

# **Spiritual Fitness Course**



**Foundational  
Values**

**Personal  
Faith**

**Moral  
Living**



**Spiritual Fitness is “Inner Strength  
from Higher Purpose.”**

**General Eric M. Smith, 39th Commandant of the Marine Corps**

## ALMAR 020/24

Our 13th Commandant, General John A. Lejeune, remarked, “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.” Since our founding, General Lejeune and Marine Corps leaders have placed a high priority on the spiritual strength of Marines and Sailors to overcome the hardships of war. Decades ago, our Marine Corps codified the Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment. **The third Core Value charges leaders with caring for the “personal and spiritual wellbeing of their people.”** Today, Marine Corps Total Fitness requires us to be physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually fit. Focusing on these four areas is integral to the warfighter’s capacity to carry out the mission in peace and in conflict.

Put succinctly, 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. **We need something greater than self alone to meet the challenges of the “decisive decade” before us.**

Spiritual fitness is drawn from various religious and non-religious sources and practices for strengthening one’s inner self. Some examples may include religious faith, community, the search for meaning and significance, values and character development, and a shared sacrifice for a greater good. **Data shows those who engage in religious faith and / or spiritual practices are 60-80 percent less likely to take their own lives.** Those who participate in character formation demonstrate higher education outcomes, self-discipline, and integrity. Spiritual fitness reinforces and sustains resilience and readiness across many fronts.

Commanders own spiritual fitness. Chaplains are called, trained, and positioned to strengthen spiritual fitness among their people and help commanders steward this within the command.

**I join with leaders across our Corps in answering the charge to carry out this crucial responsibility of building the spirit of Marines, Sailors, and the families who support them.**

Semper Fidelis,  
Eric M. Smith,  
General, U.S. Marine Corps,  
Commandant of the Marine Corps

## Situation

**“There is no substitute for the spiritual in war.”**

**General John A. Lejeune**

While that statement is impactful, there is a lack of understanding about what “spiritual” means for the individual. Our unwillingness to talk about the spiritual aspect of someone’s life or how to make oneself spiritually stronger is a detriment to making ourselves internally stronger. Because of this lack of understanding, many people find themselves drifting and lost in life. To be effective in life we must have a clear sense of what Spiritual Fitness is and how to implement a Spiritual Fitness regimen in our lives.

At the same time, “While grit and determination are crucial, Marines and Sailors find greater strength from looking beyond themselves to a higher, more enduring sources of meaning and purpose. We need something greater than self alone to meet the challenges of the ‘decisive decade’ before us.”

**General Eric M. Smith, Commandant of the Marine Corps in ALMAR 020/24**

## Mission

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 fitness, mental fitness, and social fitness of Marine Corps Total Fitness in a holistic way.

**Marine Corps Total 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.”

**MCRP 6-11D**

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.

## Execution

The 3D MAW Spiritual Fitness Course consists of 5 conversations held in a small group format with Marines and Sailors regarding their Spiritual Fitness, allowing time of personal reflection and introspection through daily exercises.

### **3D MAW SPIRITUAL FITNESS COURSE CONTENTS**

1. Why should I care about Spiritual Fitness?

2. Identifying Purpose

3. Plotting A Path

4. Practices for Progress

5. People for Support

## Administration and Logistics

**MCRP 6-10.1** states that “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.”

We encourage leaders at every level to engage with their Marines on a regular basis in regard to their Spiritual Fitness. It is our hope that through engaged leaders we’ll be able to reduce destructive behaviors and suicides.

## Command and Signal

“Commanders own spiritual fitness. Chaplains are called, trained, and positioned to strengthen spiritual fitness among their people and help commanders steward this within the command.”

**Eric M. Smith, Commandant of the Marine Corps in ALMAR 020/24**

# 1. Why should I care about Spiritual Fitness

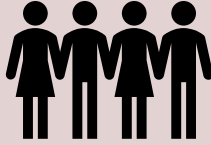
## Science shows positive effects



Practicing individual spirituality

**62%**

less likely to die by suicide



Practicing spirituality in community

**82%**

less likely to die by suicide



Attending religious services 2X per month

**94%**

less likely to die by suicide

### Physical Health

- Longer Life
- Lower rates of a vast array of diseases
- Better coping with pain, death, and stress.
- Faster Recovery from illness and injury
- Increased Healthy behaviors (exercise, hygiene, safety, etc.)



### Social Health

- Greater Marital Satisfaction and adjustment.
- Less likely to engage in delinquent behavior
- Decreased hostility
- healthier levels of pro-social behavior
- Healthier attachments



### Mental Health

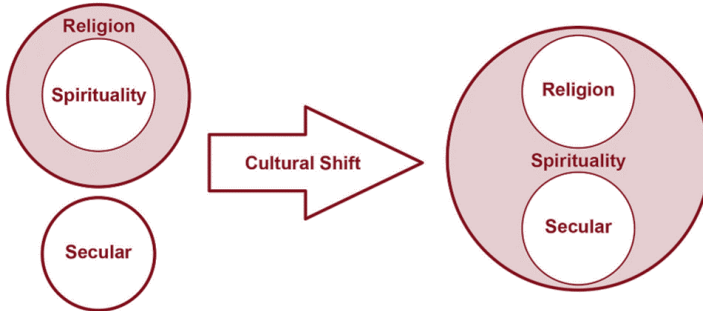
- Higher levels of happiness, satisfaction, hope, and well-being
- lower rates of depression and anxiety
- Greater stress resilience
- Greater level of self control
- Higher achievement in school and work.



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 and increases in all areas of fitness. **A strong spiritual core is more protective against the leading forms of inner suffering than anything known in the clinical or social sciences.**

## Can I be Spiritual without being Religious?

**Answer: Yes.** Historically, spirituality was viewed as a subset of religion as depicted on the left side of this graphic. This meant that only religious people were spiritual. However, the cultural understanding of spirituality today has shifted to reflect the framework depicted on the right. The modern version of spirituality has expanded to view religious and secular personnel as having spirituality. For this reason, people might describe themselves as



**Spirituality** may be used generally to refer to that which gives meaning and purpose in life. The term may be used more specifically to refer to the practice of a philosophy, religion, or way of living. Spirituality has two primary expressions.



**Human Expression** is the essential core of the individual such as self-awareness, significant relationships, and principal values.



**Religious Expression** is the application of religious faith including connecting to the Divine and faith communities.

## Spiritual Fitness Impacts Warfighting

**MCDP 1: Warfighting:** “Military leaders have a tremendous responsibility; the resources they will expend in war are human lives. It is important for them to realize, therefore, that spiritual fitness is intricately connected to 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.”*

**Lejeune, John Archer.** The Reminiscences of a Marine. Dorrance and Company, Philadelphia, PA, pp. 40, 1930.

## A Leader’s Duty

**MCRP 6-10.1: Spiritual Fitness Leader’s Guide** “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.”

## Spiritual Fitness Defined

**ALMAR 020/24:** General Eric M. Smith, 39th Commandant of the Marine Corps, stressed the importance of all Marines and Sailors working to strengthen the inner self because of the spiritual aspects of warfighting. General Smith defines Spiritual Fitness as...

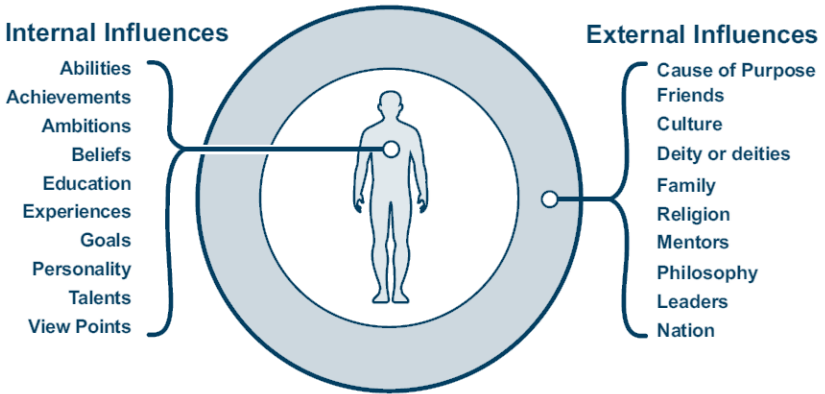


**“Inner strength from higher purpose.”**

## 2. Identifying Purpose

### Know Your Influences

Throughout your life there have been many influences that have shaped your world view and now impact how your purpose and how you make daily decisions.



#### APPLICATION:

Take time to brainstorm all the influences that impact how you live your life. Use the lists above to assist you. Externally, who are the people, places, and things that have impacted you the most? Internally, what beliefs, values, viewpoints that impact you the most?

Internal Influences		External Influences	

## Understand your World View

Each of us sees the world through a unique set of lenses shaped by our influences. Take time to answer each one of these world view questions and consider what is the influence that impacts your answers.

### **1. What is the nature of reality. Where did we and this world come from?**

My Answer	Influences
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### **2. What is wrong with the world and how can we fix it?**

My Answer	Influences
-----------	------------

### **3. Are there transcendent beings such as God or higher powers?**

My Answer	Influences
-----------	------------

### **4. What happens when I die?**

My Answer	Influences
-----------	------------

### **5. What is the meaning and purpose of life?**

My Answer	Influences
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## Understand your World View

Look at the center column below and as you contemplate each concept look to the right and left and draw a line to, or circle, the side that most closely connects with your worldview.



Inherent Worth	<u>Self</u>	Abilities Based
Meaning & Purpose	<u>Identity</u>	Acquiring Success
Calling & Contribution	<u>Work</u>	Talents & Gains
Sacred, Share Love & Grow	<u>Relationship</u>	Pleasing, Meet Needs
Always Connected	<u>Path</u>	Ultimately Alone
Purposeful World	<u>Place in the World</u>	Random World
Love, Life-Giving	<u>Existential Reality</u>	Unknown
Blessings	<u>Good Events</u>	Deserved, Luck
Opportunities, Learning		



## Find Your Purpose

The following exercise will help you to identify purpose and meaning in your life. It is meant to provide a way to define what you are living for. This overarching purpose provides the means to develop a path, practices, and a connection with communities and people to help you successfully live with purpose.

**"Marines are encouraged to develop their personal purpose and to live their lives in accordance with it. Personal purpose can be a source of strength and resilience, and it can help Marines to achieve their full potential."**

MCO 1040.30A Marine Corps Leadership

1. What does your legacy say about you and who you are? What impact do you want to make on others?
2. What are your personal goals for life? Are your personal goals focused on what you want to achieve or on who you want to be?
3. What are your Foundational Values? How do they influence how you live?
4. What does your faith say about who you are and how you live?

## **My Purpose in Life is...**



***For personal assistance please see your local Religious Ministry Team.***

### 3. Plotting A Path

It has been said that the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. The first step in committing to live life with purpose may be the most difficult, but when we take that first step, we find that our lives mean more than just getting up and going to work or school. When we commit to living with purpose, we realize we are living for something bigger than ourselves. We will begin to add and remove things from our lives so that we can live more intentionally.

Sometimes we fail to live with purpose because we simply don't know how. The exercise below will help you design your path to living with purpose by assisting you in setting the core values, beliefs, guiding principles, commandments, etc., that provide direction to your destination. It will enable you to identify obstacles blocking your path toward your destination so you can work to remove them.

- 1. Set the course.** How will I live out my purpose? (Identify your Personal Faith, Foundational values and/or beliefs principles, and Moral Living)
- 2. Identify the obstacles blocking your path.** (anger, frustration, procrastination)
- 3. How are you going to overcome the obstacles blocking your path?** (What actions/behaviors do I need to put into action?)

**If you want to have mountain top experiences, you must climb the mountain!**

**However, I need to remember that there will be another mountain to climb.**

***For personal assistance please see your local Religious Ministry Team.***



## Three Elements of Spiritual Fitness



### Element 1: Personal Faith

**DEFINED:** Belief or trust in oneself, something, or someone beyond oneself.

Just as rappelling requires a person to place faith in the rope and harness to make it safely to the bottom, life requires a person to place their personal faith in people and processes to accomplish the tasks and challenges. We all put our faith in something whether we are conscious of it or not. It may be placed in oneself, personal skills and abilities, and one's intrinsic worth to overcome self-doubt and discouragement and improve performance. Faith can be placed in family and friends, or our nation, the Navy and Marine Corps, and unit to create trust, connection, and teamwork. Faith can be placed in a higher power or a divine presence that may or may not be a part of a system of religious beliefs.

What I place faith in	My Influences

## Three Elements of Spiritual Fitness



### Element 2: Foundational Values

**DEFINED:** Principles and standards that impact personal choices and actions, thus influencing character displayed on and off duty.

Values are basic ideas about the worth or importance of people, concepts, or objects. The values instilled in Marines are the building blocks for making the right decisions at the right time. In the chaos of war and the daily tasks of life, character matters. An essential aspect of spiritual fitness is recognizing or acquiring values that will build character and resiliency. During land navigation, Marines rely on the numerical values printed on the map and compass. If any of these numerical values are incorrect, they will soon find themselves off track. Similarly, if Marines live by values that are not aligned with Marine Corps they will end up off track and jeopardize the mission or life itself.

My Values	My Influences

## Three Elements of Spiritual Fitness



### Element 3: Moral Living

**DEFINED:** Making personal and professional decisions based on an internal or external standard of what is right or wrong.

The decision, actions, and behaviors of Marines are governed by the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Code of Conduct, and orders. These external influences provide the boundaries of what is acceptable. Leaders are taught to lead with higher standards of moral responsibility. Through spiritual fitness, a Marine can choose a moral standard of living that meets, or even exceeds, the standards enforced by The Marine Corps. Marines rely on a magnetic compass to provide a constant orientation with every turn or step. The compass remains a reliable data point for every navigational decision. Without the compass, it is easy to get lost. Marines can use values, beliefs, conscience, and influences as a compass for making moral decisions. Every Marine must take the time to determine what makes up their moral compass.

Source of moral decisions	My Influences

## UNDERSTANDING MORAL INJURY (MI):

*“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*

The spiritual or moral self can be injured just as much as the body or mind. Moral Injury is a betrayal of what we believe is right. This moral wrong may have been committed by others or even ourselves. MI is how those wrongs have impacted our spirit/soul. MI isn't restricted to the battlefield; it can happen anywhere, at any time.

**Understanding Moral Injury:** Marines may experience high levels of inner conflict because of MI such as guilt, shame, self-condemnation, feelings of betrayal, loss of meaning and purpose, and loss of faith. This inner conflict might display as depression, anger, substance abuse, relationship problems, aggression, and suicidal thoughts.

**Dealing with Moral Injury:** MI should be treated with Spiritual or faith-based counseling, faith-based rituals, meditation and prayer, reading sacred text, and journaling to externalize and process those traumatic events. Two of the most important aspects of dealing with MI is forgiveness and repentance. Repentance is the turning away from or not doing those wrong/bad actions. Forgiveness is the intentional decision and act of letting go of resentment and anger because of a past hurt. Embracing forgiveness can lead to peace and hope.

**Growth after Moral Injury:** There may always be a lingering feeling or sense of guilt and shame regarding MI, so it is important to look back on the work one has done in the offering and receiving of repentance and forgiveness, and to be reminded of the freedom one now has.

**What do your Spiritual Beliefs say about Moral Injury?**

**How do your Spiritual Beliefs help you deal with Moral Injury?**

## 4. Practices for Progress

Every Marine and Sailor needs to know how fit they are. They may evaluate their level of spiritual fitness by reviewing **seven potential indicators**. Think of these seven indicators as potential warning lights on the dashboard of a car.



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.

A Service member lacking in spiritual fitness, as described by the **orange** or **red zones** 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. Servicemembers who find themselves in the orange or red zones should immediately seek help.

Green Zone	Yellow Zone	Orange Zone	Red Zone
<b>Potential Indicators</b>	<b>Potential Indicators</b>	<b>Potential Indicators</b>	<b>Potential Indicators</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged in life's meaning/purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neglecting life's meaning/purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Losing a sense of life's meaning/purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feels like life has no meaning/purpose</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hopeful about life/future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less hopeful about life/future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold very little hope about life/future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holds no hope about life/future</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes sound moral decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes some poor moral decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes poor moral decisions routinely</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged in extreme immoral behavior</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fully engaged with family, friends, and community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Somewhat engaged with family, friends, and community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weakly engaged with family, friends, and community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not engaged with family, friends, and community</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to forgive self and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty forgiving self or others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not likely to forgive self or others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forgiveness is not an option</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respectful of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less respectful of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong disrespect for others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete disrespect for others</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged in core values/beliefs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Straying from core values/beliefs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disregards core values/beliefs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abandoned core values/beliefs</li> </ul>

## CORRECTIVE ACTION

Once an honest assessment is made, Marines can begin to develop a plan to become more spiritually fit.

### **Taking Action in the Yellow**

Change is often hard and usually takes intentionality and resolve. Following are growth guides for the 7 indicators. First, here are general steps for effecting change:

1. Identify the standard, target, or goal.
2. Assess why the gap exists between you and it.
3. Brainstorm small obtainable steps to the goal.
4. Execute daily steps with external accountability.

### **Seeking Help in the Orange and Red**

If a Marine determines that he or she is in the Orange or Red Zone, which describes a mindset that has little or none of each indicator for spiritual health, it is critical at that time to access resources and talk to someone.

-If thoughts of Suicide:

- Tell Someone & separate yourself from any lethal means
- 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.
- Military One Source counselors 1-800-342-9647.
- Community counseling program.
- Chaplain 100 percent confidential counseling.
- Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) team members.
- Family, friends, mentors, leaders, and others you can trust.
- Chain of command.
- Medical / Mental health counseling and medication.
- Military Family Life Counselors

# Moving into the green

## 1. Engaged in Life's Meaning and Purpose

Reflect on these questions for further reflection.

1. What moments in my life have made me feel most alive?
2. Which values do I refuse to compromise on, no matter what the situation?
3. If I could be remembered for one quality, what would it be?
4. What activities make me lose track of time?
5. Which skills or talents feel most natural to me?
6. If money and fear weren't factors, what would I spend my days doing?
7. How do I want to positively influence the lives of others?
8. What problems in the world do I feel most called to help solve?
9. If I could leave one message for future generations, what would it say?
10. Where in my life do I feel most "in alignment" with who I truly am?

11. What parts of my current life feel out of sync with my deeper purpose?

12. What small change could I make today to live more authentically?

**Sometimes we fail to live with purpose because we don't take the time to engage our entire worldview. The questions below will help you live out your purpose by assisting you in addressing the core values, beliefs, guiding principles, commandments, etc., that provide direction to your life.**

1. Set the course. How will I live out my purpose? (Use your list of personal faith, beliefs, and Foundational values)

2. Identify the obstacles blocking your path. (What is currently keeping you from living your purpose?)

3. How are you going to overcome the obstacles blocking your path? (What actions/behaviors do I need to put into action?)

4. When I live my purpose, who are the people who will benefit?

## 2. Hope about Life and the Future

"Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible." – Helen Keller. Hope is vital to push through the challenges and setbacks in life. It is a skill can be cultivated through honest discussion about our disappointments and doubts. Those who follow a religion find that most every world religion holds beliefs about the future that are in pursuit of the betterment of life both now and after death.

1 What do you believe that the future holds? Is it guaranteed?

2 What is the source of your hope for the future?

3 How does that impact your daily life?

4 Who can you talk to for cultivating your hope?

5 Review your influences, personal faith, foundational values, and moral living for sources of hope.

### **3. Makes Sound Moral Decisions**

Everyone makes moral and ethical decisions every day. Each of us must determine the source of our moral compass that drives those decisions. We benefit from occasionally reflecting on how well our compass is directing us and whether our decisions are aligned with our stated values and goals.

**Refer to the page on Moral Injury as needed.**

**Answer the following questions to work to strengthen your moral decision making.**

1. Have you been dedicated in following your moral compass?
2. Have you made decisions that you regret and still cause pain?
3. Can you look in the mirror most nights and be proud?
4. Do you feel like you need to talk to someone about strengthening our moral decision making?

#### **4. Fully Engaged with Family, Friends, and Community**

“Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.”- Henry Ford. Relationships are critical to all aspects of life from family and friends to peers at work and fellow Marines. Having healthy relationships with people who can help you journey through life is essential to staying in the green on the spiritual fitness scale.

**Answer the following questions to work to strengthen your Relationships.**

1. How well are you maintaining healthy relationships?
2. Do you have people in your life that pour into you?
3. Are there people you can be yourself around and feel support?
4. Are you engaged in community activities to help other people?
5. Are there people that you reach out to for wise guidance?
6. What are the groups that you have the most fun with?
7. What are some ways to expand your relationship pool?
8. Are there skills you need to attain to be healthier in your relationships?

## **5. Respect for Others**

“Treat others as you want to be treated not as they treat you”  
It’s important to show respect to others regardless of whether you agree with them. We all have an inherent desire to be respected and valued as a person, so, if we choose not to respect others then it becomes a vicious circle.

**Answer the following questions to work to strengthen your Respect for others.**

1. What is causing you to disrespect other people?
2. Put yourself in another’s shoes and gain their perspective.
3. Have you ever performed a random act of kindness? Why not?
4. Do you truly listen to others or just plan your next statement?
5. Do you consider every human of value? Are there degrees?
6. Can anyone forfeit their value and lose your respect?

## **6. Able to Forgive Self and Others**

"Forgiveness is not an occasional act; it is a constant attitude."

– Martin Luther King Jr. Being able to forgive others and yourself is critical for your own mental and spiritual health.

Lack of forgiveness leads to anger, bitterness, resentment, seeking vengeance, inner conflict and moral injury. Forgiveness means to pardon and remove the penalty that is rightly due for the wrong committed. It is a decision not a feeling. Is a decision to offer grace instead of demanding justice and bring the offender back to your level, even if they do not receive it.

**Answer the following questions to work to strengthen your ability to forgive.**

1 How good are you at forgiving yourself?

2 What are things you would like forgiveness for right now?

3 Why would someone receive your forgiveness?

4 What is the goal or purpose of forgiveness?

5 Who benefits from forgiveness?

6 Is there anyone you need to forgive now? What's stopping you?

## 7. Values and Beliefs

“In matters of principle, stand like a rock; in matters of taste, swim with the current.” -President Thomas Jefferson. Beliefs are ideas that we feel strongly about that we hold as truth, and that guide us in our daily life. Our beliefs shape what we value and then how we choose to act, our moral compass. This is a summary of most of what has come before, however, living according to our values is a significant indicator to spiritual health.

1 Review your responses to influences, person faith, foundational values, and moral living.

2 Do you consider yourself a person of integrity? Do others?

3 Have you taken time to reflect on why you believe as you do?

4 Are your beliefs rooted in fact or opinion?

5 What things can you do to solidify or alter your beliefs?

6 Do you struggle when other people's beliefs are not your own?

7 What beliefs can you focus on in common with other Marines?

# Practices for Progress

## (Action Items)

**Spiritual practices are activities that deepen your relationship with the sacred, the world around you, and help you focus on your purpose. They are performed to cultivate and deepen your spiritual development. They can help you connect with God or the Divine and increase your personal well-being.**

Practices I already have in place (established).

Practices that I would like to incorporate (daily, weekly, monthly).

## I MAKE A COMMITMENT TO THESE SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

I am making the commitment to practice the following...

PRACTICE	WHEN I WILL DO IT
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

***For personal assistance please see your local Religious Ministry Team.***

## Practices for Progress to Consider

As we walk the path of purpose it is vital to always keep our purpose in view. The more we think about our purpose, the more we align our lives to it. The best way to focus our minds on our purpose is to discipline ourselves to perform specific practices each day. Engaging in spiritual practices helps us to live and grow stronger to that purpose.

**Reading:** Reading fills our minds with information, teaches us skills, and gives us examples through the stories of others that have shared and lived our same purpose.

**Journaling:** Journaling allows us to keep a written record of our progress along the path of our purpose. Through journaling we are able to write freely about our successes, struggles, and questions about living our purpose.

**Meditation & Mindfulness:** Meditation & Mindfulness allows us to focus on being fully Mentally, Emotionally, and Spiritually present. It helps us to train our mind to focus on what is happening now without being distracted by the past or the future. As we meditate, we dedicate mental energy and time to cultivate a specific state of quality. We may focus on a principle, Teaching, core value, or belief that is vital to our purpose and how that can bring peace and calm to our life situations.

**Prayer:** Prayer keeps us in communication with our God. Prayer is a religious discipline in which we communicate with our God seeking guidance, provision, and blessing. Prayer brings peace to our lives.

**Confession:** The practice of confession frees us from the guilt that keeps us from living with purpose. Confession is the practice of admitting our faults and wrongs to others. This may be to our God, a close and trusted friend, or someone we have wronged. When we practice confession, we are able to throw off the emotional weight of guilt that slows us down on the path of purpose.

**Gratitude:** The practice of gratitude creates within us a mindset of thankfulness for what we have in our lives and trains our minds to focus on the positive in every situation. Gratitude also allows us to appreciate the impact other people have in our personal growth and progress to living out our purpose.

**Generosity:** The practice of generosity reminds us that living our purpose is not about us. Generosity is the practice of giving our time, talents, possessions, words, and lives to people to help them progress in life and living out their purpose.

**Forgiveness:** Forgiveness frees us from the anger, bitterness, hurt, and guilt that takes our focus off living or causes us to go against the core values, beliefs, and teachings that are the foundation of our purpose.

## 5. People for Support

### Engage With People Who Support Your Spiritual Fitness

"Community is essential to spiritual fitness. Marines who are part of a strong community are more likely to have a strong sense of purpose and meaning in their lives.."

MCRP 6-10.1

No one can live successfully on their own. We need other people in our lives to walk the path of purpose with us. There is power in community connections that motivates, educates, strengthens, and sustains. That connection empowers us to increase our effectiveness and success in living out our purpose. As we walk our journey of life to live with purpose, we will grow tired, we will struggle, we will want to give up, and we will wander off course. In community we find that we have value, we are heard, we are understood, we are trusted, and we are family.

**Bad company corrupts good character.**


Who do I have in my life that I know will support me to live with purpose (personally)?

Who do I have in my life that I know will support me to live with purpose (professionally)?

What groups or agencies support my interest and purpose?

*For personal assistance please see your local Religious Ministry Team.*

**Trusted People**



**Trusted Groups**



## **SPIRITUAL FITNESS REFERENCES**

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## **Spiritual Fitness Fridays**

1. Did I live according to my personal faith, foundational values, and moral living this week? If not, how did I struggle?
2. What color zone am I in on the seven indicators? Compare where you are at to the week prior.
3. Did I forgive people who wronged me this week? Did I find forgiveness for my own wrongs?
4. What spiritual practices did I do this week?
5. What spiritual practices did I do within a spiritually supportive community this week?
6. Who did I interact with this week?

# Spiritual Fitness Support

## 3d MAW Chaplain Offices

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MAG 39 (Camp Pendleton)	Phone # 760-725-8180 Email: MAG39Chaplain@usmc.mil
MAG 11 (MCAS Miramar)	Phone # 858-307-4443 Email: MAG-11_Chaplain@usmc.onmicrosoft.com
MAG 16 (MCAS Miramar)	Phone # 858-307-1625 Email: mag16rmt@usmc.mil
MACG 38 (MCAS Miramar)	Phone # 858-307-9598 Email: MACG38_Chaplain@usmc.onmicrosoft.com
MAG 13 (MCAS Yuma)	Phone # 928-269-3714/3454 Email: mag13_chaplain@usmc.mil

### Miramar Community Guide



### Spiritual Fitness Survey

