

Building Spiritual Awareness, Fitness, and Resiliency

A holistic view of life

by LCDR Diana A. Lantz, Chaplain, USN

In October 2016, the Commandant of the Marine Corps released *ALMAR 033/16* addressing spiritual fitness in the Corps.¹ He emphasized that Marines are not only physical, mental, and social beings, but also spiritual; that spiritual resiliency is an important part of overall well-being and the individual's ability to "grow, develop, recover, heal and adapt." The Commandant asked the Marine Corps to begin reflecting on the meaning of spiritual well-being, questioning what it means to become spiritually resilient in the same way that Marines strive to be physically, mentally, and socially fit. To demonstrate this desire, the Commandant placed *What It Is Like to Go to*

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*War*² by Karl Marlantes, a highly-decorated Marine of the Vietnam War, on his Professional Reading List. Marlantes addresses his experiences of war in the context of its psychological and spiritual effects, discussing how preparation and training *for* war along with exercises and programs *after* war can better mitigate war's impact on the individual while instilling self-awareness in actions and decision making *during* war.

Reformed theologian John Calvin begins his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* by stating that "without knowledge of self, there is no knowledge of God. Nearly all wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and ourselves."³ The purpose of this article is to introduce the thesis that knowledge of self can be developed through the contemporary understanding of psychological type outlined through the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator), which can be used as a tool to not only deepen our knowledge of ourselves in general but also to develop our knowledge of God as we use related exercises in order to build spiritual awareness, understanding, and resiliency according to our unique personality.

The Christian Scriptures tell us that humans have a soul and that the essence of the human connection with God is in the soul. The fundamental depth of our being is our soul, and the home of our personality traits is the soul. The soul is comprised of three parts—mind, body and spirit—and is defined as "the principle of life, feeling, thought, and actions in humans."⁴ The three parts working in harmony provide what is necessary to have a resilient spirit. The interplay between mind, body, and spirit is paramount in our understanding of their nourishment of the soul. There is a continual triangle of movement and interplay between the three parts—in the exercise of our spirit, we are using our mind and our body; in the exercise of our body, we are addressing our mind and our spirit; and in the exercise of our



Marines strive to be physically fit, but what about spiritually fit? (Photo by LCpl Jesus Sepulveda-Torres.)

spirit, we are using our body and mind. To have balance in all aspects suggests an extremely holistic view of life.

The U.S. Marine Corps defines spiritual fitness as “an optimal state of the overall spiritual well-being of a person that touches on three fundamental elements: personal faith, foundational values and moral living.”⁵ As Marines and Sailors who are physical, mental, social, and spiritual beings, it is necessary to have practical spiritual resources and leadership development practices capable of strengthening an individual’s spiritual well-being. The MBTI is one such readily-available resource among Navy chaplains.

The use of a psychological type is simply one technique to develop our knowledge of true self and the nourishment of our soul in the quest for knowledge of God, higher power, or

noble path. The root word of psychology is *psyche*, meaning the human soul. Thus, in order to understand our spiritual make-up and how we practice spiritual disciplines, we should be grounded in our knowledge of our soul type. As we learn our type in general, and spiritual profile in specific, we reflect and act (through spiritual disciplines such as prayer, meditation, worship, music, arts and crafts, acts of service, nature, study, physical exercise, or even sleep) on who we are and how our spiritual personalities interact with our faith or belief in a higher power. Our spiritual journey is a life-long one in which we are continuously growing. We should never be wholly satisfied with where we are as we recognize that that there is always room for growth.

The beginning point of self-reflection is the determination of our particular

psychological type. Every individual has their own genetic make-up, and though God “broke the mold” after birth, there are common characteristics in individual personalities which can be noted as similar in others and grouped accordingly. These universal characteristics were originally noted by Carl Jung in 1923, and they eventually became known as psychological type. Concurrently, Katharine Briggs had begun her own research in 1917, and after Jung’s publication, Briggs expanded her research in conjunction with her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers. Together, they spent 1923–1941 developing their own typological ideas and theory, refining their work until it began to be utilized in the mid-1960s as a useful tool for clinicians and researchers.⁶ Their work is now known as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and it is the most well-known tool for measuring psychological

PREFERRED ATTITUDE FUNCTION OR LIFESTYLE	EXTRAVERSION E	INTROVERSION I	SENSING S	INTUITION I	THINKING T	FEELING F	JUDGEMENT J	PERCEPTION P
PRIMARY ARENA	World, Other	Ideas, Self	Body	Spirit	Mind	Heart	Will	Awareness
PREFERENCE FOR	Action	Reflection	Sensory reality Details Status Quo	Possibilities Patterns Change	Objective Principles	Subjective Values	Initiative	Response
NATURAL SPIRITUAL PATH	Action	Reflection	Service	Awareness	Knowl- edge	Devotion	Discipline	Spontaneity
NEEDED FOR WHOLENESS	Reflection	Action or Participation	Aware- ness or Under- standing	Service or Embodi- ment	Devotion	Knowledge	Spontaneity	Discipline

Figure 1. Finding your spiritual path through Meyers-Briggs. (Adapted from a chart by Earle C. Page given as a handout at a MBTI workshop at Farifax, VA in 2004.)

type. It is possible to use the MBTI to explore how we practice our spirituality according to our soul type.

The MBTI is not a test but a self-reporting instrument that assumes that type is inborn. Its results sort individuals into one of each of four dichotomies which address how an individual relates to the world. The first dichotomy addresses the direction of an individual's energy—E (Extraversion)/I (Introversion); the second, how an individual gathers data—S (Sensing)/P (Perceiving); the third dichotomy addresses how an individual makes decisions—T (Thinking)/F (Feeling); and the fourth dichotomy determines the individual's orientation to the outer world—J (Judging)/P (Perceiving). The first and last pairings (E/I and J/P) are described as attitudes while the middle pairings (S/N and T/F) are regarded as functions. Sixteen possible combinations are identified with every individual falling into one of the 16 types.⁷

At this point, it is necessary to give a brief overview of what type theory calls the dominant and auxiliary functions, which in turn leads to the *shadow*.⁸ In their four letter MBTI profile, each individual has a dominant and auxiliary function. The first and last letters of the four letter combination are called the *attitudes*, while the middle two letters represent the *functions*. Of the two *functions*, the individual has preferences for each, which in turn is described as the *dominant* (the most preferred function the *commanding general*) and the *auxiliary* (the second most well-developed and dependable function/the *loyal lieutenant*). The third most developed is called the *tertiary* function, and it is the opposite of the auxiliary function and is used more in the unconscious than the conscious. The *inferior* function is the least developed of the combination, and it is the opposite in every way of the dominant function. It is also the gateway to the shadow, which is the collective name of the two inferior functions. As an example, for an ISTJ (the most common military type), the dominant function is an introverted senser, the auxiliary is extraverted thinker, the tertiary is feeler, and the inferior is extraverted intuitive. Our shadow type is also sometimes described as the four letter

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How do we decide? (Image by CW02 Matt Andrew.)

combination, which is the opposite of an individual's actual type. For example, the shadow of an INFJ is ESTP; the shadow of ISTJ is ENFP, etc.⁹

The pathways presented in Figure 1 (previous page) can be used as a guide for the individual to explore their spirituality according to MBTI preferences and are intended to open the individual to new aspects of their spirituality in their search for, and journey toward, wholeness. The chart is oriented toward discovering some of the primary characteristics of one's unique personality as it relates to the spiritual life. Each of the eight MBTI preferences is listed across the top while categories of the spiritual life are listed in the first column. The words or phrases in each category are meant to help the individual gain a better understanding of their particular

spirituality and are not strict definitions. While the "Natural Spiritual Path" suggests the primary orientation of a particular type (such as "Action"), the category "Needed for Wholeness" indicates the opposite orientation ("Reflection") that is needed for a balanced spirituality. For example, an ESTP wants action, service, knowledge, and discipline in the spiritual world. However, for spiritual wholeness, the ESTP also needs to incorporate reflection, awareness/understanding, devotion, and spontaneity into their practices.

In a video interview entitled *Leadership Lessons*, Retired Gen James N. Mattis responded to the question, "How do you keep improving as a leader to meet the demand of each role in your career?" He noted that,



Spiritual awareness is gained from reading, studying, and applying what you learn about your faith to both your life and your relationships with those around you. (Photo by Cpl Zachery B Martin.)

not only is it necessary to stay teachable as a leader and to be a better warfighter at the end of each week than at the beginning; it is essential to maintain the body, mind and spirit at all times in order to be the physically toughest, the mentally sharpest and the most spiritually undiminished possible.¹⁰

In the same interview, Mattis declined to name one of the 11 leadership principles as more important than any other because they are all parts of the whole; there is no way to separate them. The same can be said when applying spirituality to the leadership principles. Spirituality is a necessary component of all the principles in the same way it undergirds the six functional areas of leadership development—fidelity, fighter, fitness, family, finances, and future.

Without knowledge of self, there can be no knowledge of God; without knowledge of God, there can be no growth or development of the spiritual elements of a Marine seeking overall fitness and resiliency. Psychological type and the MBTI profile (along with associated spiritual exercises) are valuable tools that gives individuals the ability to understand themselves more effectively, thus allowing them to grow in their spiritual awareness and resiliency. An analogy which can be used is that of a three-legged stool with each of the

legs representing mind, body, and spirit. If one of the legs is weak or broken, the stool will fall over. Humans are multi-dimensional beings, designed to live our lives aware of our mind, body, spirit, and community—all of these elements inform our relationships with both humanity and God. The MBTI spiritual profile is a valuable tool for exploring avenues of spirituality that take us beyond our traditional constructs to accept practices to which we are naturally drawn as legitimate soul work. The MBTI spiritual profile can encourage Marines to engage in legitimate soul work to build spiritual awareness, fitness, and resiliency as they develop leadership, decision-making skills, and teamwork.¹¹

Notes

1. Headquarters Marine Corps, *ALMAR 033/16, Spiritual Fitness*, (Washington, DC: October 2016).
2. Karl Marlantes, *What It is Like to Go to War*, (New York, NY: Grove Press, 2011).
3. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1960).
4. *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*, (New York, NY: Barnes and Noble, 2003).

5. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Spiritual Fitness Communications Plan*, (Washington, DC: 2016).

6. Isabel Briggs Myers with Peter B. Myers, *Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Type*, (Mountain View, CA: CAPT, 1980).

7. Otto Kroger, *MBTI Qualifying Workshop Manual*, (Fairfax, VA: 2001).

8. Marlantes addresses the existence of the shadow primarily in Chapter 5, "The Enemy Within." Jung's shadow refers to "an archetype which is an innate mode of psychic behavior, in reaction to certain situations. There are archetypal modes of action and reaction, processes, attitudes, ideas and ways of assimilating experience. The shadow as an archetype is that part of Collective Unconscious which intrudes itself into the personal sphere, forming the Personal Unconscious. It personifies everything that people refuse to acknowledge about themselves, such as inferior traits of character and other tendencies incompatible with and unacceptable to their conscious, ego-dominated view of self." Naomi L. Quenk, *MBTI News*, (Kansas City, MO: 1982.)

9. When stationed at Naval Submarine Base New London, CT (2008–2012), one of my responsibilities was Brig Chaplain. On one occasion, there were six young Sailors from the BESS (Basic Enlisted Submarine School) in pre-trial confinement for getting involved in a drug ring. When I administered the MBTI to them, all six were either ENFP or INFP. These two types in particular have a natural disregard for rules and regulations and are most likely to "get into trouble." Experience has taught me that if a Marine or Sailor is in their first enlistment and is under the age of 24 years, he will struggle in the military environment if an ENFP or INFP.

10. United States Marine Corps, *Leadership Lessons from Gen. James Mattis (Ret.)*, (Washington, DC: 2016).

11. This article is based on the author's doctor of ministry thesis, "The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator as a Tool for Spiritual Growth: A Case Study Among Female Chaplains in the United States Navy," (doctorate thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2016). The ISTJ spiritual exercises are offered as an example of how to build spiritual resiliency.



The Beauty of Risk

Allowing and encouraging an atmosphere of risk taking

by LtCol Gregory A. Thiele

Over the last 15 years or so, Marines have been beaten to parade rest when it comes to taking risks. Whether it is wearing personal protective equipment in combat or motorcycle safety, virtually every conceivable sphere of a Marine's life has been influenced by the Marine Corps' aversion to risk. "Risk" has truly become a four-letter word in the Marine Corps. Some of this is good; after all, no one wants Marines injured unnecessarily. Unfortunately, success in war often necessitates accepting risks, and the willingness to accept risk must be tolerated and even nurtured during times of peace if it is to be called upon during wartime. As an institution, the Marine Corps has become too risk averse. Marines must be allowed, and even encouraged, to take risks if the Marine Corps is to remain an effective fighting force.

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***"If you never want to take risks you can achieve nothing!"
—Frederick the Great'***

In an address to the Joint Services Conference on Professional Ethics in January 1999, LTC William Bell, USA, claimed that risk aversion was "possibly the greatest danger facing our Army."² Although LTC Bell spoke in 1999, it would be a mistake to believe

that risk aversion no longer exists, or that it is limited to the U.S. Army. A number of junior officers leaving the Corps have commented on the Marine Corps' risk-averse culture in the last few years.³ A decade of war has not banished it to the shadows. In a Marine Corps that preaches NCO leadership and "empowerment" of subordinates, but increasingly curtails both in practice, risk aversion is alive and well.⁴

It is easy to understand why the Marine Corps has become risk averse. There is a lot of pressure to prevent or limit mistakes. As LtGen Victor H. Krulak, USMC(Ret), famously observed, the United States wants, but does not truly need, a Marine Corps.⁵ Bad publicity can be extremely damaging and could potentially lead to the end of the Marine Corps as an independent Service. While conceivable, such outcomes are unlikely. The greatest threat to the Marine Corps' existence is ineffectiveness on the modern battlefield. In creating a risk-averse culture, the Marine Corps has unintentionally endangered its ability to prevail in combat.

Leaders that do not take risks lead units that are predictable. Predictability is among the worst traits for any military unit; it becomes a relatively simple matter for the enemy to take advantage of the patterns that develop. It is for this reason that the military theorist William S. Lind criticized U.S. forces' reliance on firepower in Afghanistan and Iraq, writing that U.S. forces "make heavy use of airstrikes because our 'line' infantry tactics cannot do without them."⁶ Mr. Lind believes that U.S. infantry tactics have become formulaic: when U.S. forces bump into the enemy, they hunker down and call for massive fires. The Taliban often attempted to use this reliance on firepower to cause



Frederick the Great (center) meets with Emperor Joseph II in 1769. (Painting by Adolph Menzel, 1857.)

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U.S. forces to inflict civilian casualties, to the ultimate detriment of the U.S. effort in Afghanistan.

Marine Corps doctrine, and many of the literary works that inform our understanding of our profession, encourage the acceptance of risk and taking bold action as the surest path to success. *MCDP 1, Warfighting*, says that,

Risk is inherent in war and is involved in every mission. Risk is equally common to action and inaction. Risk may be related to gain; greater potential gain often requires greater risk. The practice of concentrating combat power toward the main effort necessitates the willingness to accept prudent risk elsewhere. However, we should clearly understand that the acceptance of risk does not equate to the imprudent willingness to gamble the entire likelihood of success on a single improbable event.⁷

It is important to note that *MCDP 1*, while encouraging risk taking, delineates between accepting carefully measured risks and foolish gambles.

The true beauty of risk is that it requires trust. If seniors do not trust subordinates, they will not allow subordinates to take risks.

Carl von Clausewitz wrote that “a distinguished commander without boldness is unthinkable. No man who is not born bold can play such a role, and therefore we consider this quality the first prerequisite of the great military leader.” Clausewitz also had an interesting perspective regarding the willingness to take risks. He believed that the higher the rank, the less likely leaders were to act boldly. Likewise, “the greater the extent to which [boldness] is retained, the greater the range of his genius.”⁸

Characteristically, Sun Tzu approached the matter of risk more obliquely. Master Sun recommended

maneuvering in such a way that victory was assured even before battle was joined. While generally advocating efforts to limit risks, he also recognized the value of boldness. Master Sun wrote that, “If you can strike few with many, you will thus minimize the number of those with whom you do battle.”⁹ Often, the only way such a preponderance of force is possible is by accepting risks in an effort to surprise the enemy. Sun Tzu also claimed that, “In battle, confrontation is done directly, victory is gained by surprise.”¹⁰

Nothing in the preceding discussion should be construed as an attempt to ignore the importance of thinking through the possible ramifications if a risk does not pan out. Accepting risks for their own sake is not the answer; risks must be judged against the possible gains as well as against the potential negative consequences of failure. Decisions should be made upon this basis. Leaders must educate their Marines regarding what kinds of risks are acceptable, which are gambles and how to hedge against failure. What the Marine Corps needs are leaders, at all levels, who actively encourage their subordinates to take intelligent risks and are involved in the teaching process that this requires.

With its structural, pedantic approach to measuring and assessing risks, ORM (operational risk management) may actually be part of the problem. ORM is often viewed as a “check-in-the-block,” “cover-your-backside” exercise. Many Marines have the impression that if things go wrong, their higher headquarters will only use the ORM as a tool to second-guess any decisions that were made. Under such circumstances, ORM, potentially a valuable tool to teach subordinates about measuring and assessing risks actually degrades the bonds of trust between leaders and led.

The true beauty of risk is that it requires trust. If seniors do not trust subordinates, they will not allow subordinates to take risks. If subordinates do not trust their seniors, they will be extremely hesitant to accept risks. The most effective way to stem the tide of risk aversion is for Marines to build trust

at all levels, including individual and unit.

Trust is the “secret ingredient” or “accelerant” to maneuver warfare. Without trust, maneuver warfare is impossible. Possessing a doctrine that espouses maneuver warfare is insufficient. Maneuver warfare requires leaders who work relentlessly to build trust and confidence in their leadership among their peers, juniors and seniors alike. The greater the degree of trust that exists between leaders and led, as well as adjacent units, the greater will be the willingness and ability to take the risks necessary to succeed in maneuver warfare.

Trust should not be given blindly—it must be built, and this takes time. Trust comes through shared experiences and demonstrated reliability. The Marine Corps’ current personnel policies that move Marines every three years (or less) make it difficult to build organizations with deep levels of trust among all ranks. There is too much personnel turbulence.

In addition to trust, supervision is still required. This supervision takes the form of a conversation between professionals, with the senior leader frequently going in person to see what his subordinates require. Subordinates are not afraid that senior leaders will show up unannounced to have a look around. Subordinates may even desire their presence, as they are viewed as teachers and mentors by their Marines.

The kind of supervision that destroys trust comes from a leader who only shows up episodically, determines that everything being done is wrong, and second-guesses every decision made by the Marine on the ground. Under such circumstances, subordinates put on an artificial “show” while their seniors are around and experience a mixture of relief and elation when their superior has departed, whether they have learned anything from this person or not.

The Marine Corps did not develop a risk-averse culture overnight. It occurred slowly over time. As C.S. Lewis once wrote, “Indeed, the safest road to hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts ...”¹¹ Regardless of how good the in-



Sun Tzu and Clausewitz recognized the value of boldness. (Photo by LCpl Richard Davila.)

tentions in discouraging risk-taking behaviors may be, the long-term result has negatively impacted the Marine Corps’ warfighting ability—which is, after all, its *raison d’être*. Marines must be allowed and encouraged to accept more risks. They must be taught how to judge what risks are appropriate and which are potentially too costly. The future of the Marine Corps depends upon this. It is time for Marines to get out there and take chances again!

Notes

1. Quoted in David Fraser, *Frederick the Great*, (New York: Fromm International, 2000).
2. William Bell, “Threats to Core Values,” (panel, Joint Services Conference on Professional Ethics, January 1999), available at <http://isme.tamu.edu>.
3. A recent example is a blog entitled “We’re Getting Out of the Marines Because We Wanted to be Part of an Elite Force,” available at <http://www.mca-marines.org>. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the author’s views is immaterial; the perception of the Marine Corps as risk averse is out there, particularly among junior officers.
4. Paradoxically, the Marine Corps, while discouraging risk-taking behavior in individuals, appears very willing to accept major risks when it comes to large acquisition projects (MV-22, Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle, F-35). As there are unique factors at work to incentivize this

behavior in the acquisitions world, it is a poor indicator of an institutional willingness to take risks. In fact, one might reasonably argue that the Marine Corps should be *more* risk averse when it comes to acquisitions.

5. Victor H. Krulak, *First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1984; reprint, 1999).
6. William S. Lind, “Our Illiterate Infantry,” *The American Conservative*, (Online: September 2011), available at www.theamericanconservative.com.
7. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 1, Warfighting*, (Washington, DC: June 1997).
8. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976).
9. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War: Complete Texts and Commentaries*, (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 2003).
10. Ibid.
11. C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2000).

