry such things with them, Stimson noted memories of friends and family as a strong motivation to press through the hardships common throughout combat tours.

“I think it's a comfort thing,” he said. “When things get hard, or you get a little scared, it's good to have something familiar with you to put things into perspective; reminders of good times.”

Fellow CLB-6, 1st MLG (FWD) Marine LCpl Nicholas Randolph, a logistics vehicle system operator, wears a pendant his mother gave him for good luck before he deployed.

“I haven't taken it off since. We've always been really close and by keeping it with me, it feels like she is watching over me in some way. It makes me feel more secure out here doing what we need to do.”

In addition to luck, some Marines, like LCpl James Vanvalkenburg, a motor transportation operator with Bravo Company, CLB-6, 1st MLG (FWD), look no further than their own faith to safely guide them through the valley of the shadow of death.

Two religious challenge coins, which he received during pre-deployment training at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California, have accompanied him on each of the dozen missions he has participated in since touching down in country in late January.

“I've always been pretty religious. I attend church often back home, and as often as I am able to out here depending on operational requirements,” said the 28-year-old native of Athens, Georgia. “This is an easy way for me to always carry the Lord's blessing with me.”

“It's easy to lose touch with your faith out here and this is a durable, tangible reminder for me.”

To LCpl Mark Malarkey, a heavy equipment mechanic with Alpha Company, CLB-6, 1st MLG (FWD), trusty pieces of gear in the form of haggard boots and recruit training-issued dog tags provide him with more peace of mind than any higher power or gift of good luck.

“I wore these boots during a deployment to Iraq last year which included being mortared [several] times in one month, so I make sure I wear them every time I head out here,” said the native of Brooklyn Park, Minnesota., as he kicked his visibly worn boots against his truck. “So far, so good...”

The variations of these precious items found here are endless, but they all seem to represent one common theme. Whether it's a symbol of a higher power from the Heavens or something a little more worldly in the form of well-worn combat boots, it appears nothing is ruled out when it comes to a safe passage through Helmand province and beyond.

Discussion Questions

1. What “precious items” have you seen Marines taken into combat or other difficult situations, and what did those items represent to them?
2. The author wrote, “When asked why troops carry such things with them, Stimson noted memories of friends and family as a strong motivation to press through the hardships common throughout combat tours.” Why do you think Marines carry “precious items” into combat? How does it motivate them to push through the adversity ahead?
3. LCpl James Vanvalkenburg stated, “It's easy to lose touch with your faith out here and this is a durable, tangible reminder for me.” Do you agree it is easy to lose touch with your faith in a combat zone? What other times and places in life might cause a person to lose touch with their faith.
4. A theme for the Marines interviewed in this article is that they all had an item that represented safe passage through Helmand province and beyond. How do you think a person might gain strength from a physical object?

Personal Reflection Questions

1. The Marines interviewed for this article made clear their personal faith was in something greater than self: family, luck, and religion. Using Figure 2-2 as a visual guide, what are some of the sources or objects of your personal faith?
2. What are some ways to remain active in your personal faith whether deployed or in garrison? Do you have any ‘precious items’ you use to help you through difficult situations? If so, what are they and what do they represent?

APPENDIX B.

STORIES THAT

ILLUSTRATE FOUNDATIONAL VALUES

MARINE OVERCOMES ADVERSITY, SHOWS HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT

**Adapted from a story by Lance Corporal Jorge Rosales (website link is listed in Appendix E).
III Marine Expeditionary Force Camp Courtney, Okinawa, Japan**

The U.S. Marine Corps lists its core values as honor, courage and commitment. These are traits engraved into Marines, but some Marines' circumstances result in these values already residing in their personalities.

Sgt Shelly Janecke is one of those Marines. Like her brothers and sisters in the Corps, she earned the title by completing the U.S. armed forces' longest and most challenging version of recruit training. And, like her fellow Marines, she continues a transformative journey that involves subjecting herself to mental, physical and emotional stress in order to harden herself for whatever challenges the Marine Corps throws at her.

However, the challenges that may have influenced her character the most did not come from work, but from home.

Janecke, the ammunition noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the Materials and Readiness Branch, G-4, supply and logistics, III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), juggles being a Marine, student, instructor, and a mother to Payton, her 5-year-old daughter. There is no such thing as a break for Janecke. Sometimes life becomes overwhelming, but she always pushes on to overcome her challenges one at a time, day after day.

"My daughter is my biggest motivation," said Janecke, an Eaton Rapids, Michigan, native. "Everything I do as far as school and work is so that I can give her the best options in life."

Janecke's courage to overcome the challenge of tackling single motherhood helped establish a strong foundation for her leaders and mentors to build upon.

"The good NCOs and Staff NCOs I was really lucky to have along the way have helped, and they always showed humility," said Janecke. "They did what they were supposed to do and looked out for their Marines more than anything else, and that's always what I've strived to be like."

Janecke did just that when she heard about an open instructor billet for the lance corporal Leadership and Ethics Seminar with III Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group, III MEF.

GySgt Marc Rodriguez, a former drill instructor and mentor of Janecke, recognized her leadership potential and asked her if she would be interested in instructing the course.

“She is one of those Marines who naturally wants to better the Marine Corps, better her Marines, and better herself,” said Rodriguez, the operations chief with G-4 food service, III MEF.

Rodriguez believes that courage is the attribute that sets her apart from her peers.

“I believe that out of the 14 leadership traits, courage is the number one because everything else is encompassed within it,” said Rodriguez. “You need courage to be decisive, you need courage to be tactful, you need courage to be enthusiastic and Sgt Janecke has that.”

Rodriguez explains that Janecke’s courage comes from the personal challenges that she has confronted and overcome.

“I believe the source of her courage comes from the adversity she’s been through,” said Rodriguez. “She’s a single mother. I believe she uses that as motivation, to be a great mother and be a great example. That is what courage is about.”

Discussion Questions

1. Sgt Janecke values her child, giving her the motivation to push on when times are difficult. Using the self-assessment framework (Figure 3-1), how might internal and external influences help Marines push through adversity? What are some words you would add to these lists?
2. GySgt Rodriguez attributed the character trait “courage,” to Sgt Janecke. As a group discuss: what is courage?
3. What role, if any, does adversity play in creating foundational values that guide and develop a Marine’s character?
4. Discuss how a person’s foundational values impact how they make decisions. How have you seen this demonstrated? (Give positive and negative examples.)

Personal Reflection Questions

1. List the foundational values you live by. Where do your foundational values come from? How have they helped you accomplish missions and overcome challenges in your life?
2. How do your foundational values impact your decision making?
3. GySgt Rodriguez believes that Sgt Janecke gained her courage through the adversities she has lived through. Has adversity shaped any of your foundational values? If so, describe how.
4. Which of the 15 Marine Corps leadership traits do you think your mentors and peers attribute to you?

THE VALUES OF A MARINE

**Adapted from a story by Sergeant Jon Holmes (website link is listed in Appendix E).
6th Marine Corps District**

As a young man, Charles Krulak respected the values of his father—selflessness, moral courage and integrity. His father, Marine Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak, imparted in his son the same values introduced to him as a Marine.

Following in his father's footsteps and making the transformation to become a United States Marine, Charles Krulak embodied these values. They are still a part of who he is today.

"My father instilled in his three boys a solid foundation of trying to be men of character—being selflessness, having great moral courage and having integrity," said Krulak, the 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps. "At the same time, taking those values and seeking to do the most good for the most people."

That final piece led Krulak to his current post as President of Birmingham-Southern College. A position he says is one of the most challenging of his life.

Mismanagement and a growing debt foreshadowed the college's future. Budget cuts cost students their educational programs and professors their jobs. Dropping enrollment, a demoralized faculty and a community that lost confidence in the school posed additional problems making Birmingham-Southern College's future uncertain.

One of Krulak's first decisions as the new college president was to refuse a salary.

"They were pretty surprised when I did that," he said.

He also turned down the university vehicle and even lived in a dorm instead of the Birmingham-Southern College President's house.

"Why," Krulak asked. "Why turn down the salary? Because of the sacrifice everyone else had gone through. If all of the sudden I came in and had this salary and drove around in a college car and lived in the house of the president, I wouldn't be doing what all Marine do—setting the example."

Krulak continued that example by visiting every classroom on campus and meeting with the faculty, staff and students. He even spent time in the cafeteria serving food to the students—something he did for his Marines as an officer.

Former students who have returned to serve as staff to the college notice his actions.

"I was most impressed with his relationship with his students," said Katie Glenn, the executive assistant to Krulak and graduate of Birmingham-Southern College. "He knows them all and genuinely cares. He even delivered cookies to the students, just as he did for his Marines. He really cared about his Marines, and here, he cares about his employees and students."

For Krulak, his actions are not unusual. They are the actions of a man of character. They are from the values of his father and the Marines past, present and future who are bound together by their core values and ethos.

“You hear time and time again the Marine Corps made you the individual you are,” Krulak explained. “That transformation is forever. That ethos is in all of us for life.”

Discussion Questions

1. Charles Krulak's values come from his father and the Marine Corps. Using the self-assessment framework (Figure 3-1), locate these two influences in the list of external influences. As a group, look at the other words in the lists of internal and external influences and discuss how a Marine can derive foundational values from them.
2. As a group, identify how specific foundational values build resiliency and the ability to persevere and prevail. Discuss possible sources for those values.
3. What can a Marine do if one of his or her foundational values is negatively impacting the ability to build resiliency and to persevere and prevail?

Personal Reflection Questions

1. What are the sources of your foundational values? List your foundational values and record where they came from. Use the self-assessment framework (Figure 3-1) as a visual guide.
2. Of the foundational values that are currently guiding you, are they assisting you in building resiliency and your ability to persevere and prevail in difficult situations? If not, what do you think you should do?
3. What are the most helpful foundational values you learned from a parent or other mentor?
4. Are there areas of your life where you think you might benefit from a stronger application of your foundational values? If so, how might you accomplish that stronger application to those areas?
5. Charles Krulak's value of “commitment” led him to refuse a salary, sleep in a dorm, and other actions that some may think odd, but others noticed as a positive trait. What actions do your foundational values lead you to? What do you do if others think those actions are odd?

FROM QUEENS TO MARINES

**Adapted from a story by Lance Corporal Joseph Abrego (website link is listed in Appendix E).
Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni**

Brown eyes, six-feet tall and an athletic build, the man who grew up in the borough of Queens in New York, New York, decided average wasn't good enough and joined the world's greatest fighting force, the United States Marine Corps.

At 21 years of age, Cpl Darius Jones, intelligence analyst with Marine Aircraft Group 12 on Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, said his 16 years of growing up in Queens wasn't always the easiest of times, and although his family situation wasn't always right, he didn't see that as a reason to stop from bettering himself.

"The neighborhood was a cesspool of violence and corruption," said Jones. "On top of that, my father was in and out for years at a time leaving my mom with the sole responsibility of raising me. I had a chronic habit of getting in trouble with my friends who I thought were cool because they rebelled against authority."

Jones said one morning he had gone through a phase and identity crisis that teenagers have where he had no idea what he wanted to do and seriously considered his future.

"I found the passion and the drive to do better," said Jones. "Especially when I was growing up in bad parts of New York, and I knew that wasn't where I wanted to be."

Always making the best of every situation, Jones found a chance to put himself in a position where he can control his own success and the outcome of his actions.

After moving to Texas to finish his education, Jones came across an opportunity he couldn't turn down leading him to where he is at today.

"I saw a group of Marines when I was coming home from school one day," said Jones. "They were running back to their recruiting substation, and they looked tight. They looked aggressive, calm, collected, and moved me in a way the Marine Corps commercials couldn't. They were running in formation aligned to the right and left and singing this cadence. The cadence just spoke to me. It spoke straight to my soul, and I knew that being a Marine is what I wanted to do with my life."

As a teenager Jones went to boot camp where he emerged a private in the Marine Corps. He went on to work his way up to Lance Corporal, a rank he held for 8 months before getting an opportunity to be meritoriously promoted.

After meritoriously earning the rank of corporal, Jones began to fill his leadership role, take charge of his junior Marines and set the example of how Marines should carry themselves.

"Cpl Jones is what every senior leader wants in a junior Marine," said GySgt Michael Merrill, intelligence chief for MAG-12. "A display of professionalism in all action that is taken and sought out after. His heart is in the development of every Marine from lowest rank to the top of the ladder."

He personally strives to find ways to improve every situation for himself, his Marines, section, unit and Corps. He's a very quiet fellow with a devotion to his organization and country deeper than any body of water."

Jones has taken everything life has thrown at him and still manages to succeed and move closer to reaching his goals of being not only the best Marine he can be but to be the best person he can be.

"Cpl Jones has a lot of ideas and dreams," said LCpl Stephanie T. Allen, intelligence analyst and with MAG-12 on MCAS Iwakuni. "He is one of the few people I know that can make a dream a reality. He not only pushes himself to his limits and beyond but makes sure he pushes his junior Marines. That, in every way, affects the morale and motivation of myself and other Marines I know in a positive aspect."

Allen said the corporal embodies the Marine Corps values of honor, courage, commitment, and dedicates his time to bettering himself as well as his junior Marines by upholding himself to the highest standards possible throughout everyday life.

Jones takes what he's learned through hardships and incorporates them into teaching points where he can help Marines learn to work through their struggles. He recently held a shop physical training exercise at the obstacle course followed by professional military education on leadership.

"The obstacle course was the best way I could get the Marines into that combat mindset," said Jones. "It was a modified obstacle course where they had two bowls of water that they had to maneuver through the obstacles. Sometimes we find problems where we have to be creative and get outside of our comfort zone. The bowl of water represents those problems that we have to maneuver around."

Testing his Marines and how they handled problems, Jones analyzed their strengths and weaknesses to find where he could help them grow.

"My time with Cpl Jones has taught me to always look at the brighter side of the situation," said Merrill. "I have witnessed how his daily display for passion, ethics and motivation inspires all who he encounters in a positive direction."

Merrill said Jones is one of the most unique Marines that he's lead. When it comes to Jones' commitment to the Marine Corps and his fellow Marines, Jones has a drive that surpasses his ability, and he can't wait to see what he does.

Jones' biggest lesson that he strives to teach, not only to Marines but to anyone who can benefit from it, is to always look past what's stopping them from getting where they want and make their own path to get there.

"If you're struggling with anything, just remember there's always somebody doing worse," said Jones. "There's somebody in a worse position that wishes they could be in your position. There's a solution to your problems, and you can move forward and do bigger and better things in your life."

Everyone has different ways to cope with stress and overcome their own obstacles. Jones found ways that helped him in the worst of situations and used them to get where he is today.

“No matter how low I was in life, I always saw the light at the end of the tunnel,” said Jones.
“Music and my mom are what helped me through my issues. I’m grateful for those two things in life. Without those two things, I don’t know if I would be here today.”

Discussion Questions

1. The Marine Corps core values are honor, courage and commitment. As a group, discuss how Cpl Jones’ choices, actions, and character reflect these values? What other foundational values seem to drive Cpl Jones?
2. Can you think of a mentor that has exemplified our core values? If so, did they influence you?

Personal Reflection Questions

1. How do your choices, actions, and character reflect Marine Corps’ foundational values of honor, courage, and commitment?
2. Which of your foundational values are most helpful to you when you are struggling?

MARINE USES MCMAP TO INFLUENCE OTHERS

**Adapted from a story by Corporal Paul Zellner (website link is listed in Appendix E).
III Marine Expeditionary Force, Okinawa, Japan**

A tactical data network specialist with Communications Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 3, based out of Okinawa and currently attached to 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), is using his Marine Corps martial arts program skills and family values to lead fellow Marines to the next level.

After his shift ends every afternoon, Cpl Alfred J. Joseph, a 22-year-old native of Waterville, Maine, can be found at Camp Dwyer's Marine Corps Martial Arts Program pit, teaching Marines the skills they need to progress in the program.

"I became an instructor so I could help the other Marines grow as I did," said Joseph. "I think MCMAP [Marine Corps Martial Arts Program] helps build a lot of confidence in Marines while teaching them new skills."

Joseph takes his duties as a MCMAP instructor as seriously as he does his normal duties as a data network specialist and as a Marine noncommissioned officer.

"He's the first person who will lend a helping hand for anything, no matter how it inconveniences him," said Cpl Gregory M. Baxley, a friend and fellow tactical data network specialist for Communication Platoon, H&S Company, CLB-3. "I haven't seen a limit to the lengths he'll go to help someone out. He's a great leader who junior Marines can look up to because he leads by example."

Joseph says his motivation comes from what awaits him at home, when he's done assisting others here. Joseph is known by his peers and superiors to be reliable and believes his drive comes from a strong family bond.

A tattoo on his right arm is a reminder of his responsibility to the two special ladies who make him the man he is today. "My wife and daughter are the driving force behind everything I do," said Joseph. "They're why I do what I do."

Joseph's strong family background at home plays a major role in how he cares for his Marine Corps family.

"We're a very close family ... my mom and dad still live happily in the same house my identical twin brother and I grew up in," said Joseph. "He's out living the American college-kid dream, and I'm proud of him for that because he's as dedicated to his choices as I am to mine."

Joseph's selflessness and dedication to those he cares for extends from his own home to the Afghanistan office where he assists his junior Marines and anyone else who needs help.

"The way I was raised, our community was one big family," said Joseph. "You have the family you were born into and the one you were sworn into. You have to do your best to support both."

As a leader, his peers and superiors agree he is motivated and someone who all ranks can look up to because of his work ethic and enthusiasm.

“Joseph is motivated and has the courage to take on any task no matter how challenging,” said Sgt Ryan B. Jasman, data chief for Communication Platoon, H&S Company, CLB-3. “He’s someone who not only the junior Marines can look up to, but also Marines higher ranking than him because of his leadership skills.”

Joseph’s friends, family and fellow Marines know that no matter their problem, great or small, Joseph is someone they can rely upon. Whether for instruction in the MCMAF pit or elsewhere as a friend, he is a brother-in-arms and a leader.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some of Cpl Joseph’s foundational values? How do those values impact his choices, actions, and character?
2. Corporal Joseph leads Marines by example and is willing to stay after his shift to teach MCMAF. What values would guide someone to go above and beyond normal work hours to grow and develop others?
3. Joseph was raised to believe that “You have the family you were born into and the one you were sworn into. You have to do your best to support both.” As a group, discuss similar mottos or creeds that inspire Marines to live out the values that build resiliency and the ability to persevere and prevail in difficult situations.

Personal Reflection Questions

1. What foundational values do you have that help you achieve your goals?
2. Are there any foundational values you have that may be negatively impacting your ability to persevere and prevail in difficult situations?
3. Are there any foundational values you would like to adopt? If so, why?
4. Is there someone in your unit you look up to that parallels Cpl Joseph? If so, what do they do that inspires you and what foundational values do you see reflected in their actions?

MARINE OFFICER LEADS WITH THE VALUES LEARNED THROUGH SCOUTS

**Adapted from a story by Corporal Joseph Scanlan (website link is listed in Appendix E).
1st Marine Division, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California**

From core values to outdoor skills, Boy Scouts and Marines have much in common. A platoon commander serving with 1st Combat Engineer Battalion (CEB) uses the Boy Scout values and skills he was raised by to lead Marines today.

Growing up as a Scout, 1stLt Michael Cooley was taught the values of good conduct, respect and honesty. As the years went on, he learned lifelong lessons in outdoor skills, first aid, proper manners, and citizenship skills.

Cooley started Scouting when he was in kindergarten. Unlike many of his peers, he chose to continue Scouting and became an Eagle Scout when he was in high school. Even when he was in college, he volunteered at a local troop as an assistant scoutmaster.

“The thing I like most about the scouts is being outdoors,” said Cooley, a native of Algonquin, Illinois. “I enjoy hiking, camping, fishing and shooting weapons. Also, we take the core values we learn growing up as a Scout and take them with us into the community and into the Marine Corps.”

Before he joined the Corps, Cooley felt a void after being involved with Scouts for so long. After he enlisted, he felt he had filled that void by becoming part of a brotherhood and something greater than himself.

“I come from a long line of family in the military from World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam,” Cooley said. “The transition of going from high school to the Marine Corps was kind of easy for me because I grew up with a structured life.”

After serving as an enlisted Marine since 2000, Cooley felt the need to lead at a different capacity and commissioned as a second lieutenant during 2010.

Now his son is a Cub Scout, and Cooley is involved in the Scouting community again as a den leader for his son.

“What he does is very honorable,” said Maj Paul Bock, the former operations officer for 1st CEB. “He doesn’t have much free time because he’s always working with his Marines to prepare for this upcoming deployment.”

Like being a platoon commander, Cooley keeps accountability of his Scouts, develops plans to keep his Scouts engaged in recreational activities and gives classes on various outdoor skills.

“He’s with the Scouts every week and is very involved in what they do,” said Bock, a native of Francestown, New Hampshire. “I respect and appreciate what he does because I know it is an extensive commitment and requires a lot of time and dedication.”

Leadership is one of the many skills taught to Scouts. Cooley has led Marines both as an enlisted Marine and as a commissioned officer for 13 years.

“I really enjoy setting the example and leading Marines,” Cooley said. “I love being able to watch boys become men in the Marine Corps and watch children grow into men in Cub Scouts. I find complete happiness and enjoyment in mentoring and being there for people.”

Despite an extensive predeployment training schedule, Cooley plans to continue being a den leader for his son until he deploys with 1st CEB to Afghanistan during the fall.

Discussion Questions

1. 1stLt Michael Cooley adopted some of his foundational values from his time in scouting. Describe any foundational values that were formed in your childhood. How do those foundational values impact your choices, actions, and character today?
2. What foundational values have you observed in the choices, action, and character of good leaders?
3. 1stLt Cooley not only lives out his foundational values, but also leads with them and shares them with the next generation. As a group, discuss how you might share your foundational values to help the next generation of Marines build resiliency and the ability to preserve and prevail in difficult situations.
4. What are some ways people develop their foundational values? How do these ways differ, and which one is most effective? How does one learn values from a person who is currently living them?

Personal Reflection Questions

1. What are the sources of your foundational values?
2. Do your foundational values help the next generation of Marines build resiliency and the ability to persevere and prevail in difficult situations? If so, how?
3. Who is someone like 1stLt Cooley whose foundational values have had an impact on you? Who do you look up to right now as a positive role model with foundational values you admire?

APPENDIX C.

STORIES THAT ILLUSTRATE MORAL LIVING

FIFTEEN YEARS OF GOOD CONDUCT MEDALS

**Adapted from a story by Corporal Brady Wood (website link is listed in Appendix E).
Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort**

Good conduct is a pillar of the United States Marine Corps, a foundation of honor, courage, and commitment. A good conduct medal is awarded to each Marine every three years as long as they uphold the standards and regulations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice and do not receive any non-judicial punishments within those three years.

Throughout her 15 years of service, GySgt Latrice Todd, the staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge of Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron-31 aviation supply response division, has proven that it is possible to stay on the right path and not sway from what is right. Being the recipient of five good conduct medals, Todd credits success to the support she receives from her family.

“My main motivation was my two girls and my immediate family,” said Todd, a native of Birmingham, Alabama. “They have supported me every step of the way. If it weren't for them I don't think I would be able to do the things I do.”

The Corps' values of honor, courage and commitment help each Marine tune their personal moral compass. But often, being a part of a group or organization encourages one to think of more than themselves and helps strengthen the basic values foundation laid in childhood.

“It's taking what your parents taught you and applying it to your career in the Marine Corps,” said Todd. “It's those ethics and morals that help you uphold the fact that, as Marines, we do right even when no one is looking, and hold ourselves to higher standards than others.”

Remembering the drive to do the proper thing just because one should isn't enough; personal conduct affects what happens in the workspace and in one's career.

“Most Marines will pay attention to how the people within their own shop behave and try to take the best part of each one and apply it to themselves,” said Todd. She warns that while emulating others can be effective in making good behavior decisions, it's smart to not follow someone doing the wrong thing.

“The bad part is that some Marines might see something that isn't considered right from someone who is a higher rank and think 'since it's OK for them then it must be OK for me,’” said Todd.

All Marines are taught how to conduct themselves. These teachings should also be applied when one is on liberty.

“Some people believe that doing what’s right when no one is looking while at work is enough,” said MGySgt Curt Denham, the operations chief for Headquarters and Service Battalion aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island. “A proper Marine would know that doing what is right even when no one is looking is continuous, whether you’re on or off duty.”

Throughout life most people personify qualities and ideas that are both taught and observed. These qualities affect our behavior and conduct.

The way people conduct themselves not only affects what others think about them, but it also affects the decisions that are made and the consequences of those decisions.

Discussion Questions

1. GySgt Todd’s two girls and her immediate family were a source for her moral living and decision-making processes. Using the self-assessment framework (Figure 3-1), review the lists of internal and external influences and discuss how a person’s moral decision making can potentially be sourced from each influence that is listed.
2. GySgt Todd states, “A proper Marine would know that doing what is right even when no one is looking is continuous, whether you’re on or off duty.” As a group discuss whether you agree with Todd and if so, what are some of the challenges to living in this manner?

Personal Reflection Questions

1. GySgt Todd states, “It’s taking what your parents taught you and applying it to your career in the Marine Corps...It’s those ethics and morals that help you uphold the fact that, as Marines, we do right even when no one is looking, and hold ourselves to higher standards than others.” As a group, discuss how to become the person GySgt Todd describes.
2. What source(s) guide(s) your moral living and decision making?
3. Do you have a strong motivation for pursuing moral living? If so, what is it? How do our prior mistakes shape our present-day moral living and future decision making?

GROWING PAINS

**Adapted from a story by Sergeant Ian Leones (website link is listed in Appendix E).
Marine Forces Reserve**

Samuel L. Posey is no stranger to trouble, much to the dismay of his mother. He recalls a time in the seventh grade when he was hanging out at Quail Pointe apartments in Spartanburg, South Carolina, a place his mother had warned him not to go.

“I ended up in the middle of a shootout,” said Posey, a 22-year-old with dark black hair and an easy-going smile. “When I got home, I didn’t tell my mom. She asked, ‘Where have you been?’ I said, ‘nowhere,’ with my heart beating out of my chest. The next day, it was on the news and my mom came to me saying, ‘I know you were over there.’ It was like she sensed something I didn’t.”

Eventually, Posey told his mother the truth and took her punishment.

“My mom didn’t play games,” Posey said. “She was a strong woman and she wanted to teach me to be a good person, but not to be a pushover.”

By the time he reached middle school, Posey had witnessed drugs, violence and the gamut of troubles that come with living in a rough neighborhood.

Posey, now a lance corporal with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, Marine Forces Reserve, believes these experiences have shaped the man he has become and given him a reason to give back to the community.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, the middle child of three boys, Posey bounced around between New York and Spartanburg growing up. The son of an abusive father, Posey witnessed his mother getting beaten and took a few beatings as well.

“Every time my dad would fight us, we would be out on the street,” Posey said. “But my mother was no bum. She would get a job to support us and soon enough we’d be back.”

To escape this environment, Posey’s aunt and uncle would take raise him for months at a time in Spartanburg. Eventually, Posey’s mom left his father and moved to Spartanburg where she remarried.

“I had a lot of hatred for my dad for a long time, but after a while I learned to let it go,” Posey said. “He wasn’t the best dad in the world, but if it weren’t for him, I wouldn’t have met the people I met or become the person that I am.”

Even though Posey didn’t always have his parents around, he had parental figures in his life like his aunt and uncle.

“They taught me to be a ‘stand-up guy,’” Posey said. “They taught me to carry myself in a manner that, even though I didn’t have much, showed people that I knew how to act right.”

After graduating high school, Posey attended Morris College in Sumter, South Carolina.

“When I went to college, I was rowdy,” Posey said. “I was this kid from the hood who still hadn’t grown up.”

Towards the end of his first year of college, Posey got into a physical altercation with another student. After that fight, Posey came to the realization that he needed to mature and college was not the place he was going to do it.

“I asked myself, ‘Why am I doing this?’” Posey said. “It was the end of the school year and I knew I couldn’t come back next semester because of my grades and my attitude. I didn’t want my mama to ask, ‘Well, what are you going to do next?’”

Posey headed to a Marine Corps recruiting office.

“I remember I left my house in the middle of the day,” Posey said. “I went down to the mall and went to the recruiter’s office. I didn’t talk about it at all, I just went there.”

Attracted to the ideals of the Marine Corps, Posey signed a contract for the Marine Corps Reserve as an infantryman. Posey couldn’t sign the papers that day, so he came back the next day, and this time he brought his mother as a witness.

“I wanted her to see me do it,” Posey said. “She just sat beside me with big eyes while I signed the papers. I liked the fact that I had to earn the title, it wasn’t given to me.”

While boot camp proved to be tough, Posey channeled the lessons he had learned growing up to get through it.

“I knew I would make it because of my childhood,” Posey said. “I knew no matter how bad it got, I had always been through worse.”

Having been in the Marine Corps Reserve for three years, Posey says he has grown from the experience.

“I’ve grown a lot compared to where I was,” Posey said. “My decision making is really different than what it was before. The fact is that someone can actually die in this job because of my failure to do something correctly or my inattention to detail. This has really changed how I look at other things in life.”

Other Marines in Posey’s platoon have also noticed how he has grown as a Marine.

“I’ve known Posey for three years, since he got here,” said Cpl Robert D. Ray, a team leader with Company I, 3/25. “He’s a great Marine who is willing to learn and he excels at what he does.”

Being in the Reserve Component, Posey has an opportunity to serve his community when he is not serving his country. Posey has been dancing with a group called Dance Over Everything, which helps less fortunate kids channel their frustrations through dance.

“We go out to schools so we can show these kids there is another way,” Posey said. “Why not take that anger and frustration you have inside and put it into something constructive. They are young and might go out and do something stupid, but there is always time to fix it and grow up to be somebody.”

Posey is now working toward an associate's degree in business marketing at Limestone College in Gaffney, South Carolina. As he looks to the future, he only hopes that his contributions make an impact on others.

“By the end of everything I do, I want to be able to say I made a difference,” Posey said. “When someone younger who looks up to you asks you the question of what you did when you were younger, what can you tell them? You can tell them you were wild, drank, smoked and were out thugging in the streets. How many people get to say they served their country?”

Discussion Questions

1. Growing up in an environment that exposed him to dangerous and illegal gang activity, Posey eventually made the decision to pursue a safer, better life, which led to his joining the Marine Corps. As a group, discuss what you think makes the difference between a person who chooses to pursue a better life as Posey did, or become a person who gets pulled into a life of illegal activity?
2. As a group, discuss how we know what moral living looks like and how we can pursue it? What are some of the potential sources for moral living? (Look at the lists of internal and external influences in Figure 2-2.)

Personal Reflection Questions

1. Posey stated, “My decision making is really different than what it was before. The fact is that someone can actually die in this job because of my failure to do something correctly or my inattention to detail.” Has your decision making changed over time? If so, what caused the change?
2. Are you regularly reflecting upon and evaluating your past decisions to inform your current and future decisions? How can you use your past experiences and decisions to shape your decisions about how you will live your life?

SURVIVAL, CELEBRATION: SERGEANT MAJOR RETIRES

**Adapted from a story by Cpl Katherine Solano (website link is listed in Appendix E).
II Marines Expeditionary Force**

Three decades of service and faithful marriage, nine deployments and two tours on recruiting duty only skims the surface of one sergeant major's career. The retirement ceremony for SgtMaj Herbert Wayne Wrench, the sergeant major for 2nd Marine Logistics Group, took place aboard Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, March 16.

Two children, a grandson and countless friends surrounded the path and saturated the experiences leading to Wrench's retirement. The site of the event itself, Marston Pavilion, was filled with family in suits and dresses, Marines in uniform, and retired, decades-old friends in motorcycle garb. The hour-long event was less of a traditional ceremony and more of a celebration, packed with anecdotes and stories that can only come from people who survived through years of war, service, dedication and hardship, and it celebrated love and good times together.

The tear-jerking moment came when Wrench spoke of how he and his family made it through the trials of the past few years. Diagnosed with stage-four cancer, Wrench is still undergoing maintenance chemotherapy. He credits his strength, in large part, to an unwavering faith, but he says the support flowing in from his family and friends was priceless, too.

"Whenever I was having a bad day, a friend just knew to call," said Wrench. "It's been the true test of friends. Some of them didn't even know I had cancer, they just called on the right day. During the five months of the initial chemo I had to go through, there were a lot of phone calls at just the right time."

Solid friendship was a consistent theme during the speeches, as well as when talking to Wrench's closest acquaintances before the ceremony.

"Everybody in this room, the extended family, the extended friend network, everybody prayed, everybody thought good thoughts, everybody cared," said Col Mark Hollahan, the commanding officer of 2nd MLG, during his speech, specifically about the time following the cancer diagnosis. "The fact that [Wayne is] sitting here as a healthy man is a part of the investment of the strength of heart, undying faith, and a lot of love."

The devotion and love pouring forth from those who came to send Wrench ashore following a successful career was a testament to his strong character and his solid convictions.

"He's the conscience of the regiment," said Hollahan, a native of Atlanta. "He's the guy who makes us do the right thing all the time. There's no special 'Wayne Wrench' way of doing business. There's the way the Marine Corps taught you, and he holds you to the standard."

The stories came spilling out from both Hollahan and Wrench, with an emphasis on motorcycle riding, a favorite hobby of Wrench's. Hollahan even joked that Wrench manages to keep his bike up on two wheels "most of the time."

Wrench took the time to recognize a number of individuals in the crowd, many of them retired Marines. The cracks about riding, recruiting stories and recently-acquired beards lasted for much of the ceremony, but Wrench brought it all back home to close it out.

“I couldn’t have asked for any better,” said Wrench, a native of Fayetteville, North Carolina. “I couldn’t have asked for better friends, associates, better family members, extended family members. My door is always open at home for everybody. I’ve got a local number, a local home. I’m not leaving this place.”

Wrench spoke of his biggest supporter, his wife of almost 30 years, Jo Ann, many times.

“I appreciate her support for all these years,” he said during a meeting a few days before his retirement. “She is the backbone of the family and my career. She is the reason I’ve made it to where I am.”

Many who retire go on to start a second career, or to find a job that encompasses their hobbies. It’s not the case for Wrench.

“My intent is to ‘just’ retire and enjoy life,” Wrench said.

Riding motorcycles with Jo Ann and spending as much time outdoors as possible with his three-year-old grandson, Isaiah, are at the top of his retirement to-do list.

“Isaiah’s the one who’s gonna keep me energetic for the next 120 years,” he added.

In true fun-loving, humorous, down-to-earth Wayne Wrench fashion, he concluded his retirement speech with an invigorating “Semper Fidelis, peace!”

Discussion Questions

1. SgtMaj Wrench is described as “the conscience of the regiment” and “the guy who makes us do the right thing all the time.” Who in your unit would you describe in a similar manner and could they serve as a source to guide your moral living and decision making?
2. The author mentioned that solid friendship was a consistent theme at the retirement ceremony that day. Discuss the role of solid friendships when it comes to moral living.
3. SgtMaj Wrench displayed strong character and solidly held beliefs, principles, and values during his 30 years of service. As a group, discuss the relationship between a person’s beliefs, principles and values, and their moral living.

Personal Reflection Questions

1. What are your sources for moral living? How do they guide you and your decision-making processes? How do you reflect your moral living within your unit?
2. Do you currently have solid friends or family that guide you in moral living and decision making? If not, are you aware of available resources, if you wanted guidance?

THE SINGLE MILITARY FATHER: A BALANCE OF NOBILITY

**Adapted from a story by Corporal Thomas Mudd (website link is listed in Appendix E).
Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms**

When GySgt Ira Heide first enlisted in the Marine Corps, he never imagined he would become a father. As he quickly rose through the ranks, his focus was on being an exemplary Marine and having children wasn't ever in the cards. Everything changed at 4:01 a.m. the day before Halloween, when his son, Jessen, was born and he held him for the first time. Military careers change, as do family dynamics, but in the years to come, Heide would learn to master the craft of balancing the responsibilities of a Marine Corps gunnery sergeant and those of a single father.

"I didn't know what to expect, to be honest," explained Heide. "I always told myself that I never wanted kids. I didn't think that I was going to be prepared for it. The first time I held him everything sank in. It clicked. I'll never forget that feeling for the rest of my life."

Heide was born in a small town in Utah and joined the Marine Corps believing it was the best fit for him. Feeling drawn to the brotherhood by which Marines are bound, he made a career out of his profession. He then took the experiences he learned from his time in Corps and applied them to all facets of his life. Heide's primary military occupational specialty is fire-direction controller but throughout his career he has fulfilled many other billets and responsibilities such as working in civil affairs, as a combat instructor and staff academy instructor.

"What I consider to be achievements are some of the lessons I've learned," Heide said. "I have a better sense of self-worth, more confidence in my ability to do day-to-day tasks whether it's work-wise or personal."

Throughout 16 years of service and seven years of fatherhood, Heide strived to find the best way to manage his duties as a Marine and his obligations as a parent.

"It's kind of hard, you know, being a single father," Heide said. "You have to have a healthy balance. I go to work and then I leave it there. When I go home, that time is for him. I don't bring work with me. That is the biggest key to balancing the two and I think the biggest problem with some people, they can't do family things, it's just work, work, work."

Heide has worked hard throughout his Marine Corps career to keep the ideals of a good Marine and leader close to heart. The lessons he learned throughout his time in the Corps helped him overcome many of the challenges he now faces as a father.

"It's helped me on a morality stand point," Heide remarked. "What's right and what's wrong and what I expect out of my son. It has also helped me to be more compassionate. That is a big one; I feel that our society today can be uncompassionate. The Marine Corps has definitely pulled me in that direction."

Heide's grasp of how other people think and his exposure to myriad psychologically, culturally and socially diverse Marines has given him the patience to be an empathetic parent.

“It allows me to be more understanding. We work with so many different people with mentalities, different backgrounds, not everyone is going to have the same thought process I do,” Heide said. “I also have to remember that my son is a little boy. There are a lot of things he doesn’t know. He’s going to have his moments and it took a lot for me to realize that he doesn’t think a certain way and the Marine Corps has definitely helped me work on that.”

Even before the Marine Corps, Heide was taught the importance of determination and a hard work. The experiences he had growing up and the lessons imparted upon him as a child helped him develop his outlook on being a thoughtful and effective father.

“To be honest, I never knew my natural father. I had my stepdad, but my parents worked a lot,” Heide said. “When it comes down to it, I think the biggest father figure I had in my life was my grandfather. He was a World War II vet and a good man. He imparted a lot of good things on me like manners and an innate drive to be something and do something.”

Heide has worked hard to pass these values and ideals on to his son the same way his grandfather passed them on to him. Heide believes it is his responsibility as Jessen’s father, to raise him to one day be a good man.

“In my opinion, a dad needs to raise a boy,” Heide said. “I could never understand how, as a man, you can walk away from your own blood. I couldn’t imagine not being an active part of who will one day become.”

Heide makes a point to take Jessen to parks and spends time playing games and building epic projects out of blocks. At times, they spend hours together in the garage working on a shared passion, repairing and working on cars. All of this is part of a conscious effort to give his son the things Heide did not have growing up.

“I try to expose him to things that I never really got to do,” Heide said. “I try not to spoil him, but I still want to give him the things that I never had growing up. I definitely want to impart on him that being a hard worker is a good thing.”

When Heide talks about his son, beaming with pride he describes a child that is bright, kind and thoughtful. He explains that even at the age of seven, Jessen excels in his mechanical skills and likes figuring out how to take things apart and building then anew. To Heide, his son’s potential opportunities are vast, and he is determined to show him that he can aspire to anything.

“I want him to grow up and do what makes him happy,” Heide explained. “I don’t expect him to join the military or anything like that. If he keeps things up, I can see him going to college and doing something pretty spectacular with his life.”

Discussion Questions

1. Regarding being a single father, GySgt Heide states "It's helped me on a morality standpoint...What's right and what's wrong and what I expect out of my son." Discuss how becoming responsible for other people can cause you to take moral decision making more seriously.
2. The author states that, "Heide has worked hard to pass these values and ideals on to his son the same way his grandfather passed them on to him. Heide believes it is his responsibility as Jessen's father, to raise him to one day be a good man." What can leaders do to help their subordinates in moral decision making?

Personal Reflection Questions

1. What are your sources for moral living? How do they guide you in your decision-making processes?
2. Who is currently mentoring you on moral living and good decision making? To whom are you passing along what have learned?
3. GySgt Heide's moral decision-making process led him to take on the responsibility of raising his son. Is there a major decision point you are currently facing? If so, how will your past experiences, including advice from others, factor in your decision?
4. What relationships in your life currently challenge you to pursue moral living?

DRILL INSTRUCTOR A ROLE MODEL FOR RECRUITS

**Adapted from a story by Corporal Walter D. Marino II (website link is listed in Appendix E).
Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego**

He was the first in his family to join the military and since his enlistment, two of his siblings have followed his footsteps. Sgt Juan E. Duque, senior drill instructor, Platoon 1041, Company C, says he was a role model for his younger brother and older sister who have both joined the service.

“My sister definitely joined because I pushed her,” said Duque, a Medellin, Columbia native. “My brother played the same sports as me and looked up to me as well. He joined right after high school.”

Now a drill instructor, Duque has transformed his position as family role model to a role model for a recruit platoon. Although the number of people is higher, it appears Duque is leaving a lasting positive impression on the recruits aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, November 2.

After selecting Recruit Troy G. Redman, Platoon 1041, as the guide, Duque has pulled him aside many times to give Redman advice on leadership and how to be a role model to the other recruits.

Redman explained that, because he is only 18 years old, many of the other recruits are older than him and it was stressful to try and lead them.

“My senior (drill instructor) is a role model for me. He told me that they all look at me and the recruits are going to do what I do,” said Redman. “He told me that instead of doing things for myself it’s more about working with and pushing the recruits.”

During his drill instructor career, Duque has had three honor platoons, received the Band of Brothers award three times, awarded two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement medals and was recently voted “moral leader” for his current cycle of recruits.

The respect doesn’t end in the recruit’s eyes; fellow drill instructors also feel Duque is an excellent leader who always puts taking care of fellow Marines first.

“He takes care of his team,” said SSgt Michael A. Garcia, chief drill instructor, Company C. “He sends them home to see their families as much as possible. He has Marines that want to work for him because of who he is and not just because they have to.”

Garcia explained Duque regards honesty as a very important quality and sets the right example by his own actions, but also by giving honest opinion of his fellow drill instructors.

“He gives an honest assessment on what fellow drill instructors need to improve on,” said Garcia. “A big part of being a senior drill instructor is training the Marines under you as well as the recruits. Recruits look up to him because he always sets the example of what a Marine is.”

Duque said making Marines had to do with his desire to leave his thumbprint in the Marine Corps.

"I wanted to instill good morals that I feel I was taught by my leadership during my life in the Corps," said Duque.

Duque explained that after eight cycles of recruits, he has learned just how much influence a drill instructor can have not only in his recruits but fellow Marines as well.

"It's a huge responsibility," said Duque. "You see how recruits are inspired by your actions and how you treat your fellow drill instructors."

Duque said that's why he can't have a negative attitude.

"If I had a negative attitude, it would reflect on the recruits," said the 26-year-old Duque.

Although Duque says he joined the Corps to find purpose, it appears after finding it, the tables have turned. He not only inspires Marines in the making, but fellow Marines as well.

Discussion Questions

1. The author mentions that Sgt Duque was recently voted moral leader for his current cycle of recruits. Is there someone you know that you would describe as a moral leader? If so, share about that person with the group. Explain how they have inspired you as a moral leader. What tool do they use to reflect on the past and consider future decisions?
2. Discuss how a person's decision to engage in moral living influences the people around them.
3. Describe a time when you used a difficult experience to make a better decision in the future.

Personal Reflection Questions

1. Who has had the greatest impact on your moral decision-making abilities? What did they do that was either helpful or unhelpful?
2. What are your sources for moral living? How do they guide you in your decision-making processes? (Review the internal and external influences in Figure 2-2 for potential sources of moral living.)

APPENDIX D.

SPIRITUAL FITNESS GUIDE PRINTOUT

Spiritual Fitness Guide

This is a self-assessment tool to help Service members determine their spiritual condition.

Green Zone	Yellow Zone	Orange Zone	Red Zone
Potential Indicators	Potential Indicators	Potential Indicators	Potential Indicators
• Engaged in life's meaning/purpose	• Neglecting life's meaning/purpose	• Losing a sense of life's meaning/purpose	• Feels like life has no meaning/purpose
• Hopeful about life/future	• Less hopeful about life/future	• Hold very little hope about life/future	• Holds no hope about life/future
• Makes sound moral decisions	• Makes some poor moral decisions	• Makes poor moral decisions routinely	• Engaged in extreme immoral behavior
• Fully engaged with family, friends, and community	• Somewhat engaged with family, friends, and community	• Weakly engaged with family, friends, and community	• Not engaged with family, friends, and community
• Able to forgive self and others	• Difficulty forgiving self or others	• Not likely to forgive self or others	• Forgiveness is not an option
• Respectful of others	• Less respectful of others	• Strong disrespect for others	• Complete disrespect for others
• Engaged in core values/beliefs	• Straying from core values/beliefs	• Disregards core values/beliefs	• Abandoned core values/beliefs

***If you find yourself in need of support, do not suffer in silence.
Immediately seek assistance from any avenue of support.***

Resources for Support:

Chaplain — Military and Family Life Counselors — Community Counseling Program Leaders
 Leaders — Family or Friend — MCCS One Source **800-342-9647**
 Military Crisis Line: Dial **988** then press **1**

***Your religious ministry team cares about you and is committed to helping you develop your spiritual fitness.
 Absolute 100% confidentiality is provided.***

Chaplain POC:

Religious Program Specialist POC:

NOTE: Click Image to Print.

APPENDIX E.

USEFUL WEBSITE LINKS

Marine Leader Development

The Six Functional Areas of Marine Corps Leadership Development.

Marine Corps University, <https://www.usmcu.edu/mcld-6-fs/>.

Marine Leader Development Website

<https://www.usmcu.edu/Academic-Programs/Lejeune-Leadership-Institute/Marine-Leader-Development/>

Spiritual Fitness

Resilience, USMC Human Performance Branch, Quantico VA,

<https://www.fitness.marines.mil/Resilience/>.

Spiritual Fitness, USMC Human Performance Branch, Quantico VA,

<https://www.fitness.marines.mil/Resilience/Spiritual-Fitness/>.

CHAMP SOCOM Spiritual Fitness Scale

<https://www.hprc-online.org/resources-partners/ssfs/champ-socom-spiritual-fitness-scale-ssfs>.

Suicide Prevention Resources

Marine Corps Community Services Quantico

<https://www.usmc-mccs.org/protect/>.

Navy Medicine Navy and Marine Corps Force Health Protection Command

<https://www.med.navy.mil/Navy-and-Marine-Corps-Force-Health-Protection-Command/Population-Health/Health-Promotion-and-Wellness/Suicide-Prevention/>

Stories for Leader Instruction

Stories that Illustrate Personal Faith

How I Got Here: MGySgt Lillian McLaughlin

dvidshub.net/news/126043/got-here-master-gunnery-sgt-mclaughlin

Faith Drives Excellence in NCO of the Quarter: Sgt Evan Mendes

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/87467/faith-drives-excellence-nco-quarter>

Ramadhan Teaches Control and Commitment: GySgt Kimi Khamisi

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/169019/ramadhan-teaches-control>

Marine Officer Expresses Himself Through Poetry: 2ndLt Chad Grasmuck

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/84216/marine-officer-expresses-himself-through>

Deployed Marines Keep Reminders of Home

<https://www.1stmlg.marines.mil/News/Unit-News-Temp/Article/543342/pocket-sized-pieces-of-mind-deployed-marines-keep-reminders-of-home-luck-and-fa/>

Stories that Illustrate Foundational Values

Marine Overcomes Adversity, Shows Honor, Courage, Commitment: Sgt Shelly Janecke

<https://www.iiimef.marines.mil/Content/Feature-Stories/Article/721788/marine-overcomes-adversity-shows-honor-courage-commitment/>

The Values of a Marine: Charles Krulak

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/129187/values-marine>

From Queens to Marines: Cpl Darius Jones

<https://www.mcasiwakuni.marines.mil/Iwakuni-News/News-Stories/News-Article-Display/Article/933845/from-queens-to-marines>

Marine uses MCMAP to Influence Others: Cpl Alfred Joseph

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/67243/marine-use-mcmap-influence-others>

Marine Officer Leads with the Values Learned Through Scouts

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/107796/marine-officer-leads-with-values-learned>

Stories that Illustrate Moral Living

Fifteen Years of Good Conduct Medals: GySgt Latrice Todd

<https://www.beaufort.marines.mil/COMMSTRAT/News/News-View/Article/524560/15-years-five-good-conduct-medals/>

Growing Pains: LCpl Samuel Posey

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/207549/growing-pains>

Survival, Celebration; Sergeant Major Retires: SgtMaj Herbert Wrench

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GLOSSARY

Section I: Abbreviations and Acronyms

ALMAR	All Marines (message)
CEB	combat engineer battalion
CLB	combat logistics battalion
Col	colonel
Cpl	corporal
CRP	command religious program
FWD	Forward
GySgt	gunnery sergeant
G-4	assistant chief of staff, logistics/logistics staff section
H&S	headquarters and service
LCpl	lance corporal
MAG	Marine aircraft group
Maj	major
MCDP	Marine Corps doctrinal publication
MCMAP	Marine Corps Martial Arts Program
MEF	Marine expeditionary force
MGySgt	master gunnery sergeant
MLG	Marine logistics group
MSG	Marine security guard
NCO	noncommissioned officer
OODA	observe, orient, decide, act
RMT	religious ministry team
Sgt	sergeant
SgtMaj	sergeant major
1stLt	first lieutenant
1stSgt	first sergeant

Section II: Terms and Definitions

combat logistics battalion

The task-organized logistics combat element of the Marine expeditionary unit. Personnel and equipment are assigned from the permanent battalions of the Marine logistics group. As required, it may be augmented by combat service support assets from the Marine division or Marine aircraft wing. (USMC Dictionary)

command religious program

The comprehensive program of religious ministry that is planned, programmed, budgeted, and implemented to meet identified religious ministry requirements of a command. (USMC Dictionary)

Marine aircraft group

Administratively and tactically structured by aircraft category as being either a fixed-wing group or a combined rotary-wing and tiltrotor group. Marine aircraft groups may also be formed for specific missions or unique organizational/geographic considerations. Each Marine aircraft group has a headquarters and maintenance squadron. With a source of supply, the Marine aircraft group is the smallest aviation unit capable of self-sustaining, independent operations. (USMC Dictionary)

Marine expeditionary force

The largest Marine air-ground task force and the Marine Corps' principal warfighting organization, particularly for larger crises or contingencies. It is task-organized around a permanent command element and normally contains one or more Marine divisions, Marine aircraft wings, and Marine logistics groups. The Marine expeditionary force is capable of missions across a range of military operations, including amphibious assault and sustained operations ashore in any environment. It can operate from a sea base, a land base, or both. In a joint or multinational environment, it may also contain other Service or multinational forces assigned or attached to the Marine air-ground task force. (USMC Dictionary)

Marine logistics group

The logistics combat element of the Marine expeditionary force (MEF). It is a permanently organized command tasked with providing combat service support beyond the organic capabilities of supported units of the MEF. The Marine logistics group is normally structured with direct and general support units that are organized to support a MEF possessing one Marine division and one Marine aircraft wing. It may also provide smaller task-organized logistics combat elements to support Marine air-ground task forces smaller than a MEF. (USMC Dictionary)

observe, orient, decide, act loop

conceptual model of the time-competitive decision cycle of observe-orient-decide-act. In military operations, the side that can consistently observe, orient, decide, and act more quickly than the other gains a significant operational and tactical advantage. This cycle is critical to generating tempo. Also called OODA loop. (USMC Dictionary)

religious ministry team

1. A team that is composed of one or more chaplain(s) and one or more religious program specialist(s), and other designated members (e.g., appointed lay leaders and military volunteer personnel) to provide religious ministry. The team works together in designing, implementing, and conducting the command religious program. 2. A basic religious ministry team consists of one chaplain and one religious program specialist. Other team members could include lay leaders, command religious program volunteers, contract religious ministry professionals, chaplain office federal employees, and other command religious program contracted professionals. (USMC dictionary)

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Chief of Chaplains Instructions (COCINST)

5351.1 Professional Naval Chaplaincy

Secretary of the Navy Instructions (SECNAVINST)

1730.11 Confidential Communications to Chaplains

United States Marine Corps

All Marine Message (ALMAR)

027/70 Resiliency and Spiritual Fitness

033/16 Spiritual Fitness

Marine Corps Doctrinal Publications (MCDPs)

1 Warfighting

7 Learning

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