

~~The My A~~ Philosophy of Fitness

Peter Mellow, Senior Lecturer,
Sports School
Auckland University of Technology 1987 - 2011

© 2006

kiwirip@me.com
www.petermellow.com

1

A PDF copy of these notes is available
from:

[http://
www.petermellow.com/
Aoraki Polytechnic/](http://www.petermellow.com/Aoraki_Polytechnic/)

2



3

Wednesday, 4 July 2012

The nature of...

Fitness ?



4

Components of Fitness (physical)

- ✓ Body Composition
- ✓ Cardiovascular
- ✓ Flexibility
- ✓ Muscular Strength & muscular Endurance
- ✓ Agility
- ✓ Balance & Coordination
- ✓ Power
- ✓ Speed

5

Fitness

Physical

Psychological (mental, sport, fitness, injury)

Philosophical (belief, spiritual, shared understanding)



6

philosophy | fr'lɒsəfi |

noun (pl. **-phies**)

the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, esp. when considered as an academic discipline. See also **natural philosophy** .

- a set of views and **theories** of a particular philosopher concerning such study or an aspect of it : *a clash of rival socialist philosophies*.
- the study of the theoretical basis of a particular branch of knowledge or experience : *the philosophy of science*.
- a theory or attitude held by a person or organization that acts as a guiding principle for behavior : *don't expect anything and you won't be disappointed, that's my philosophy*.

ORIGIN Middle English : from Old French **philosophie**, via Latin from Greek **philosophia** 'love of wisdom.'

7

“Philosophers spend their lives trying to put into words what the common man experiences.”

Emerson



8

“Things we think, but do not say”



9

**“The unexamined life
is not worth living.”**

Socrates 399 BC



10

**“Sport provides a
universal social
context for the
learning of such
cherished values
as courage,
honesty,
discipline,
communal effort,
and the pursuit of
excellence.”**



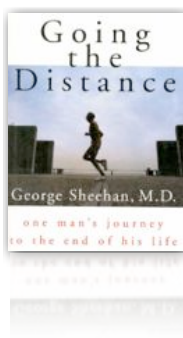
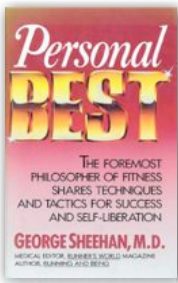
11

**“A sound mind
in a sound
body, is a short
but complete
description of a
happy life”**



John Locke
1632 - 1704

12



George Sheehan
1918 - 1993

**Doctor, author,
husband, father,
athlete, fitness
philosopher.**

13

**President Bill Clinton's tribute
to George Sheehan**

"As the 'guru' and 'philosopher king' of running,
you have informed and motivated us to follow your teachings.
You're an inspiration to all of us."



14



**"Everyone is an
athlete. The only
difference is that
some of us are in
training, and
some are not."**

George Sheehan,
Jim Fixx, Ken
Cooper.

George Sheehan

15

“Health, outweighs all other blessings. Without proper exercise, no one can remain healthy; all the processes of life demand exercise; exercise not only of the parts more immediately concerned but the whole body.”

Schopenhauer



Arthur
Schopenhauer
1788 - 1860

16

“Most of his leisure was spent in walking. Walking was his path to enlightenment. It was where he did his best thinking, his best writing.”

George Sheehan

Thoreau quotes:

“An early morning walk is a blessing for the whole day.”

“If a person does not keep pace with their companions perhaps it is because they hear a different drummer. Let them step to the music which they hear, however measured or far away.”



Henry David Thoreau
1817 - 1862
Philosopher of nature

17

“At 60, Emerson was 6 feet tall and 65kgs...a person who resembled a distance runner, not only in body but in mind...”

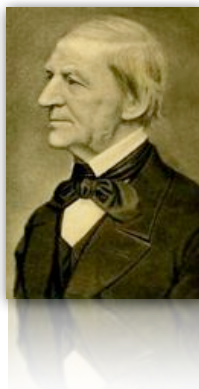
George Sheehan

Emerson quotes:

“First be a good animal.”

“Fitness is so inseparable an accompaniment of beauty, it has been taken for it.”

“We must be at the top of our condition to understand anything rightly.”



Ralph Waldo Emerson
1803 - 1882

18



19

George on running



Thoughts on the run - George Sheehan



20

"The Strenuous life tastes better."

"Life is made in doing and suffering and creating."

William James

"The road to greatness is indeed hard labour. Those of us who would be athletes know that. I do everything an Olympian does. I experience the same fatigue and pain. I, too, have days when I wonder if it is worth it.

My body has found in running all it needs to know, or do. I am not upset that it has no other skill. My life needs nothing more."

George Sheehan



William James
1842 - 1910

21

For some, exercise has brought about rebirth. "I find running to be excellent therapy," wrote a recovering alcoholic. "It has brought me a whole new area for my physical health and conditioning." A strong recommendation, but modest compared to what follows.

George Sheehan

22

"Modern man *has* everything. He *is* nothing."

Erich Fromm

"Happiness we receive from ourselves, is greater than we receive from our surroundings"

From an unknown disciple of Stoic philosopher Epictetus (55 - 135 AD).



Erich Pinchas Fromm
1900 - 1980

23

"Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity. "



John F Kennedy
1917 - 1963

JFK

24



**"Sweat cleanses
from the inside.**

**It comes from
places a shower
will never reach."**

George Sheehan

25

Is running a religion?

**"Running is not a religion,
it is a place."**

**"A place to commune with God
and yourself, a place for
psychological and spiritual
renewal."**



George Sheehan

26

Common Characteristics ?



- Meeting together
at a place of
'worship'
- **Rituals**
- Time to reflect
on our life
- **Shared
'experience'**



27

Motivation

Extrinsic - external

Rewards
Recognition
Attention
Prizes
Money
Position
Status



May be strong initially but often short term only

Intrinsic - internal

Feeling of well-being
Self-esteem
Confidence
Identity
Mastery
Purpose

May be long term and lasting

28

“We train to become athletes. The word comes from a Greek word meaning struggle and prize. The struggle is for the prize which is oneself.”

“The philosophy of exercise is the philosophy of holism. The gym is a place where we develop our whole personality, where we strive for the excellence the Greeks called *arete* (pronounced ar-ay-tay) - to function as you are supposed to function, to achieve your personal best. Not to be the best in the gym, but the best *you*.”

“The real reason why we train is to begin the lifelong task of becoming an athlete, and achieving *arete*.”

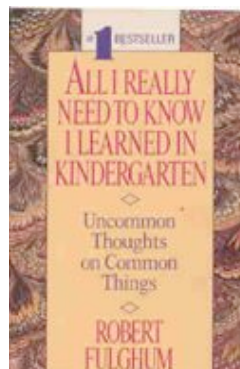
George Sheehan

29

“Frontiersmen of the American West used to carry small leather bags strung around their necks. The bags contained flint, steel and tinder to make fires, comprised their ‘possibles.’ The theory was that even if they lost their supplies, these essentials would keep them alive.



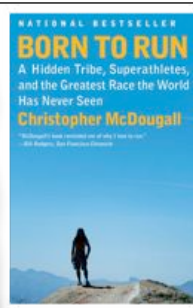
Robert
Fulghum
1937 -



30

TED

Ted.com



31

“One that reckoneth accounts all the day
passeth not a happy moment. One that
gladdeneth his heart all the day provideth not for
his house. The bowman hitteth the mark, as the
steersman reacheth land, by diversity of aim.”

The Egyptian sage Ptahhoptep c. 2400BC

**“All Work and No Play
Makes Jack a Dull Boy.”**

James Howell's 'Proverbs in English,
Italian, French and Spanish' 1659

32

Two of George's quotes on fun and play.

"Fitness has to be fun. If it is not
play, there will be no fitness. Play,
you see, is the process. Fitness is
merely the product."

"Play is where life lives."

33

Foster **FUN** in your exercise.



Intensity changes, order of exercises, social aspects, environment, variety, mode, goals, games, sport, laughter, rest, off task thoughts and actions.

34

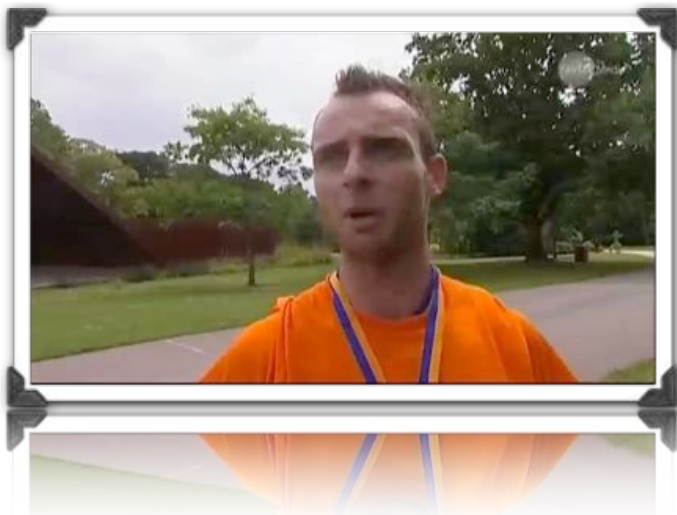
My philosophy of fitness

What I have learnt so far...

- **Everyone works out at their own pace**
- The shared struggle helps us all endure (social)
- When you think you can't do any more... you can!
- This is 'my time', my recreation, my relaxation, my stress manager
- **Sometimes the struggle is enough**
- Fitness is not a franchise or a formula, it's a philosophy

35

'Retro' running



36

Scoop. **DASHBOARD** **CURATE** **FOLLOW** **ANALYTICS** **Peter Mellow** 2.6K | +41


Physical and Mental Health

"Healthy body, healthy mind!"
Curated by Peter Mellow

342 Views **Share** **Filter** **New Post** **Curate**

petermellow.com - May 2, 4:03 PM

Peter Mellow Home Page



Hi there and welcome to Physical and Mental Health. I hope you like the articles that I have selected around fitness, exercise, running and health.


Use the 'Filter' menu above to find topics you may be interested in.

Please feel free to add comments in the 'Reactions' button at the bottom of each article.
Enjoy! :-)

Remember that there are many pages of links here, see the full list of pages at the bottom of this page! Also, please feel free to suggest any good resources on the web that you have found.
Email me at: kiwirip@me.com

www.nzherald.co.nz - June 27, 9:02 PM

The ups and downs of being an ultramarathon runner



Running 1000km in 14 days. Ultrarunning or ultramadness? Andy Kenworthy looks at the punishing world of extreme long-distance running and talks to Kiwi devotees about why they do it.

Scooped by Peter Mellow

www.amth.com.au - June 29, 8:29 AM

Forget the jog slog and fit in a sprint for maximum weight loss results

<http://www.scoop.it/t/physical-and-mental-health>

37

Be true to...

Fitness



38