

Where Soul Meets Body:  
A Phenomenological Description of Sport Experience, Human Movement, Play,  
Exercise, and Mind/Body Wholism through Storytelling

A Dissertation

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

With a

Major in Education with Emphasis in Sport Pedagogy and Character Education

College of Graduate Studies

University of Idaho

by

Dina Mijacevic

August, 2012

Major Professor: Sharon Kay Stoll, PhD

## Table of Contents

ABSTRACT .....	4
EXISTENTIAL PROLOGUE .....	5
CHAPTER ONE- THE EXISTENTIAL “I” .....	7
The Problem Statement.....	11
Outline of the Dissertation.....	11
CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW .....	13
Problem with Mind/Body Dualism.....	13
Need for Study .....	47
CHAPTER THREE – PHENOMENOLOGY IN ACTION.....	49
Purpose.....	49
Theoretical Framework.....	49
Methodology - Phenomenology with Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Ihde, Kretchmar, Reid, & Saint Sing.....	51
Investigative & Instrumentation Techniques .....	72
Significance .....	80
Lived Experience: “I am my Numbers” .....	82
Study Design.....	86
Population and Sample .....	86
My Writing Style .....	87
Data collection .....	88
Ethical Considerations .....	89
Assumptions.....	89
Limitations .....	89
CHAPTER FOUR - EXPLORATIONS OF BODY/SELF PARTICIPANTS.....	90
Introduction.....	90
Participant Characteristics .....	90
Participants’ Profiles.....	96
Summary of Body/Self Participants .....	105
Discussion of Sub Problem One-Descriptive Questions .....	113
CHAPTER FIVE -REFLECTIONS AND DISSCUSIONS .....	133

Lance Armstrong & Body/Self .....	134
Craig Lambert & Mind over Water .....	140
Greg Louganis & Physical Intelligence .....	146
Christopher McDougall & Brain/Body Connection .....	149
S. Walsh & Running Free .....	150
<b>CHAPTER SIX - IMPLICATIONS FOR SPORT AND/OR EXERCISE BODY/SELF</b>	
<b>EDUCATION .....</b>	<b>153</b>
Introduction.....	153
Finding One: Transformation towards the Natural Athlete .....	153
Finding Two: Appendix for Sport and Exercise Educators .....	155
Summary .....	163
<b>THE EXISTENTIAL EPILOGUE .....</b>	<b>164</b>
Reflections on Journey.....	164
Researcher as a Sport and Exercise Educator .....	164
Future Directions for Inspirational Movements.....	166
Personal Reflection .....	167
Personal Lived Experience .....	168
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>APPENDIX A.....</b>	<b>178</b>
Institutional Review Board Support Letter .....	178
<b>APPENDIX B .....</b>	<b>179</b>
Invitation to Participate.....	179
Initial Email Contact.....	179
<b>APPENDIX C .....</b>	<b>180</b>
Informed Consent for Participation .....	180
<b>APPENDIX D.....</b>	<b>183</b>
Interview Question, Probing Questions, and Participants' Responses .....	183

## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study utilizes phenomenology, engaging the experience and the experiencer in sport, human movement, play, and exercise. Lived experiences will provide a description of how participants find meaning and mind/body connection in sport, human movement, play, and exercise. In addition, I will be describing and quoting professional athletes' sport experiences from published autobiographies to facilitate better understanding of phenomenology of lived experiences (Lance Armstrong's *It's not about the Bike: My Journey Back to Life*, Craig Lambert's *Mind Over Water*, Greg Louganis's *Breaking the Surface* Christopher McDougall's *Born to Run*). This dissertation study will try to explore the phenomenological connection between mind and body and description of sport experience, human movement, play, and exercise through storytelling (life narrative approach).

**EXISTENTIAL PROLOGUE**

"Soul Meets Body" (Death Cab for Cutie, 2000-2011)

I want to live where soul meets body

And let the sun wrap its arms around me

And bathe my skin in water cool and cleansing

And feel, feel what its like to be new

Cause in my head there's a greyhound station

Where I send my thoughts to far off destinations

So they may have a chance of finding a place

where they're far more suited than here

And I cannot guess what we'll discover

When we turn the dirt with our palms cupped like shovels

But I know our filthy hands can wash one another's

And not one speck will remain

And I do believe it's true

That there are roads left in both of our shoes

But if the silence takes you

Then I hope it takes me too

So brown eyes I hold you near

Cause you're the only song I want to hear

A melody softly soaring through my atmosphere

Where soul meets body

Where soul meets body

Where soul meets body

And I do believe it's true

That there are roads left in both of our shoes

But if the silence takes you

Then I hope it takes me too

So brown eyes I hold you near

Cause you're the only song I want to hear

A melody softly soaring through my atmosphere

A melody softly soaring through my atmosphere

A melody softly soaring through my atmosphere

A melody softly soaring through my atmosphere

## CHAPTER ONE- THE EXISTENTIAL ‘I’

An athlete may be that person, who persistently seeks new adventures, visualizes new movements, hears his or her mind and body, listens to his or her mind and body, anticipates, imagines astonishing body movements; who may be struck by his or her faith in their body and mind chain as if they came from the world where extraordinary movements just seem to flow, but may never suspects his or her mind, body, movement, play, exercise, and performance. An athlete can be that philosopher, who realizes that “the hand is as much mind as body” (Kretchmar, 1994, p. 41).

I am Serbian. My ancestors on my father’s side are Italian and German. My grandmother (Italian) is Maria Ferino. She was born Italian, so we have lots of relatives in Trieste, Italy from her side of the family. My grandfather (Serbian) was Nikola Mijacevic. He originally came from Montenegro, but we do not have any other relatives there that I know of. Perhaps, if he was still alive, he could have told me more about them. My name Dina, the sand dune, came from my mother who is Serbian. My parents are Stevan Mijacevic and Ljubica-Buba Medic. They met while working in the pharmaceutical company in Zemun, Serbia.

My father grew up in a dysfunctional family where my grandfather left my grandmother for a maid, who was only four years older than my father. They had a son who now lives in Canada and I know nothing about. My grandmother remarried and adopted another boy who committed suicide. I knew very little about my uncle and I was told that he passed away from cancer, but later I discovered that he hung himself at my grandmother’s house.

When your great love is rejected, something inside a man dies so all he could do was run away or meet someone to love. This must be done before he closes his book for once it is closed it is closed. Where there is work, there is hope. That hope for my father, was my mother. Despite his family issues, my father was an amazing athlete, an outstanding high jumper. Now as a track and field star he taught me how to be a good athlete, love sports, and love the human movement.

My mother, unlike my father, grew up in a Communist family. She has always valued getting an education. She finished her bachelor degree in chemistry, and now holds a PhD in organic chemistry.

I came into this picture in 1983 in Zemun, Serbia, at that time the former Yugoslavia. You can see how important sports are going to be in our family. I was involved in lots of sports, though not the usual sports for a girl in Serbia; volleyball and tennis. I played on the basketball team, European handball team, and was involved in track and field. I have never gotten an award for being the top math student, but I got an award for being the best female athlete in my school.

One thing I want to say about my lived experience and this study is that there was a motive. I suggest the reason is emotional because we feel. We feel because we are hungry, cold, afraid, brave, loving, or hateful. We may do what we do for reasons, emotional reasons. That is the engine that drives us. Life feels...Feeling can be connected to our intellect and we may ignore, hide from, disguise, and suppress that feeling at our peril and at the peril of those around us.

The years prior to 2008 had smiled upon me. Surrounded by great friends and a loving family, I was later to win best female athlete in my track and field club in Zemun,



former Yugoslavia, travel through US, and receive my undergraduate and graduate degrees. Life brought rewards through track and field, but no lasting peace or satisfaction. I'd always thought that a life of quality, enjoyment, and wisdom through sport and exercise were my human birthright and would be automatically bestowed upon me as time passed. I never suspected that I would have to learn how to live—that there were specific disciplines and ways of seeing the world of sport and exercise I had to master before I could awaken to a simple happy, uncomplicated life. R. Scott Kretchmar's *Practical Philosophy of Sport* showed me the error of my ways by contrasting them with his way, the Way of the Philosophical Athlete. His book constantly poked fun at my own serious, concerned, problematic life, until I came to see through his eyes of wisdom, compassion, and humor. And he never let up until I discovered what it means to live as a philosophical athlete.

Sport and exercise life is not a private affair. This phenomenological study is about the lived experience of not only me but a select few athletes. Their story and mine have lessons that are only useful if shared. So I've chosen to honor my participants by sharing their piercing lived sport and exercise experiences and ideas and opinions to meaningful approaches to human movement.

The world out there is a school. Life is the only real teacher. It offers many experiences, and if experience alone brought wisdom and fulfillment, then elderly people would be happy, enlightened masters. But the lessons of experience are hidden. I can help you learn from experience to see the world clearly, and clarity is something you desperately need right now. Your intuition knows this is true,

but your mind rebels; you've experiences much, but you've learned little  
(Millman, 1984, p. 24-25).

Like many philosophical ventures, this dissertation began accidentally.

. An extraordinary series of events took place in my life, beginning in August 2008, during my graduate work at the University of Idaho. It all began when I first read Scott R. Kretchmar's *Practical Philosophy of Sport*; that chance encounter with sport philosophy and the adventures that followed were to transform my sport and exercise life, and maybe even yours.

This study is an evocative reflection of self through sport and the human movement, play, and exercise; and a connection between the mind and the body plus a discussion of an athletic phenomenological experience with my participants through storytelling. In addition, this study will also describe phenomenological sport lived experiences of other professional athletes (Lance Armstrong, Craig Lambert, Greg Louganis, and Christopher McDougall). Therefore, the purpose of this phenomenological study is to access the lived sport and exercise experience in a volunteer population of athletes who have in the present and past sought for a deeper sense of meaningful connection where soul meets body.

As athletes we are often looking for that deeper sense of meaning, that great quest for the meaning of our sport, and that meaningful connection where soul meets body. The more awareness and knowledge athletes have about those things, the richer their own sport and exercise experiences may become, and the more they can contextualize their own experiences and not have a sense of isolation (relationships with others and oneself). The phenomenon I will try to describe may have everything to do with my own reality,

the experience of my own journey through a life as an athlete surviving on my own striving for a perfect connection, a perfect chain-sport-exercise-human movement-mind-body. Often moving alone being the activity until near fatigue or exhaustion brings me to my reality. A dramatic reminder of the reality I may have discovered, the reality of my perfect connection, my perfect chain to the outcome that waits

Wilson (2009) explains that analogies (data and analysis) are like a circular fishing net. “You could try to examine each of the knots in the net to see what holds it together, but it’s the strings between the knots that have to work in conjunction in order for the net to function” (p. 120). The above framework is due to the fact that most of my life has been spent moving. A journey through honoring the Sport and the Movement, and Mind and the Body. A life spent discovering what makes me love the movement, love the sport, love my mind, and love my body into what I have so identified as a Perfect Connection Where Soul Meets Body. Does this connection exist? I propose it does. Could you be interested enough to seek some clarification on this topic then I welcome you. Is this connection real? I propose it is.

### **The Problem Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to access the lived sport and exercise experience in a volunteer population of athletes who have in the present and past sought for a deeper sense of meaningful connection where soul meets body.

### **Outline of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is unorthodox in that the fleshed out problem and subproblems are found in chapter three. Chapter two is a review of known existential sport philosophers who argue for the phenomenological approach to the lived experience.

Chapter three is the complete methodology with a review of the philosophical phenomenological literature of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Idhe, Kretchmar, Reid, and Saint-Sing. Chapter four is the results of the phenomenological reflections of the participants in this study. Chapter five is the discussion of the reflections and what professional athletes have said about the phenomenological experience. Chapter six are the implications, findings and strategies of this study. And the Epilogue are my final reflections.

## CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Problem with Mind/Body Dualism.**

Our greatest talent also created the monster that could destroy us. Unlike any other organism in history, humans have a mind-body conflict: we have a body built for performance, but a brain that's always looking for efficiency." We live or die by our endurance, but remember: endurance is all about conserving energy, and that's the brain's department. "The reason some people use their genetic gift for running and others don't is because the brain is a bargain shopper."

(McDougall, 2009, p. 242)

The question of mind/body dualism may not be easily answered. To understand mind/body connection, we may need to understand the relationship of body and soul, play and beauty, and sport and political authority. I suggest that the phenomenological writers in sport, Meier & Morgan' brilliance is captured in the passage below regarding embodiment and sport. Meier & Morgan (1995) state,

Numerous philosophic speculation over many centuries accord the greatest importance either to the development of the soul or the mind as the essential defining aspect of humanness, and, consequently, the one that deserves most or even exclusive attention. Indeed, very few philosophers have ever asserted that the body has equal or greater value than the mind (p. 67).

What do embodiment and sport mean and why do some people declare that humans are composed of the separate essentials of mind and body, and even spirit or soul? In reality, my love for running is described by the process where both mind and body are engaged equally. As a former competitive runner I often watch and think about other runners and

their embodied connection. Furthermore, when I reflect on my distance running meets, this embodied connection becomes even more meaningful the older I get. My previous experience have taught me that I may have to disagree with Plato (1985) when he states,

He will be set free as far as possible for the eye and the ear and, in short, from the whole body, because intercourse with the body troubles the soul, and hinders her from gaining truth and wisdom. When the soul and the body are united, nature ordains the one to be a slave and to be ruled, and the other to be master and to rule (p. 69).

This stage may be set for the soul/body separation. Plato leads a soul-directed life and insists that our souls are the most important part of us. Through our souls we shall have access to knowledge, reality, goodness, and beauty. As a result, we are our souls because when we die and decompose, our souls shall live on. I do not propose that my running experience troubles the soul and hinders her from gaining truth and wisdom. On the contrary, I propose that my embodied connection allows me to gain truth and wisdom. My soul may not be superior over my body, and my body may not be superior over my soul. My best running performance may be possible when the soul and the body are united. If my body is not essential, but malignant and an obstacle to the smooth functioning of my soul, I suggest I can lose my identity. Our bodies can be essential to who we are. Nonetheless, Spelman (1982) raised a titillating concept when she described that “If we are our souls, and our bodies are not essential to who we are, then it doesn’t make any difference, ultimately, whether we have a woman’s body or a man’s body (p. 77). In addition, Merleau-Ponty, (1995) raises a significant question, “the body is more than a commodious instrument that I could do without: my body is myself, the man who I

am” (1995, p. 91). We often keep a distance from ourselves when we try to keep a distance from our bodies.

For instance, many objectifying practices in sport and exercise can easily amputate one’s spirituality by looking at individual components rather than by looking at the total person. Furthermore, the complexity of the connections and relationships that allow that individual to function can also be destroyed by objectification.

‘Mind’ is one of those, slippery terms like ‘love’. The proper definition depends on your state of consciousness. Look at it this way: you have a brain that directs the body, stores information, and plays with the information. We refer to the brain’s abstract processes as ‘the intellect’. Nowhere have I mentioned mind. The brain and the mind are not the same. The brain is real; the mind isn’t (Millman, 1984, p. 62).

This review of literature will summarize some approaches to encourage mind/body wholism and provide recommendation of a new theory for helping individuals find a meaning behind sport, human movement, play, and exercise.

Many things in our modern world try to force us to be separated, isolated individuals. We separate the secular from the spiritual, research and academia from everyday life. It is my dream that we may turn away from this isolation to rebuild the connections and relationships that are us, our world, our existence. We need to recognize the inherent spirituality, as well as the everyday applicability (Wilson, 2009, p. 137).

### **Body/Self Wholism<sup>1</sup>**

Spelman (1982) stated that to have more concern for our body than our soul is to act just like a woman. As evidence, Spelman provides an example of a soldier who surrenders to save his body, when he should be willing to die out of the courage of his soul. Hence, the soldier is turned into a woman. I can see the residue of this negative attitude about the tasks associated with the body. Spelman referred to Plato's misogyny as his somatophobia where the body, according to Spelman (1982), is seen as the cause of all the unwanted qualities a human being could have, and women's lives are spent practicing those unwanted qualities (p. 77). Further, Spelman explains that Plato was both a dualist and misogynist due to his negative views about the body.

First of all, I speak to you from my own experience; I am not relating abstract theories I read in a book or heard secondhand from an expert. I am one who truly knows his own body and mind, and therefore, knows others' as well. Besides, how do you know that I'm not your body intuition, speaking to you know (Millman, 1984, p. 33)?

Descartes also emphasizes the importance of the real distinction between the mind and body. Descartes feels that there is a vast distinction between the mind and the body, in that the body, from its nature, is always dividable and the mind is completely undividable (1951). Though this may sound odd, but Descartes further states,

For in reality, when I consider the mind-that is, when I consider myself in so far as I am only a thinking being-I cannot distinguish any parts, but I recognize and

---

<sup>1</sup> "Wholism"-a play on the word hole-but more whole, rather than holism, encompassing "whole" experience. Even though the Greek usage of meaning the whole experience is termed "holism," I am choosing the Native American usage of wholism. Indigenous theory framework is about the importance of not categorizing or naming, but to ask question, "What does this mean?"



conceive very clearly that I am thing which is absolutely unitary and entire. And although the whole mind seems to be united with the whole body, nevertheless when a foot or an arm or some other part of the body is amputated, I recognize quite well that nothing has been lost to my mind on that account (p. 71).

Conversely, Spelman emphasizes that the pain itself is not usefully catalogued as something just our minds or just our body's experience (1982). She reminds us that we can appeal to the physical without denying what is called "mind" and we can come to regard our physicality as "resource, rather than a destiny" (p. 81-82). Spelman (1982) states,

In order to live a fully human life we require not only control of our bodies (though control is a prerequisite); we must touch the unity and resonance of our physicality, our bond with the natural order, the corporeal ground of our intelligence (p. 81-82).

The primary duty facing the athlete may be struggling toward unification and harmony between mind and body. Paul Weiss (1969), for example, explains that the athlete becomes one with his body through practice, and comes to accept the body as himself (p. 93).

Granted that you may, in fact, experience the mind of a warrior on occasion; resolute, flexible, clear, and free of doubt. You can develop the body of a warrior, lithe, supple, sensitive, and filled with energy. In rare moments, you may even feel the heart of a warrior, loving everything and everyone who appears before you. But these qualities are fragmented in you (Millman, 1984, p. 30-31).

Since sport and human movement are my passion, I may never want to stop practicing the unification and harmony between mind and body. As an athlete, I may not wish to be regarded as capable of being completely understood by means of stimulus-response conditioning, laws of learning, transfer of training, and neurological brain wave analysis (Meier & Morgan, 1995). Meier describes this,

It is through the power and gestures of the 'lived-body,' fully and openly engaged in dialogue with the world, that man discloses, establishes, and broadens the personal meanings of his existence. Moments of "intense realness" available in sport provide opportunities for the unfolding of new insights and the restructuring of previous perceptions. During instances of total immersion and dynamic individuation man unfolds his powers, becomes aware of his capabilities and his limitations, develops forms of self-expression, and affirms himself (1995, p. 94).

Sport and exercise may often be characterized and inscribed as the celebration of an athlete as an open and meaningful embodied being. Jean-Marie Brohm (1978) explains,

[In sport that body is] experienced as an object, an instrument, a technical means to an end, a reified factor of output and productivity, in short, as a machine with the job of producing maximum work and energy (p. 30).

What does embodiment and sport mean to me? And why do some people declare that human bodies are supposed to be objectified? In Brohm' words, sport creates an atmosphere where athletes cannot experience any pleasure because pleasure heavily relies on what is done with the body. Thus, pleasure is only experienced when the game is won, personal performance goals satisfied, and the body executes what is trained to

execute. When this happens, Brohm (1978) continues, sport becomes a “prison of measured time” and alienates athletes from their own bodies (as cited in Eitzen, 1984, p. 30). In reality, my love for movement can be described by the process where both mind and body are engaged equally. I often disagree with Vince Lombardi when he states that “winning is not everything, it’s the only thing” or when Don Shula says that “no one ever learns anything by losing” (as cited in Eitzen, 1984, p. 61). My own quest for success can be winning my identity through sport and movement. If my body is often not essential, but malignant and an obstacle for winning, I propose I would lose my identity. Our bodies can be essential to who we are, no matter if we win or lose.

No more real than the shadow of a shadow. Here is the truth: consciousness is not in the body; rather, the body is in consciousness. And you are the consciousness; not the phantom mind which troubles you so. You are the body, but you are everything else too. That is what your vision revealed to you. Only the mind is deluded, threatened by change. So if you will just relax mindless into the body, you’ll be happy and content and free, sensing no separation (Millman, 1984, p. 90-91).

I suggest that sport, human movement, play, and exercise can provide athletes opportunities for increasing the numbers of individuals with whom they can relate. In the past, it was proposed that athletes have been cut off from the sense of self and power because they have been cut off from their bodies treating their bodies as objects for utilization. “What do you mean when you say, ‘My body is sore today’? Who is the ‘I’ who is separate from the body and speaks of it as a possession” (Millman, 1984, p. 89)? According to Leanne Schreiber, the reconnection with one’s body as the most basic sense

of power is absolutely necessary (as cited in Eitzen, 1984). Athletes may need to establish the sense of control and reclaim a sense of their own worth. As a result, Nancy Theriot (1978) asks the question about getting in touch with the physical self; “What is the positive contribution of a system of athletics which demands for its existence a beer-drinking, popcorn-eating audience which is totally out of touch with its physical self” (as cited in Eitzen, 1984, p. 393)? Bonnie A. Beck (as cited in Eitzen, 1984) poses another question; “how do we stop this procession toward NonSelf? Where do we begin our own Journey of Ecstasy, our own March of Joy/Integration/Reunification” (p. 409)? In the paragraph below, Beck provides an intriguing clarification of how to reconnect with one self;

We begin to create new patterns of movement/forms of moving/ways of moving that emphasize Wholeness/Integration/Connectedness. We begin to move in natural ways, spinning, spiraling, darting, dipping and swooping in ever-widening circles until our creative energy, released in movement, attracts other self/energized humans be-ing; and then we soar to quite places with rapidly beating hearts, sweating bodies, full lungs, and pulsating auras that cry “One. I am One. We are One” (as cited in Eitzen, 1984, p. 409).

### **Embodiment through Play**

Though Spelman and Meier highlight several significant points about embodiment, I suggest the emphasis on play is extremely crucial. Play can allow me the opportunity to escape from normalcy. While playing, it is through this playful movement where I can often express and define myself. Schiller, according to Fink (1960), says, “A man is whole only when he plays.” (p. 101). It is often through play when we could

actually see who people really are. Fink states, “We can indicate at first sight, as an essential element of play, that it is a passion of the soul” (1960, p. 104). In addition, Sartre describes that the desire to play is fundamentally the desire to be (1956, p. 111). Indeed, during moments of play, says Meier, man is fully his own master (1980, p. 121). Play can be a voluntarily process undertaken for intrinsic purposes. The player can be truly committed to the activity and he or she can fully experience the beauty of play. Due to this, according to Esposito, play, thus, gives satisfaction to man’s creative imagination, nurtures the emotions, excites the soul, and satisfies the senses (1974, p. 127). This also led Schiller to conclude, “to declare it once and for all, Man plays only when he is in the full sense of the word a man, and he is only wholly Man when he is playing“ (1965, p. 127).

Everything you’ll ever need to know is within you; the secrets of the universe are imprinted on the cells of your body. But you haven’t learned inner vision; you don’t know how to read the body. Your only recourse has been to read books and listen to experts and hope they are right. When you learn body wisdom, you’ll be a Teacher among teachers (Millman, 1984, p. 26).

### **You Get What You Play For (Forencich, 2003)**

Do we often pay other people to do our playing for us? Huizinga (1950) proposes that play is liberated and voluntary, spatially and temporally separate, and unsure in its outcome. Also, play, explains Huizinga (1950) is fruitless in practical sense, and has a pretend excellence outside of everyday life. Schmitz (1972) names three mistreatments that can jeopardize our play within sport and exercise activities. The first mistreatment is the victory which is apparently the goal of sports and exercise which distances athletes

for playful activities. The second abuse is performance and techniques which distance athletes from being creative and natural. The third mistreatment of play is the audience (fans) which lead to an exploitation of play. In fact, we know that true play may exist among athletes and exercisers, but it may not be the main focus of sports and movement. Yet, it is play that can make sport, exercise, and movement workouts more exciting, passionate, and fun. From a philosophic perception, Levy conceivably makes the straightest statement of the potential worth of play:

Play, then, is necessary to affirm our lives. It is through experiencing play that we answer the puzzle of our existence. To be free, and therefore to know play (know oneself), means to realize simultaneously the supreme importance and utter significance of our existence. To play means to accept the paradox of pursuing what is at once essential and inconsequential (ac cited in Thomas, 1983, p. 56).

When athletes are interested in play, they often tend to seek a variety in the quality of their movements. Athletes may add some risky and unpredictable movements. Forencich (2003) on the subjective meaning of play.

Being subjective, play can't be measured, broken down or analyzed. There can be no stats or spreadsheets. No Olympic finals in play, no standings, no rankings. Fun is in the body and the spirit of the player, not in the eyes of the judges or on the faces of stopwatches. There can be no standards, no qualification rounds, no eliminations; just experience. No show contracts to the best players, no endorsements deals to those who get the most pleasure out of movement. It's up to us; we get what we play for (p. 205).

Reflecting on play, Kohn said:

Play is not concerned with quantifying because there is no performance to be quantified...the process-oriented individual gladly gives up precision-particularly precision in the service of determining who is best-in exchange for pure enjoyment (as quoted in Forencich, 2006, p. 280).

In other words, “He who plays does not ask the score” (Forencich, 2006, p. 280).

Overall, I may not have any means of knowing the human body other than that of living it, which can mean taking up on my own explanation the drama which is being played out in it, and losing myself in it. I can be my body; at least wholly to the extent that I possess the experience, and yet at the same time my body can be as it were a “natural” subject, a provisional sketch of my total being. Meier explains that the experience of one’s own body runs counter to the reflective procedure which detaches subject and object from each other, and which gives us only the thought about the body, or the body as an idea, and not the experience of the body or the body in reality (1995, p. 92). Merleau-Ponty states, “nothing is more expressive than the human body; it is the locus and vehicle of “an indefinite number of symbolic systems” (1970, p. 125).

Understanding is one dimensional. It is the comprehension of the intellect. It leads to knowledge, which you have. Realization, on the other hand, is three dimensional. It is the simultaneous comprehension of the ‘whole-body’-the head, hear, and physical instincts. It comes only from clear experience (Millman, 1984, p. 26-27).

### **To The Things As They Are: How Phenomenology Helps with Objectification**

I can easily consider myself an Intrinsic Phenomenologist. I suggest this title be my individuality. It can be who I am and who I have become through sport, movement,

exercise, play, mind, and body. An Intrinsic phenomenologist can often call for an essential reflection on lived experiences. I guess I can compare myself to an Existential Phenomenologist. I often apply phenomenology as a method to discover reality and truth. Carolyn Thomas (1983) explains that existentialists, despite their diversity, call for a reflection on the “lived” or ongoing experience (p. 33).

Existentialism is the twentieth century position focusing on the analysis of existence, the subjectivity and irrationality of man, and his relationship to the world. The major contrast to many of the previous positions is that existentialism views man as a subject rather than an object and considers the human being as an end in himself rather than a means to an end. The existential position suggests that man is not subject to systems but that he is free to choose based on his own free will. Phenomenology is the study of human consciousness and self-awareness in an attempt to acquire knowledge and understand existence (p. 33-34).

To understand this concept one may need to conceptualize both mind and the body. Scientific methods may often make us treat our body as an object. For example, strength training, bioenergetics, and anthropometrics (i.e., body measurements) may all be mechanisms which we can use to identify strengths and weakness and establish standards for different sports, but they can also become distracting if we are fixated on something like weight and start to attribute failures to being too heavy or too light. The ridiculousness of this reasoning may become apparent if we step back and distance ourselves and ask, "Did Lance Armstrong become a great cyclist because he worked really hard to have tremendous leg strength and a great VO2-max? Or, does Lance Armstrong have tremendous leg strength and a great VO2-max because he worked



fantastically hard at becoming a great cyclist?" Obviously, it may seem to be the second one (but I do not know Lance so I cannot say for certain - maybe he spends all that time on the bike because deep down he is just really self conscious about his calves).

I am not saying it may not be important to have standardization especially in something like medicine. For instance, if a doctor is telling me my blood pressure or HDL level I may want that test to be standardized so I know where I am relative to the rest of the population. Is my cholesterol better than his? Or hers? I may not want the cholesterol test that he/she invented in his/her car on his/her way to the office that morning. But these standardized tests may not be the end-all be-all of health. A doctor may still need to interpret my results relative to a wide range of other factors and recognize that each person can be unique constellation of physiological attributes and while plenty of results on different test can possibly be unhealthy; there may not be a single one-size-fits-all criterion for health.

The same may hold true in the athletic development. The average NCAA basketball player can be a certain weight, with a certain vertical, and a certain power clean max. And if can be above these values you may be an above average basketball player? Obviously, you may be.

But back to the impetus for this note was when I was talking to a client who wants to be a promising triathlete and she asked about her ideal race weight. She laid out her height, body composition, 400m, 3k, and 10k times and asked me what I thought her ideal race weight should be. I think my answer surprised her, because my answer surprised me. I was thinking about how much fat mass she could lose per week while maintaining lean tissue mass and what that might mean for her finishing kick when my

mouth got tired of waiting for my brain to come up with an answer and just threw something out there. I said, "I would train as smart as I could for the next six months. Do not weigh yourself do not worry about what you eat, just time yourself in workouts and everyday ask how you feel. At the end of six months examine your competition time and see if you feel like you are at your best. Then, go and weigh yourself and get your body fat percentage and your heart rate and all of that. If you felt your competition performance was really good then you are around your ideal race weight. If you felt like it could improve, try it over again for another three months or so."

By the time my brain caught up with my mouth, I thought, "Hey, that's an intriguing idea." Suggestions: Train as "smart" as you can- this means to train as hard as you can for the next sixty days without overtraining, so give yourself at least a few active rest days a week, but otherwise give as much as you can over the next 60 days. Eat right - Plenty of fruits and veggies! Balance your food intake so you consume plenty of complex carbohydrates (about 50% of your calories, more if you're a hardcore enduro person); lean sources of proteins (about 25% of your calories), and fats (20-25% of your calories) from good sources like nuts and fish. Limit your intake of refined sugars and alcohol. Drink plenty of water and stay well hydrated. Otherwise, just eat when you are hungry and drink when you are thirsty. Share your achievement - in the end you've got to share what you feel are positives and negatives and (if hopefully multiple people do it) we can learn from each other's experiences and adapt these principles of purposeful training to other areas of our lives. Because after all, if I am working out for fun instead of for exercise and I happen to be 130lbs I'll be a lot happier and I'd wager a lot healthier than if I am

working out trying to be 100 lbs because some other girl/guy is 100 lbs and I think I want to be like her/him.

In the end it boils down to one of my favorite quotes of all time. The myth of the Olympic Games, "*Citius, Altius, Fortius*" ~ "Swifter, Higher, Stronger". And it does not mean swifter, or higher, or stronger than somebody else, it just means swifter, higher, and stronger physically and mentally. Competitions may often give us a way to compare ourselves to each other. For example, maximum repetitions in the weight-room, body fat percentages, or heart rate levels can give us a way to compare ourselves to others. If we try to focus on these individual instances for too long, I suggest we may lose sight of the dynamic and organic nature of sport as process. It can be a continuous process that keeps us moving forward and progressing - and not just in sport - throughout our lives.

“You’re full of useless knowledge. You carry too many facts about the world, but you know so little of yourself” (Millman, 1984, p. 26). In today’s world, we have been conditioned to view exercise as a means to lose weight, get in shape, and enhance our physical looks. Due to this view, we may fail to acknowledge that for many people, movement is a way to tell a story to the world. For instance, physical activity, sport, and exercise often say; “This is who I am.” Simply, find activities you absolutely cannot live without and enjoy them; Train Smart, Eat Right, and Share your Achievements. As health columnist Laura Jones claims, “Exercise is a habit you break, movement is something you do forever” (as cited in Forencich, 2006, p. 268). Therefore, the purpose of this phenomenological study is to access the lived sport and exercise experience in a volunteer population of athletes who have in the present and past sought for a deeper sense of meaningful connection where soul meets body.

### **Unconditional Love for Sport and Movement**

The true beauty of what we do in sport, movement, play, and exercise can be hidden in our metaphysical knowledge and experience. Athletes can be passionate about this subjective part and live in their sport or physical activity. In the following passage David Brunner reflects on his lived experience.

I was fortunate enough to receive instruction that instilled in me a life-long love of sport. My father was my first teacher, long before high school, and he transferred an enthusiasm for play to me that still burns in my soul when I think of the look in his eye when he first attempted to show how to shoot a basket. He had been a player at Duke...in the 1940's and while he had left the game behind physically, he was still under its spell, and desired for me to become a member of 'the club.' The special group that receives the emotional and physical gifts that come from immersion and participation in the traditions, practice, and games that comprise organized sport...I have taught kids from age 7 and up-It was here that I believe that my love for teaching was evident. I would bring some football equipment with me from school...and the kids would go wild. The opportunity to run, hit, block, tackle was a joyous epiphany to them. To see the pure fun and the basic movement and activity proved them was an energizing experience that transferred reciprocally to me the field to bring the best out in these students. I too began to play. For, "really to play, a man must play like a child" (Holowchak, 2002, p. 14). Exercise is present in each day of my life. Whether throwing pass skeleton at practice, riding the bike at the gym lifting, running, surfing, or playing pick-up basketball, I find time daily to bring my body/self to the place that provides the spark of energy that makes the rest of it work so well. Just last week,

I was reminded of the special nature of sport when participating in a pick-up basketball game at the Medical University of South Carolina. After the game was completed; a well contested full court affair, I spent some time with my teammates and opponents, offering the obligatory 'good game' to all. However, in this case we meant it. It was a 'good game,' and we all were fortunate to have been participants in it. We started out as relative strangers; just shooting baskets together, and ended up as a sort of community of characters. Characters who all shared a common joy and essential roles in our drama that became 'our game.' A game that we had played. "Play as fun...a voluntary free activity that...had itself as an end" (Huizinga in Holowchak, 2002, p. 7 as cited in Stoll, 2010).

Todd (1979) argues that "one of the most basic pleasures associated with sport can be called 'joy of movement'" (p. 9)

Such pleasures may also be associated with, and be simultaneous with, other pleasures such as the enjoyment of a summer day and the feel of grass on the bare feet. Still, the joy of movement derives almost entirely from tactual and somatic sensations, and very little from other kinds of sensations (p. 10).

I propose that many people like to play sports, exercise, or move because they just like how their body feels. For the rest of us, exercise or physical activity may present themselves as a chore. Furthermore, Todd (1979) explains that a swimming coach finds an additional beauty and an extraordinary sensation of being in the water, or feeling completely powerful and strong as one pulls through the water.

Participation in any sport has the potential for being an intensely beautiful and very satisfying experience. In dedicating their performances to the gods, the

Greeks may have been giving religious expression to an aesthetic truth. The beauty is of several kinds. There is a beautiful feeling in meeting a challenge, in pushing one's limitation outward, in going faster or harder, or longer than one had ever done before. There is beauty in feeling one's mind and body working together at full capacity in complete harmony. When one realizes those different kinds of beauty all at once, it is absolutely wonderful, an aesthetic experience of the highest order, a celebration of life (p. 18).

In her autobiography, *Jumping Over the Moon*, Alice Coachman, former Olympian and the first African-American woman to win the Olympic gold medal in London in 1948 reflects on her unconditional love for running and jumping. Alice Coachman learned to be competitive by playing with boys. "I knew I was going to get a whipping, but I went on anyway. I loved nothing more than running and jumping on Albany's dirt roads. Jumping over a rope held by two schoolmates, I strengthened my legs and honed my athletic abilities" (Roulhac, 1993, p. 35-36).

My past experiences have taught me that sport and exercise success may not come with toughness, but compassion, kindness, and love. That's right: Love (McDougall, 2009). I may have been a lot happier sticking to good, hard, and quantifiable data (VO2 max and training zones). But, how do we actually make athletes love their sport, physical activity, exercise, or movement? How can I flip the internal switch that changes us into the passionate movers? I remember back in a day my parents had to yell at me to slow down. Every game I played, I played at top speed, at 100 percent, making it the last time in my life I'd ever be hassled for going too hard and too fast. Christopher McDougall

(2009), in *Born to Run*, explains that the real secret of Tarahumara, the running people was that they'd never forgotten what it felt like to love running.

Distance running was revered because it was indispensable; it was the way we survived and thrived and spread across the planet. You ran to eat and to avoid being eaten; you ran to find a mate and impress her, and with her you ran off to start a new life together. You had to love running, or you wouldn't live to love anything else. And like everything else we love-everything we sentimentally call our "passions" and "desires"-it's really an encoded ancestral necessity. We were born to run; we were born because we run. We're all Running People, as the Tarahumara have always known (p. 91-93).

There may be some kind of a connection between the capacity to love and the capacity to love sport and exercise. I propose that both the capacity to love and the capacity to love sport and exercise can depend on our desires, passions, appreciations for what we got rather than what we want, and being patient and understanding. Maybe getting better in the capacity to love can make us better in the capacity to love and appreciate sport and exercise.

You guys need to get together and remember what you're doing this for. You're not doing it for money. It may seem that way, but that's just an external reward. You're doing it for the internal rewards. You're doing it for each other and the love of the game (Jackson, 1995, p. 162)

### **Competition in Sport & Exercise**

Tutko & Burns (as cited in Eitzen, 1984) described competition as a studied phenomenon, "that people are not *born* with a motivation to win or to be competitive" (p.

136). For instance, humans adapt an activity with an instinct to survive. Therefore, the will to win, explain Tutko & Burns originates from an environmental trigger and family influences. In the following passage, President Ford discusses about the will to win;

The reason I make reference to those winning seasons at Michigan is that we have been asked to swallow a lot of home-cooked psychology in recent years that winning isn't all that important any more, whether on the athletic field or in any other field, national and international. I don't buy that for a minute. It isn't enough just to compete. Winning is very important. More important than ever... If you don't win elections you don't play, so the importance of winning is more drastic in that field... Broadly speaking, outside, of a national character and an educated society, there are few things more important to a country's growth and well being than competitive athletics (as cited in Eitzen, 1984, p. 294-295).

According to the above statement, President Ford's values may imply that participation is unnecessary, but the outcome may be the primary reason for a contest. Moreover, competition can assume that sport may be a reflection of the existence where the most physically and mentally healthy can survive or exist. Further, Winer explains the equivalence of winning an athletic contest and mountain climbing;

Whatever the thrill upon arrival on a mountain peak, it would be without much meaning if the climber had been transported there effortlessly by helicopter. The mountain top is a symbol, and attaining it is confirmation of obstacles overcome. Its meaning resides for the climber in the struggle he has made and the difficulties mastered en route. The motives of mountain climbers and jocks have in common a wish to confront physical obstacles and the surmount them. The message their



achievement impart is not only about their physical abilities, but of qualities of character as well (as cited in Eitzen, 1984, p. 295).

I may not have any means of knowing that we may have fostered the generation of youth whose main goal may be to become competitive athletes, which can mean that children will begin specializing in little leagues at the expenses of education and the social life. Bill Russell argues that we have damaged team play for a win now mentality. In accumulation, Sage (1974) explains that “the sport experience comes to be defined in terms of winning and losing rather than in terms of other sources of enjoyment” (as cited in Eitzen, 1984, p. 393). When you take the fun out, says Terry Orlick, a sports psychologist at the University of Ottawa, you risk turning a kid away from competitive sports (as cited in Eizen, 1984, p. 423). Dawkins’ statement speaks a great deal about competition;

The occasion for competition is more important than the outcome. Sports must go beyond the formalities of good sportsmanship. They must reach all the way to “fair play.” The essential difference is that fair play involves taking a stand beyond the rules of the game—a stand that places your winning at risk, but “a stand that preserves the dignity and value of sport.” It is a moral issue and is based on an inward conviction that to win by cheating, by an umpire error or by an unfair stroke of fate is not really to win at all. If athletic competition does teach then what more valuable lesson is there to learn from time to time than that we have a responsibility to stand up for what is right. MacArthur spoke of seeds being sown.

The seeds are values. What are ours (as cited in Eitzen, 1984, p. 428-429)?

Reflecting on his tennis experience, Andre Agassi (2009) talks about winning.

But I don't feel that Wimbledon has changed me. I feel, in fact, as if I've been let in on a dirty little secret: winning changes nothing. Now that I've won a slam, I know something that very few people on earth are permitted to know. A win doesn't feel as good as a loss feels bad, and the good feeling doesn't last as long as the bad. Not even close (p. 167).

I do occasionally wonder if athletes are motivated to compete due to external rewards or intrinsic values. In handling this conflicting impasse, Coakley (1978) described that in his 1917 treaties on physical culture, Mao signified that the main goal of competition in China was to toughen the socialist party through individual health and physical well-being (p. 39). In other words, China's philosophy of sport in the 1970's was friendship first and competition second. In addition, Chinese people felt the final score is only worth for a few moments, where friendship is forever. In the 1970's in China, according to Coakley (1978), even elite athletes declined to discuss their accomplishment and were ashamed to make any indications to their win/loss verifications.

Winning is important to me, but what brings me real joy is the experience of being fully engaged in whatever I'm doing. I get unhappy when my mind begins to wander, during wins as well as losses. Sometimes a well-played defeat will make me feel better than a victory in which the team doesn't feel especially connected (Jackson, 1995, p. 201)

The occurrence of competitive references is so vast in American society that people often overlook that there may be another method of impending sport participation.

Coakley (1978) reflects on his lived experience with the Special Olympics.

The running events began shortly after I arrived. They included the 50-, 100-, and 220-yard dashes; the 440-yard and mile runs; and the 440-yard relay. Throughout the day, occasional cheers and numerous words of encouragement came from the spectators, who were primarily the relatives of the athletes. They made no negative comments, and they seemed to be overjoyed whenever a finish line was crossed—no matter who was the winner. Out on the field, the athletes cheered for each other and hugged their fellow competitors after an event was completed—no matter what the outcome. And the coaches and other volunteers congratulated the athletes and gave them words of praise whenever they participated—no matter how well they performed. I had never seen anything like it. The athletes knew who won and who lost; they tried hard; and they cherished their first-, second-, and third-place ribbons and the ribbons they received for each event they entered. Their warmth and enthusiasm were contagious. Their coaches gave them advice on technique mixed with the encouragement, but the advice seemed to always focus on the individual's effort apart from any of the competitive relationships or reward structures. The outcomes were important to the athletes, but outcomes took a back seat to the sheer pleasure and the camaraderie of personal involvement. I was repeatedly amazed to see all the athletes become elated when they or their peers finished an event. The excitement of the person coming in last place was just as intense and spontaneous as the excitement of the winner. And those watching cheered everyone. About halfway through the meet, there was an incident that revealed to me that what I was seeing in the Special Olympics was truly a unique form of sport competition. It occurred in a 220-yard race in which three 12-year old youngsters were participating. They were evenly matched,

so when the starter's gun fired, they ran shoulder to shoulder into the curve on the track. As they came out of the turn, one of the runners had taken a two-step lead, but about 25 yards from the finish line, he tripped and fell to the cinder surface of the track. Instead of racing past him to victory, his two opponents simultaneously stopped, turned around, and helped him up. Together they brushed him off, and then, each holding one of his hands, they jogged together across the finish line. It was a three-way tie for first place. In my 20 years of playing and watching sport, I had never seen anything so dramatic. I later discovered that the response of the two runners was made without prior advice from the coaches or anyone else. They did it on their own, and they did it so matter-of-factly that it looked like they never gave it a second thought. Unlike "normal" athletes, their compassion was not overwhelmed by the heat of competition (p. 45-46).

After reflecting upon Coakley's experience, I suggest that there can be so much joy and compassion in competition when is not structured for the personal gain. Sage (1974e) discovered an interesting factor when working with athletes; their sport participation declined because they felt burned out from their sport activity. These findings led Sage (1974e) to conclude that these athletes never learned to enjoy themselves in organized programs; their focus was always on the outcome rather than the process (as quoted in Coakley, 1978, p. 115). Nonetheless, I often forget that sport can be more than competition. Sport may be about respect for oneself and others, and trusts in oneself and our bodies. Not to have confidence, says Simone De Beauvoir (1974) "in one's body is to lose confidence in oneself" (as cited in Coakley, 1978, p. 243). Athletes can have positive and successful experiences playing sport. Coakley (1978) explains, "Through those

experiences, it is hoped that they can gain the confidence and self-mastery necessary to build a healthy self-image (p. 46). It may be time to stop judging athletes on the basis of wins, losses, trophies, prestige, fame, and money and start judging them on the basis of effort, personal progress, moral values, and ethical decisions. Most significant, athletes may try not to compare themselves to anybody else and realize that they are all important in their own unique way. In accumulation, coaches and trainers can be concerned with athletes' feelings, emotions, social, moral, and psychological development. Sport competition may be stimulating enough, but not at the point that the focus is on outcomes rather than process. Out of respect for our individual sport, we can remind our society that competition can be more than winning and we can continue to keep it alive. Leonard (1973), in Coakley (1978) states, "In the proper proportion, competition is like a little salt, "...it adds zest to the game and to life itself. But when the seasoning is mistaken for the substance, only sickness can follow" (p. 62).

The true beauty of competitive athletics can come from opponents struggling against each other, but also from athletes struggling against themselves. Jack Scott (1971) explains it the best,

The index of how well you do is how well you struggle. If you don't struggle well, you should feel badly. But you shouldn't feel badly just because you lose. The final score should almost be identical (as cited in Coakley, 1978, p. 313).

According to Huizinga (1955), the Greeks referred to struggle as *agon* (as cited in Coakley, 1978, p. 318). Huizinga (1955) says,

This same desire to seek out the experience of a challenge occurs in group activities. People getting together to play basketball day after day may find that

they would eventually like to test their collective skills against those of another group. This does not mean that their own involvement has ceased to be satisfying, but only that they want to add another dimension to that involvement (as cited in Coakley, 1978, p. 318).

Correspondingly, Paul Weiss (1969) has suggested that contests may lead athletes to concentrate on the consequences of their involvement. Weiss (1969) explains,

When the competition is severe and the struggle strenuous, we tend to forget that the justification of contests is their provision of opportunities to find out who one is in relation to other men in a bounded situation. Violations of rules, underhanded practices, deliberate attempts to injure, all testify to the magnitude of men's passions and their desire to be victorious-and to their failure to keep focused on the athletic event (as cited in Coakley, 1978, p. 318).

I propose that sport can be the embodiment of a balance between good-natured expression, movements, and competitive challenge.

Lombardi's statement that winning is the only thing may lead athletes to believe that winning is central to their sport world and experience. On the contrary, Vince Lombardi once described a champion as that athlete who plays well whether they are losing or winning (Thomas, 1983, p. 113).

To link respect, competition can be relational event where athletes come together and where athletes may appear to have greater ability for self-understanding (Thomas, 1983). To support Thomas' (1983) argument, Kretchmar (1975) explained that it is possible to give oneself to another in an athletic competition even though both athletes are going for the same goal (p. 20-22). In addition, Hyland (1978) experiences

competition as athletes questioning and striving together where each athlete puts his/her finest effort to be the best, play hard, and be fair (p. 35).

#### Sport & Exercise Meaning: Subjective Approach to Sport & Exercise

Meaning and experience is individual. People do sports for skill, fitness, knowledge, and even pleasure. I propose that skill and pleasure be ranked above fitness. Whether I am a knower or a known, the importance should be on the skills and thoughts if learning to learn is the major goal. While learning, it is through practicing skills where athletes can express and define themselves. Gill (1993) is correct when he states, “knowledge is only truly knowledge when it is incorporated into one’s life at the behavioral level” (p. 77). In his paragraph about the skills, Kretchmar (1994) argues,

The fact is that we grow into stories and meaning more than we encounter them as foreign propositions or theories. Cultural traditions, hobbies, dances, games, habits, crafts and other activities point us in some directions and away from others. The skills we learn tell us implicitly that it is important to do this and not that. Moreover, these activities come loaded with values—with etiquette, with ways of behaving, with right attitudes and so on. By learning play and game skills, we grow into rights and wrongs, values and disvalues, things that are important and other things that are not valuable...Games and play resonate with the dominant messages of our time and place, and this builds a compass into our being that tells us the directions in which we should develop our personal stories (p.167).

According to Freire (as cited in Gill, 1993),

Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other. Rather than being something that happens or is done; it is a verb rather than a noun. Better still, knowing is here conceived as a participle, as an ever ongoing activity wherein the knower is in dialogue with the world and with the knowers (p. 26).

As evidence, I would not be where I am today if it were not for this vision of knowing as a process which transforms the known as well as the knower. Nonetheless, Freire raised a great point when he described that in a world there must be a reciprocal, dialogical relationship, not only between the teacher and the student, but between the knowers (including the teacher!) and the known, for knowing to take place (as cited in Gill, 1993, p. 27). The true learning, according to Gill (1993) only takes place when the learner is confronted with a problem. Alfred North Whitehead's philosophical approach is also captured in the passage regarding the power of education, "we are dealing with human minds, and not with dead matter...the evocation of curiosity, of judgment, of the power of mastering a complicated tangle of circumstances, the use of theory in giving foresight in special case" (as cited in Gill, 1993, p. 16). Alfred North Whitehead, according to Gill (1993), describes learning as dynamic activities and skills rather than as the transfer and manipulation of static information and cultural values (p. 16). Dewey, in Gill (1993), centers on experience itself as the source, goal, and criterion of all cognitive activity (p. 20). Gill (1993) states that according to Dewey,

Everything depends upon the quality of the experience which is had. The quality of any two aspects. There is an immediate aspect of agreeableness or



disagreeableness, and there is its influence upon later experiences. The first is obvious and easy to judge. The effort of an experience is not borne on its face...Hence the central problem of an education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences (p. 21).

Further, Kretchmar (1994) explains the pleasure values. He continues,

Pleasure is also the value that fosters cultural literacy. It gets people back to the games and dances of their country, region, or town. This pleasure motivated repetition leads to the socialization in the values, goals, and meanings of a people. A way of life becomes something of a habit through these repeated encounters. Pleasure is influenced by familiarity. Activities that were once a great deal of fun sometimes grow stale. People have mood swings that influence the degree of enjoyment that is experienced. External factors, like the attitudes of other participants in a group activity, can dramatically affect the level of enjoyment...Thus, if continued participation or repeated involvement were to be based only on pleasure, it might be on very unsure footing (p.146).

Satisfactory life experiences build a logical and meaningful life stories. By developing our sport and exercise life stories, we may realize our connection with mind and body (body/self). We can succeed in defining our life through exercise and movement. Sport, human movement, play, and exercise are not something we have to work into the day. Instead, sport, human movement, play, and exercise can be a pure joy to look forward to. Kretchmar (1994) comments,

Perhaps the most fundamental and customary experience of a coherent life comes with developing and living a story. As we mature, move through school, prepare for our life's work and play, make commitments to mates or choose to remain single, and start families and careers, we continue to define our stories and achieve, hopefully increasing degrees of meaning, satisfaction, and at-homeness with our choices. We refine our goals and gain a good sense of what fits and what does not (p.131).

In addition, athletes and movers can try to discover and define oneself through their sport or physical activity. For example, I can describe and define myself; "I am a runner where I no longer see myself as a slave to running, but running is who I am." Discovering and defining oneself through every movement our sport and physical activity can become a joy, not work or chore. Working on our sport skills and physical activity can be regarded as special. This argument is further supported by Kretchmar (1994).

Discovery. Human movement is a dialogue between persons and a spatiotemporal world. The dialogue is given life by purposes - to play, to win, to score, to kick, to show. As the dialogue unfolds, discoveries typically trip along one after another. People learn about themselves –their personalities, their capabilities, their intensity, their determination, their generosity, their fears, their tenderness, their prickliness, their capacity for love, their potential for hate. This information does not come inscribed on parchment. It comes as human beings jump, through their victories and defeats, when they swing or pirouette, as they fall or dive, while they pass to a teammate or get shut out of an offensive scheme. This process of discovering can be valued for its own sake (p. 195).

Is there an intrinsic value of sport and physical activity? Pleasure is always something intriguing, captivating, fun, and enjoyable. More accurately, experiencing joy through running; the aesthetic of running. Running has a pronounced and powerful aesthetic component. Aesthetic meaning pleasing to the senses: eyes, ears, nose, touch, taste, and proprioceptors. For example when I run, my eyes provide the beauty of the river, the trees, the sky ... When I run, I hear the rhythmic pattern of my own feet, my breathing, and the beat of my own heart. When I run, I smell the pine trees and the river, in spring it's the blossoms around me. Even if I run in the city and smell car exhausts and wet pavement, it brings me joy. When I run, I taste the salt of my own sweat, the cold air, and even almost taste the smell of pine trees. When I run, I have the joy of feeling spent and my joints and muscles give me the pleasure of the aesthetic experience of fatigue. It is the effortless effort that I experience.

Pleasure often occurs in environments where something of a spell has been cast over its participants they are give to the experience—so given, in fact, that they are not sure why they spent so much time there. When asked after the fact why they gave so much energy to dancing, playing field hockey, or riding a bicycle, for instance, these players will often say simply that they experienced a great deal of pleasure. Or more likely, they will just say it was fun. (Kretchmar, 1994, p.168).

The problem and reality of an objective approach to movement, sport, and exercise is many times the same thing. Often running is initiated because it is fun, and the fun wears off. Similarly, running may begin because we want to achieve fitness, and the need eventually wears off. While everything we do may have some sort of meaning, but

it does not have to be meaningful. For example, what if we became so used to running activities that we did not need a reason to do it; we just participated because it's what you do-it's part of who you are.

We may want to feel something in every sport and physical activity we do. When we feel something in our sport, movement, and physical activity, we may be more grounded in the moment and in complete awareness of our bodies and their potential. Thus, we can turn our attention inward encouraging ourselves to let go of external comparisons and judgments and allowing for a deeper experience in our performance and practice. Maybe we can try to practice based on how we feel today, not how we felt yesterday. Sport, movement, play, and exercise may be a process and a journey, not a destination. Therefore, we may focus on: "I am listening to the Body," "I am letting go of Competition," "I am letting go of Judgment," and "I am letting go of Expectations" (Shaw, 1997, p. 12).

Thomas (1983) in her book *Sport in a Philosophic Context*, argues that people desire for sports and exercise to be valuable and meaningful without understanding their true value, meaning, or potential in a society (p. x). I suggest two basic assumptions: (1) people do not voluntarily engage in meaningless activities and (2) meaning is highly individual and often difficult to communicate. Thomas' (1983) belief is centered within the lived sport and exercise experience. Why do people play sports or exercise? According to Carolyn Thomas (1983), only be experience and a subjective reflection is it possible for athletes to truly understand the satisfaction and passion for their activity.

The analytical methods used in sport and exercise science can often explain what sport and exercise are about. Can these methods explain the importance of the sport and exercise lived experience?

Significant moments in movement activity come from our experiencing them.

These are the moments which provide the basis for the worth of activity and which constitute the motivating and driving force which causes us to return time and again seeking new, yet old engagement” (Kleinman, 1970, p. 11)

I suggest that people often search sport and exercise movements and physical activities that are meaningful, self-satisfying, and positive. Thomas (1983) supports the above suggestions by arguing that people usually do not engage in activities which are meaningless or energy depriving (p. 90).

As athletes, we can try to ask ourselves “How elegantly can I move?” or “How good can I feel?” or “How can I get the best out of my workouts?” Thus, we can try to feel passionate, more expressive, and more inspirational. Forencich (2003) explains that when athletes step into the gym, playing field, or the court, they may want to try to create an experience with meaning (p. 228).

In this way, every movement session takes on a deeper meaning. When you go for a run, you’re not just burning calories, you’re creating culture. Every workout becomes both an act of affirmation and an act of defiance. Every play session an expression of joy and rebellion. By moving vigorously and frequently, you become an activist, not only for your own personal health and happiness, but for social progress (Forencich, 2003, p. 304).

Coakley's (1978) *Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies* provides three major factors for developing a definition of sport: 1) the types of activities involved, 2) the structure of the context in which the activities take place, and 3) the orientation of the participants (p. 7). Keating (1964) further argues, "That sport is necessarily characterized by a subjective *spirit of play* among the participants" (as cited in Coakley, 1978, p. 10). In other words, the term "spirit of play" can mean that participation may be optional and voluntary due to intrinsic motivation towards a certain activity of interest. In reality, to define sport and view sport as an activity, I suggest that it may be necessary to adjust our attention from the social classification to an individual participant and their perceptions and sport experiences. I recognize that behavior surfaces out of individual meanings of sport and the sport world around them. Contrary, a social system within sport, I propose is best understood in terms of individual achievements and relations. Sport activity can be defined as an activity where individuals are motivated by intrinsic reasons.

Martin Buber (1970) explains that there is neither nothing in man (the I) nor in the world (the Thou) except the connection between them. People can bring their own values to sport and exercise and make it meaningful and worthy. Athletes may be largely responsible for creating their own sport and exercise meanings.

Sooner or later in sport, the serious striver after excellence will meet a situation that is almost too big for him to master. Such situations occur in ordinary life and can often be dodged. We can play hide and seek with reality, avoiding facing the truth about ourselves but in sport we can't do this...As a result, sport leads to the most remarkable self-discovery, of limitations as well as abilities. The discovery is partly physical...but mainly the discovery is mental. In time we learn how far from being

self-sufficient we are, we realize the value of cooperation and assistance from others. But less we start out alone, we never learn the answers other can best answer and those we must answer for ourselves (Metheny, 1968, p. 66).

### **Need for Study**

The need for my study is to present the reader with another view. This dissertation research I propose to follow is about ideas developing through the formation of meaningful sport and exercise experiences, and human movement knowledge. I will try to develop a relationship between the storytellers and you; the readers. Please allow yourself a little time to accept this narrative journey and somehow connect to the world of sport, movement, play, and exercise. I say this in relation to attitudes, behaviors, phenomena, stories, experiences, and ethics that remain inside of what I call “The world of Movement.”

Sports in America, according to Gorn & Goldstein (1993) have always been a strange mixture of drama, affliction, superiority, rudeness, cleansing, corruptness, and benevolence. My purpose will be to help my readers explore the phenomenological and life narrative connection between mind and body through sport experience, human movement, play, and exercise. Times have changed, says Wharton (2004), yet the phenomenon prevails...Sport (p. 19). Not a day has gone by where something I do, or think, or act upon does not involve some connection to sport, human movement, play, and exercise. In fact, it may be said that I have not grown up. From a young age to now almost twenty years later, I can still smell the odor of my first track and field practice. I remember receiving my first prize for being the fastest girl in my school.

I may have many reasons and purposes for writing this research. I propose that my sport and exercise society tries to develop their own relationships both with me and my participants. In addition, I can try to help athletes and exercisers benefit from another view, a view from the inside (intrinsic view); where soul meets body (body/self) view.



## CHAPTER THREE – PHENOMENOLOGY IN ACTION

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to access the lived sport and exercise experience in a volunteer population of athletes who have in the present and past sought for a deeper sense of meaningful connection where soul meets body. The research methodology used in this dissertation includes existential reflection and stories, personal conversations, and interviews. Hopefully, the methodology used will bring more awareness and knowledge on body/self-utilization through sport, human movement, play, and exercise. This study will also implement the phenomenological sport experiences of other professional athletes (Lance Armstrong, Craig Lambert, Greg Louganis, & Christopher McDougall) to help explain lived sport and exercise experiences<sup>2</sup> of the subjects and the authors.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The main sources of research for this dissertation study are from Husserl (1923) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1964)<sup>3</sup>. I have selected certain elements and terms applicable to the discussion of the body/self sport and exercise experience that I propose will benefit the direction of this dissertation study. Throughout this dissertation, I mostly use Merleau-Ponty's arguments because his philosophy is the closest to the body/self

---

<sup>2</sup> Heather L. Reid, noted sport philosopher and a past president of IAPS (International Association of Philosophy of Sport), argues that these stories are existential, phenomenological descriptions. A purist may not agree because none of these writers use a recognized philosophical application of phenomenology in these writings. However, for the purpose of the present study, I will agree with Reid and use these writers to help flash out the existential, lived story of the subjects studied as well as my own lived story (2002).

<sup>3</sup> According to Ihde, the personal I, first person is a required method of phenomenological study. I will use the personal pronoun also to describe the methodology and the application.

relationship<sup>4</sup>. Also, Merleau-Ponty is an Existentialist and Apollonian. Apollonians argue that existentialism is directed toward a positive choice to make a difference. It is joyous living through this freedom, and thus living life to the fullest. Husserl's (1923) theory in this dissertation study will be used to describe things as they exist<sup>5</sup>. Merleau-Ponty's (1964) theory is chosen because he argued that we are unable to completely and fully detach ourselves from the phenomenon. In other words, we must live the phenomenon and be completely connected to this phenomenon if we want to experience truth.

Throughout this dissertation I will also be referencing *Practical Philosophy of Sport* by Scott R. Kretchmar. Scott R. Kretchmar (1994) was gracious enough to help me discover my existential and phenomenological body/self connection. Without him, I would have not made it to this dissertation research. I always knew that I could experience special moments in my athletic career, I just never fully understood them until Kretchmar's *Practical Philosophy of Sport* was forced into my hand<sup>6</sup>.

In this dissertation I provide personal-lived experiences where I build my final connection between sport, movement, exercise, and play with the body/self (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). In addition, I will try to describe the sport lived experience using several professional athletes' writings who have published autobiographies and non professional athletes/exercisers/movers and their sport journeys subjectively<sup>7</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> Polanyi and Marcel also wrote: In the Vein of the Body as did Sarte. However, Merleau-Ponty's work (1964), I suggest, meets the needs better as applied to lived body experience in athletics, sport, and play.

<sup>5</sup> Merleau-Ponty borrowed liberally from Husserl as he should have in describing his phenomenological method. Merleau-Ponty was an Existentialist-Husserl was not. The Existentialism is focused specifically on the lived experience.

<sup>6</sup> R. Scott Kretchmar is one of our foremost sport philosophers in the world. Educated at USC under the tutelage of Eleanor Metheny, author of *Movement and Meaning*, Kretchmar's work has focused greatly on the existential lived experience of movement. His work spans a life time professionally and personally in sport and athletics.

<sup>7</sup> In *The Philosophical Athlete*, Heather L. Reid (2002) states that these particular autobiographies are examples of such phenomenological writings.

Through my past experiences, I have become a lived phenomenon and I am sharing with all who have crossed my path and made an impact in my complicated life as an athlete.<sup>8</sup> I will try to take my readers on a wholistic metaphysical expedition-“to the things themselves and back” (Husserl, 1923).

## **Methodology - Phenomenology with Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Ihde, Kretchmar, Reid, & Saint Sing**

### **Edmund Husserl**

Phenomenology is one of the latest philosophical methodological attempts to acquire knowledge and truth of reality (“to the things as they are”). As a word, phenomenology is derived from two Greek words: phenomenon (an appearance) and logos (reason). According to Husserl (1902, 1913, 1962), phenomenology is the science of experience; the science of science and accurate portrayal of first person human experience, exactly as that experience shows itself. In addition, there is no subject without the object nor object without the subject; an object only has meaning to the extent given to it by the subject (object-subject relationship was termed by Edmund Husserl as “intentionality” (Stoll, 1980, p. 71). Stoll (1980) further explains that phenomenology insists that a phenomenon be investigated as it presents itself to consciousness; only then can it be understood that one must take care that no area of conscious experience is excluded or reduced to something other than what is being experienced (p. 72). For example, when we play our sport, exercise, or move we become the activity, we are focused and involved. Later, after we distance ourselves from the activity, we are able to reflect on that particular activity. Husserl (1902, 1913, 1962)

---

<sup>8</sup> In much of the existential phenomenological literature the use of the first person, I, is the language of articulation. I will also use the first person language throughout this dissertation (See Don Ihde’s *Experimental Phenomenology*).

explains that this act of perceiving develops a personal relationship between the subject, object, and the activity. For Husserl (1902, 1913, 1962), experience is a compound of phenomena which are brought into a meaningful world. In other words, phenomena can be personal emotions, moods, and aesthetic experiences.

### **Maurice Merleau-Ponty**

Merleau-Ponty (1964) greatly assisted the development of phenomenology by being an Apollonian existentialist with a primary focus on lived experiences. His view is on inseparability of self and the world. In addition, he was able to project his imagination into the world through his philosophical views. Unlike Husserl, Merleau-Ponty argued that phenomenology's task is to clarify or expose the truth of reality. Merleau-Ponty (1964) viewed our insertion into the world as through the body, which created a relationship between our body and world known as an "interworld." In addition, Merleau-Ponty (1964) believed that the body is both perceiver and perceived and is expressed by our experience of flesh. Merleau-Ponty (1964) philosophized that things are encrusted in the flesh of the body, just as the body is part of the fabric of the world. In fact, we are our bodies, body/subjects, and body/objects at the same time and that is how we experience the world (Stoll, 1980, p. 78). Therefore, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is a

[t]ranscendental philosophy which places in abeyance the assertion arising out of the natural attitude, the better to understand them; but it is also a philosophy for which the world is always 'already there' before reflection begins...and all its efforts are concentrated upon reaching a direct and primitive contact with the world, and endowing that contact with a philosophic status (as cited in Stoll, 1980, p. 79).

According to Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology is understood through the body before it is understood intellectually. Phenomenology existed as a movement before it became fully accepted as a philosophy. In Heidegger's words, phenomenology allows things to "show themselves, from themselves, in the very way in which they show themselves, from themselves" (Stoll, 2010).

In *Primacy of Perception*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty argues that one's body is oneself and that this body/self defines everything about who we are as individuals. He applies phenomenology to the real lived experiences. According to Merleau-Ponty (1964), body/self experience provides perception of meaning beyond the thought. For instance, Descartes' ("I think, therefore I am") does not explain how our perception is manipulated by the existence of a person's own body.

### **Don Ihde**

Ihde (1977), an interpreter of Merleau-Ponty's Existentialism, explains that some disciplines are better understood by doing than by theorizing. Philosophy must be learned by using examples and dilemma-solving skills. Therefore, without doing philosophy, it would be impossible to understand phenomenology. Ihde (1977) stresses that one needs to understand the terminology of phenomenology before one can begin practicing phenomenology. He states that "if the discipline is to be mastered, the technical language simply must be learned" (p. 20). The questions to be answered were not whether phenomenology studies experiences, but how it does it, and with what technique and effect. How does phenomenology interpret experience? How does phenomenology interpret human experience? Why is phenomenology considered to be the rigorous science of experience? Therefore, all the evidence must be interpreted through human

experience. Phenomenology has been accused of subjectivity, but phenomenologists have tried to explain introspection as “reflexivity” or “directly present to the mind” (Ihde, 1977, p. 23). Ihde (1977) explains that “phenomenology is the door to possible, a possible that can be experienced and verified through the procedure which are, in fact, the stuff of experimental phenomenology” (p. 26)<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, experimental phenomenology tries to explain how phenomenology works.

Ihde provides an example concerning two blindfolded people attempting to describe an elephant through touch. Each individual had never seen an elephant and they were asked to describe the elephant through touch. After touching the elephant, each described something entirely different from the other. This example emphasizes that phenomenology concerns seeing, understanding, interpreting, experiencing, reflection, and leaping to a premature definition of its parts (an elephant). In addition, each noema (the object or content of a thought, judgment or perception) people see, or in this case felt, generally takes a different interpretation than somebody else. I suggest this is similar to every activity one does; each usually has a different meaning than another doing the same activity. Also, Martin Heidegger noted that “phenomena signify that which shows itself in itself, the manifest” (as cited in Ihde, 1977, p. 29). According to Ihde (1977), in order to discover, I must in some sense already know; but in order to know, I must discover.

Moreover, Ihde (1977) discusses Husserl’s idea of reduction and *epoché*. *Epoché* means to suspend or step back from our common ways of looking. According to Husserl

---

<sup>9</sup> Experimental phenomenology is a rigorous application of how to use and practice phenomenology.

(1977), to comprehend phenomenology this step is vital. Every time I observe *noema*<sup>10</sup>, I bring presuppositions with my observations. Husserl states that for one to grasp phenomenology, they cannot examine a *noema* with any presuppositions. To get past this dilemma, Husserl states a person needs to use reduction. Ihde (1986) states, “Phenomenological observations do violence to the passivity of ordinary viewing. There is a deliberate probing of the phenomenon for something that does not at first show itself, and growing sense of control over what is seen” (p. 115).

Ihde (1977) explains that what is sought is what is given; what is sought is what is instant or current to the experiencer. These phenomena are apodictic; which is present in such a way that it shows itself as certain. Therefore, according to Wittgensteinian form, “describe, don’t explain” (as cited in Ihde, 1977, p. 34). Do not explain any type of theory, idea, or concept.

Phenomenology takes time and effort to learn. Ihde repeatedly emphasizes the importance of practicing phenomenology for it to be successful. He stresses for one to truly understand phenomenology requires hours of training and continual practice. In addition, Ihde (1977) has coined three rules for practicing phenomenology: 1) attend to phenomena as and how they show themselves, 2) describe (don’t explain) phenomena, and 3) horizontalize all phenomena initially-tell us something about how a phenomenological investigation must begin at the first level (p. 38)<sup>11</sup>.

Most important, only the person doing the activity or experiencing the situation can have the phenomenological experience. As individuals, we can observe others’

---

<sup>10</sup> *Noema* is the object of thought, judgment, or perception and it is one of two aspects of intentionality. It is used; primarily when one engages in the perception of an object (Husserl, 1931) is an intentional jump into the phenomenon.

<sup>11</sup> In this dissertation study, participants will not be educated on how to do phenomenology. This paragraph only explains how to do experimental phenomenology from Ihde’s point of view.

behaviors and ask how they feel about an experience, but we cannot truly understand their experience. I suggest a prime example of this would be when someone close to you dies. Friends and family may state they understand your loss, but I suggest the loss of someone affects each person in a different manner.

In addition, Ihde stresses that with each experience we have a different meaning after we reflect on the experience. During the activity, the person is immersed in the activity at hand. Ihde (1977) states that the person is not focusing or thinking about anything else except for a specific activity. However, after the person finishes the activity, the activity has a totally different meaning to them. Ihde (1977) states that the experience of the activity becomes much more powerful for the person due to their time reflecting on the experience.

Often, I do not fully comprehend an experience until I reflect upon the experience. For instance, when I am running, I am focusing on my rhythm, delivery, and the softness of my legs. I am not thinking about anything but the aspects of running. Nonetheless, after I finish running and reflect upon it, the activity becomes much more powerful and emotional.

Moreover, it is important to select activities that provide one with the best opportunity to achieve a phenomenological experience. Swimming is an excellent activity for one to achieve a phenomenological experience (S. Stoll, personal communication, June 6, 2010). There is no background noise while swimming and little interference from the outside. Thus, the swimmer is fully presented with an opportunity to immerse oneself in the experience. Nevertheless, it could be almost impossible to achieve a phenomenological experience while running in the open air or participating in a



competition. Due to outside factors (or horizon) such as cars, noise, or dialogue from other participants, the ability to focus and immerse one's self in the activity becomes difficult<sup>12</sup>.

Due to what may be a growing horizon in physical activities, I propose phenomenological experiences will become fewer for our generation's population. We live in a digital world where one usually uses electronic devices such as cell phones, iPods, laptops, and other electronics to stimulate the brain. In addition, I further propose that our generation struggles with being alone. The time one has to reflect has all but been diminished due to our constant advances in technology. It seems there is a continuous struggle for one to stay connected and the fear of being alone. In addition, older generations used to journal their thoughts and experiences much more than our generation (Stoll, 2010). I suggest the idea of journaling our thoughts has become all but obsolete in our generation, which has inhibited our opportunities to achieve more phenomenological experiences.

### **R. Scott Kretchmar**

In *Practical Philosophy of Sport*, R. Scott Kretchmar's emphasis is on the importance of developing philosophic skills, refining personal philosophy concerning physical activity and sport, and learning that philosophy can be clean, practical, and holistic, rather than ambiguous, explicitly hypothetical, and dualistic. Moreover, Kretchmar's analysis of dualism, scientific materialism, and holism introduces a new relationship between body/self: the power of persons as whole psychological and physical beings.

---

<sup>12</sup> However, a long distance trail run in a secluded area or a stable, safe quiet environment could be excellent.

Holism<sup>13</sup> is possible when our bodies are united with our souls; Kretchmar (1994) explains early expressions of holism and five holistic principles. Kretchmar further describes that to have a pure expression of holism is to have a sound mind in a sound body; a unity of mind, body, and spirit; education through the physical; education of the physical different approaches; and a sound body around a sound mind (1994). In addition, Kretchmar argues that one needs to encompass the five holistic principles. Physical influences are always at work in shaping all that we are and do. The influences of consciousness are always at work and have no complete independence from one another, different levels of behavioral intelligence, and different types of activity (p. 74).

In reality, my love for running is described by the process I enact every time I am outside running the trails. Morning trail runs allow me to reflect on my body/self relationship and reflect on my competitive experience and what it means to me. As a former competitive runner, I often watch and think about other runners and their experience with mind and body wholism. More important, when I reflect upon my distance running, the experience becomes even more meaningful the older I get. I often catch myself thinking about younger athletes' awareness of mind and body connection. Often these thoughts are triggered by little things such as body awareness and body coordination I observe in young athletes. There is something metaphysical about this connection. However, I do occasionally wonder if the competitive athletes think about the relationship of mind, matter, space, and time. Williams (1964) said, "The hand is as much mind as body" (as cited in Kretchmar, 1994, p. 41).

---

<sup>13</sup> R. Scott Kretchmar is using the word holism to explain the relationship between the mind and the body, but throughout this dissertation I will be using the word wholism encompassing "whole" body/self experience.

Currently, people view exercise as one separate part of our lives, something we exercise to better our lives by way of objective numbers and measurements, and unfortunately this method fails. On the contrary, we should be viewing exercise more wholistically and more subjectively (Kretchmar, 1994). Exercise, like sports, should be a significant image of who we are as moving individuals. Moreover, philosophy of sports and exercise should be a purposeful endeavor to recognize the whole and the sum of one's experience, in both its objective and subjective sense, with a view for more successful living (Robert Dyal in Stoll, 2009). I argue that Kretchmar (1994) is correct when he asks: Is the approach to exercise true, real, and good?

“Movement can express ideas when words cannot” (Kretchmar, 1994, p. 61). Athletes are capable of succeeding by means of beautiful artistry and skill. For example, if athletes were to depend on cheating to win, they will destroy their chances to show grace, fine timing, touch, endurance, strength, excellence, and artistic movements. If athletes develop honesty, integrity, justice, and self-respect, they will be able to achieve genuine artistic beauty in their sport. In addition, athletes will need to find their stories and their values.

Through participating in sports, my previous experiences have taught me that we may never be just our bodies, not just ourselves; the problem may lay in our view of this world through our bodily self. Sport and exercise allow me the opportunity to understand this body/self perception. Whether I am playing or watching, the sport and exercise is my central focus when I am involved. While playing, it is through sport and exercise where I can express, define, and find a true meaning behind the activity in which I am involved

in. I have objectified myself in the past. But, I have also gradually learned that my mind and body are connected.

A person is a whole being who has three aspects. No one part should be excessively elevated over, or given attention to the exclusion of, the other two. The human being should be symmetrical and balanced. A person is a whole being, and the profession should take advantage of this fact by teaching social and moral lessons through sport, dance, and exercise activities (Kretchmar, 1994, p. 70).

### **Heather L. Reid**

Heather L. Reid's *The Philosophical Athlete* showcases vital contributors in sport philosophy and its evolution and incorporates learning about life from athletes' lived experiences in the field of sport. Throughout this piece, Reid covers several phenomenological aspects in the field of sport. For instance, Reid provides an excellent example of athletes' experience with victory and defeat. Reid (2002) states,

To Plato and many other in ancient Greece, the philosophical struggle for truth was absolutely akin to the athletic struggle for victory. The real task was to create the Olympian self, to cultivate the virtues-the discipline, the courage, the self-knowledge- I believed all Olympians had. The philosophical athlete knows that the greatest opponent is the self, the greatest challenge personal excellence, and the greatest reward true happiness (p. xi-xii).

All athletes aspire to perform exceptionally and victoriously, but philosophical athletes, explains Reid (2002) aspire knowledge. Philosophical athletes not only desire athletic success, but they strive to learn and know more about themselves and their competitors. In addition, Reid' sequence from self-discovery, responsibility, respect, and

citizenship is significant for one's knowledge in dealings with the personal and social challenges faced by every athlete. For example, in many sports an excellent opponent provides the challenge, one who challenges us to our maximal effort while keeping the occurrences of success and failure as equal as possible. My best opponents actually provide the opportunity to test myself, to learn about myself, and to become the kind of self I strive so hard to be. Paul Weiss<sup>14</sup> provided the most powerful example concerning this topic. Weiss said, "While a game allows one to see what man can do, a contest, instead, offers an occasion for self-discovery" (as cited in Reid, 2002, p. 13). Thus, athletes have social responsibilities to their teammates, coaches, opponents, family, and friends. By far the best way, says Reid (2002), "To experience the life of a philosophical athlete, however, is quite simply to live it" (p. 10). She further continues with four characteristics of all philosophical athletes. A philosophical athlete; 1) values the sports experience as an opportunity to learn about himself as a person, 2) takes responsibility for her actions, her attitudes, and the pursuit of meaningful goals, 3) shows respect for himself, those around him, and the ideals of his sport, and 4) understands the values of her sports community and seeks to preserve them (p. 11). Further, Reid (2002) argues that

An examined life in sport begins with examination of oneself. But seeing ourselves as we really are is something inherently difficult to achieve-even more so in this modern world of constant distractions and external stimulation. We need some place where we can listen to our bodies, watch our dreams, talk to ourselves. We need a place to tune out from the external world and tune in to who

---

<sup>14</sup> Paul Weiss was the founding member of the International Association of Philosophy of Sport. At the time he was a philosophy professor with American University at Washington D.C. and a leading noted philosopher in America.

we are as individuals. The philosophical athlete can find such a place through a mindful approach to sport (p.13-14).

Sport has an extremely important role in my life. It has provided me with guidance, direction, friendships, and fulfillment in life. Nevertheless, I believe a growing population does not take mindful approaches to sport frequently enough. Reid (2002) also discusses that athletes also encounter their embodiment in the sporting experience. However, Reid (2002) concludes that people tend to identify their minds with themselves, viewing their bodies as mere objects and practice their mind-over-matter philosophy. I understand this opinion. There were occasions when I objectified and compared myself to my competitors. Reid (2002) explains,

As athletes, we know that honestly assessing the truth about our physical strengths and weaknesses, then playing in accordance with that knowledge, leads to better performance. The short, quick basketball player who models his play after Shaquille O'Neal will never maximize his potential. The challenge for philosophical athletes is to apply that principle beyond sport and live according to our knowledge of ourselves- to be authentic (p. 31).

As a scientist, I too identified myself by my own body measurements (weight, height, body fat percentage, and body circumference). It is not surprising that athletes often hide their sense of value and even their real identities. Philosophical athletes are not just performing their sport, but they are their sport, they identified self through sport. Athletes who criticize about noncompliant bodies, explains Reid (2002) not only make a distinction between subjects and objects, but they also make a division between themselves and their bodies (p. 37)! Nonetheless, I am attempting to change this habit

due to the realization regarding the importance of self-discovery, self-maturation, and self-knowledge. More important, I understand that sport is a major catalyst for expressing my own actions and unique self.

Since my body has always been an integral part of my life, the body/self helped lead me to discover my true identity. Though I believe embodiment is extremely important, many athletes struggle with a love-hate relationship with their bodies. Athletic bodies are often viewed as an objectified machine. Many athletes struggle with body image and eating disorders. No wonder many individuals fail to intrinsically motivate themselves to exercise or be physically engaging. The fact is, says Kretchmar (1994), “Few people will continue to exercise unless they find some *meaning in their movement*” (as cited in Reid, 2002, p. 42). Stoll (2011) also argues that to find some meaning in our activities we must connect the mind in movement, rather than distracting it with music, television, or reading. Maybe we should start treasuring, valuing, and appreciating our workouts as quality times with ourselves. Maybe we could also give our mind a chance to get to know our body, and possibly, find the body/self connection. Craig Lambert (1998) in *Mind over Water* sums it the best,

These reductive analogies exact a fearsome price from the human soul. If we believe our bodies to be machines and our brains to be computers, we will wonder why we do not function with mechanistic consistency. I should perform perfectly 100 percent of the time. Humanity becomes a case of defective technology. We feel flawed since we lack the reliability of the inanimate world; what is alive fails by comparison to than which is not (p. 138-139).

From the above perspective, phenomenology may be very helpful to athletes when they are trying to discover oneself through sport experience. Merleau-Ponty (1962)- look it up argues against Descartes' mind over body philosophy by explaining that separate mind and body plainly do not match our real experience. We are never simply just a mind or just a body. Our body, I believe, is not an object with a mind as its subject. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) says,

There are two senses, and two only, of the world' exist': one exists as a thing or else one exists as a consciousness. The experience of our own body, on the other hand, reveals to us an ambiguous mode of existing. If I try to think of it as a cluster of their person process- 'sight,' 'motility,' 'sexuality'-I observe that these 'functions' cannot be interrelated, and related to the external world, by causal connections, they are all obscurely drawn together and mutually implied in a unique drama. Therefore the body is not an object. Whether it is a question of another's body or my own, I have no means of knowing the human body other than that of living it, which means taking up my own account the drama which is being played out in it, and losing myself in it. I am my body, at least wholly to the extent that I possess experience, and yet at the same time my body is as it were a 'natural' subject, a provisional sketch of my total being. Thus experience of one's own body runs counter to the reflective procedure which detaches subject and objects from each other, and which gives us only the thought about the body, or the body as an idea, and not the experience of the body or the body in reality (as cited in Reid, 2002, p. 49-50).



In contrast to mind-body dualism, sport and movement forces us to listen to our bodies. Stoll (2011) often says that through sport we can see who people really are. Hence, their moving body is a window to their soul. As an athlete, I can welcome my mind and body connection with its limitations and flaws, as part of who I am as a person. De Beauvoir<sup>15</sup> (1949) explains, “Not to have confidence in one’s body, is to lose confidence in oneself (as cited in Reid, 2002, p. 274). For instance, while growing up the only extracurricular activities I undertook were sports that suited me against other individuals or teams. Reid (2002) helped me remember the “com” in competition means “with.” Hyland<sup>16</sup> (1972) discovered that his experience with basketball was special due to being with others; teammates and opponents (as cited in Reid, 2002, p. 134). Basketball, for Hyland was a place where he could truly be himself while networking with others. That is, sport permits us to get past the self while still being accurately ourselves. However, as I matured, I began skiing, biking, water skiing, and hiking. Today these are the activities that carry the most value because they often lead me to my phenomenological experiences.

Since sport has always been an integral part of my life, it led me to competition. Though I enjoy competition, the older I have become, I have begun to compete more with myself than opponents. I suggest that competition can be dangerous to individuals when they are motivated by nonmoral values and develop a win at all cost attitude. According to the existentialists, explains Reid (2002), these general attitudes toward competition, like the specific attitudes that affect our perceptions, are also a matter of choice (p. 87). In

---

<sup>15</sup> Simone De Beauvoir was a French Existential movement writer. Her themes supported the lived body experience. She was considered to be a free thinker and a lover of Jean-Paul Sartre for sixty years.

<sup>16</sup> Drew Hyland is the Charles A. Dana Professor of Philosophy at Trinity College. He has published six books and over forty journal articles.

competition, we are responsible for our opponents, but we are also responsible for oneself. Porter & Foster (as cited in Reid, 2002, p. 94), present athletes with several questions to help them interpret competitive situation. Porter & Foster (1986) continue,

Think of the last big event you participated in that meant a lot to you. When the big play came to you or when the outcome depended totally on you, did you pull it off or did you lose your concentration and choke? If you did succeed, what was your feeling? Relief? Joy? Elation? If you did not succeed, were you filled with self-hate, strong, sharp anger with yourself for days or weeks? Or did you feel disappointed and dissatisfied for a few hours and then go on with life (as cited in Reid, 2002, p. 94).

Successful athletes may be able to transform failures in their learning experiences and their life stories. How we interpret competitive situations may speak a great volume about who we are as people, but also whom we have chosen to become. Reid's statement speaks about philosophical athletes,

Your mother was right. Sports are risky, even dangerous. As soon as you enter the arena of sport you risk failure, pain, injury, embarrassment, losing, even death. Every athlete experiences and must overcome 31 flavors of fear. However, the scariest thing about sport is not facing what might be, but dealing with what is. It's not about who you think you are, but who you really are. It's not about facing death, it's about becoming aware of life. What we risk in sport is losing the illusion and finding the truth about ourselves and our lives (2002, p. 97).

In competitive sports, losing is often seen as death (Reid, 2002). As mentioned before, successful athletes learn about themselves from their failures or losses, and treat

them as life experiences with an opportunity to grow and excel. Coaching legend, Joe Paterno<sup>17</sup> explains it best,

I think you profit more from getting a licking because it makes you zero in on the things you didn't do well. There's a tendency when you win to overlook some of the things you didn't do well. I've always said to my squad, you're never as good as you think you are when you lose (as cited in Reid, 2002, p. 98).

Sport philosopher Paul Weiss (1969, p. 109) notes that conquered athletes learn more about themselves because they have an ability to discover their limits and identify their strengths that led to their success and weakness that led to their collapse (as cited in Reid, 2002, p. 109). If we do not take risks, we can potentially lose the ability to live a certain amount of life and to know oneself. Jonathan Senk, an adventure racer explains,

Our society is so surgically sterile. It's almost like our socialization just desensitizes us. Every time I'm out doing this I'm searching my soul. It's the Lewis and Clark gene, to venture out, to find what your limitations are (as cited in Reid, 2002, p. 113).

In *The Philosophical Athlete*, Heather L. Reid emphasizes several important things. First, is that only the individual can take responsibility for values and meanings. For example, professional cyclist, Lance Armstrong presents a meaningful sport role in life. Armstrong says, "It's ironic, I used to ride my bike to make a living. Now I just want to live so that I can ride" (as cited in Reid, 2002, p. 119). It may be important that each individual athlete finds his/her meaning independently. My previous experiences with playing sports and moving have taught me that the search for meaning is the most

---

<sup>17</sup> Methodology section in this dissertation study was written before Joe Paterno's accusations. Therefore, most sport philosophers would rethink Joe Paterno as a role model.

important motivation in our life. Second, values can be imperative because they may lead to our decisions and actions. In sport, our actions can be reflections of our values. Reid (2002) captures this statement by saying, “Our actions reveal what we care about-often more clearly than our words do (p. 127). For instance, we can or may be able to undergo suffering and adversity for the sake of meaning. Lastly, Reid (2002) explains that ethical responsibility in sport focuses on three main issues: self-respect, respect for others, and respect for the sport itself (p. 140). In addition, Reid (2002) discusses Plato’s health of the soul as the pleasant function of head, heart and gut. To support this theory, Plato uses a *tripartite theory of the soul*. Plato argues that individuals have three contending challenges within them: the rational or wisdom-loving part (*logistikon*), the spirited or honor-loving part (*thymoeides*) and the appetitive or pleasure-loving part (*epithymetikon*). The trick to virtue, explains Plato (as cited in Reid, 2002) is getting all three to work together. Plato, says, “The head determines the proper goal, the heart summons willpower, and the gut provides that burning desire (p. 146).

While playing sports and exercising, I have learned to understand, appreciate, and better apply sport and exercise meaning to my lived experiences. Now I can recognize that athletic excellence could be accomplished without the virtues. For instance, some successful athletes used performance enhancing drugs, cheated on their wives, lied to their fans, betrayed their teammates, and exploited their family ties. As an athlete, my goal is not just to be successful in my sport, but also to be respected in virtuous logic. In fact, my aim is to respect my opponents and help them achieve excellence. Robert Simon (1991) identifies competition as “a mutual quest for excellence” (as cited in Reid, 2002, p. 171). Therefore, competitors and opponents should struggle together. We want to

strive to improve both oneself and our opponents. If we want to be champions or act like champions, the first step may be to know ourselves, both physically and mentally.

Finally, we also may need to respect our sport.

A sports community, like any community, is only as good as the values of its members. The values of a particular sport, like the values of any well-planned community, can serve as a guideline to making and implementing rules and regulations that preserve rather than destroy a sport community. To this end, sports might develop their own sorts of constitution; perhaps we can imagine an athlete's bill of rights. Ultimately our participation in sports as philosophical athletes can teach us to be better citizens of all the communities we value (Reid, 2002, p. 213).

That is, the health, preservation, and preservation of our sport depend solely on its practitioners. I propose that sport and movement has helped so many of us in our individual struggles against public and cultural prejudice. Sport can teach us to respect others as equals.

“You are your Sport” (Reid, 2002, p. 228). Moreover, philosophical athletes can use their lived sport encounters to expand self-knowledge, responsibility, respect for oneself and their communities. Understanding our sport experiences, we can optimistically lead fulfilling and happier lives. Reid (2002) enlightens the best when she states,

Athletes cannot be enlightened; however, they must enlighten themselves. The transformation into a philosophical athlete takes place inside the individual. It begins as part of that vision of the kind of person you want to be, then becomes reality only through practice (p. 280).

### Susan Saint Sing<sup>18</sup>

In *Spirituality of Sport: Balancing Body and Soul* (2004), Susan Saint Sing captures the power of mind, body, soul and its relationship to our beliefs and how it defines us when we play.

Balancing body, mind and spirit gives you a strength like a triangle—the strongest building unit. If each side of the triangle is balanced an equal then you have achieved great strength. Like the ancient Greeks, you achieve the heightened state of *arête*—a state of grace and excellence. Linking the mind-body-spirit trinity could be the energy of the divine wisdom playing through the world (p. 12).

I suggest that all the weights I have lifted, or miles I have run on the road are training me for life's challenges. And when the challenges come, all the hours I have dedicated towards play and sport will guide my courses during these challenges.

I didn't know at the time what I was making, or what was being made inside me, other than the lactic acid which was causing my lungs to beg me to stop. But I know now, that those years of training, discipline, physical toughening built a reservoir inside me, a well that I still don't know the depths of (Saint Sing, 2004, p. 21).

In sport, athletes may often question their abilities to perform.

We test ourselves in sports. The isolation of the competitor, though voluntary, can take one to the extremes of the desert experience—exhausted, dehydrated, at times clawing one's way face down after

---

<sup>18</sup> Saint Sing was a competitive athlete who broke her back in a gymnastics competition. A student of Kretchmar, Saint Sing went on a spiritual journey and spent a year with the Franciscan monks in Italy, there she regained her physical and spiritual health. *Spirituality of Sport: Balancing Body and Soul* is her reflection of that experience.

collapsing on a track or falling on a snowy mountain slope. The symbolic parallels between ritualistic sport testing and faith are so close, so obvious that even the ancients used them, as did Saint Paul, as metaphors of one another (Saint Sing, 2004, p. 25-26).

Susan Saint Sing was able to reflect on her sports lived experiences through her phenomenological description of the mind, body, and soul.

Play is an archetype of goodness and joy, a cluster of energy mirroring the last memories of the perfect human state. Play is a return to that, a memory pushing through layers of consciousness and breaking surface like a wave on a beach where we, like children, press our toes in the sand for a moment and then it is gone, to resurface later (p. 67).

### **Examining Phenomenology**

I suggest that there are things, events, places, and individuals in one's life that can affect the life of a participant in the sport and exercise progress. There are moments and events that will forever affect one's life.

...If I take experience as merely a sort of passive recording of impressions, I shall never manage to understand how the reflective process could be integrated with experience. On the other hand, the more we grasp the notion of experience in its proper complexity, in its active and I would even dare say in its dialectical aspects, the better we shall understand how experience cannot fail to transform itself in reflection, and we shall even have the right to say that the more richly it is experience, the more, also it is reflection (Marcel, 1950, p. 33).

I propose that there is a fundamental question to be asked: As athletes and movers, how are we affected by the sport and exercise culture or process? What experiences have shaped us as individuals? Those of us who have experienced the sport and exercise process have been reached by a certain style, character, and movement by those we established relationships with (coaches, teammates, opponents, friends, and family). Thus, the connection between body/self and others we have encountered along the way does exist, but it is often unexplainable.

### **Investigative & Instrumentation Techniques**

#### **Phenomenology in Practice: Setting the Problem**

The purpose of this study is to use the phenomenological method to access the lived sport and exercise experience in a volunteer population of athletes who have, in the past and present, sought a deeper meaningful connection where soul meets body<sup>19</sup>. The phenomenological method will be used to describe athletes' personal stories about lived sport and exercise experience. The sub problems of this study will be:

1. An explanatory description of self through sport and exercise
2. An explanatory sport and exercise description of athlete' experience through storytelling
3. A reflection and discussion of the phenomenological experience with a body/self connection, and
4. A discussion of meaningful body/self approaches, opinions, and ideas to sport and exercise.

---

<sup>19</sup> Participants sought for this dissertation study are lifetime exercisers who truly love what they do; individuals who have been on a long journey and are seeking and searching the body/self connection. I found them through deep conversations, sport practices, and group fitness classes.



My purpose here will be to try to encourage the reader to be more aware of those individuals who were affected by their sport and exercise process. The phenomenological method I propose to implement is devoted to communication where there is a description of the existence of lived sport and exercise experiences-to things as they are (as the experience manifests itself). In addition, I will remain an active participant throughout this dissertation study while trying to describe the pure subjective sport and exercise experience-where soul meets body. Personal experiences combined with reflections and body/self descriptions will guide in constructing a reality in such a way as to describe the multifaceted world of sport and exercise.

**Sub Problem One: What are the Descriptive Characteristic of the Participants?**

Because participants are not educated in the phenomenological language of the method, my goal will be to help them toward an understanding of the lived body experience. I will try to do this through explicit questions that are based on the themes of phenomenology. In essence, through specific questions and further probing questions I will try to help participants express their lived experiences.

Descriptive: Edmund Husserl (1923) explains that all knowledge and truth depend on their careful and accurate description of first human experience, exactly as the experience manifests itself. In other words, phenomenological description is a description of one's experience without presupposition. Hence, we can describe personal moods and emotions. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues that all knowledge, even the scientific knowledge is obtained from some experience without which the symbols of science would be meaningless (p. ix). Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty explains that some daily activities are not reflective, but pre-reflective because, for example, walking or eating do

not require reflective thought since we do them in pre-reflective state. Simply put, Merleau-Ponty argues that there exists a living dialectic between the subject and object.

We must seek an understanding from all... [the] angels simultaneously, everything has meaning... Whether we are concerned with a thing perceived, a historical event or a doctrine, to 'understand' is to take in the total intention (cited in Stoll, 1980, p. 77).

To help the participants, descriptive questions will be posed to the participants:

1. How did you first get started playing sports or exercising?
2. What has kept you playing sports or exercising?
3. What motivated you to play sports or exercise?
4. During sports, physical activity, or exercise, what ways do you commonly hear people objectify body/selves? How can you transform the way you speak about your body/self while playing sports and/or exercising so that it does not sound as you are collected of objects?
5. How do you describe your workouts or physical activity? Please talk and reflect on your sport and/or exercise lived experiences.
6. What is your purpose of playing sports, moving, and/or exercising?

**Sub Problem Two: How does the Epoché Analysis Occur in the Participants' Experience?**

Epoché: *Epoché* is an analysis of experience focusing on part or all of the experience by describing, observing and describing the experience. It is best understood by stepping back from the experience so that the pure experience can be precisely described. When we are engaged in an activity, we often become the activity. Later, after reflecting on that activity, we are able to analyze the experience. Husserl (1923) clarifies that this act of

distancing from the experience reveals an intimate relationship between the subject, object and the activity.

Reflection and *epoché* questions used in this dissertation study were:

1. While participating in sports or exercising, how do you think of your mind and body-as separate entities or working together? And if so, how is this manifested?
2. How can you modify the way you think about your sport, movement, and physical activities so they feel more like playouts, not workouts?
3. Think about why you play sports, move, or exercise; in what ways does your physical activity contribute to your skill and knowledge growth? What types of physical activities, sports, or exercise do you participate in that contribute to your skill and knowledge growth?

**Sub Problem Three & Four: What if any Transcendental and Reductive Experience has Occurred through Participants?**

Reductive: Edmund Husserl (1975) explains that we reach the true source of knowledge through pure consciousness. In fact, reduction is an expansion of the *epoché*. Only by going back to the original action can the true facts of our consciousness be understood. Stoll (1980) states that “phenomenological reduction is the bracketing of belief in the existence of the objective phenomenon” (p. 73). However, Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues that rather than a reduction to this pure consciousness, we operate on a level of meaning/giving that is preconscious to the level of bodily existence. Rather than reaching knowledge through a complete reduction, explains Kwant (1963), knowledge is never finished because everything is interwoven with everything (p. 9).

Transcendental Self: When everything is bracketed, all we have is a transcendental self. Bracketing of all presuppositions of beliefs allows one to completely concentrate what

appears to consciousness. According to Husserl (1975), through transcendental self we are reducing the world to consciousness-of-world to obtain the truth. Merleau-Ponty's method contrasts Husserl's in terms of transcendental reduction. In other words, Merleau-Ponty (1962) clarifies that transcendental philosophy is also a philosophy for which the world is already there before reflection begins. Therefore, the body subject is always found in the lived world (Stoll, 1980).

We are in relation to the world through and through... [and it is impossible for us] to reduce ourselves to transcendental consciousness and to become wholly consciousness (p. 80).

I am present to myself by being present to the world... I am never a thing and never naked consciousness (cited in Stoll, 1980, p. 80).

Reduction and Transcendental Self questions used in this dissertation study were:

1. How can you keep the enjoyment of your sport, play, human movement, and exercise activities?
2. What would you say to someone who asks you if you workout or participate in sports? Think about the phrase "work" versus "play" and how you would like to view yourself-as a mover in activity/play or a worker in exercise and/or sport.
3. How do you allow yourself to experience the pleasure of your sport, movement activity, play, or exercise?
4. Describe your sport and/or exercise story for your body/self lived experience.
5. What are some meaningful approaches, ideas, or opinions to sport and/or exercise?

### **Sub Problem Five: How do the Participants View Intentionality of the Self and Body?**

(Even though no specific questions were asked about intentionality, intentionality was there through participants' answers and lived experiences).

Being an athlete I have often questioned what my experiences have meant? Have other athletes experienced similar situations to mine? What have these sport and/or exercise experiences meant to other athletes? Henceforth, using the phenomenological method by Maurice Merleau-Ponty's body/subject and body/object relationship, I propose to describe lived sport and exercise experience through intentional reflection of the participants' perception, emotions, descriptions, and observations throughout their acculturation into the world of sport and exercise where soul meets body.

The differences between Husserlian phenomenological methods and Merleau-Ponty-ian phenomenological methods also vary in intentionality. Husserl explains that consciousness does not exist in isolation and objects do not exist in isolation. Thus, there is no subject without the object and object without the subject. An object only has a meaning to the extent given to it by the subject (Stoll, 1980). This subject-object relationship is termed "intentionality." For example, the object of our consciousness (let it be a treadmill) is something that is assembled or intended by us. Truth is, explains (Stoll, 1980), that intentionality of the experience of the subject/object relationship, and its existence depends on accurate description as it is actually manifested. This whole process can be somewhat confusing, but the task remains the same; an attempt at describing (telling)<sup>20</sup> the experience.

---

<sup>20</sup> Frank Forencich (2006) explains that stories are enormously powerful, but language is not the only way to have a voice (146). In reality, storytelling can be

Merleau-Ponty's intentionality and the subject/object relationship is not primarily cognitive, but pre-reflective consciousness (relationship of being). Therefore, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is interaction between the subject and the object in the world. Intentionality is not the Husserlian pure consciousness or "active genesis," rather, intentionality is "engagement in the world" (Stoll, 1980). To completely understand Merleau-Ponty phenomenological methods, it is important to understand his concept of the body.

The relationship of subject and object is no longer that cognitive relationship in which the object always appears as constructed by the subject, but is a relationship of being, through which, to us a paradox, the subject is his body, his world, his situation, and in a certain sense enters into interaction with it (cited in Stoll, 1980, p. 78).

In other words, we are not just objects, but both subject and object. I am the intentionality of my body subject/body object relationship. For example, we may move objects, but our body is not moved in the same way. The body is moved by the body.

By my body itself I move directly, I do not find it at one point of objective space and transfer it to another. I have no need to look for it, it is already with me- I do

---

immune-enhancing and health-promoting. When it comes to movement and physical activity, we can tell our stories through sport, exercise, and even relationships. In today's world, we have been conditioned to view exercise as a means to lose weight, get in shape, and enhance our physical looks. Due to this view, we often fail to acknowledge that for many people, movement is a way to tell a story to the world. For instance, physical activity, sport, and exercise often say; "This is who I am." Such a view has nothing to do with body fat percentage, body mass index, calorie expenditure, reps, sets, weights, lactic acid, and anabolic thresholds.

The moral to this story is simple: make expression a part of your life and fitness. Get your story out into the world. Say it, tell it, move it, sing it, paint it, play it. Let your voice out. Your body will love you for it (Forencich, 2006, p. 147).

not need to lead it towards the movement's completion. It is in contract with it from the relationships between my decision and my body are, in movement, magic ones (as cited in Stoll, 1980, p. 78).

I am my lived body. We can be our lived bodies. I am the body/subjects and body/objects at the same time and this is how I experience the sport and exercise world. For the athlete, this means we must first view the self. To dualistically separate one into halves is to look, but not see; reflect but not understand (Shaw, 2011, p. 24). The direction of this dissertation research study is heading towards a jump of perception and reflection. After completing an interview, participants were asked to return to their initial answers, reflect on them, and respond again.

### **Sub Problem Six: Does Apodictic Certainty<sup>21</sup> Present Itself to the Lived Experience of the Participants?**

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues that phenomenon can be reduced to the original, but the original cannot be transcendental ego because the original cannot be brought fully to light. Phenomenology is not exact, according to Merleau-Ponty (1962), but an art of description and understanding. It is not science, but scientifically oriented (Stoll, 1980).

Philosophy is not a reflection of a preexisting truth, but, like art, the act of bringing truth into being. Philosophy as a radical reflection... is a dialogue or infinite meditation in so far as it remains faithful to its intention, never knowing where its going. The unfinished... atmosphere... is not to be taken as a sign of failure... because phenomenology's task was to reveal the mystery of the world and of reason (cited in Stoll, 1980, p. 80).

---

<sup>21</sup> I will analyze self and others' reflections to obtain apodictic certainty.

To do phenomenology, we are not being asked to tear the mask away (Stoll, 1980), but to disclose the truth of reality. Through Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology technique and questions, I looked for the categories and themes with a body/self connection.

### **Significance**

This dissertation is focused on the body/self relationship orientation in order to describe athletes' relationship to experience as Merleau-Ponty (1964) does. Perhaps, it is the human who gives the activity, the movement meaning.

Discover in this unrolling of facts a spontaneous order, a meaning, and intrinsic truth, an orientation of such a kind that the different events do not appear as a mere succession (Merleau-Ponty, p. 52).

“Our life is played both within us and outside us, in our present and in our past”

(Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 52). For that reason, the body/self relationship exists before it existed in any other athlete... where soul meets body is the reflection of the lived sport and exercise experience of the athletes existing prior to and alongside other athletes.

Significance is built on the narrative-through the narrative we can find meaning.

### **Distinctiveness of Qualitative Research: Who, What, Where, When, and How of the Body/Self Sport and Exercise Lived Experience**

The aim of qualitative research is to find meaning in the culture and/or the phenomenon one is studying. To name a few qualitative theories, traditions and orientations range from ethnography, autoethnography, narrative inquiry, grounded theory, hermeneutics, feminism theory, and phenomenology. This dissertation study is concerned with phenomenology. It is through the use of the phenomenological method developed by Husserl followed by Merleau-Ponty that I attempt to describe body/self sport and exercise



lived experience of my participants. I have also used the writings of Kretchmar (1994), whose focus has been directed at the wholistic, not dualistic approach to sport and exercise. All together, I used blended ideas and thoughts of these philosophers to describe the phenomenon of body/self sport and exercise experience as I and others interviewed for this dissertation have experienced it. I accomplish this by using certain phenomenological techniques such as: description writing in first person, reflection: body/self sport and exercise experience or *epoché*, reduction: reducing experiences to the things themselves (transcendental self and apodictic certainty), and narrative (storytelling)<sup>22</sup>: conversation between self and self and self and others.

---

<sup>22</sup> According to Josselson, Lieblich, & McAdams (2003), narrative inquiry examines participants through the narratives of their experiences in context and in time. Thus, narrative inquiry is research where both the researcher and the participants collaborate. The words and meanings of the storytellers allow sport and exercise community to view the lived experience through the lens of the storytellers themselves. Connelly & Clandinin (1990) explain that the act of telling a story is a phenomenon. The authors explain that people tend to lead storied lives (1990). This phenomenon helps establish storyteller's identity. The final interpretation should be left to the reader of the story. In addition, Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber (1998) discuss that storytelling provides rich results often not available through surveys and questionnaires. Through storytelling individuals can view, understand, and make sense of their lived experiences (Shank, 2002). Henceforth, through these understandings, athletes and exercisers can address sport, physical activity, and movement through past lived experiences. In support, Ely et al (1997) explains that the goal of writing story rich research is to engage the reader in the lived experience of the individual. Thus, similarities may emerge from interpreting various stories from individuals within a common community (athletes). Richardson (1997) explains that these collective stories may emerge about a community of people (athletes and exercisers), yet every individual has his/her own story: "That is my story. I am not alone" (p. 33). Postman's (1995) passage speaks a great deal about storytelling.

Our genius lies in our capacity to make meaning through the creation of narratives that give point to our labors, exalt our history, elucidate the present, and give direction to our future (p. 7).

**Lived Experience: “I am my Numbers<sup>23</sup>”**

I have studied sport and exercise sciences most of my life, but purposely in the university setting over the past eleven years. Along this journey, I have traveled and worked at numerous fitness and sport conferences where I have discovered more of the same truth over and over through my travels. Today’s athletes and exercisers need to live through their sport and exercise experience to guide them and imprint identity into that special place where soul meets body. These may seem like unwestern like conclusions, but join me on this journey as I explain some philosophical opinions about the fitness industry.

In addition to being a former collegiate runner, I also work as a personal trainer and a fitness instructor at the university’s Student Recreation Center. There, I get the pleasure of pursuing one of my great passions which is the love for sport and movement. (The other is having people listen to me while I talk, but that sounded a little vain to list in the #1 spot). While fulfilling these duties I often get asked questions or just hear opinions from clients which are at times surprising and at times totally vexing. Or, in the case of younger clients, I will be asked specific questions, which can be doubly vexing. These statements usually are something like this, "I really want to be at my fastest, I think I need to lose 7 lbs by the end of this month," or, "I read that so-and-so can squat 450 lbs, so I'm really focused on leg strength right now," also, "I'm going to cut fat and carbohydrates out of my diet. Ya' know, get leaner". A small sample but indicative of the range of statements and questions I get from clients regarding how to use body composition, strength training, and nutrition to improve their performance. Many of these

---

<sup>23</sup> “I am my numbers” statement was adopted from Frank Forencich’s book titled: *Exuberant animal: The power of health, play and joyful movement*.

statements actually sound perfectly reasonable and sensible. My favorite is: “Who is healthier? An individual who cannot eat a meal without consulting his/her nutritionist or an individual who discovers pleasures in a well balanced diet with plenty of saturated fats, sugars, and caffeine?” As Frank Forencich (2006) states: “The former might have more years in his life, but the latter might have more life in his years” (p. 135).

If you examine these types of questions, there is a huge flaw. More to the point there is a huge whole; there is something missing. Most of us just want to love our chosen sport, exercise, physical activity, and movement. Unfortunately, love and passion for our chosen sport, exercise, physical activity, and movement are consistently undervalued in the majority of studies in physical fitness, exercise physiology, sport psychology, health, and performance. In fact, these qualities are often underestimated by our data concentrated culture. If we cannot quantify, track, develop spreadsheets, and manipulate data in our research studies, we cannot get results. As a result, we now know more about lactic acid concentrations than we do about passion and joy for sport, physical activity, exercise, and movement. We know more about body mass index than we do about an unconditional love for movement and sports, more about exercise performance than we do about eagerness and enthusiasm. Simply, we just shred human movement and physical activity down to clean components of anatomy, exercise physiology, and biomechanics and then complain how no one wants to participate (Forencich, 2006).

Numbers often offer precision about things that are sometimes not worth knowing. Just because we cannot measure something, it does not mean such information is invaluable. In many cases, our experiences are really the most significant part of who

we are as individuals. As Einstein said, “Sometimes what counts, can’t be counted and what can be counted, doesn’t count” (BrainyQuote, 2011).

As athletes, we identify ourselves with “I am my Numbers mentality.” Runners are particularly prone to this numbered practice. I run a 5 minute mile, I burn this many calories, and I have 6% body fat. What happens when athletes live and define themselves by their digital performance? Athletes gain very precise athletic performance order, but lose quality, meaning, ideas, experiences, relationships, and depth. With numbers, explains (Forencich, 2006) there are really only two directions to go-higher or lower, slower or faster. Your position in the hierarchy can only go up or down (p. 268). In our number dictated world, there is often no creativity, no ambiguity, no intelligence, no inspiration, no distinction, and no passion (Kretchmar, 1994).

During my travels to fitness conferences, I realized that numerous workshops and presentations focused entirely on numbers, sets, reps, weight loss, body fat percentage, body mass index, and calorie expenditure. I even ran around the circles to increase my VO2 max for two minutes at a seven minute mile pace. Most important, it is not how much we do in terms of reps, sets, weight loss, and body fat percentage, but how much love we put into doing it. Thus, the fitness industry should empower individuals to work-in instead to work-out, or better still to play-out as Kretchmar (1994) says. Athletes and fitness buffs practice and workout long hours to push their bodies to intense ends, motivated by winning and claiming their champion status. The fitness industry should strive to unlock potential in athletes and exercisers not only to realize their identity and dreams, but to go beyond their objectified goals and focus more on their subjective lived sport and exercise experiences.

The current approach to physical activity, sport and exercise science hammers us with an overwhelming overflow of data, experimental and clinical studies, and scientific research results. From this view, exercise and physical activity present themselves like something that we cannot do right unless we become the numbers. For example, if you run on a treadmill, you may burn more calories and increase your heart rate, but you won't be getting much in the way of enjoyment and passion. Plus, if there is a TV attached to a treadmill with some loud music, we will be overpowering our running experience with entertainment while depriving ourselves of our body/self connection.

As we become increasingly devoted to the concept of modern fitness industry, we place huge amount of emphasis on our physical appearance. We stop caring about our feelings and passions and concentrate more on looks. Why? In the fitness industry, physical appearance is delivered as the definitive sign of health. The before-and-after photo spread has become an icon for physical success, with joyful movement fading to secondary importance (Forencich, 2006, p. 66). This approach to the body is largely an individual's relationships with his/her body/self. The body/self relationship should be explorative, personal, experimental, and intimate (Merleau-Ponty, 1963).

When we exercise, we often compare ourselves with fitness competitors, professional athletes, and bodybuilders. Many weight loss plans promise quick results with no effort and minimal time, but they also deplete anything that might tell a story or share an experience. There is no history or meanings, just a numerical description of how many calories to burn. Therefore, there is no interest, no story to tell, no experience to share, no achievement to explain, and no reason to continue.

Interestingly, today we know more about the scientific relationship of the body to exercise than ever before. However, the science has not truckled down to participants. Most people know they should exercise and eat healthily. However, we have a global obesity epidemic. The scientific method has apparently failed. Perhaps, it is time to try something else. Perhaps, the more we know about movers who love to move, the more we can understand how to help others to love to move.

### **Study Design**

I propose a qualitative approach (phenomenology) for this study. The depth of knowledge, experience, and meaning from qualitative methods can be significantly richer than what would be interpreted through quantitative surveys. An empowering process can deepen the researchers' knowledge about mind and body wholism. This study is descriptive in that it attempts to identify the knower, the knowing, and the known (Gill, 1993). The study is also exploratory because it attempts to identify specific experiences behind sport, human movement, play, and exercise. The primary strategy for this dissertation research involves engaging information abundant subjects on a body/self phenomenology. Descriptive and direct personal/lived experience is crucial to fully appreciate and understand the phenomena, as without this first person experience, the researcher may seem too far removed and therefore not able to understand the phenomena as it manifest itself.

### **Population and Sample**

Who are these people? Along this body/self connection, reference has been made to others. Participants are all part of this perfect connection; this soul meets body connection and sport and exercise experiences. All the participants share a common

attribute. This connection is from those who have experienced and those who have lived it.

All these discussions come naturally. My experiences are not the same as other experiences, yet we do share a bond. The information phase of this dissertation involved personal conversations, phone calls, emails, and interviews. These participants account for numerous years of struggling to find a meaning and a connection behind sport, human movement, play, and exercise (body) with mind (soul). Some describe perilous adventures and others just talk and share. They were all invited like they are all invited to play sports, move, and exercise. Moreover, they were all invited to stay with me on this journey to my own perfect connection; my own perfect meaning. They were all my friends; people with whom I share a common bond .

These participants are both men and women from different cultures and they all have one thing in common...mind and body connection with sports, exercise, and play. Some finished their careers and some are still actively practicing.

### **My Writing Style**

You will notice that this dissertation is written using the personal narrative approach. This dissertation is about ideas developing through the formation of meaningful (body/self) sport and exercise experiences, and wholistic human movement knowledge. Please allow a little time to accept this narrative journey and somehow connect to the world of sport, movement, play, and exercise.

Who are my participants? These athletes, these movers, these exercisers who want to share their stories and personal (body/self) knowledge through life experiences. Participants are all part of their own sport, movement, play, and exercise journey of

knowledge. My experiences are completely different than my participants' experiences, but all of our experiences and knowledge are shared the more we travel along through sport, movement, play, and exercise. We each recognize the other's role in shaping the phenomena. I hope this allows the reader to develop his/her own body/self experience through sport, human movement, play, and exercise.

This dissertation will not, by all means, provide a structured formula for health. It certainly does not provide any checklists or prescriptions for weight loss or muscle gain. Instead, this dissertation may open the reader's mind to new adventures and possibilities in sport and exercise. Maybe this dissertation will help others build new body/self relationships, establish new connections within the sport and exercise world, and realize that there is more to sport and exercise than reps, sets, calories, and weight loss.

When reading through this dissertation, the reader may notice two distinct voices; one academic and one more personal. Anyhow, I hope that by the time the reader reads this dissertation, an internalization occurs with enough new ideas to allow an experience with body/self connection, experience, and knowledge through sport, human movement, play, and exercise.

### **Data collection**

Data was collected through note taking, personal conversations, emails, and interviews. In addition, documentation and collection of participants' experiences and stories were also collected. Included first are, descriptions of personal experiences by the participants I have met along my own sport and exercise lived experience; my opponents, my teammates, and my clients I coached and trained were solicited to share their experience. And second, descriptions of personal experiences by the professional and



amateur athletes to flash out the background. This group represents the professional and amateur athletic participation and I will first list the sports that these athletes have mastered in.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This dissertation study has been approved by the University of Idaho Human Assurances Committee (Project Number: 12-019-see Appendix A for the letter of support).

### **Assumptions**

I assumed that participants in this study felt comfortable sharing their lived experiences behind sports, human movement, play, and exercise through storytelling. I expected that they provided me their true and honest lived experiences. I know all of my participants personally; thus, I believe that they were encouraged to share as much as they desired to contribute. I operated under the assumption that I am open about what my purpose is and demonstrated that their participation gives them power and strength to be thoughtful and forthright about their lived experiences.

### **Limitations**

Personal values and identity are shaped by lived experiences and context. The main limitation I have come across in taking a phenomenological approach in a commercial or organizational setting is people not understanding what it is, and expecting similar parameters to apply as for quantitative research. For example, there is a perception of usefulness when doing a phenomenological study with a limited sample size.

## **CHAPTER FOUR - EXPLORATIONS OF BODY/SELF PARTICIPANTS**

### **Introduction**

Lucy is holding the ball for Charlie Brown to kick. When he misses, Lucy tells him he has to use his mind and body. Charlie Brown informs Lucy that his mind and body haven't talked to each other in years (Mack & Casstevens, 2001, p. 42-43).

As noted earlier, a purpose of this phenomenological study is to access the lived sport and exercise experience in a volunteer population of athletes who have in the present and past sought for a deeper sense of meaningful connection where soul meets body.

This chapter brings together the data obtained from the interviews and conversations of each participant. Plus, this study also incorporates the phenomenological sport experiences of other professional athletes (Greg Louganis, Lance Armstrong, Craig Lambert, and Christopher McDougall) to help explain lived sport and exercise experiences. In addition, I have chosen many other resources: personal journal entries, personal conversations, and documentaries. Data highlighting the theme of body/self (where soul meets body) connection will be analyzed and interpreted for future suggestions, ideas, and solutions to meaningful body/self approaches to sport and exercise.

### **Participant Characteristics**

A review of the characteristics of participants involved in this dissertation study provides background for viewing participants. This also addresses the transferability of

the research data to other similar body/self connection populations, while exposing the uniqueness of the study population in comparison to other groups.

**Sub Problem One: What are the Descriptive Characteristics of the Participants?**

Participants who move in and out of this dissertation study are all part of their own continuous search where soul meets body. It is a series of meaningful events, a life odyssey, and a personal sport and/or exercise experiences. These participants account for numerous years of experience. They are a combination of participants in both team and individual sports, as well as just some passionate movers. Some described adventurous journeys; others just wanted to share. Most important, they all shared the common theme of this dissertation study: reflections of their sport/exercise experience and body/self connection. All of them were acquaintances, friends, athletes, and competitors. Every participant (Football-Track & Field-Long Distance Running-Passionate Mover-Basketball-Olympic Diving-Rowing-Biking) created or used a pseudo name of their choice with a special meaning.

Whole man acting: The last requirement for the aesthetic experience in sport is that the experience involve the total man, i.e. , mind and body, and that the body be experienced as a subject rather than as an object (Thomas, 1972, p. 8).

***First Person Consciousness***

The Body/Self transfers and flavors every little experience. My personal lived experience is powered by my past and history.

My ‘inner mind’ works easily right at the fringes of consciousness, providing me with dreams, fantasies, intuitive feelings, memories of lost moments, posthypnotic

reminders and sometimes peak experiences. At one point, I lived happily with the assumption that everyone was like that, but as I grew older I found out indirectly that this behavior was frowned upon... so I learned to keep it to myself and to share it selectively (Wharton, 2004, p. 98-99).

From the beginning, I loved the thought of the Body/Self concept. As an athlete, I traveled to competitions, met lots of people, and developed amazing friendships. Most important, I loved competing and I made the best of it. When I was a little girl, I wanted to be involved with sports. I was not really good in school so sports were the only thing I could excel at. Soon enough, I discovered that team sports did not really work for me. Simply put, by my European team handball coach, I was not very coachable. But, I loved running and running is where I excelled.

I was running now, and a fresh rhythm entered my body. No longer conscious of my movement I discovered a new unity with nature. I found a new source of power and beauty (Bannister, 1963, p. 12).

All sources seem to imply that the sport and aesthetic experiences are highly unique and subjective. It is further implied that despite the presence of others the performer is essentially alone in the experiential process (Thomas, 1972, p. 75-76). This was a challenge for me, to go back and reflect on my sports and exercise experience. I have some very conflicting memories about my own sport experience; some memories I do not even want to remember.

Listening to the softness of my footsteps as I am running free and alone. I can only imagine which trail will take me towards the military base and which will take me in the right direction. To a place where I might find some peace,

happiness, and love for people who have lost everything in a war torn country. A place where I can be accepted for who I am as an individual not for who I am ethnically. The mistakes I've made do not always find the way to forgiveness. It has been a struggle. Can someone tell me which way to go? I can only hope that I'll be arriving soon (Dika, personal communication, March 31, 1999).

### ***First Person Reflection<sup>24</sup> Through Sport***

When you grow up in America, you do not really learn how foul humans can smell, just as you do not learn about the smell of death. Taking a crowded bus in the summer exposes you to odors, but that is a transitory experience. If you turn your head or move a few steps away from an offending commuter, the smell is gone.

No amount of journeys on buses, however, can prepare you for the stink of refugees. When you enter a sports hall filled with women and children who have not washed for a month, or when you enter a cowshed filled with male prisoners who have not washed for two or three months, you smell something new, and it is terrible. You think that somebody has wrapped a discarded dishrag around your face, and that you must inhale air through it. Of course the smell is disgusting. It is the smell of filth.

My training facility in Zemun (suburb of Belgrade, Serbia) reeked of sweat, not from athletes but from refugees. The basketball floor was jammed full of Serbians and Bosnians, mostly women and children who had just straggled into town. They slept on blankets, one family per. The court was too small for all of them, so a few hundred refugees were living on the bleacher seats. It was May 1992. Many of the Serbians and

---

<sup>24</sup> My first person reflection is uniquely different than the American experience.

Bosnians had not showered since the war<sup>25</sup> began a month earlier, having been trapped in basements all the time or scrambling through forests. The wait for the gym showers was so long that, days after arriving in Zemun, most had not begun the first step of cleaning their bodies. Just six weeks before, some of them had been well-groomed doctors and lawyers. It was only the smallest insult the war had bestowed on them. This training facility was where my father and I trained for my track and field meets and my first experience of a non athlete sweaty gym. I often prefer doing my workouts outside because every single gym reminds me of a refugee sweat.

There were days that I had no choice but to practice around the refugees. I sat down on a gym floor with Senada, who had just arrived with her two children, a daughter of seven, and a son of five. She had come on foot from Foca, a small Bosnian town. She had to leave Foca in the middle of night, when attacks by bands of Serb paramilitary soldiers became too frightening, and then she had to sneak from one safe village to the next, never in a direct line, avoiding roads, walking through forests and mountains, sneaking past Serb villages, occasionally being shot at. She was on Bosnia's Underground Railroad, and it was a rough ride. She could rest for no more than a day at safe villages because other refugees were arriving and food was running out. I asked how long it took to get from Foca to Split, a town in Croatia where my family owned a beach house.

“Forty-five days,” she said.

---

<sup>25</sup> The war was the result of the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991. Bosnia and Herzegovina passed a referendum on independence on February 29, 1992, but it was rejected by the Serbian representatives. Slobodan Milosevic, the president of the former Yugoslavia and the JNA (Yugoslav National Army) attacked Bosnia to secure Serbian territory and war soon broke out across Bosnia accompanied by ethnic cleansing. It is important to mention that ethnic cleansing was performed by Serbians, Bosnians, and Croatians.

“Excuse me?”

“Forty-five days.”

“You have been walking for forty-five days? Sometimes I walk for an hour or two on my cross-training days.”

“Yes. But only at night. It was too dangerous to walk during the day.”

What was going on? I looked at Senada’s feet for an answer. She was wearing a pair of blue snow boots. They had been the best thing to put over her feet when she fled into mountains still covered with snow. She had run for so long that by the time she arrived in Zemun, in late May, the seasons had changed. It was 72 degrees outside. I was wearing a T-shirt and she was wearing snow boots, her only shoes. I ran because I loved it, but Senada ran to survive.

I needed to go out for a run. I needed a breath of fresh air. The stories, the smells, it was enough for one day. I stepped outside and was blinded by a bright sun that repudiated everything I heard in the dim bowels of the sports hall. When you are in pleasant Zemun, the wretchedness of Bosnia seems impossible, as unlikely as nighttime enveloping your neighbor’s home while your house is soaked in sunshine. Was my passion for running stronger than Senada’s running for survival? Or was I just obsessed with being the fastest? To truly understand the inner world and life of an athlete, one must hear directly from that person.

Looking back on this event, I think I was then already a member of sport and exercise community; developing my story, experiencing the absurdities of life through running as a sport and a metaphor, and probing the many niches and cracks of this

complex sport experience. By the time, running away from the war stories could hardly have been avoided.

When Novak Djokovic<sup>26</sup> was called the best public relations the country has ever had by the Serbian president, he felt the pressure and lots of responsibility. I do not think that Federer feels that he is carrying the prestige of Switzerland on his shoulders. But, Serbia is counting on every single athlete; they are carrying Serbia on their shoulders. It is because Serbians have a harder way to succeed in life because of their history. We have to dig deeper and we have to do much more in order to be seen and be spotted.

## **Participants' Profiles**

### **Introduction**

The participants in this dissertation study use their own lived experiences which can be seen through the profile the body/self participants. The use of these profiles addresses the initial dissertation research focus: To access the lived sport and exercise experience in a volunteer population of athletes who have in the present and past sought for a deeper sense of meaningful connection where soul meets body. After all, “crafting profiles is a way to find and display coherence in the constitutive events of a participant’s experience” (Seidman, 1998, p. 103). The use of the profiles highlights each participant’s sport and/or exercise lived experience that brought them to their body/self connection.

“One key to the power of the profile is that it is presented in the words of the participant” (Seidman, 1998, p. 103). Interpretations of the actual words of the

---

<sup>26</sup> Novak Djokovic is a Serbian professional tennis player, once known for his comical impersonations of fellow players than his winning ways. He has emerged from the long shadows of Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer, who until this year were the world’s two best players by leaps and bounds. Last year, he won three Grand Slam Tournaments. When Novak Djokovic won the Wimbledon Title last July, it was a gift to the nation whose only claim to fame were infamy in recent decades has been a brutal role player in the wars that broke up the former Yugoslavia.



participants reveal the experiences and meaning of their lived sport and/or exercise experience. The presentation of these individual profiles increases the understanding of the lived sport and/or exercise lived experience as expressed in their own words. Also, it will hopefully demonstrate the need to re-think both how we educate individuals about sport and/or exercise participation and sport and/or exercises pedagogy curricula.

### **Pseudonyms**

In order to maintain the anonymity of each body/self participants, pseudonyms have been assigned. Body/self participants chose their favorite names. Accordingly, the names of the body/self participants are as follows: (Acetylyne, Atle, Magic, and Roman).

### ***Presentation of Body/Self Participant Profiles: Sub Problem One: What are the Descriptive Characteristics of the Participants? (Question One, Two, & Three)***

As a part of the methodology of this dissertation study, the participants were asked a series of questions. The first of those included some descriptive information of each participant (see Chapter Three).

### ***How did you first get started playing sports or exercising?***

#### *Acetylyne*

I started dancing when I was around four or five. I danced ballet, jazz and tap for eight or nine years. I also loved to run and play on gymnastic rings and bars.

Moving has always been a part of my life and I have always enjoyed moving especially to music. I grew up near the beach and enjoyed and later lived in the mountains and enjoy being outside as well, hiking, camping and swimming (Interview, 3/12).

*Atle*

I got started playing sports when I was six years old (the earliest memory). I started playing soccer. My parents put me in soccer and when I was eight; my parents put me in basketball. Then, I turned twelve; I played softball, volleyball, and did track. Sport-wise really young and my parents put me in the sports. Exercising was different for me. Obviously I exercise during sports, but I started wanting to exercise on my own in high school when I took a step aerobics class as an elective because I wanted to do it. It was a new program they started in high school and I took that upon myself because I really wanted to do it. It's kind of cool that we had that program so that kids who weren't in sports can still excel in something else movement related (Interview, 03/12).

*Magic*

I first began exercising and playing sports when I was a child and we would have a babysitter come over. As part of the entertainment during the day, we would play different games and with an older brother and older sister, we would always split into two teams and it was my babysitter and me and my brother and sister. And, it was one of those things when we were playing these games, time seemed to pass. And, I began to notice playing these games that it wasn't only when she came over after a while, but I would see my brother out playing games and I felt like the fun could continue not only when she was around, but even after she left because these types of games, whether it was baseball, basketball, a game we called a long base which is a cross between kickball and baseball were happening throughout the neighborhood because there were a lot of kids and one thing I

loved about the sports were the relationships and the competition, to some degree, but I just loved the sense of community that we had when we did it and how fast time went (Interview, 03/12).

*Roman*

I first started playing soccer and baseball at age four. Then, my parents got me into football at age six and I was playing three sports. My parents both played sports in high school and wanted me to be in shape and have an option of what sport I wanted to play because they wanted me to play sports and they knew I'd be good at them. I was into soccer the most because it was the most active sport. That was before I started football and then football came along and I did pretty well. So I really liked football. It is that kind of sport that you just get into. I just figured I'd keep playing them all and see how well I do and how good I am at them. I was just doing it for the fun of it at first and then I started getting into it more competitively in middle school and high school. My parents never pushed me to play. I was always wanting to go out and play different sports and try different and new things. I was very active when I was younger (Interview, 3/12).

The second question begins a more existential line of questioning (see Chapter Three).

***What has kept you playing sports or exercising?***

*Acetlyne*

It makes you feel good. When I don't move my legs get restless and I am not as happy. Exercise helps elevate my mood, relive stress and reset my mind (Interview, 3/12).

*Atle*

Being part of a team (friends, family) during sports. My own enjoyment during exercising especially during step aerobics in high school (3/12).

*Magic*

It was just the challenge of whether it was catching a ball or throwing a ball, but once I started seeing some success that I can actually do the activity and then I was improving at the activity and then, the people I was playing the activity with, I really enjoyed their company and the friendships that we developed through the activity and then moreover. Once I started becoming successful and I realized to some agree that I was a desired participant to come and play. And, I really appreciated that someone actually wanted me to come play with them or be a part of their team.

It was just the fact that as I grew of age, I noticed that I was getting stronger and I was able to do the activity better and better each year if not each year, each week, each month. I noticed improvements in games and there was something about being set free when playing this activity. It was almost like there were no barriers on your personality and some emotions that you showed. It was accepted.

I felt like there was some form of expression of emotion that sports allowed that was important. When you are playing sports, it was OK, in a way accepted, if you became juvenile and you were really happy and you got excited when you made a great play to let that emotion out; to set it free. In failure, I would get extremely angry and upset which would make me try harder and make me work more on the process to make myself better. But, at the same sense, it was OK if there was a

little bit of anger even from a coach. Sometimes I saw players, if they didn't achieve what they wanted to or they didn't feel like that they have done their best when they set free some anger, as long as it wasn't directed at someone, but more towards themselves. For that moment, it is OK. You know, that is a part of being human. We have these emotions and I think when we play an activity and we get involved and what makes us so much fun is that we can get these extreme emotions. I often felt that you could tell a lot about someone or who they are by how they compete and play. Some people get extremely competitive, some people don't.

I've noticed the older I've gotten, I'm not as competitive. There are some things that get my competitive juices flowing, but that's a great thing about playing; it allows us to get in an area of our inner consciousness where we forget about everything else and we are just focused on the activity at hand. We are just in the moment; that's what I like to call it. It's almost like our soul is free. We are not worried about what we have to do at work or at the office. We are not worried about other obligations we have in life. We are just in the activity and often after we are done with the activity, it gives us a time to think back and reflect on how fun that activity was, but also how powerful the relationships are with the people we do those activities with.

As time moves on, we reflect back on those relationships and that experience becomes stronger and stronger by day. I noticed for the first time that, I felt like one of the better players, not the best, but I felt like I can hold my own.

Competition! I wanted to think about the ways and things that I could do to make

myself better and improve; it was practicing my skills more, whether it was throwing the baseball or playing catch, whether was shooting free throws on the basketball courts, whether was throwing the football the correct way to get a tighter spiral, catching ball with my hands instead of my body, working on the fundamentals.

To the time I hit junior high and high school that's when exercise came in. And, that is when I realized that strength training made me a better player, but it was the process that I really enjoyed about what does it take to make me a better athlete and perfecting my craft even more and that was just a part of the process and looking back on and reflecting, that process was vital to, not only success, but to how I live my life today. Everything is a process now and I developed that at an early age because I saw the impact that it had on my playing ability in sports (Interview, 3/12).

### *Roman*

The competitive drive that I have and the big factor is the success in sports that I've had and that were my big motivation. The reason why I've had found enjoyment is because it was the fame. If I wasn't very good then that fame wouldn't be there and I wouldn't enjoy it (Interview, 3/12).

The third descriptive question of Sub Problem One was:

1. What motivated you to play sports or exercise?

*Acetylene*

When I was young you just played outside, we didn't have TV or many inside games, you were always outside and moving is what I grew up doing. Climbing trees, jumping, and wrestling were just a part of daily life (Interview, 3/12).

*Atle*

In the beginning, my parents and my friends, but now it's just an enjoyment of sports that's why I participate in recreational leagues like city leagues, private leagues, and intramurals. What has kept me exercising is my own enjoyment. Like I said at the beginning, I started step aerobics, but now I really enjoy Zumba and Gravity (Total Gym). Creativity in Zumba and engaging the mind and having to think and remember certain moves and steps make Zumba extremely enjoyable. Gravity, I believe, builds confidence which is a positive outcome of gravity; building confidence through strength-muscle strength (Interview, 3/12).

*Magic*

Initially, it was probably my brother. Growing up without a father from the ages of 4-8, didn't have anyone to...I didn't have a father figure necessary to push me. But, it seems like my brother and his outlet after our father passed away was playing sports. And, I remember being in the house and seeing him out shooting basketball. During the winter, we'd be watching football game and he would want to go out and play catch with the football and he wanted someone to do something with so he would bring me out there, teach me how to throw, or teach me how to catch. In the spring, when baseball came and him teaching me how to hold a baseball bat, and how to swing a baseball bat and him telling me that I was going

to be really good at baseball. And him calling my mom outside and saying: “Hey, watch Magic hit a baseball,” or “Watch Magic shoot a basketball” after I made my first basketball hoop. It was almost like he was really proud of the games that I had made which kept me going.

Even though we were extremely competitive with each other and he was always much better at that age than I was, I still say to this day, he’s had much more natural ability as an athlete in some areas than I did, but he really pushed his knowledge onto me, not in an overbearing way, but in a way that if I asked for something when we were out there playing and he would definitely help out.

Now, my sister and I, we wouldn’t share any knowledge with each other because we just wanted to beat each other. We were close in age.

Also, when I would go watch a sporting contest and my brother was fun to watch when he started playing football and basketball. I enjoyed seeing how excited my family members would get and how excited the spectators and the crowd would get and I wanted that same experience for when I was playing; that support. And I just loved how it brought everyone together and just the atmosphere around the whole event. My brother was more focused on the game, but I enjoyed having everyone together and we were focused on him.

When I was playing, it was a way that the family would come together or when my sister was playing. Not just the family, but the relationships we developed with other spectators in the crowd who would come and watch their sons and daughters play. When I was playing sports, watching our parents get together and watching the bonds they formed with other parents and our parents knowing all



the kids. It was just a fun time in life and its funny even to this day, I'll talk to some parents who really missed those moments of being together and you realize that it's such a short window, but I think it was just that whole experience and seeing that as a younger kid and having that experience myself, but that was a big reason that pushed me. I wanted that same thing. And, of course, at the end of the day, when we were out there playing on the court or playing on the baseball field, playing on the football field, it was that time when we were set free and we were doing what we loved best. It was being able to share those moments and reflect on those moments with others, too. It wasn't just us. I think it made those moments more powerful (Interview, 3/12).

#### *Roman*

My parents started me on participating in sports. I got to know friends through playing sports. We all did the same activity together. My grandpa played baseball so he really encouraged me to stay active and do some kind of sport (Interview, 3/12).

### **Summary of Body/Self Participants**

Body/Self participants were varied in regard to their sport and exercise lived experiences where soul meets body. Their playing and moving environments were also varied. Similarities in motivation, enjoyment, and body/self connection through sports and exercise emerged on comparison of their lived experiences. For the most part, body/self participants were interested in increasing their body/self connection (where soul meets body) through movement. They have spent most of their moving careers trying to discover that deeper meaning within their sport and exercise choices. Nonetheless, these

participants expressed that they felt that sport and exercise was where they belonged, and we truly devoted to the activity.

**Body/Self Transformation through Sport and Exercise: Sub Problem One:  
What are the Descriptive Characteristics of the Participants? (Questions Four, Five,  
& Six)**

Analysis indicated that each body/self participant appeared to be going through an interesting reflection of body/self objectification via sport and exercise lived experiences and personal narratives. Several participants described that their identity through sport and exercise was part of their central personhood. “I enjoyed the identity one has with their body and one has with themselves and I felt like sport played a crucial role because it was who I was as a person; my identity (Magic, Interview, 3/12). “I am that special kind of athlete. Running is not just running. Running is bliss. Running is escape. Running is freedom. Running is me” (S. Walsh<sup>27</sup>, personal communication, September 13, 2011). Therefore, their identity through sport and exercise incorporates both internal and external concepts of a body/self connection.

For many, body/self connection is achieved differently and is dependent on various sport and/or exercise lived experiences. Individuals may go through stages in their lives where their body/self connection will vary. There may be different turning points in their sport and/or exercise lives and these turning points may represent their mind/body wholisim growth and understanding. To encourage lived sport and exercise experience sharing and body/self connection through sport and exercise, some probing questions were also asked.

---

<sup>27</sup> S. Walsh was a student majoring in Sport Management and I have had a chance to talk to her about her experience with running.

Continuing with question four/sub problem one: During sports, physical activity, or exercise, what ways do you commonly hear people objectify body/selves? How can you transform the way you speak about your body/self while playing sports and/or exercising so that it does not sound as you are collected of objects? Acetylyne responds:

Most people talk about themselves in the negative. I think much of this negative talk is to protect ego, we want people to disagree and say we are good, or at least me saying the negative about our actions we can be first to acknowledge that we don't think of ourselves of being perfect. I have spent a lot of time teaching myself to not refer to myself as fat or being uncoordinated as if I say these things then others who may be less coordinated or larger than myself feel worse about themselves. I think using language that implies you are working at a skill or practicing trying to improve is much more positive self talk and more encouraging for others around you rather than negative speech. The majority of time when I work out I am "in the moment" and do not take the time to separate when I am doing and the enjoyment of movement (Interview, 3/12).

Atle describes her own experiences with teaching group fitness classes.

Common example I hear now is: "I like to run because I don't have to think. So I don't have to think, that's why I like running." My own experience through teaching group fitness classes taught me that some people show up to class just to show up. They don't really want to get as much out of it. They don't want to think so they just show up to get an outcome. They are hoping they'll lose weight so that's the only reason that they are there. They are not there to enjoy it, they are there to lose weight. I hear a lot: "I had this New Year's resolution to lose all this

fat so that's why I'm here", not because I actually enjoy it. I like to look at my body as a whole talented being that is capable of enjoying a variety of physical activities rather than using the sport or exercise to kind of objectify ourselves. For example, I'm a whole being that loves movement and dancing. I love lifting, rather than I lift so I won't be fat, or I lift weights so I can look ripped. You hear that a lot (Interview, 3/12).

Magic reflects on his wrestling experience and his relationships with his wrestling coach.

Mind/body dualism, for instance, when I was in wrestling practice in high school, my wrestling coach would say things such as: "Your body may be saying no, but your mind is saying yes." "Don't tell body to shut up and just keep going." I can see where he is coming from and I can see where that goes, but sometimes that allowed people to push themselves to levels they didn't think were possible.

However, there is a body understanding, understanding your system and how your body works, and understanding that there are times when we feel like we hit a wall, but we can reach above those levels, but at the same sense, your body and your mind it's not like you can walk in tomorrow and run the marathon if you haven't been a marathon runner because your mind is not there and your body is not there. I look back at what my wrestling coach was saying and what he was really trying to do is trying to build that mind and body togetherness and realize that other levels are achievable, but it wouldn't have been possible had we not built to that. I also hear people say the complete opposite where your mind and body work together through embodiment. The mind and body move up the ladder together. It's not like the body is here and we have to wait for the mind to climb

the ladder. I look back, for instance, from where I'm at right now at age and where I was at 24 when I started working out again. My mind and body have climbed a lots of steps on the ladder together to get up to where I am today (Interview, 3/12).

When asked to reflect back on his coach's statement about mind/body dualism, Magic transforms the way he speaks about his body/self so it does not sound his mind/body are collected of objects (Sub Problem One: Probing Question Four: How can you transform the way you speak about your body/self so it does not sound your body/self is collected of objects?).

If I was coaching wrestling today, I would tell people that exercise and sport is a journey. The path that we are on right now as a novice wrestler is not where we are going to be in six months from now. Today, we are going to work on most basic things. It's like learning that alphabet before you can write. Before you start writing, you have to learn to pronounce all the different letters in the alphabet. First, is learning the 26 characters and then, learning how to pronounce the 26 characters and then, is learning how to pronounce the characters together along the way and then pretty soon, you'll be writing and pretty soon, you'll be reading. The more you read, the more you write, the better you're going to speak, and the better you're going to learn a language. I think that is very true with sport and exercise. First, let's just learn how to crawl, let's learn how to walk, let's learn how to run, let's learn how to catch, let's learn how to kick, let's learn how to use a bench press correctly, let's learn how to squat correctly, let's learn how to dance, let's learn how to feel the rhythm of what we are doing. When we perfect

our own skills, how are we going to do this with a team, how are we going to do this as a community, how are we going to work together. If your mind and body were that much different if I would just say: “Body, let’s do it today! What are you waiting for?” That wouldn’t be possible. But, it is a process just like anything else. And that’s when I get back to reflecting on my own experience on how important that process is. I know you guys want to play sports, but it’s an old saying from karate kid where Mr. Miyagi teaches him wax on/wax off at first; the very basics. And then he learns to do karate (Interview 3/12).

Roman demonstrated recognition of his body/self connection after examining his track and field experience (Sub Problem One: Probing Question Two: What is the most common thing your teammates would say to objectify body/self? Have you ever done anything in the past to objectify body/self?).

When people say that their body is not there, then their body isn’t there. When an athlete starts his/her pre-competition day with that kind of an objectifying attitude, then they already told themselves that they are going to fail. When I was running track lot of people would say: “Oh, I’m just not feeling good today.” When they say that, they are already telling themselves in their mind and their body that they are not going to do well in terms of performance. If you tell yourself that you want to perform good in your competition and that you feel good then your mind and body will back you up on that.

Roman has spent most of his life running track and field and competing. Probing questions were posed to encourage him to describe his sport experience in a nontraditional “I am my numbers” way. When asked: “As athletes, should we constantly

measure our performance via numbers (Sub Problem One: Probing Question Three)?”

Roman continues:

It depends on what you're measuring. The body mass index is not right. You can't measure yourself based on that. If you're trying to measure your performance in track, those are definitely objective things that you need to get right every time, but I suggest using some kind of subjective stats for yourself and that is really hard. It really does depend on what you're trying to measure. I would train as hard as I can without giving up. The problem is that people give up. It is hard to get a goal and if you don't do everything right and train smart, you are not going to see the results. It is the mental toughness. My dad had been telling me that my whole life which means that you can tell your mind and body together what to do and there is no pain. If you have a certain training workout usually you would try to achieve a goal and if you only do that training workout maybe you could go harder and push yourself harder and that's what mental toughness is, but if you only have 10 reps, then, you are not pushing yourself (Interview, 3/12).

Roman also mentioned mental toughness; “How do you achieve your optimal performance via mental toughness, true enjoyment, and an unconditional love for sport and movement (Sub Problem One: Probing Question Five)?”

There is a different kind of enjoyment and love for sports. There is love for the success in sports and exercise and there is love for fun. From my experiences, it is hard to love something if you are not successful at it. In general, people don't like to lose. There is some things that you can enjoy. Like art, but you might not sell your art; you just enjoy painting, but sports is a little different (Interview, 3/12).

Due to a foot injury, Roman is not currently successful in track and field, but he still reflects on his sport enjoyment (Sub Problem One: Probing Question Six: Even though you are currently not successful in track and field, do you still enjoy it?).

I was talking to my fiancé about this topic yesterday and I was asking her whether I should go back to track and field after my injury and if I don't do well then I'm not going to like track and field anymore and I don't want that to happen so I might just quit now and leave it at that and still like it. That kind of scares me because the only reason I liked it because I was good at it. Yes, I enjoyed running around. I liked the team I was on and I just liked the sport and liked that competitive drive and those butterflies that you get. But, if I didn't see the results, I didn't enjoy it and I didn't want to be there. That is a huge part of me. In football, I wasn't great in it because of my size, but I had speed and I had things that other people didn't have which they utilized me for so that made me enjoy it even though I wasn't the top performer I had different aspects of where I was. I had speed and I had a really good field vision so when I ran the ball and tried to make touchdowns, I was just different than the normal guy who doesn't try. I feel like I tried harder to get to where I wanted to be. In high school, the coaches didn't understand that and they would pick the bigger guys for running backs. Every year I started getting less enjoyment out of football, but I still did it just because of family and friends. They were saying to just stay with it; you got one more, two more years. But, I hated going to it. I was OK, but I never got the ball. I had a starting position in soccer according to my soccer coach my senior year because of my speed and because I played for so long. My friends and family



were saying to just stick with football for four years. I loved football when I was a little kid. I was starting all the time and getting a ball (Interview, 3/12).

### **Discussion of Sub Problem One-Descriptive Questions**

Through the examination of the profiles of the body/self participants, we can realize the diversity of experience brought to body/self wholism by this group of participants. Each participant has different body/self experiences and personal sport and/or exercise stories. These participants appear to have similar motivations for continuing with their sport and/or exercise journey, and most very much enjoy the activity and movement.

The implications of the varied experience level of this group of participants can lead one to envision individualized learning needs and goals to meaningful approaches to sport and/or exercise. An examination of individual sport and/or exercise experiences enhances one's ability to excel in one's own sport and/or exercise program, as well as the personal and professional growth of each person. Specific ideas, opinions, and suggestions to encourage and retain participation in sport and/or exercise are proposed in

### **Sub Problem Two: How does the Epoché Analysis Occur in the Participants' Experience?**

#### *An intimate Relationship between the Subject, Object and the Activity*

##### *Introduction*

Body/Self participants were asked to distance from their sport and/or exercise experience to analyze their relationship with the activity and movement. To help participants distance from the experience, reflection and *epoché* questions were introduced and explained first (see Chapter Three). Participants were allowed to reflect

on questions for one week before their sport and/or exercise experiences were recorded. In addition, a series of probing questions were used to help participants with their reflection moments:

1. During your sports activity, how do your mind and body work together?
2. How is your sport performance affected?
3. What made you realize that your mind and body are connected?
4. What does body/self connection mean to you?

**Participants' Reflections (Sub Problem Two: Questions One, Two, Three, & Four)**

“Magic, you need to tell your body what to do (Sub Problem Two: Probing Question Four)!”

I had that perspective, but as I examine things now, I realize that part of what made me such an effective hitter in baseball and yes, I knew how to swing a bat, but that came from just doing the very basic fundamentals of doing a karate chop drill on pitches and then it came to thinking about if I had two strikes and zero balls and the pitchers had to count and I only had one more strike before I'm out. Is he going to throw away a fast ball down the middle of the plate or is he going to try to get me to chase a bad pitch. It was about trying to learn how the mind game works. I started to realize that your mind and body play a big role when I'm swinging a baseball bat. If he is throwing a curve ball, I need to have my weight back so I can load my weight to really put some power into the pitch. And I was thinking how that mind and body thing works together and I started thinking about how does this work in exercise. For instance, is my rhythm important when I'm riding a bike? How can I maximize my effort? Is my form correct when I'm

doing a curl? Is my form correct when I'm doing a squat? When I'm running bases how am I rounding the bases, where am I touching the base with my foot when I go on the base. So I'm thinking that mind and body are constantly working together and really it is one. The more in flow you are with your mind and body, the more you understand this concept and the better you'd be able to perform. You'll be able to get enjoyment out of exercise. When I reflect on where I was as an 17 and 18 year old junior and senior in high school to where I am today is understanding the importance and valuing the embodiment philosophy and realizing that exercising is who I am, playing golf is who I am, fly fishing is who I am. It's the feel that I have and that feel that I have is that mind/body feel. It's more of an understanding (Magic, 2012).

I think they are separate. Your mind is totally different and your body is totally different because you can wake up, you can feel fine, you can be: "I'm not in a mood today" and your body is going to respond to that. If your body is not feeling good, then you're going to tell yourself that you're not feeling good (Roman, 2012).

After distancing from his body/self connection in track and field, Roman further explains:

"They work together as a union!" During a 100m dash when you come out the block and you feel good. I always feel my technique through my body and it's really good. If I can relax and don't tense up, it makes me feel good running and I get faster times. I'm constantly telling myself to relax and that allows me to get better from which a lot of people don't understand-you have got to relax! People tense up and they run slower times. People think too much during competition.

I've been that way before. I've told myself that I was thinking way too much (Roman, 2012).

Reflection on his competition days, Roman describes his track and field performance.

It is way worse. When I go out and I think so hard on my mechanics then I ran the worst time I've ever ran. If I just go out there and sprint for fun without thinking about it, I ran a better time. I have an example of this. I was long jumping at WSU two years ago and I was not jumping well at all and I was getting pissed off because I wasn't doing well. My knee was bothering me a little bit so I made that excuse to my coach that my knee was bothering me because I didn't want to run the 100, I didn't want to do anything because I was just pissed off. So I drove home during the meet. Right after there was a track and field intramurals and I knew I was going to take the whole thing because it was kids that were hung over. It was just easy I wasn't supposed to run because if you are on the track team, you are not allowed to play intramurals. I didn't even get in the 22s on my long jump at WSU. I had sweats on, I had a sweatshirt, I didn't even have my spikes on and I went on and didn't care with a nice good pace jog jump and I got into the 22s. How did I do that? And during my sport competition I couldn't even get that. And then I ran the 100 without a block because they only had 7 so I gave everybody else their blocks because that was going to be easy and relaxed and I've never felt so good in my life because I was beating everybody. I ran the same time I run in competitions with blocks. I was wearing a sweatshirt and sweats. It was weird that I could do that and I didn't care. I was relaxed and just having fun. That kind of pissed me off because I was like: "Why can't I do that during competition?"

Maybe if I didn't treat it as competition and was more relaxed and focused on the fun aspect of track and field. Like: "I'm just going to do my best and whatever happens-happens. It is a different attitude people have towards competition. It is hard to stay that way because you can relax and have fun during every meet, but sooner or later you're going to get to that point where you just want to beat a certain time. You can only get so much better until you start trying to work on your technique. My parents always told me to have fun during your sport that is why I just want to have fun, I agree. But it is hard to have fun when you're trying to get a certain time and technique right because you're successful at your sport (Roman, 2012).

Atle explained that her body/self disconnection in sports came from constantly striving to please her parents.

Originally, when I played sports, I would separate them, but now as I've learned and grown, I connect them. They've always been connected and they'll always be connected. It is just the mindset that we have. For example, in sport, when I played basketball, I disconnected my mind and body because I didn't think I was that great at basketball, but I knew I had to do it to make my parents happy. It was a complete disconnect. I didn't have confidence in myself so it reflected in my body. I pretended my mind and body were disconnected (skill from confidence). But now, as I play basketball in intramurals, I realize how connected my mind and body are and I have confidence because I enjoy it and that shows in a way I play. I'm able to use more strategy, use my teammates... make more plays (Atle, 2012).

Atle further reflects on mind and body wholism:

What has helped realize body/self connection was stepping away from it for a little bit because I played all four years of high school and playing three sports every year and constantly playing. So stepping away from it and reflecting upon my experiences and taking competition in the pressure also helped me to connect my mind and body. I'm almost disconnected when I try to compete, but I'm fully connected when I'm playing sports just for myself. When I'm practicing yoga, in the beginning, I treated yoga as a body exercise, just something we do with our bodies, but as I continued my journey in yoga, I realized that the more I connect, connect the poses with actual things in my life, I was able to see the meshing of mind and body in exercise. If I connected to lotus pose which is a flower that grows in water and comes up and above the dirty, the scum of the earth and rises above and is able to bloom, so when I connected that to myself in real life-what does that mean to me? And then I saw the meshing in yoga (Atle, 2012).

Atle discusses meaningful body/self approaches through movement:

It means to me that sometimes there are things in life that we are never going to be able to control. The scum of the earth, we can never control it. Sometimes people say hurtful things to us, or they think little of us and they talk behind our back. And me rising above that is letting it go and still being able to function, bloom, and do my best despite the world (Atle, 2012).

Acetylyne takes on a different approach to mind and body wholism and relates it to movement:

The majority of the time my mind and body work together without conscious thought. When I do think about movement it becomes more forced and I get caught up in counting and become less focused on what my body is physically doing and more about what I “think” I should be doing next, or if I am on beat (Acetlyne, 2012).

**Sub Problem Three and Four: What if any Transcendental and Reductive Experience has Occurred through Participants?**

*Playouts vs. Workouts (Sub Problem Three and Four: Questions One & Two: How can you keep the enjoyment of your sport, play, human movement, and exercise activities? What would you say to someone who asks you if you workout or participate in sports? Think about the phrase “work” versus “play” and how you would like to view yourself-as a mover in activity or a worker in exercise and/or sport)*

I look towards working out as means to activities that I want to do as part of a process. For instance, I love to golf, I love to hike during the summer whether is going fly-fishing or camping. I love to hike in the fall when I’m going hunting. By exercising, I feel much more comfortable when I do those recreational activities. It makes me have an appreciation for working out, but not only does it help me with those recreational activities, I feel like I’m a better teacher, I feel like I’m a better husband, I feel like I’m a better son, a better brother, a better nephew. It helps with all areas of my life where I really value that exercise. Do I think of it as a workout? I guess maybe I do have that perception. I also think, not only do I enjoy the people that I’m coming to see there and sweating. I really enjoy getting in there and beating that time on the clock. I’m playing against myself in there. At the same sense, it gets back to that team concept that I can talk to people after we’re done and share that experience, my workout experience and

I can say: “Hey, you know what? You were really hitting hard on a bike! What are you doing down there holding that plank? Is that a pretty good workout? That’s really impressive of you! I see you that you did 17 pull-ups. You’ve lost some weight and you’re looking really good! You’re looking stronger! That’s great!” I’d be the first one to say that and throw a compliment out and I want to let them know that I really value what they’re doing, too. It’s not just about me in there. It’s about the community and hopefully, that community keeps them coming back and its building relationships (Magic, 2012).

To question two, Atle responds that individuals can make their workouts more like playouts and make them fun and engaging:

Our body craves variety so changing fitness routines can help us keep interested. A lot of times something changes from a workout to a playout when we make it fun and the fun aspect comes from relieving pressure so we always have this pressure to lift Monday, Wednesday, Fridays our legs, or our abs, or our deltoids. We have that pressure to perform every single time even though we aren’t feeling great and we are sore, but we still are going to do it and it becomes work. So that pressure aspect is no longer fun. But, if we could see our long term goals: “I want to be stronger. I want to be able to hike a mountain this summer.” If we could see that long term goal, it becomes fun and we may tweak it or change it so that we are not crushing our bodies into the ground. So it becomes work when we are exhausted (Atle, 2012).

According to Roman, when athletes compete, their sport becomes a workout:



Because I have to work-out instead of just play. Anybody that's in a competition it's already starting to think about it because there is also other people around doing the same thing. Your sport becomes a workout to you. When we had a football practice and literally, the coach said: "OK everybody, we are just going to practice, but we are going to have fun and you guys are going to run your own practice and you'll have your own scrimmage." That was fun! I had a blast. I don't know if we were doing better or not, we might have been doing better just having fun-offensive line was making plays, the defense was doing better and we don't care so much about competition. The coaches stayed out of our way, the team meshed together and that was the best time I've ever had because we were having our own practice and we weren't worried about anything else (Roman, 2012).

Acetylyne explains that people around her make her workouts playful and fun.

I generally do choose workouts and class that to me are more playouts. I though, have that freedom since I work in the industry I can pick and choose classes more easily than many others as my schedule allows me this opportunity. Though I do have to attend classes that I know I will not enjoy as much and I go in knowing this and try to find other ways to enjoy the workout through those people around me, the fun the instructor is having, the music or knowing that I am burning so many calories (Acetylyne, 2012)!

When everything is bracketed, all we have is a transcendental self (Husserl, 1962). Bracketing of all presuppositions of beliefs allows one to completely concentrate what appears to consciousness. Through transcendental self, participants are reducing

their sport and/or exercising world to consciousness-of-world to obtain the truth (where soul meets body). Themes derived from the body/self participants' responses indicated that they had experienced circumstances that are conducive to their mind and body connection through sport and/or exercise, play, and human movement. Via sport and/or exercise these participants experienced several factors that motivated them to acquire new skills and education that would advance their body/self connection. As these participants embarked on their sport and/or exercise lived experiences, three themes became evident: a) competition, b) lifestyle choices, and c) relationships with oneself and others.

Through my phenomenology research, I examined the responses of the body/self participants for common existential themes. I found the consistency in themes addressing competition, lifestyle choices, and relationships with oneself and others. This section relates the lived sport and/or exercise experience of these participants, in order to make the experience visible to the sport and exercise industry. Analysis of these experiences demonstrates a need for changes within the sport and exercise education. For instance, lived experiences will be addressed as well as possible strategies to meaningful approaches to sport and/or exercise.

**Competition (Sub Problem One: Question Five: How do you describe your workputs or physical activity? Please talk and reflect on your sport and/or exercise lived experience.; Sub Problem Three and Four: Question Two & Three: How do you allow yourself to experience the pleasure of your sport, movement activity, play, or exercise? Describe your sport and/or exercise story for your body/self lived experience.: Theme One)**

Participants may often face challenges in their body/self relationship. Many explained that competition had an effect on their body/self connection. A sense of being

pressured to perform and achieve significantly affected participants' sport and/or exercise enjoyment and pleasure. Competition influences on the participants varied. Some participants experienced competition with oneself and some with others. Nonetheless, the influence of the competition was discussed by all the participants.

According to Atle:

There are two ways that I allow myself to experience the pleasure. The first thing is the environment. I think the environment is extremely important to allow yourself to enjoy exercise or sport. For example, in high school when I played sport, the environment was competition and pressure to perform. The environment didn't allow me to truly enjoy the sport to my liking. You have to feel safe in the environment in order to enjoy it. If you don't feel safe, let's say you are going to a class and there is someone in there that has ridiculed you or prosecuted you, are you really going to allow yourself to enjoy Zumba; probably not. So it's a lot in the mind, the allowing I think happens in the mind. Also, to letting go of competition. Another way to allow ourselves, for example, when I go hiking with my husband, I love being outdoors, but if I think I need to compete because my husband doesn't hike mountains, he runs mountains. If I'm thinking I need to compete, I'm running and I'm looking down and I'm going as fast as I can. I'm not allowing myself to enjoy everything around me (Interview, 3/12).

Acetyne emphasizes other factors to sport and exercise that are more important.

I do not view myself as a sports person, I am the sort of person who roots for the underdog, I can be competitive but I am not driven by my competitiveness. I think

staying healthy is important but I like to enjoy what I do for my workout and have fun (Interview, 3/12).

Roman describes his relationship with oneself and track and field:

Me participating in sports is a full time job and something that I have to do, but it is working towards an achievement in my sport. Not really play in sport, but if you are playing a game of touch football, that's play because there is no competition involved-professional competition. I would say work because you're working for yourself. If you are not working for yourself then it becomes a job. When I was trying to get that 23ft, I was working for a goal, but since I haven't been getting any its kinda like work for a job. That is what I don't want it to be if I come back to track. And that's what I have to figure it out if it' be work for a job or work as trying to achieve the goal. If I can't achieve that goal then I got to know when to stop. It is really hard and I don't know what to do. No matter what, I would still think too hard and I wouldn't relax as much when there is competition involved. When I'm working out by myself that's when is fun because I can push myself and nobody else is pushing me or watching me or doing anything. So that's fun! I go and workout because it's fun and I go and push myself and there is no competition. I'm just competing against myself. With track you compete against yourself because you have to try and get your times, but it's kinda different track and lifting weights because you compete against yourself. But, if you don't do good, then you are not enjoying it plus there is probably a factor that you're always trying to compete against others when you are long

jumping. There is other people long jumping with you and when you're working out, you're just lifting on your own (Interview 3/12).

Magic explained that most of his workouts are a competition with oneself.

I would describe my workouts as high intensity and pushing myself to my limits, but in control in a way and really focusing on my breathing, my sweating moment. I almost like it better when there is no music playing. It's almost like a rhythm when I really get into a good flow. It's almost like a competition that I have (Interview, 3/12).

### **Researcher Reflections of Responses to Sub Problem Three & Four**

As reflected in the phenomenological experiences, competition was very significant to this group of participants. It appears that competition was important for the body/self connection, although many experienced pressure to perform well. The struggle that ensues from competition may have long-term effects on athletes striving towards mind and body wholism within their chosen sport, human movement, play, and exercise. This indicates that sport and exercise professionals could intervene by providing informational sessions or written ideas to encourage and incorporate body/self/meaningful approaches to sport and exercise for athletes and general public. This may be particularly important for sports and exercise retention, involvement, and participation.

**Lifestyle Choices (Sub Problem Three and Four: Question Two & Three: What would you say to someone who asks you if you workout or participate in sports? Think about the phrase “work” versus “play” and how you would like to view yourself-as a mover in activity/play or a worker in exercise and/or sport. How do you allow yourself to experience the pleasure of your sport, movement activity, play or exercise?: Theme Two)**

Body/Self participants had shared that moving and being active are part of their lifestyle choices. “In the process of self-actualizing, reality has a way of derailing the most motivated” (Mertig, 2003, p. 76-77). Magic stated,

I always try to talk how this is a lifestyle choice. Part of the reason I do this stuff, it is who I am, it defines who I am. It is a lifestyle. We love to play! The older we get, we feel like we have to more serious and we have to get our stuff done at the office and we don’t have enough time to workout or playout. You need to make time to do these activities because you can never give up play. It is what helps us keep sharp, it helps keep us young, it helps with relationships, but more than anything, I would say that it is a lifestyle choice and this is who I am; this is a part of me (Interview, 3/12).

Roman explained that his lifestyle choices help with his track and field career. In addition, Roman clarified that track and field performance is a part of his lifestyle choice.

Better performance in lifting so I can get stronger. If you get stronger, you’re going to get better. And I have to have a clear mind, too. I might come back because I only have one more year and I’m just going to have fun and I can do better, but then I also could think that I only have this one year to get 23ft and if I don’t get it, then I’ll be pissed off. But, I’m just going to have fun and what I get, I get. But, I still feel I won’t like it even if I don’t get 23ft or over. You have to

feel some kind of pleasure because you feel like you're doing something.

Achievement is doing something instead of sitting on a couch and doing nothing.

It might not be fun, but I'm staying active and I like being active. I don't like to sit around (Interview 3/12).

Atle described that playing her sport and exercise activities and movements would never be work to her:

I enjoy participating in exercise and movement and a variety of physical activities. You want to use the same words people are used to, so you say: "Yes, I workout," "Yeah, I play" because you want to connect to them. To me, it is more play, it is playful exercising. Sometimes I workout and don't enjoy things, but I'm like: "Oh, I have to do this." We think we have to, but we really don't. I would like to view myself as a mover, one who takes care of my mind and my body by practicing yoga. I enjoy playing the game of soccer, softball, volleyball, and basketball. I love hiking the Glacier lakes, hiking to mountains and finding hot springs, riding my bike for enjoyment on trails and the mountains. I'm totally playing. That would never be work for me (Interview 3/12).

Acetyne mentioned that she always chooses fun and engaging activities.

I don't judge myself or compare myself to others. I just try to do my best and to have fun doing what I do. I try to make others around me have fun also. Laughing at yourself is the best way to get rid of being self conscious (Interview 3/12).

**Relationships (Sub Problem Three & Four: Question One & Three: How do can you keep the enjoyment of your sport, play, human movement, and exercise activities? How do you allow yourself to experience the pleasure of your sport, movement activity, play, or exercise?: Theme Three)**

Body/Self participants' sport and exercise experiences may just be the mesh of relationships. For some body/self participants, these relationships may be what surrounds them, and what forms them as athletes and/or movers, and individuals. Frankly, many body/self participants explained that the reason they play sports or exercise may not always be to win or beat each other, but to be we each other. Sport and exercise may as well be a reflection of all our relationships.

Sports and exercise give me pleasure. They give me pleasure because of the relationships I've had established and sharing those activities with people that I enjoy. The other thing is: the identity. I realize how positive these experiences are for me. I would like to say that I'm fairly happy person, very positive, very uplifting. Part of the reason I'm like that is because of the activities I incorporated into my life. Have you ever heard of saying: "If you surround yourself with negative people, chances are that you are going to be a negative person." If you look at your children and they are hanging out; you are the company you hang out with. By doing these activities, they only have the positive, for the most part positive consequences, positive effects in my life. I really enjoy the activity which is number one. I really enjoy sharing the activity and I really enjoy the way they make me feel (Magic Interview, 3/12).

Atle explains that sport and exercise is a reflection of her relationship with one's body/self. Atle continues:



Listening to what is going on in our body. We overtrain a lot and force our bodies to be involved in physical activity. Sometimes this is harmful, but we convince ourselves that we must keep participating in this activity in order to achieve our goals. Our bodies are not machines and we like to pretend that they are. Our bodies have a life, they have a mind, they have cells, they have muscles, tissues, genetics and machines will never have that. In order to keep our enjoyment in sport, play, movement, and exercise, we have to connect with what is going on in our body, access that, and do an appropriate exercise. For example, if you force something in terms of movement, you're not going to enjoy it because you'll be disconnected from your body/self. If our body is suffering, we won't have enjoyment. We pretend we will because of competition, but we won't (Interview, 3/12).

**Body/Self Sport & Exercise Lived Experiences (Sub Problem Three and Four: Question Four: Describe your sport and/or exercise story for your body/self lived experience; Sub Problem Five & Sub Problem Six<sup>28</sup>)**

It's time you began learning from your life experiences instead of complaining about them, or basking in them" (Millman, 1984, p. 65).

Thomas (1972) describes that aside from the unity, subject-object integration, and affective reflection and insight of the aesthetic experience, it is further distinguished from common experience by its autonomous, unique, and non-utilitarian nature. Thus, for an athlete sport and/or exercise experience carries its own highly individual meaning and feelings which are exclusive to him/her. Referring to the dance experience, Sheets has

---

<sup>28</sup> No specific questions were asked in Sub Problem Five and Six, but intentionality and apodictic certainty was evident in the participants' answers.

also noted that in any lived experience it is the process which is experienced and not the “thing” (p. 58). This entire experienced process disproves dualisms of subject-object and mind-action. Athletes may experience fear of failure and/or lack of confidence in one’s skills which may lead to failing to wholly absorb in the experience.

...I thereby attribute to the soul... the potentialities which are actualized by means of this instrument ... I furthermore convert the soul into a body (Ibid, p. 196 as cited in Thomas, 1972, p. 91).

I am my body... I am not the master or proprietor of the content of my body, etc. It follows that as soon as I treat my body as a thing. I exile myself in infinite degree: the negative justification of materialism; we end up with the following formula: “my body is (an object), I am nothing” (Ibid, p. 202 as cited in Thomas, 1972, p. 91).

One time when I was hiking I was completely aware of everything in my body/self. That was the most amazing experience that I’ve had. Recently, I went hiking and one of the hiking techniques in order to keep a long gait is to look forward rather than down. I think this also helped me with my experience. Look ahead, otherwise if you’re looking down your feet would be short. That allowed me to take in nature to see what was around me and to understand that I was so small in this huge wilderness and when we got to the lake, we got lost for a while. But, when we finally got there is kinda feeling you can’t ever describe it, because it comes from inside by taking in this beautiful glass, glacier lake. And that’s an example when my mind was completely cleared. I was allowed to take in more than I’ve ever thought I could. More nature, my environment, things that are

bigger than myself, not focusing on my opponents but realizing the whole spirit (Atle Interview, 3/12).

When the body is in action, as in sports, according to Wenkart (1963), man's personal relation to his body can be explained in terms of his positional consciousness (p. 401). Possibly we may be able to note that man not only is his body, but also has his body.

...my body is already a meaning-giving existence, even if I am not yet conscious of this meaning-giving activity. My body invests my world with meaning even before I think about this meaning. ... My body makes the world and the other available to me... My behaving body—which I am—is the locus for the appropriation of sense and meaning (Vankaam, p. 229).

Just as the perfect sport and/or exercise experience moment necessitates the unity of mind and body, the unity or integration of man and sport is a necessary criterion for the perfect moment to occur (Thomas, 1972, p. 95). Athletes may not use one's movement to form an experience, but the involvement in one's body/self being allows this experience to transpire.

When I live a dance, I feel as one: the dance, the dancer, and myself. I am necessarily the object of my perception because it requires my attention and interest for its existence. If I blot out the dance, I am not in it, it does not exist for me. On the other hand, if I live the dance vicariously, I am in it, its existence is complete (Fraleigh, 1970, p. 68-69).

There is something about fly-fishing where you have to have a certain rhythm when you are casting—you're rocking back and forth with your arm. If you are not

rocking in the right moment or the right way, your presentation of your fly to a fish is going to look out of whack and you are not going to catch any fish. But, it's just being in the moment. You're hearing the water. You are feeling the breeze. You are feeling the sun on your face. You are in some of the most pristine area that the world has to offer. It's just you and you are hearing the sounds, the smells, the feel. You are incorporating all the 5 senses in this one activity. Even if you don't catch anything, it's just the fact you are out there and its feeling that water rush up against your legs, smelling the dried heat and the pine trees, hearing the water splashing against the rocks, the birds, seeing how transparent the water is and all the different colors. (Magic Interview, 3/12).

For a complete list of interview questions, probing questions and participants' responses, please refer to Appendix D.

## CHAPTER FIVE -REFLECTIONS AND DISSCUSIONS

The intent of this dissertation study was to access the lived sport and exercise experiences in a volunteer population of athletes who have in the present and past sought for a deeper sense of meaningful connection where soul meets body. The Sub Problems were:

1. An explanatory description of self through sport and exercise (Sub Problem One: What are the descriptive characteristics of the participants?),
2. An explanatory sport and exercise description of athlete' experience through storytelling (Sub Problem Two: How does the epoché analysis occur in the participants' experience?),
3. A reflection and discussion of the phenomenological experience with a body/self connection (Sub Problem Three, Four, Five, and Six), and
4. A discussion of meaningful body/self approaches, opinions, and ideas to sport and exercise.

Understanding and interpretations of lived sport and/or exercise experiences, proposed learning strategies to body/self connections through sport, human movement, play and exercise, and motivational paragraphs were explored. Through phenomenology of lived experiences it may be possible to increase involvement and retention in sport, exercise, and physical activity. The following is example of the lived body experience from elite athletes. This literature is offered here to help describe and flesh out the existential experiences of the study's participants.

### **Lance Armstrong<sup>29</sup> & Body/Self**

When cyclist Lance Armstrong started coughing one morning in the fall of 1996, he initially wrote it off as just another after-effect of his strenuous training program. Then he saw the blood spattered in his bathroom sink, and at that moment he was transformed from a tough professional athlete to a vulnerable man rushing to save his own life. He was coughing up blood because testicular cancer, relatively common among men his age, had spread to his lungs and to his brain. The cancerous testicle was removed immediately and he underwent brain surgery shortly thereafter. Aggressive chemotherapy was administered to shrink the tumors in his lungs. Almost overnight, the central question in Lance's life was not whether he could win the Tour de France, it wasn't even whether he'd return to the sport. The question at this point was: would Lance live or die? In 1999 Lance Armstrong did win the Tour de France, and the victory meant more to him and to others around the world than it seemed like a bike race ever could. The meaning came, first, from the fact that he had stared death in the face and survived the grueling treatments. But it also grew out of some serious soul-searching about the purpose of his life and the values that would shape it. Finally, the victory had meaning for Lance—became a goal for Lance—precisely because it meant so much to others. It gave hope to thousands with cancer around the world (Reid, 2002, p. 119-120). Lance Armstrong (2000) further explains,

The truth is, if you asked me to choose between winning the Tour de France and cancer, I would choose cancer. Odd as it sounds, I would rather have the title of cancer survivor than winner of the Tour, because of what it has done for me as a

---

<sup>29</sup> Even though Lance Armstrong is in the midst of a legal battle with the USADA—his biography is still a good example of phenomenology.

human being, a man, a husband, a son, and a father. In those first days after crossing the finish line in Paris I was swept up in a wave of attention, and as I struggled to keep things in perspective, I asked myself why my victory had such a profound effect on people. Maybe it's because illness is universal-we've all been sick, no one is immune-and so my winning the Tour was a symbolic act, proof that you can not only survive cancer, but thrive after it. Maybe, as my friend Phil Knight says, I am hope (p. 265).

All athletes could aspire to connect body and self during practice and competition, but Lance Armstrong also aspired knowledge. Lance Armstrong not only desired athletic success, but he strived to learn and know more about oneself and his competitors. For instance, Armstrong provides an excellent example of his own lived experience with cycling.

What did I think about on the bike for six and seven hours? I get that question all the time, and it's not a very exciting answer. I thought about cycling. My mind didn't wander. I didn't daydream. I thought about the techniques of the various stages. I told myself over and over that this was the kind of race in which I had to always push if I wanted to stay ahead. I worried about the lead. I kept a close watch on my competitors, in case one of them tried a breakaway. I stayed alert to what was around me, wary of a crash (p. 249)

In addition, Armstrong's sequence from self-discovery, responsibility, respect, and citizenship can be significant for one's knowledge in dealings with the personal and social challenges faced by every athlete. For example, athletes may often live in denial when it comes to injuries. Often athletes may deny all the aches and pains because they want to

finish practice or a game. Lance Armstrong suggests that every sport is a sport of self-abuse to some extent. Athletes are outside either running or cycling in all sorts of conditions and they just do not give in to pain. Athletes can be too busy to realize that they are fearful, weak, vulnerable, and forgiving toward themselves and others. Lance Armstrong (2000) states,

What makes a great endurance athlete is the ability to absorb potential embarrassment,

and to suffer without complaint. I was discovering that if it was a matter of gritting my teeth, not caring how it looked, and outlasting everybody else, I won.

It didn't seem to matter what the sport was-in a straight-ahead, long-distance race, I could beat anybody. If it was a suffer-fest, I was good at it (p. 24).

Cycling is a team sport and cyclists have social responsibilities to their teammates, coaches, opponents, family, and friends. By far the best way to experience cycling is simply to live it. Cycling is a sport that rewards prime champions, explains Armstrong (2002). It takes a physical and emotional endurance created over years that comes only with one's lived experience. Each teammate has his/her role linked by a language of its own and is accountable for a race. In cycling, teammates are critical. Cyclists do not win races on their own. Each cyclist depends on his/her teammates. Cooperation in cycling is crucial and people have to want to ride with you. Armstrong (2000) continues, "Every team needs guys who are sprinters, guys who are climbers, guys willing to do the dirty work. It was very important to recognize the effort of each person involved-and not to waste it. "Who's going to work hard for someone who doesn't win" (p. 55)? One may realize that people really do not learn from their races as much as they



learn from their experiences. Lance Armstrong's appreciation for his teammates came when Fabio died during Tour de France. Fabio had two goals: to finish the race and to win the stage into Limoges. Armstrong knew that he had to try to win the stage into Limoges for Fabio. He explains that he felt something spiritual like there were two riders on that bike. Lance Armstrong felt great to be able to finish the stage for Fabio and his family. Armstrong (2000) says it best, "Your past forms you, whether you like it or not. Each encounter and experience has its own effect, and you're shaped the way the wind shapes a mesquite tree on a plain" (p. 17).

Cancer, for Lance Armstrong, was an examination of oneself. Seeing ourselves as we really are can be quite difficult to achieve. Athletes may need a place where they can listen to their bodies and talk to oneself. Philosophically, Lance Armstrong was able to find his mindful approaches to cycling. Further, Armstrong explains that he saw more beauty when he was sick than he ever did cycling. He calls this beauty *human* moments beauty with his friends, his doctors, his nurses, and his family. Lance Armstrong used to claim that cancer derailed him from his identity. "Who would I be if I wasn't Lance Armstrong, world-class cyclist" (Armstrong, 2000, p. 14)? In the long run, cancer helped shaped him as an athlete and a human being.

Lance Armstrong was able to use his life experience to define thy self. Cancer and cycling had an extremely important role in his life. They have provided him with guidance, direction, friendships, and fulfillment in life. Nevertheless, I believe a growing population does not take mindful approaches to sport frequently enough. Often, athletes tend to identify their minds with themselves, viewing their bodies as mere objects and practice their mind-over-matter philosophy. Lance Armstrong did it, too. There were

occasions when I objectified and compared myself to my competitors. As a scientist, I too identified myself by my own body measurements (weight, height, body fat percentage, and body circumference). Then, it may not be surprising that athletes often hide their sense of value and even their real identities. Armstrong (2000) states,

There was a science to winning. The spectator rarely sees the technical side of cycling, but behind the gorgeous rainbow blur of the peloton is the more boring reality that road racing is a carefully calibrated thing, and often a race is won by a mere fraction of acceleration that was generated in a performance lab or a wind tunnel or a velodrome long before the race ever started. Cyclists are computer slaves; we hover over precise calculations of cadence, efficiency, force, and wattage. I was constantly sitting on a stationary bike with electrodes all over my body, looking for different positions on the bike that might gain mere seconds, or a piece of equipment that might be a little bit more aerodynamic (p. 65).

The fact is, says Kretchmar (1994), “Few people will continue to exercise unless they find some *meaning in their movement*” (as cited in Reid, 2002, p. 42). Did Lance Armstrong find some meaning in his Tour de France? Is Tour de France about the bike? For Lance Armstrong, Tour de France is about life, deep questioning, soul searching, and mind/body/character building.

Why did I ride when I had cancer? Cycling is so hard, the suffering is so intense, that it’s absolutely cleansing. You can go out there with the weight of the world on your shoulders, and after a six-hour ride at a high pain threshold, you feel at peace. The pain is so deep and strong that a curtain descends over your brain. At least for a while you have a kind of hall pass, and don’t have to brood on your

problems; you can shut everything else out, because the effort and subsequent fatigue are absolute.

Sport philosopher Paul Weiss (1969, p. 109) notes that conquered athletes learn more about themselves because they have an ability to discover their limits and identify their strengths that led to their success and weakness that led to their collapse (as cited in Reid, 2002, p. 109). If we do not take risks, we may potentially lose the ability to live a certain amount of life and to know oneself.

There is an unthinking simplicity in something so hard, which is why there's probably some truth to the idea that all world-class athletes are actually running away from something. Once, someone asked me what pleasure I took in riding for so long. "Pleasure?" I said. "I don't understand the question." I didn't do it for pleasure. I did it for pain (p. 88).

Only the individual athlete can take responsibility for values and meanings. For example, Lance Armstrong (2002) presents a meaningful sport role in life.

I didn't love the bike before I got sick. It was simple for me: it was my job and I was successful at it. It was a means to an end, a way to get out of Plano, a potential source of wealth and recognition. But it was not something I did for pleasure, or poetry; it was my profession and my livelihood, and my reason for being, but I would not have said that I loved it. But now I not only loved the bike, I needed it. I needed to get away from my problems for a little while, and to make a point to myself and to my friends. I had a reason for those rides: I wanted everyone to see that I was okay, and still able to ride-and maybe I was trying to prove it to myself, too (p. 149).

It may be important that each individual athlete finds his/her meaning independently. The search for meaning can be the most important motivation in our life. Values can be imperative because they lead to our decisions and actions. In sport, our actions can be reflections of our values. Through Lance Armstrong' life journey, one can learn to understand, appreciate, and better apply sport to my lived experiences. Athletes may recognize that athletic excellence could be accomplished without sacrifice where every obstacle could be an opportunity. As educators, we can try to deliver motivation, inspiration, hope, and courage, but there are many questions we cannot answer.

### **Craig Lambert<sup>30</sup> & Mind over Water**

“Perhaps”, says Craig Lambert (1998) “we are rowing toward something other than the horizon, an unknown shoreline. Each stroke pulls us farther along an inner journey. The real voyage, whatever the boat, is into the soul” (p. 23). In fact, many athletes may go fast through their sport and exercise experience without any particular elegance and beauty. But we can try to appreciate them for discovering their own path to movement. Lambert (1998) explains that speed is a science, not an art and “there is no single way to go fast any more than there is one formula for beauty” (p. 13-14). What may really matter for us athletes is utilizing our own talents wholly by mounting our own body/self in a way that extorts its finest swiftness. Experiencing sports and our workouts at their full potential, I propose, may mean discovering our purpose and dreams. To do this, can require us to know clearly what we want to achieve through our movement and play. We may need to establish meaningful rituals with sport and movement that power us to become more fully alive. Reach your meaningful movements through sport and

---

<sup>30</sup> Craig Lambert studied at Harvard University in 1966 where he was the coxswain for the freshmen crew. Lambert's interest for rowing has led him to a deeper understanding of some life's fundamentals. Rowing defines him in his pursuits and his writings.

exercise faster and I suggest, we can realize more of our dreams in a lifetime-and so more rapidly fulfill our personal identity through sport, movement, play, and exercise. "Life at high velocity," explains Lambert (1998),"speeds your own evolution" (p. 14).

Lambert (1998) provides an excellent example of his own experience with rowing.

Common experience knits us together. Rowers undergo certain initiation rites: we have all caught crabs, sucked wind, risen reluctantly before dawn, and struggled with balancing a finicky boat. This communal past forges a tacit understanding, a feeling of joint endeavor, a sense that we are aspiring to the same goals. In our post-industrial society, such shared histories may be our best approximation of village life (p. 75).

In addition to sport experience, Craig Lambert also aspires to engage body/self during rowing. Through many years of competing in track and field, I realized that the left-handed compliment "he's a brain" may only reflect our disconnection of body and self. Lambert (1998) adds that the left-handed compliment also reflects our opposition of thought and action, and intellect and sports (p. 25). For example, the "dumb jock," a person who thrives playing sports (physical intelligence), but fails in the classroom (mental power). If admitting physical intelligence problems is difficult, truthfulness regarding mental shortcomings may be nearly unattainable. Craig Lambert (1998) supports this argument by saying that it is one thing to tell the coach "I'm getting painful twinges in my lower back at the end of a long piece; is there some physical therapy that could help? It is quite another to say "Coach, I'm having trouble pulling my hardest when I get tired near the end of a race. I've got an urge to ease off a bit, to give myself a

break. Can you suggest anything to toughen me up mentally (p. 106)? I suggest the physical intelligence is a physical problem, but mental shortcomings can look like a character deficiency. Most of the body's problems can be temporary, but we may tend to see character flaws as permanent (Lambert, 1998). Every athlete could aim towards self-discovery, responsibility, and respect in dealings with the personal and social challenges. We may need to try to find enjoyable activities. Lambert (1998) says that enjoyable work "satisfies the emotions, the social instincts, the body, and the spirit as well as the intellect" (p. 87). To find our purpose within sport and exercise, we must listen to all of these inner voices, explains Lambert (1998) which "speak from, and to, the soul" (p. 87). Craig Lambert (1998) states,

In the shadowy area between mind and body, between character and muscle fiber, between thoughts and brain chemistry, we discover the power to create reality. The physical body incarnates what the soul asks. Thoughts become tissue. In the penumbra of the human spirit we enter a zone of pain and divine powers (p. 118). Dog is your soul. You can avoid it, move away from it, distract yourself, lose yourself in the most remote parts of the world. You can forget your soul but it cannot forget you. It will remember you wherever you go, and someday you will find it, panting, on your front porch (p. 28).

Numerous years of studying exercise science and physiology and even some nutrition have shaped my understanding of how to train my body. Lambert (1998) says that discoveries in exercise sciences will continue to advance, but the learning curve has gone asymptotic and further improvements will likely be marginal (105). In fact, an elite

athlete who is training two to three hours per day with the most sophisticated training and conditioning program may be unlikely to break to new levels of fitness.

Rowing is a team sport. Hence, rowers row within a community. Lambert (1998) explains that rowing is a small beautiful community where everyone knows everyone. Such a sense of belonging within a community nourishes one's soul. Accomplished athletes may often listen to their teammates and their coach (sport community), then accurately respond to the needs of the moment. In making their responses, they can summon a wide repertoire of adjustments (p. 100-101). A classic example of the kind of teammate, comments Lambert (1998), is that individual who makes the athletes around him better than they are (p. 102). In rowing, the entire crew makes the individual excel. This is the phenomenon of accountability where the decision to train is no longer an individual choice but a social one (Lambert, 1998, p. 103).

The real true coach-player relationship may not happen when the goals are imposed on players, but when the players are free to realize their ambitions and talents. The coach educates and leads the athletes forth (Lambert, 1998, p. 47). Indeed, Lambert (1998) reminds us that the words *educate* and *educere* stem from the same root: the Latin *educere*, to lead forth. He continues by adding that the real education does not install knowledge in the brain, but it evokes potentials that exist in the student, developing intrinsic talents and abilities (p. 47-48). Therefore, team and individual sports nurture two sides of the human soul: the involved citizen and the self-actualizing individual (Lambert, 1998, p. 98-99). There is an athlete mystery: while each sport may be unique in its own way, they all can share a common bond in countless ways. To wrap this story, we can notice that athletes like to train together where accountability keeps them going. In my

own sport experience, training and playing with athletes who were willing to go one step farther took me to a prospect I would not have reached alone.

Lambert' most influential sport lived experience concerned objectification of body/self. Lambert (1998) suggests that when we try to identify individuals by their body parts, we dismiss their value as a whole person. These objectifying statements can blind the value of the human soul. Craig Lambert (1998) explains,

If we believe our bodies to be machines and our brains to be computers, we will wonder why we do not function with mechanistic consistency. I should perform perfectly 100 percent of the time. Humanity becomes a case of defective technology. We feel flawed since we lack the reliability of the inanimate world; what is alive fails by comparison to that which is not (p. 138-139).

Hypnotized by numbers, we can resemble obsessive-perfectionist personalities fascinated with getting everything accurately right, we have little room for imagination. Glued to this life, we may miss what is really happening. After all, real beauty of one's body/self can be in the ear of the listener.

Many athletes have such diverse sport and movement backgrounds, but each sport experience may instruct us about our talents and gifts, but also our preferences. Most important, sport and movement can also show us where we lack aspirations and talents. By far the best way to experience our sport knowledge can be to express who we are through movement. Even after many years of playing sports and exercising, we may find ourselves on some surprising new approaches. Our love for sport and movement could carry us; we cannot force it.



Throughout sport and/or exercise lived experiences, I have learned to understand, appreciate, and better apply sport and/or exercise to my body/self connection. One may often recognize that people need to meet the activity in a more intimate and personal way and experience its beauty. Craig Lamberts did experience this beauty through his unconditional love for rowing. Thus, he became the activity and a part of the rowing tribe. He describes this encounter in following paragraph:

The boat is perfectly level. Set up beautifully, we skim the surface on an invisible laser beam running from horizon to horizon. There is no friction; we ride the natural cadence of our strokes, a continuous cycle. The crew breathes as one. Inhale on recovery, exhale as we drive our blades through the water; inspiration and expression. *In. Out.* Row with one body and so with one mind. Nothing exists but: *Here. Now. This.* Rushing water bubbles under our hull, as if a mountain brook buried within the Charles flows directly beneath us. I have never heard this sound before, but I know it means we are doing something right. Rowers have a word for this frictionless state: swing. The experience of swing is what hooks people on rowing. The appetite for swing is limitless (Lambert, 1998, p. 124-125).

As someone who is not familiar with rowing, it can be clear that Lambert was truthfully carried away by his rowing experience. I propose we all can be delighted and surprised by our own sport and exercise experiences. In addition, I suggest that we can be inspired to probe our sport, human movement, play, and exercise for further beauty and treasures.

### **Greg Louganis<sup>31</sup> & Physical Intelligence**

Greg Louganis's *Breaking the Surface* showcased vital contributions in one's sport story and its evolution and incorporated learning about life from Louganis' lived experiences in the field of sport. Greg Louganis (1995) explains that he is a diver "accustomed to speaking with my body. I've never been comfortable expressing myself in words, and I've generally avoided it" (p. xiii).

There are numerous times when athletes could not remember their routines, but as soon as they start moving, their body has an incredible muscle memory capability. Athletes' movements start naturally flowing. As athletes and movers, we may aspire to perform exceptionally and victoriously, but the most successful athletes aspire knowledge. True athletes may not only desire athletic success, but they can strive to learn and know more about themselves and their bodies. "You can't always win," says Louganis (1995), but "you can always do your best" (p. 19). Every sport, physical activity, and exercise could be like poetry where each movement rhythmically and freely flows into the next; where athletes are their sport. Louganis said it the best,

"Ride the board." When you push off into your hurdle, you should hear the board bounce twice against the fulcrum before you land on it. So I started listening for the board, and pretty soon I learned how to ride it. That's the first step toward doing a good dive (p. 20-21).

In many sports, an excellent coach provides the challenge, one that challenges us to our maximal effort while keeping the occurrences of success and failure as equal as possible. The best coaches can provide the opportunity to test oneself, to learn oneself,

---

<sup>31</sup> Greg Louganis was a competitive diver who had won his first Olympic medal at age sixteen. He is a five time World Champion and hold forty-seven National Championship Titles. He was the first to score 700 points in a diving competition under the old scoring system.

and to become the kind of self we strive so hard to be. Thus, athletes could have social responsibilities to their coaches, teammates, other competitors, family, friends, and significant others. Louganis explains:

Coach Andres, on the other hand, always gave us the sense that he cared, that he wanted to be there with us, and that he wanted us to do our best. At the same time, as long as we did our best, it didn't matter to John whether or not we won. He made us feel good about getting second or third place. No matter how we placed, he would concentrate on the best dive we had done in that competition and praise us for doing it so well. Of course, for me, that really made me want to win so I could please him even more. Because he made me feel good about myself, I looked forward to practice, even when it was cold and I didn't feel much like diving. If every coach and gym teacher had those values we'd see a lot fewer problems with young athletes (p. 21).

Furthermore, Louganis signifies his relationship with his mother and his father. Loganis' mother always made sure she was attending his competitions and practices, and he always strived to be number one because winning was a way of making sure that his mother loved him. Loganis' father, on the other hand, did not care about dancing or acrobatics so when his peers at school were calling him names, Louganis thought his father was calling him names, too by not coming to his performances. It took both Louganis and his father' illness for them to have a relationship with each other.

Louganis' most influential sport lived experience concerned discovering thy self. Stoll (2011) discussed the importance of self-discovery and how we incorporate it into our lives as athletes. Sport can have an extremely important role in one' life. It may

provide athletes with guidance, direction, friendships, and fulfillment in life. Often Greg Louganis looked at his diving as a performance. Then, it may not be surprising that athletes often hide their sense of value and even their real identities. Successful athletes, I suggest, are not just performing their sport, but they are their sport, they identified oneself through sport. As athletes, we are never simply just competitors or just performers, but how we interpret competitive situations speaks a great volume about who we are as performers and as people, but also whom we have chosen to become. In the past, Louganis let his diving speak for himself. It took a while until Greg Louganis was able to transform failures in his learning experiences and his life story with a new sense of pride in oneself as a gay athlete.

During a diving competition, a judge had approached Louganis in Montreal before the platform competition inquiring about the gold medal and suggesting that Louganis should come to his room to discuss a potential win. It was clear that a judge was propositioning to Louganis. Louganis (1995) later explained that judges throw out the high and low scores. One may wonder how much of a difference could one judge make. Louganis (1995) continues,

I was offended by the whole thing, but I managed to say no as graciously as I could. I have no idea if that affected my scores, because I never thought to go back and check the record to see if they scored me low. That was the one and only time a judge ever propositioned me, but I doubt I'm the only Olympic athlete who has ever had that experience (p. 61).

Moreover, successful athletes can use their lived sport encounters to expand self-knowledge, responsibility, respect for oneself and their communities. Understanding our

sport and life experiences, we can optimistically lead fulfilling and happier lives. That is, the health, preservation, and preservation of our sport depend solely on its practitioners. I propose that sport and movement has helped so many of us in our individual struggles against public and cultural prejudice. Sport and/or exercise can teach us to respect others as equals.

### **Christopher McDougall<sup>32</sup> & Brain/Body Connection**

Human distance running, at its evolutionary best, is much more than that; it's a blend of strategy and skill perfected during millions of years of do-or-die decisions. And like any other fine art, human distance running demands a brain-body connection that no other creature is capable of (McDougall, 2009, p. 231-232).

Fifty-five miles in one day. Her friends had to wonder, and worry. Did Ann have an eating disorder? An exercise obsession? Was she fleeing some subconscious Freudian demon by literally running away? "My friends would tell me I'm not addicted to crack, I'm addicted to endorphins," Trason would say, and her comeback didn't much put their minds at ease: she liked to tell them that running huge miles in the mountains was "very romantic." Gotcha. Grueling, grimy, muddy, bloody, lonely trail-running equals moonlight and champagne. But yeah, Ann insisted, running was romantic; and no, of course her friends didn't get it because they'd never broken through. For them, running was a miserable two miles motivated solely by size 6 jeans: get on the scale, get depressed, get your

---

<sup>32</sup> Christopher McDougall is an author and journalist best known for his 2009 book *Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes, & the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen*. He has written for *Esquire*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Outside*, *Men's Journal*, and *New York*. Also, he was a contributing editor for *Men's Health*.

headphones on, and get it over with. But you can't muscle through a five-hour run that way; you have to relax into it, like easing your body into a hot bath, until it no longer resists the shock and begins to enjoy it. Relax enough, and your body become so familiar with the cradlerocking rhythm that you almost forget you're moving. And once you break through to that soft, half-levitating flow, that's when the moonlight and champagne show up: "You have to be in tune with your body, and know when you can push it and when to back off," Ann would explain. You have to listen closely to the sound of your own breathing; be aware of how much sweat is beading on your back; make sure to treat yourself to cool water and a salty snack and ask yourself, honestly and often, exactly how you feel. What could be more sensual than paying exquisite attention to your own body? Sensual counted as romantic, right (McDougall, 2009, p. 68-69)?

### **S. Walsh & Running Free**

The clock ticks 2:40- signaling the end of a long day of classes. All I can help but think is, "finally." I race home, charge up four flights of stairs to my room, throw my backpack down at the foot of my bed, and begin changing. I am on a mission. I happily trade my True Religion Jeans for a comfy pair of DRI-fits, my lacy pink push-up for a sleek training bra, and my Old Navy flip flops for the most precious piece of clothing I own- my custom made Nike Frees. The hair is ponytailed; the iPod is charged and ready; the Rec is calling my name. I am pumped! I practically prance through the doors of the Student Recreation Center, or what I like to think of as my second home in Pullman. It is at this point where I come to realize there is no distance too far. There is no limit to how fast I will run today or how long my body will last before calling it a day. Pain? What

pain? There is no such thing as pain- only exhaustion. I will gladly tell the treadmill when I have had enough, thank you very much. Out of the corner of my eye, I spot my favorite machine, sitting idle and untouched. Jackpot! I make my move, place my sweat towel in a handy position, adjust my headphones, and start that belt. Oh yes! It is go time!

Running is not my sport. Whether it is indoor or outdoor, running is my passion. The sound my feet make when each one thumps on a tight treadmill deck or crunches beneath a patch of loose gravel; the alignment each stride makes with the tempo of an upbeat hip hop song; the immense sense of accomplishment that extra half-mile brings after mentally begging my legs to push through the pain – all of these are things I think about, long for, and live for. There's no greater feeling in my mind than bearing witness to myself become stronger, faster, and longer lasting. Racing down a long stretch of empty road, winding through an uneven forest trail, or pushing my limits on a pristine treadmill is my ultimate getaway- all I need to pack is my iPod. While the thought of sweat pouring down their freshly powdered face may sound horrific to many girls my age, I somehow feel most striking when I'm dripping sweat. Sweat not only filters my body of all impurities, stresses, and anxieties thriving underneath my skin, but it is also a sure fire indication of an exceptional work out. Look at me. I went hard. Why do I run? Why do I breathe?! It's a question that seems rather silly. In my mind, to run means to prove, to challenge, to defy; I absolutely could not imagine my life without it.

I run to prove myself, but not necessarily to others. I am not going to lie, I do feel superior when my machine is set for a faster pace than the person next to me, but for the most part, I run to satisfy a deeper fulfillment. If it makes any sense, I run to prove

myself to myself. In my opinion, I have never been phenomenal at anything. I have never been the straight A student. I do not know what it feels like to neither carry the team nor be that irreplaceable playmaker. By no means do I find myself unusually gorgeous; I look in the mirror some mornings and cannot help but feel like a 5 foot 7 inch pile of flaws and imperfections. Whether it is with schoolwork, looks, or even other competitive sports, I feel as if I have always been nothing more than slightly above average, despite my best efforts. Running has always been that one thing I know I am exceptional at. And maybe that is because with running, or at least non-competitive running, there is no standard of excellence or skinny African kid to beat. Running is a “race” against yourself.

Running truly is just as much of a mental work out as it is a physical one. I believe that as long as I am running, my body is always competing with itself- my head versus my legs, or my heart versus my lung capacity. I know I am not always capable of winning this race, some days the shin splints or diet coke induced side ache may get the best of me. But rest assured, the days I come to perform are the days I feel exceptional, victorious, and elite. To me, the best days are the days I surpass the expectations I set for myself on that treadmill, track, or trail. I run a little faster or a little further than I did the day before, and boom. No longer am I average. In my own mind, I am a legend (S. Walsh, personal communication, September 13, 2011).



## **CHAPTER SIX - IMPLICATIONS FOR SPORT AND/OR EXERCISE BODY/SELF EDUCATION**

### **Introduction**

Embody what you teach, and teach only what you have embodied (Millman, 1984, p. 185)!

Carl Lewis: "I want to be remembered as a person who felt there was no limitations to what the human body and mind can do, and be the inspiration to lead people, and do things they never hoped to do (Mack & Casstevens, 2001, p.90-91).

The findings of this dissertation study may suggest innovations that could be made in sport and/or exercise education. These body/self participants approach sports and exercise differently. For instance, some individuals were primarily interested in the quality of his or her movement while others spoke the language of passion, feeling, expression, and inspiration. They were looking into creating the experience with meaning. For them, quality movement is considered essential.

The discoveries revealed suggest that these body/self participants focus their attention on the immediate experience, not on the ultimate outcome. The body/self participants center on enjoyment, fun, and a positive experience with sport and/or exercise. In addition, the findings serve as the basis for consideration in sport and/or exercise education.

### **Finding One: Transformation towards the Natural Athlete**

According to the findings in this dissertation study, the body/self participants have learned to focus their sport and/or exercise attention in the present moment attention. The

sport, exercise, human movement, and play is not bound by random distractions like concerns, fears, regrets, and expectations. I suggest that these body/self participants have gained the knowledge on how to be the natural athlete and make a positive statement to oneself. For example, “I am an accurate putter,” “I am a courageous gymnast who performs even better under pressure” (Millman, 1979, p. 51). Frankly, to most of them sports, exercise, and movement come naturally; they feel and think the activity and that may be a reason they are successful in sports, exercise, and movement. Success breeds success, because it undermines assumed limitation (Millman, 1979, p. 51).

In general, sport and/or exercise experience may provide the natural athlete with a meaningful picture of himself or herself at their greatest. Thus, if they find this picture to be satisfying, they may view sports and exercise holistically, wholebodily and wholemindly and therefore, benefit from it. If people find the complexities in the experience of sport and/or exercise, they may struggle to maintain their interest throughout all those sets, reps, body fat percentages, body mass index, circumference measurements, and weight loss programs that might create those necessary benefits. Simply, the natural athlete finds much satisfaction and enjoyment in doing an activity they like the best.

The natural athlete will often find the romance with their sport and/or exercise. The romance is achieved, I suggest, when one can feel the flow of energies in their mind and body. Finally, their awareness penetrates deeply into their mind and body and into the world of sport and exercise. To be more precise, the natural athlete often times does not need structured sport and/or exercise events, their lifestyle choice includes the quality

of movement. Next time, “perhaps we can have a real competition” (Millman, 1984, p. 167).

In this way, every movement session takes on a deeper meaning. When you go for a run, you’re not just burning calories, you’re creating culture. Every workout becomes both an act of affirmation and an act of defiance. Every play session an expression of joy and rebellion. By moving vigorously and frequently, you become an activist, not only for your own personal health and happiness, but for social progress (Forencich, 2003, p. 304).

### **Finding Two: Appendix for Sport and Exercise Educators**

The task at hand is to try to create a model and an education objective for sport and exercise that is related to meaningful approaches to human movement and the activity. If we honor intelligence in physical activity, explains Forencich (2003) people will be more likely to participate (p. 229). I propose the body and the mind may not exist in isolation for this particular training objective. The following learning strategies may show one the path, but the rest may be up to the participants.

#### **Proposed Learning Strategy One: Fear of Failure**

Athletes and future sport and/or exercise participants may need to recognize that failure is an essential learning process. Failure can lead to further progress. Often, athletes and future sport and/or exercise participants may not believe that they can perform the activity well. Thus, if we do not succeed, it is usually because we did not really try to perform well. To truly enjoy the movement, we may try to recognize that pairing success with failure is necessary. For example, Babe Ruth was the home-run king. He was also the strike-out king (Millman, 1979, p. 53). After each trail, ask: Where was

my attention focused during this attempt? What was I thinking about? How did I react to success or failure? Continue your trials until you have mastered the skill (Metheny, 1968, p. 119).

### **Proposed Learning Strategy Two: Mastering Self-Worth**

We may try to maintain a positive attitude of self-appreciation and self-understanding with oneself to demonstrate a body/self unity in all of our movements. For instance, we can try to tell ourselves that we have a well-rounded capacity for movement in any environment. Let us begin by imagining a self-worthy/wholistical/energetic individual who focuses on the quality of movement rather than the quantity.

1. Let us begin by picturing what this Master Athlete looks like, including height, build, features. Do you want a male, a female? What sport, if any, does this Master specialize in? Give him/her a name.
2. Let us imagine how this Athlete stands and moves. Look at his degree of relaxation. Pay particular attention as you create his mental traits and emotional calm. Give this Master Athlete a personality, as if you were creating him for a novel. Create your ideal balance, using any models you may know in life or imagination.
3. Let's give this Athlete all the insight, courage, humor, and realism you'd consider ideal. Imbue him/her with every kind of physical, mental, and emotional quality you feel the Natural Athlete possesses.
4. Once our creation is complete, we have a teacher who will never be absent. You have an inner example, a source of inspiration. Take this Athlete with you

whenever you train. This Master can even be useful to you in daily life (Millman, 1979, p. 163-164).

Now, we can work on developing and maintain self-worth by utilizing the following strategies:

1. Appraise situations as challenges rather than threats.
2. Develop readiness, performance and recovery plans to deal with problems.
3. Emphasize problem-focused coping strategies to reduce threat and anxiety.
4. Use emotional-focused coping techniques to feel less threatened and calm yourself when there is a problem.
5. Focus on more controllable process and performance goals (Burton, 2011).

### **Proposed Learning Strategy Three: Creative Ideas to Human Activity**

We can try not to quantify and log sets, reps, miles and weights, but we can try to get our body/self back in touch with our physical experience. We may want to try to incorporate a well-balanced physical activity. For example, we can do some cardio training one day, strength training the next, and add some flexibility, agility, and balancing movements. Moreover, we can also add a day of recovery. This well-balanced physical activity program may provide us with room for success and make our body/self happy and content. Instead of objectifying one's body/self, we can try to be more wholistic in our sport and/or exercise activities. For instance, statements like: (a) Shape your body in just ten minutes! (b) Get rid of those extra pounds fast! (c) Build your biceps in just six weeks!-can be replaced by more meaningful approaches like:

- (a) Develop a long-term relationship with your body
- (b) Discover health and vigor gradually over the course of your lifetime

- (c) Manage your weight by participating in consistent, regular movement”  
(Forencich, 2006, p. 253-254).
- (d) Celebrate the pleasures of physical movement and play
- (e) Abandon the idea of the “work-out” (the phrase of “working out” implies labor which in turn implies ends over means)
- (f) Participate to whatever level you like and feel free to adjust your movement entirely (Forencich, 2006, p. 285)

Everyone is different and how we approach exercise or sport is different, but we should try many things and do what makes us happy, and if we get bored, do not be afraid to change what you do. Also, as we age we may need to adjust what we do for exercise. Always try, experience and change, do not be afraid of what you have not done you may love it (Acetylyne Interview, 3/12).

#### **Proposed Learning Strategy Four: Pursue your Meaning in Sport and Exercise**

I suggest each athlete or a future participant pursue his or her quest for meaning in sport and/or exercise.

In order to define any human activity, it is necessary to understand its sense and importance. And, in order to do that, it is primary necessary to examine that activity in itself, in its dependence on its causes, and in connection with its efforts, and not merely in relation to the pleasure we get from it... (Tolstoy, 1899, p. 38).

For example, Sport and/or Exercise Happiness can equal Satisfaction divided by Desires (Happiness=Satisfaction/Desires (Millman, 1984, p. 167). “The secret of happiness, you see, is not found in seeking more in your sport and/or exercise achievements, but in developing the capacity to enjoy less” (Millman, 1984, p. 167-168).

### **Proposed Learning Strategy Five: Share your Experiences**

We tell ourselves stories in order to live... We look for the sermon in the suicide, for the social or moral lesson in the murder of five. We interpret what we see, select the most workable of the multiple choices. We live entirely, especially if we are writers, by the imposition of a narrative line upon disparate images, by the “ideas” with which we have learned to freeze the shifting phantasmagoria which is our actual experience (Krakauer, 1999, p. 127)

People have a tendency to examine sport and/or exercise through their own lived experiences. Novak (1976) explains that when a person looks at a game of football, he tends to see a reflection of his own life (p. 177). Carolyn Thomas (1972) suggests that descriptions of sportsmen who have possibly achieved the perfect moment in their sport can provide not only teaching insights but perhaps a closer and more human examination of the athlete experiences (p. 135).

At times, and with increasing frequency now, I experience a kind of clarity that I’ve never seen adequately described in a football story. Sometimes, for example, time seems to slow way down<sup>33</sup>, in an uncanny way, as if everyone were moving in slow motion. It seems as if I have all the time in the world to watch the

---

<sup>33</sup>When athletes explain that time seems to slow way down during sport and/or exercise, often they are experiencing flow. Flow is that effortless, automatic performance where everything goes perfectly well; “being in the zone.” Most flow research is conducted by Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, Hungarian born professor at the University of Chicago. Flow is considered a type of intrinsic motivation where the enjoyment is also enhanced and self-confidence is highly boosted. Characteristic of flow include: challenging activity requiring skill, clear goals and feedback, merging of action and awareness, total concentration on task, loss of ego and self-consciousness, paradox of control, transformation of time, and autotelic experience (Burton, 2011). Simply, performers must get totally “into the activity.” Carolyn Thomas (1972) calls it “the perfect moment.” It is the ultimate moment when everything “clicks” and perhaps time slows to a standstill. For example, that’s when I come alive: on the basketball court. As the game unfolds, time slows down and I experience the blissful feeling of being totally engaged in action. One moment I may crack a joke and the next cast a woeful look at a ref. But all the while I’m thinking: how many timeouts do we have left? Who needs to get going out there on court? What’s up with my guys on the bench? My mind is completely focused on the goal, but with a sense of openness and joy (Jackson & Delehanty, 1995, p. 203).

receivers run their patterns, and yet I know the defensive line is coming at me just as fast as ever. I know perfectly well how hard and fast those guys are coming and yet the whole thing seems like a movie or a dance in slow motion. It's beautiful... (Novak, 1976, p. 178).

As we experience these sport and/or exercise moments, we also may experience our own feelings and emotions about oneself. We may also recognize that often we rationalize these feelings and emotions during our sport practices, play, or exercise. Sport and/or exercise may become more meaningful to us if we try to develop them within our own personal experiences. Metheny (1968) further suggests:

- (a) In terms of your own experience, ask yourself what the performer was probably feeling at this point in the performance
- (b) Try to describe those feelings by explaining what they are like, e.g., a feeling of smooth-flowing rhythm, a sense of power, and explosive feeling of emotion, or the sense of feeling like a fish
- (c) Try to sketch the outlines of these conceptions in the fewest possible lines, as you did with your conception of a home (p. 107).

Sharing my sport experiences and achievement can definitely help people relate and let them know that they should try it and see how they feel. For people to be active, they have to find a meaning behind the activity. Sharing stories is extremely important in helping people find meaningful approaches to sport and exercise. People like to hear what I have been through and relate to that. Experiences will get them acquainted with sports and exercise world and once they are out there, it will get easier. There is much data out there, but we still have



more and more people on the couch. Most people are just intimidated. Motivation through external forces is a lot harder than internal motivation. All you can do right now is share your experience (Roman Interview, 3/12).

### **Proposed Learning Strategy Six: Developing One's Sport and/or Exercise Life Story**

Kretchmar (1993) explains that one's life story has a beginning, middle, and an end where all three are related to one another. Its characters have roles to fulfill, work to do, and celebrations to hold, and love to experience (p. 131). We can try the following approaches:

- (a) Be an active participant in your own sport and/or exercise life story
- (b) Try to incorporate movement into your life story engaging body/self
- (c) Immerse yourself in a culture of your favorite body/self movements where you are not a slave to sport and/or exercise.

#### Motivational Paragraphs from Sport and/or Exercise Lived Experiences

It's the journey that makes it worthwhile, not the destination (Witt & Swift, 2005, p. 106)

Since I was on autopilot, if someone had told me to keep on running I might well have run beyond sixty-two miles. It's weird, but at the end I hardly knew who I was or what I was doing. This should have been a very alarming feeling, but it didn't feel that way. By then running had entered the realm of the metaphysical. First there came the action of running, and accompanying it there was this entity known as me, I run; therefore I am (Murakami, 2008, p. 113).

Yet even in this highly competitive world, I've discovered that when you free players to use all their resources-mental, physical, and spiritual-an interesting shift in awareness occurs. When players practice what is known as mindfulness-simply

paying attention to what's actually happening-not only do they play better and win more, they also become more attuned with each other. And the joy they experience working in harmony is a powerful motivating force that comes from deep within, not from some frenzied coach pacing along the sidelines, shouting obscenities into the air (Jackson & Delehanty, 1995, p. 5-6).

This is what I've loved about our sport. It's transporting in the simplest, purest way. You don't have to be in the Olympics. You don't have to stand on the podium. A sheet of ice, a song, a skater, a practice. They come together, and without a choreographer, without a coach, even, what's created can move someone to remembering a special place in her youth (Witt & Swift, 2005, p. 166).

But I love volleyball. I love the way it makes me feel. I love that I can use my body to do something. No money, no amount of recognition has ever brought me the same feeling of accomplishment. Taking on a challenge, dealing with discomfort, sucking it up...all those things mean more to me than the rest. And I can say it and mean it because I've been on all sides of it. I've been recognized, I've been glamorized, I've made money. I'm not Michael Jordan, but I don't think you have to be at his level to understand that the issue is one of self-respect. My confidence comes from the fact that I know I'm capable, that I'm willing to roll up my sleeves and get down and dirty and uncomfortable and suffer and be sweaty and your nose is running and you need to spit and you've got sand between your teeth and up your butt-because that's real (Reece & Karbo, 1997, p. 190-191).

## Summary

Implementation of the suggestions, strategies and motivational paragraphs generated through this dissertation study is dependent on sport and/or exercise lived experiences. Phenomenological lived sport and/or exercise experiences can be used as a strategy to develop meaningful approaches to sport, human movement, play, and exercise. Narrative stories can be integrated into retaining participation in sports and/or exercise.

Proposed learning strategies in this dissertation study may help deliver satisfactory experiences in developing sport and/or exercise love stories and realizing a body/self; “my day begins with movement!” These innovative strategies may serve as the facilitator in experiencing joy through movement; the aesthetic of movement.

## **THE EXISTENTIAL EPILOGUE**

### **Reflections on Journey**

The initial focus of understanding the lived experience of the body/self participants was accomplished through in depth interviews, personal conversations, and emails. These interviews and conversations revealed the participants' passion for sport, exercise, play and movement as well as for undertaking their part in learning strategies and suggestions for meaningful approaches to sport and/or exercise. Prospective body/self participants were excited when this dissertation study was introduced. They were particularly excited to have the opportunity to help future athletes and movers find joy and passion in one's activity. The interaction with the body/self participants facilitated an appreciation for their lived sport and/or exercise experiences. In addition, the methodology of phenomenology had the power to give voice and meaning to the experiences of the participants. The more I listened their experiences, the more I knew myself. Postman (1995) had explained that without one's narrative, life has no meaning and without meaning, learning has no purpose (p. 7). I became part of this dissertation study through interaction and reflection on my own sport and exercise experiences. Understanding the participants' experiences disclosed their reality and meaning.

### **Researcher as a Sport and Exercise Educator**

Dewey explains that everything depends upon the quality of the experience which is had. Hence the central problem of an education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences (as cited in Gill, 1993, p. 21). Further inquiry into participants' lived sport and/or exercise

experiences influenced my own body/self practice as a sport and exercise educator. I became more aware of the learning strategies, options and suggestions to meaningful approaches to sport, human movement, play, and exercise. I had a new appreciation for different approaches and ideas. I was also very interactive with the body/self participants, becoming more engaging and willing to share my own lived sport and exercise stories. I became focused on asking them several probing questions and having a dialogue with them to better access and understand their lived sport and exercise experiences. Freire (as cited in Gill, 1997, p. 27) explained that there must be a reciprocal, dialogical relationship, not only between the teacher and the student, but between the knowers (including the teacher!) and the known, for knowing to take place.

Dialogue with the participants became a routine. How can I best access their sport and exercise experience? What are their ideas of meaningful approaches to sport and exercise? I had a new energy and motivation to share my own sport and exercise experience and help them better understand and appreciate their own experiences. I embodied the role of the experience-researcher in every aspect.

I became more and more appreciative of the human activity. As sport and exercise educators we can control this environment of learning and integrating. To foster the realization of the body/self and meaningful approaches to sport and/or exercise and increase the participation and retention in sport and exercise, we may need to be able to enrich one's experience, to stand aside letting them experience movement, while encouraging growth and self-worth. Each individual requires their own spin towards their own movement and physical activity culture and we may be able to individualize the sport and exercise environment to promote body/self growth.

### **Future Directions for Inspirational Movements**

The findings of this study encourage the further investigation of the lived sport and/or exercise experiences. Further research on lived sport and exercise experiences may well provide evidence of effectiveness in educating new sport, exercise and physical activity participants towards body/self and meaningful approach to movement. The proposed learning strategies may address different approaches to sport and exercise. Both qualitative and quantitative studies using the lived sport and exercise experiences to facilitate body/self and meaningful approaches to sport and exercise may be considered. Carefully planned educational and learning strategies that facilitate personal sport and/or exercise stories may be considered to be helpful with sport and/or exercise retention and participation. Existential experience (personal lived sport and exercise experience) is why people move. We need to reconsider how we educated people and the stories are what drives and inspires people towards physical activity. Mack & Casstevens (2001) explain:

Love: For a performer, love is the most basic ingredient for success. Without love for your sport and those who are important to you, you aren't living. You're only breathing. As Peggy Fleming, the former Olympic champion figure skater, said, the most important thing is to love your sport. Never compete just to please someone else. "You've got to love what you're doing," hockey great Gordie Howe said. "If you love it, you can overcome any handicap or the soreness or all the aches and pains." Listen to former major leaguer Ozzie Smith: "Now that I'm out of the game I know how lucky and blessed I was to play the game that I loved." When he coached for the Chicago Cubs, former stat Jimmy Piersall said the first thing he did before the start of every spring training was to fall in love with the players and the game all over again (p.215).

The relationships with others and oneself are reflective of their sport and/or exercise lived experiences. These participants explained that they very much value the relationships they have established while participating in sports or exercising. It could be beneficial to aid future participants in helping them establish meaningful relationships with their family, friends, teammates, coaches, opponents, and oneself by providing educational sessions and learning activities. The value of each learning activity can be carefully weighted to give the most beneficial learning experience to participating in sports and/or exercising.

It is imperative to note that future sport and/or exercise participants could experience challenges in establishing healthy relationships with others and oneself. Providing educational sessions and allowing for a healthy learning environment could potentially help individuals find meaningful approaches to sport and/or exercise and increase the retention among those.

### **Personal Reflection**

During one of the interviews, the body/self participants, Atle asked me an interesting question; how do you presently view yourself? How can you be concerned for yourself to optimize your body/self through sport and/or exercise?

I identify as a runner, but I am not a slave to running because through running you can see through my soul. You can see me at my best; you can see me at my worst. You will never find me running with headphones or watching a TV because when I run, I am the activity. I think about my running movements in terms of skill and knowledge. I am aware of my running form. My perfect running moment and my optimal performance can

only happen when my mind and body are working together. How can I get the highest enjoyment activity out of each running movement I make?

### **Personal Lived Experience**

I conclude this phenomenological journey with my own narrative:

I was seven years old when wars in Croatia and Bosnia started. I remember it so well; because that was the first time I got introduced with track and field. My training track and field complex in Belgrade was my favorite place in the whole world. Serbia was in recession, the stores were empty, people were shooting at each other, and my track and field complex was the only happy and fun place for me to escape from the reality.

I have never told this to anybody before, but I used to sneak across the street in the middle of night and go run and jump around track. Sometimes during track practices I would secretly watch my coach. He'd be looking off into space with a sad look on his face and I would guess he was daydreaming about the time when he was a successful runner, before the war.

By the time I was fifteen, I was so committed to track, practiced it every day, and I was enjoying my track and field identity. The nice thing was, I could be myself. Often, I would write about my feelings and talk to myself during and after practices to put my body/self in order and find inner peace. Sitting on the bleachers and overlooking my track and field complex in Belgrade, remembering yet another 1,500 meters run brings a vivid vision of tremendous joy of movement and my body/self in action. I picture myself completely involved in the activity. But more important now, I must think of very specific goals and realities. It is easy to say and easy to want to enjoy every single moment during each lap around the track, but so difficult to execute. How can I do it?



More than anything else, I must love everything that is part and parcel of the total body/self running experience. I must love my running economy; love every strain of running and bending my knees; love every moment of tension waiting to see if anybody is going to pass me; love the lack of total rest every night, the hunger pains during nights; seeing my family and friends supporting and cheering for me; practicing outside in snow and ice; feeling the tension in the air; and experiencing different cultures around me.

In essence, I have to possess enough passion and love to withstand all the chances to be a complete moving individual. No matter how tough, no matter what kind of outside pressure, no matter how many failures along the way, I must keep my sights on the final goal, to run and move with more love and passion than the world has ever witnessed in any performance; a total, embodied performance. Through the desire the inspiration will be present. Love for the movement, passion for the activity, attitude towards embodiment, ability to trust oneself, and intensity to share your sport experiences. I must let my inner self be out front and free. Love always for your sport, human movement, play, and exercise.

Secretly, I dreamed to experience a true body/self connection in sport and exercise; for more than a decade it remained a burning ambition. By the time I was in my late twenties moving had become the focus of my existence to the exclusion of almost everything else. Achieving the body/self unity was tangible, immutable, and concrete. Moving provided a sense of community. To become a body/self mover was to join a self-contained, rabidly idealistic society, largely unnoticed and surprisingly uncorrupted by scientific data, perfect physical appearance, spread sheets, and statistics. Getting to that

peak where soul meets body was considered much less important than how one got there.

After all, it is about the process, not the outcome.

## REFERENCES

- Agassi, A. (2009). *Open: An autobiography*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Random House, Inc.
- Armstrong, L. (2000). *It's not about the bike: My journey back to life*. New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Bannister, R. (1963). *The four minute mile*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co.
- Buber, M. (1970). *I and thou*. New York, New York: Scribners and Sons.
- Burton, D. (2011). In Class Notes. February 7, 2011.
- Burton, D. (2011). In Class Notes. December 1, 2011.
- Coakley, J. J. (1978). *Sport in society: Issues and controversies*. St. Louis, MS: The C. V. Mosby Company.
- Connelly, F. M. & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14.
- Death Cab for Cutie (2000-2011). Soul meets body. Retrieved from <http://www.azlyrics.com>
- Descartes, R. (1995). The real distinction between the mind and body of man. In Meier, K. V. & Morgan, W. J. (EDS.), *Philosophic inquiry in sport* (p. 70-72). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Eitzen, D. S. (1984). School sport and educational goals. In D. Eitzen (EDS.), *Sport in contemporary society: An anthology* (pp. 199-202). New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, Inc.
- Ely, M., Vinz, R., Downing, M. & Anzul, M. (1997). *On writing qualitative research: Living by words*. Philadelphia, PA: Falmer Press.

- Esposito, J. L. (1995). Play and possibility. In Meier, K. V. & Morgan, W. J. (EDS.),  
Philosophic Inquiry in Sport (p. 114-119). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Fink, E. (1995). The ontology of play. In Meier, K. V. & Morgan, W. J. (EDS.),  
Philosophic Inquiry in Sport (p. 100-109). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Forencich, F. (2006). *Exuberant animal: The power of health, play and joyful movement*.  
Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse
- Forencich, F. (2003). *Play as if your life depends on it: Functional exercise and live for  
Homo sapiens*. Seattle, WA: GoAnimal
- Fraleigh, S. (1970). Dance creates man. *Quest XIV*.
- Gill, J. H. (1993). *Learning to learn: Toward a philosophy of education*. Atlantic  
Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc.
- Huizinga, J. (1950). *Homo ludens: A study of the play-element in culture*. Boston: The  
Beacon Press.
- Husserl, E. (1923, 1961). *The Paris lectures*. Trans. Peter Koestenbaum. The Hague:  
Martinus Nihoff.
- Husserl, E. (1902, 1913, 1962). *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology*.  
Trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson. New York: Collier Books.
- Husserl, E. (1975). *The Paris lectures*. (P. Koestenbaum, Trans.). (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) The Hauge,  
Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff. (Original work published 1927).
- Hyland, D. A. (1978). Competition and friendship. *Journal of Philosophy of Sport*, 55,  
27-37.
- Ihde, D. (1977). *Experimental phenomenology: An introduction*. New York, NY: G. P.  
Putnam's Sons.

- Jackson, P. & Delehanty, H. (1995). *Sacred hoops: Spiritual lessons of a hardwood warrior*. New York, NY: Hyperton.
- Josselson, R., Lieblich, A., & McAdams, D. P. (2003). *Up close and personal: The teaching and learning of narrative research*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Kennedy, C. W. (1931). *Sport and sportsmanship*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kleinman, S. (1970). *Physical education and lived-moment*. Portland, OR: National College of Physical Education Association for Men Convention.
- Krakauer, J. (1999). *Into thin air: A personal account of the Mount Everest disaster*. New York, NY: Anchor Books, a Division of Random House, Inc.
- Kretchmar, R. S. (1975). Meeting the opposition: Buber's 'will' and 'grace' in sport. *Quest*, 24, 19-27.
- Kretchmar, R. S. (1994). *Practical philosophy of sport*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Lambert, C. (1998). *Mind over water: Lessons on life from the art of rowing*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Lieblich, A., Tuval-Maschiach, R. & Zilber, T. (1998). *Narrative research: Reading, analysis, and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Louganis, C. (1995). *Breaking the surface*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc.
- Mack, G., & Casstevens, D. (2001). *Mind gym: An athlete's guide to inner excellence*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Companies.
- Marcel, G. (1950). *The mystery of being: Reflection and mystery (Gifford Lectures, 1949-1950)* G.S. Fraser, Trans. Chicago: Henry Regnery.

- McDougall, C. (2009). *Born to run*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc
- Meier, K. V. (1995). An affair of flutes: An appreciation of play. In Meier, K. V. & Morgan, W. J. (EDS.), *Philosophic Inquiry in Sport* (p. 120-135). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Meier, K. V. (1995). Embodiment, sport, and meaning. In Meier, K. V. & Morgan, W. J. (EDS.), *Philosophic Inquiry in Sport* (p. 89-95). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception*. New York, NY: Humanities Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964). *The primacy of perception*. Ed., James M. Edie. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Mertig, R. G. (2003). *Teaching nursing in an associate degree program*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Metheny, E. (1968). *Movement and meaning*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Co.
- Metheny, E. (1979). The symbolic power of sport. In Gerber, E. W. & Morgan, W. J. (EDS.), *Sport and the Body* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (p. 231-236). Philadelphia, PA: Lea & Febiger.
- Millman, D. (1979). *The warrior athlete: Body, mind, & spirit*. Walpole, NH: Stillpoint Publishing.
- Millman, D. (1984). *Way of the peaceful warrior: A book that changes lives*. Tiburon, CA: H.J. Kramer, Inc.
- Murakami, H. (2008). *What I talk when I talk about running*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, a Division of Random House, Inc.
- Navratilova, M. (1985). *Being myself*. London, UK: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd.

- Novak, M. (1976). *The joy of sports: End zones, bases, baskets, balls, and the consecration of the American spirit*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Postman, N. (1995). *The end of education: Redefining the value of school*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Reece, G. & Karbo, K. (1997). *Big girl in the middle*. New York, NY: Crown Publishers, Inc.
- Reid, H. L. (2002). *The philosophical athlete*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.
- Richardson, L. (1997). *Fields of play: Constructing an academic life*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Roulhac, N.G. (1993). *Jumping over the moon: A biography of Alice Coachman Davis*. Philadelphia, PA: Privately printed.
- Sartre, J. (1995). Play and sport. In Meier, K. V. & Morgan, W. J. (EDS.), *Philosophic Inquiry in Sport* (p. 110-113). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Schmitz, K. L. (1972). *Sport and the body*. Philadelphia, PA: Lea & Febiger.
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Shank, G. D. (2002). *Qualitative research: A personal skills approach*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Shaw, B. (1997). *Teacher training level 1: Foundations*. Worldwide: YogaFit Training Systems Worldwide, Inc.
- Shaw, E. (2011). *The metaphysical pulse of the female athlete*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho.

- Sheets, M. (1966). *The phenomenology of dance*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Sing, S. S. (2004). *Spirituality of sport: Balancing body and soul*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- Spelman, E. V. (1995). Woman as body: Ancient and contemporary views. In Meier, K. V. & Morgan, W. J. (EDS.), *Philosophic Inquiry in Sport* (p. 73-84). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Stoll, S. K. (2009). *Sports ethics*. Retrieved from Lecture Notes Online Web site: <http://www.educ.uidaho.edu/stoll/PEP570/finalform.htm>
- Stoll S. K. (2011). In Class Notes. February 7, 2011.
- Stoll S. K. (2010). In Class Notes. June 8, 2010.
- Stoll, S. K. (1980). *The use of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological method to describe the human movement forms of the third dynasty of UR*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.
- Thomas, C. E. (1972). *The perfect moment: An aesthetic perspective of the sport experience*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.
- Thomas, C. E. (1983). *Sport in a philosophical context*. Philadelphia, PA: Lea & Febiger.
- Todd, W. (1979). Some aesthetic aspects of sport. In Fox, R. H. (EDS.), *Philosophy in Context* (p. 8-21). Cleveland, OH: Cleveland State University.
- Tolstoy, L. (1899). *What is art?* Trans. Aylmer Maude. New York, NY: Thomas Crowell and Company.



- Vankaam, A. (1967). *Sex and existence: Readings in existential phenomenology*. Ed., Lawrence & O'Conner. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Wenkart, S. (1963). The meaning of sports for contemporary man. *Journal of Existential Psychiatry*, 3.
- Weiss, P. (1969). *Sport: A philosophic inquiry*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Wharton, J. (2004). *The long run*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho.
- Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing.
- Witt, K. & Swift, E. M. (2005). *Only with passion: Figure skating's most winning champion on competition and life*. New York, NY: PublicAffairs™

## APPENDIX A

## Institutional Review Board Support Letter

February 10, 2012

University of Idaho

Office of Research Assurances  
Institutional Review Board  
PO Box 443010  
Moscow ID 83844-3010Phone: 208-885-6162  
Fax: 208-885-5752  
irb@uidaho.eduTo: Stoll, Sharon  
Cc: Mijacevic, DinaFrom: Traci Craig, PhD  
Chair, University of Idaho Institutional Review Board  
University Research Office  
Moscow, ID 83844-3010

IRB No.: IRB00000843

FWA: FWA00005639

Title: 'Where Soul Meets Body: A Phenomenological Description of Sport  
Experience, Human Movement, Play, and Exercise, and Mind/Body  
Wholism through Storytelling'

Project: 12-019

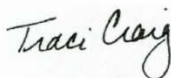
Approved: 02/10/12

Expires: 02/09/13

---

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board at the University of Idaho, I am pleased to inform you that the protocol for the above-named research project is approved as offering no significant risk to human subjects.

This approval is valid for one year from the date of this memo. Should there be significant changes in the protocol for this project, it will be necessary for you to resubmit the protocol for review by the Committee.



Traci Craig

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Invitation to Participate**

#### **Initial Email Contact**

Dear Participants:

You are kindly invited to participate in this dissertation study titled: *Where Soul Meets Body: A Phenomenological Description of Sport Experience, Human Movement, Play, Exercise, and Mind/Body Wholism through Storytelling*. You will be asked twelve questions about your sport and/or exercise experiences. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to access the lived sport and exercise experience in volunteer population of athletes who have in the present or past sought a deeper meaningful connection where soul meets body. This dissertation study is anonymous and all your answers will be held in the strictest confidence.

It will take approximately 45-60 minutes of your time to answer twelve questions.

If you have any questions or concerns about this dissertation study, you may contact Dina Mijacevic.

We really appreciate your participation!

Dina Mijacevic, MS

University of Idaho

1000 Paradise Creek Street

PO Box 441230

Moscow, ID 83844-1230

## APPENDIX C

### **Informed Consent for Participation**

#### Where Soul Meets Body: A Phenomenological Description of Sport Experience, Human Movement, Play, and Exercise, and Mind/Body Wholism through Storytelling

1. The University of Idaho Institutional Review Board has approved this project.
2. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to access the lived sport and exercise experience in volunteer population of athletes who have in the past or present sought a deeper meaningful connection where soul meets body.
3. You will be asked to share your sport and exercises lived experience as the experience manifests itself through storytelling. It will take approximately one hour of your time. We hope to understand more about the relationship and difference in the objective lived body and the subjective lived body experience. The subjective experiences and how those experiences affect an exerciser's mentality will be analyzed. This research study is based on the subjective lived experience, in which, we hope to examine the differences in the objective world.
4. Should discussions become confusing, uncomfortable, or stressful, you will have the full right to discontinue this research study at any time.
5. Your participation will help us in future intervention programs for sports and exercise based on the subjective lived experience. Lived experiences and stories may improve population' view of sport and exercise mentality and programs.
6. If you find that this research project is creating stress or emotional difficulty for you, please contact the investigator at the address below and you will be removed from the participants list.

7. Your responses will be kept confidential. Only the researcher will have access to the email in which you will record your reflections and lived experiences, and your name will not be associated with your responses in written portion of the research project.
8. If you have questions about this research study, you can contact the investigator at any time through email at [mija0105@vandals.uidaho.edu](mailto:mija0105@vandals.uidaho.edu) or by phone at 885-2204.
9. Investigator Faculty Sponsor
- Dina Mijacevic Dr. Sharon Kay Stoll
- University of Idaho University of Idaho
- Campus Recreation Department of Movement Sciences
- 1000 Paradise Creek St. Memorial Gym 500
- PO Box 441230 Moscow, ID 83844-2401
- Moscow, ID 83844-1230 Moscow, ID 83844-1234
- Ph: 208-885-2204 Ph: 208-885-2103
10. During the course of this study, you may stop at any time with no penalty. If you do decide to stop, you can email the investigator and you will be removed from the participant list.
11. If you stop your participation in the study, there will be no penalties associated with your withdrawal. All you need to say is “I no longer wish to participate.
12. I have reviewed this consent form and understand and agree to its contents.

Participant Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this research study.

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Participant Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Preferred Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

13. Experimenter Name \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

### Interview Question, Probing Questions, and Participants' Responses

#### A Complete Interview with the Participants

##### *Descriptive Questions:*

1. How did you first get started playing sports or exercising?

Magic: I first began exercising and playing sports when I was a child and we would have a babysitter come over and as part of the entertainment during the day, we would play different games and with a older brother and older sister, we would always split into two team and it was my babysitter and I and my brother and sister. And, it was one of those things when we were playing these games, time seemed to pass. And, I began to notice playing these games that it wasn't only when she came over after awhile, but I would see my brother out playing games and I felt like the fun could continue not only when she was around, but even after she left because these types of games whether it was baseball, basketball, a game we called a long base which is a cross between kickball and baseball were happening throughout the neighborhood because there were a lot of kids and one thing I loved about the sports were the relationships and the competition to some degree, but I just loved the sense of community that we had when we did it and how fast time went.

Roman: I first started playing soccer and baseball at age four. Then, my parents got me into football at age six and I was playing three sports. My parents both played sports in high school and wanted me to be in shape and have an option of what sport I wanted to play because they wanted me to play sports and they knew I'd be good at them. I was into soccer the most because it was the most active sport that was before I started football and then football came along and I did pretty well. So I really liked football. It is that kind of

sport that you just get into. I just figured I'd keep playing them all and see how well I do and how good I am at them. I was just doing it for the fun of it at first and then I started getting into it more competitively in middle school and high school. My parents never pushed me to play. I was always wanting to go out and play different sports and try different and new things. I was very active when I was younger.

Atle: I got started playing sports when I was 6 years old (the earliest memory). I started playing soccer. My parents put me in soccer and when I was 8, my parents put me in basketball. Then, I turned 12, I played softball, volleyball, and did track. Sport wise really young and my parent put me in the sports. Exercising was different for me. Obviously I exercise during sports, but I started wanting to exercise on my own in high school when I took a step aerobics class as an elective because I wanted to do it. It was a new program they started in high school and I took that upon myself because I really wanted to do it. It's kind of cool that we had that program so that kids who weren't in sports can still excel in something else movement related.

Acetylyne: I started dancing when I was around 4 or 5, I dances, ballet, jazz and tap for 8 or 9 years. I also loved to run and play on gymnastic rings and bars. Moving has always been a part of my life and I have always enjoyed moving especially to music. I grew up near the beach and enjoyed and later lived the mountains and enjoy being outside as well, hiking, camping and swimming.

## 2. What has kept you playing sports or exercising?

Magic: Well, it started out with playing sports. It was just the challenge of whether it was catching a ball or throwing a ball, but once I started seeing some success that I can actually do the activity and then I was improving at the activity and then, the people I was



playing with the activity with, I really enjoyed their company and the friendships that we developed through the activity and then moreover, once I started becoming successful and I realized to some agree that I was a desired participant to come and play. And, I really appreciated that someone actually wanted me to come play with them or be a part of their team and it was just the fact that as I grew of age, I noticed that I was getting stronger and I was able to do the activity better and better each year if not each year, each week, each month. I noticed improvements in games and there was something about being set free when playing this activity. it was almost like there was no barriers on your personality and some emotions that you showed, it was accepted where you couldn't really show that emotion when you were doing homework or some regular activity in the house whether it was cleaning or watching television or reading. I felt like there was some form of expression of emotion that sports allowed that was important. As I moved in to getting more competitive from when I was let say 4 or 5 years old when I began playing at that time maybe I was about 9-10 when I started playing parks and rec. I noticed for the first time that, I felt like one of the better players, not the best, but I felt like I can hold my own, but that competition and I wanted to think about the ways and things that I could do to make myself better and improve and whether as a younger child, as a kid, it was practicing my skills more, whether it was throwing the baseball or playing catch, whether was shooting free throws on the basketball courts, whether was throwing the football the correct way to get a tighter spiral, catching ball with my hands instead of my body, working on the fundamentals. To the time I hit junior high and high school that's when exercise came in. And, that is when I realized that strength training made me a better player, but it was the process that I really enjoyed about what does it take to

make me a better athlete and perfecting my craft even more and that was just a part of the process and looking back on and reflecting, that process was vital to, not only success, but to how I live my life today. Everything is a process now and I developed that at an early age because I saw the impact that it had on my playing ability in sports.

Me: Elaborate on set free:

Magic: When you are playing sports, it was OK in a way accepted if you became juvenile and you were really happy and you got excited when you made a great play to let that emotion out; to set it free. And that's what I mean by showing those expressions or vice versa. If you got angry and I remember my older sister was 18 months older than me and my brother was 4 years older than me and competing against them, I would get extremely competitive. In failure, I would get extremely angry and upset which would make me try harder and make me work more on the process to make myself better. But, at the same sense, it was OK if there was a little bit of anger even from a coach. Sometimes I saw players if they didn't achieve when they wanted to or they didn't feel like that they have done their best when they set free some anger, as long as it wasn't directed at someone, but more towards themselves. For that moment, it is OK. You know, that is a part of being human. We have these emotions and I think when we play and activity and we get involved and what makes us so much fun is that we can get these extreme emotions. I often felt that you could tell a lot about someone or who they are by how they compete and play. Some people get extremely competitive, some people don't. I've noticed the older I've gotten, I'm not as competitive. There are some things that get my competitive juices flowing, but that's a great thing about playing; it allows us to get in an area of our inner consciousness where we forget about everything else and we are just focused on the

activity at hand. We are just in the moment; that's what I like to call it. It's almost like our soul is free. We are not worried about what we have to do at work or the office. We are not worried about other obligations we have in life. We are just in the activity and often after we are done with the activity, it gives us a time to think back and reflect on how fun that activity was, but also how powerful the relationships are with the people we do those activities with. As time moves on, we reflect back on those relationships and that experience becomes stronger and stronger by day.

Roman: The competitive drive that I have and the big factor is the success in sports that I've had and that was my big motivation.

Me (probing question #1): Did you find an enjoyment playing those sports? Or was it just the fame and popularity? Did you truly enjoy playing?

Roman: The reason why I've had found enjoyment is because it was the fame. If I wasn't very good than that fame wouldn't be there and I wouldn't enjoy it.

Atle: Being part of a team (friends, family) during sports. My own enjoyment during exercising especially during step aerobics in high school.

Acetylyne: It makes you feel good. When I don't move my legs get restless and I am not as happy. Exercise helps elevate my mood, relive stress and reset my mind.

### 3. What motivated you to play sports or exercise?

Magic: Initially, it was probably my brother. Growing up without a father from the ages of 4-8, I didn't have anyone to...I didn't have a father figure necessary to push me. But, it seems like my brother and his outlet after our father passed away was playing sports.

And, I remember being in the house and seeing him out shooting basketball. For instance, going out there even as a four year old, I couldn't get the basketball through the hoop, but

just him teaching me the correct form. During the winter, we'd be watching football game and he would want to go out and play catch with the football and he wanted someone to do something with so he would bring me out there, teach me how to throw, or teach me how to catch. In the spring, when baseball came and him teaching me how to hold a baseball bat, and how to swing a baseball bat and him telling me that I was going to be really good at baseball. And him calling my mom outside and saying: "Hey, watch Justin hit a baseball," or "Watch Justin shoot a basketball" after I made my first basketball hoop. It was almost like he was really proud of the games that I had made which kept me going. Even though we were extremely competitive with each other and he was always much better at that age than I was, I still say to this day, he's had much more natural ability as an athlete in some areas than I did, but he really pushed his knowledge onto me, not in a overbearing way, but in a way that if I asked for something when we were out there playing and he would definitely help out. Now, my sister and I, we wouldn't share any knowledge with each other because we just wanted to beat each other. We were close in age. Also, when I would go watch a sporting contest and my brother was fun to watch when he started playing football and basketball. I enjoyed seeing how excited my family members would get and how excited the spectators and the crowd would get and I wanted that same experience for when I was playing; that support. And I just loved how it brought everyone together and just the atmosphere around the whole event. My brother was more focused on the game, but I enjoyed having everyone together and we were focused on him. When I was playing, it was a way that the family would come together or when my sister was playing. Not just the family, but the relationships we developed with other spectators in the crowd who would come and

watch their sons and daughters play. When I was playing sports, watching our parents get together and watching the bonds they formed with other parents and our parents knowing all the kids. It was just a fun time in life and it's funny even to this day, I'll talk to some parents who really missed those moments of being together and you realize that it's such a short window, but I think it was just that whole experience and seeing that as a younger kid and having that experience myself, but that was a big reason that pushed me. I wanted that same thing. I like that camaraderie at the whole thing. And, of course, at the end of the day, when we were out there playing on the court or playing on the baseball field, playing on the football field, it was that time when we were set free and we were doing what we loved best. It was being able to share those moments and reflect on those moments with others, too. It wasn't just as. I think it made those moments more powerful.

Me (probing question #1): You mentioned your brother had a natural ability as an athlete. What did you have that set you apart from your brother?

Magic: My brother was driven, but I was more driven in some ways where I would actually put some time in the process because I realized the importance of strength training and I realized the importance of working on drills that would make you quicker, you have more foot/eye coordination, hand/eye coordination with a baseball. I understood more than he did the process of what it takes to put yourself in a position to be more successful. Honestly, there were several times where I failed. We didn't win the fame. But I felt I did everything I possibly could to put myself in a place where I could be as successful as I was able to be. I was OK with that. My brother has great friends from his playing days and an athlete, but I understood the importance of those relationships and

how it affected our experience as a team or as an individual and I was a team captain in football and baseball and wrestling. The big reason I was chosen is because I could get myself to a certain level, but I also knew how to help others reach that experience and find that experience that I was feeling and really appreciate how great this moment was, how great this time was, how great it was to be out there when someone did something that it was just fantastic. I just wanted to be there and let them know not only how great what they did was, but how much I appreciated sharing that experience with them.

Me (probing question #2): What was that experience?

Magic: Whether it was a sack on a football field, or someone get a base hitter, or someone laying down a bunt to advance a runner onto a second base, they understood the situation and they understood what it took to for everyone to work as a team together. Whether you were hitting a homerun or doing a bunt a moving a guy onto a second base, each one shared its own importance. It wasn't like one was more important than the other, but everybody can feel it: "We contributed to this-win or lose, we did this together." It was almost like we were moving as one group. That was the difference between my brother and I; I really understood the importance of getting the group, the team, the herd, as I have to call it, working together and also reflecting on that experience and how great that moment was, being with guys and the importance of the team. And even if it was an individual sport, we still had those athletes that would push people to those levels and understand the importance of those levels and being able to reflect back and think about what it took to get there, but it wouldn't have been possible without the other people to be there to help along the way.

Roman: My parents started me on participating in sports. I got to know friends through playing sports. We all did the same activity together. My grandpa played baseball so he really encouraged me to stay active and do some kind of sport.

Atle: In the beginning, my parents and my friends, but now it's just an enjoyment of sports that's why I participate in recreational leagues like city leagues, private leagues, and intramurals. What has kept me exercising is my own enjoyment. Like I said at the beginning, I started step aerobics, but now I really enjoy Zumba and Gravity (Total Gym).

Me (probing question #1): What makes Zumba and Gravity so enjoyable?

Atle: Creativity in Zumba and engaging the mind and having to think and remember certain moves and steps. Gravity, I believe, builds confidence which is a positive outcome of gravity; building confidence through strength-muscle strength.

Acetylene: When I was young you just played outside, we didn't have TV or many inside games, you were always outside and moving is what I grew up doing. Climbing trees, jumping, and wrestling were just a part of daily life.

4. During sports, physical activity, or exercise, what ways do you commonly hear people objectify body/selves? How can you transform the way you speak about your body/self while playing sports and/or exercising so that it does not sound as you are collected of objects?

Me (probing question #3): How do we define ourselves through exercise and/or sport?

Magic: Agents of socialization-I did enjoy an identity I had through playing sports in high school to this day. I enjoyed the identity one has with their body and one has with themselves and I felt like sport played a crucial role because it was who I was as a

person; my identity. I enjoyed that identity, but in a way I wanted to maximize that and by maximizing, I mean I wanted to play it, but when I wasn't playing I wanted to be in the gym working out towards those athletics and I enjoyed the way people were fulfilling similar roles in their own life because it seemed liked we shared the same form and we shared that community together. If I'm looking at exercise today, I think a big part of my identity is attending the Student Recreation Center on a regular basis and getting to know the group of people there, but the culture of it, there is something to be said about the power of exercise and the feeling you have while you're doing it, but the feeling you have after you do it. And, the people that are doing the same thing or similar thing as you do, it's like they can share those same levels and you can understand. It's an understanding you have and what drives us to come here every day. Do we like the physical side of exercising? Of course, but more than anything we like the feeling that we have while we are doing it, the feeling that we have when we are done. It gets back to that whole reflection process. If I don't exercise for 3 or 4 days, I'm missing that, something feels lacking in me and yes, I miss the people. It's that feeling that I have, it's always like the weight has been released from your body and you're feeling almost weightless in a way and in your consciousness and your mind when you are done. It's a little tough to describe. I like people knowing that going to the Student Recreation Center and working out is part of my life, but at the same sense I like helping people find that path to exercise and doing things that I like to call: lifetime, lifestyle fitness activities. Mind/body dualism, for instance, when I was in wrestling practice in high school, my wrestling coach would say things such as: "Your body may be saying no, but your mind is saying yes." "Don't tell body to shut up and just keep going." I can see where he is



coming from and I can see where that goes, but sometimes that allowed people to push themselves to levels they didn't think were possible. However, there is a body understanding, understanding your system and how your body works, and understanding that there are times when we feel like we hit a wall, but we can reach above those levels, but at the same sense, your body and your mind it's not like you can walk in tomorrow and run the marathon if you haven't been a marathon runner because your mind is not there and your body is not there. If you do it over time because Rome wasn't build in a day, maybe you start of walking around the block. You do that for 3 or 4 days. Next week, you decide you'll just jog around the block. Six months from then, you'll decide to run from Student Recreation Center to Walmart. After I'm done, I'm going to walk back and run again and walk back. A year from that, you've moved on. You kept climbing the ladder and not only is your body stronger, but your mind is stronger and you are working together. If your body was so weak, but your mind was saying yes, you could run a marathon, but that's probably not possible. I look back at what my wrestling coach was saying and what he was really trying to do is trying to build that mind and body togetherness and realize that other levels are achievable, but it wouldn't have been possible had we not built to that. I also hear people say the complete opposite where your mind and body work together through embodiment. The mind and body move up the ladder together. It's not like the body is here and we have to wait for the mind to climb the ladder. I look back, for instance, from where I'm at right now at age and where I was at 24 when I started working out again. My mind and body have climbed a lots of steps on the ladder together to get up to where I am today.

Me (probing question #4): Reflect back on your coach's perspective and how you can transform the way you speak about your body/self so it doesn't sound that is collected of objects.

Magic: If I was coaching wrestling today, I would tell people that exercise and sport is a journey. The path that we are on right now as a novice wrestler is not where we are going to be in six months from now. Today, we are going to work on most basic things. It's like learning that alphabet before you can write. Before you start writing, you have to learn to pronounce all the different letters in the alphabet. First, is learning the 26 characters and then, learning how to pronounce the 26 characters and then, is learning how to pronounce the characters together along the way and then pretty soon, you'll be writing and pretty soon, you'll be reading. The more you read, the more you write, the better you're going to speak, and the better you're going to learn a language. I think that is very true with sport and exercise. First, let's just learn how to crawl, let's learn how to walk, let's learn how to run, let's learn how to catch, let's learn how to kick, let's learn how to use a bench press correctly, let's learn how to squat correctly, let's learn how to dance, let's learn how to feel the rhythm of what we are doing. When we perfect our own skills, how are we going to do this with a team, how are we going to do this as a community, how are we going to work together. If your mind and body were that much different if I would just say: "Body, let's do it today! What are you waiting for?" That wouldn't be possible. But, it is a process just like anything else. And that's when I get back to reflecting on my own experience on how important that process is. I know you guys want to play sports, but it's an old saying from karate kid where Mr. Miyagi teaches him wax on/wax off at first; the very basics. And then he learns to do karate.

Me (probing question #2): What I mean by that; there is a lot of people that just don't think when you play sports or exercise your mind and body are one. They have that separation. When you were playing sports, what as the most common thing that people or your friends/athletes would say in terms of objectification? For example, many athletes would say: "My mind is awake, but my body isn't." Leading to a competition, lots of athletes would say: "I had to get up so early and my body is not awake, but my mind is." Have you ever done anything in the past to objectify yourself?

Roman: When people say that their body is not there, then their body isn't there. When an athlete starts his/her precompetition day with that kind of an objectifying attitude, then they already told themselves that they are going to fail. When I was running track lot of people would say: "Oh, I'm just not feeling good today." When they say that, they are already telling themselves in their mind and their body that they are not going to do well in terms of performance. I also think that the diet has a major role in athletes' body/self life. People go out and party the night before and they are already setting themselves up for not performing good. If you tell yourself that you want to perform good in your competition and that you feel good then your mind and body will back you up on that. Hydration is a huge part in nourishing your body/self being. Pre, post and during performance nutrients are also extremely important.

Me (probing question #3): As athletes and exercisers we like to view ourselves in terms of numbers. For example, I have to run this many minutes fast. This is how many pounds I have to lose in this many months/weeks. This is where my body fat percentage should be. How do you feel in terms of numbers? As athletes, should we constantly measure ourselves?

Roman: It depends on what you're measuring. The body mass index is not right. You can't measure yourself based on that. If you're trying to measure your performance in track, those are definitely objective things that you need to get right every time, but I suggest using some kind of subjective stats for yourself and that is really hard. It really does depend on what you're trying to measure.

Me (probing question #4): How would you measure yourself without using any numbers?

Roman: I would train as hard as I can without giving up. The problem is that people give up. It is hard to get a goal and if you don't do everything right and train smart, you are not going to see the results. It is the mental toughness. My dad had been telling me that my whole life which means that you can tell your mind and body together what to do and there is no pain. If you have a certain training workout usually you would try to achieve a goal and if you only do that training workout maybe you could go harder and push yourself harder and that's what mental toughness is, but if you only have 10 reps, then, you are not pushing yourself .

Me (probing question #5): When it comes to sports, do you think the mental toughness and achieving your best only comes from true enjoyment for your sport and an unconditional love for sports and movement?

Roman: There is a different kind of enjoyment and love for sports. There is love for the success in sports and exercise and there is love for fun. From my experiences, it is hard to love something if you are not successful at it. In general, people don't like to lose. There is some things that you can enjoy. Like art, but you might not sell your art; you just enjoy painting, but sports is a little different.

Me (probing question #6): Even though you are currently not successful in track and field, do you still enjoy it?

Roman: I was talking to my fiancé about this topic yesterday and I was asking her whether I should go back to track and field after my injury and if I don't do well then I'm not going to like track and field anymore and I don't want that to happen so I might just quit now and leave it at that and still like it. That kind of scares me because the only reason I liked it because I was good at it. Yes, I enjoyed running around. I liked the team I was on and I just liked the sport and liked that competitive drive and those butterflies that you get. But, if I didn't see the results, I didn't enjoy it and I didn't want to be there. That is a huge part of me. In football, I wasn't great in it because of my size, but I had speed and I had things that other people didn't have which they utilized me for so that made me enjoy it even though I wasn't the top performer I had different aspects of where I was. I had speed and I had a really good field vision so when I ran the ball and tried to make touchdowns, I was just different than the normal guy who doesn't try. I feel like I tried harder to get to where I wanted to be. In high school, the coaches didn't understand that and they would pick the bigger guys for running backs. Every year I started getting less enjoyment out of football, but I still did it just because of family and friends. They were saying to just stay with it; you got one more, two more years. But, I hated going to it. I was OK, but I never got the ball. I had a starting position in soccer according to my soccer coach my senior year because of my speed and because I played for so long. My friends and family were saying to just stick with football for four years. I loved football when I was a little kid. I was starting all the time and getting a ball.

Atle: Common example I hear now is: “I like to run because I don’t have to think. So I don’t have to think, that’s why I like running.” My own experience through teaching group fitness classes taught me that some people show up to class just to show up. They don’t really want to get as much out of it. They don’t want to think so they just show up to get an outcome. They are hoping they’ll lose weight so that’s the only reason that they are there. They are not there to enjoy it, they are there to lose weight. I hear a lot: “I had this New Year’s resolution to lose all this fat so that’s why I’m here”, not because I actually enjoy it. I like to look at my body as a whole talented being that is capable of enjoying a variety of physical activities rather than using the sport or exercise to kind of objectify ourselves. For example, I’m a whole being that loves movement and dancing. I love lifting, rather than I lift so I won’t be fat, or I lift weights so I can look ripped. You hear that a lot.

Acetylene: Most people talk about themselves in the negative. I think much of this negative talk is to protect ego, we want people to disagree and say we are good, or at least me saying the negative about our actions we can be first to acknowledge that we don’t think of ourselves of being perfect. I have spent a lot of time teaching myself to not refer to myself as fat or being uncoordinated as if I say these things then others who may be less coordinated or larger than myself feel worse about themselves. I think using language that implies you are working at a skill or practicing trying to improve is much more positive self talk and more encouraging for others around you rather than negative speech. The majority of time when I work out I am “in the moment” and do not take the time to separate when I am doing and the enjoyment of movement. If I go to a class which is not one of my favorites then I separate my mind and body, as my mind is

thinking something like “do I have to jump more?” “Why am I here?” “If I leave class will it look bad?” When my mind starts to question then my body just goes through the motions. I know when this happens I will not gain the same amount of benefits from the workout as I am not putting myself into the workout, just being distracted and mimicking the moves halfheartedly and busy with thoughts instead.

5. How do you describe your workouts or physical activity? Please talk and reflect on your sport and/or exercise lived experiences.

Magic: I would describe my workouts as high intensity and pushing myself to my limits, but in control in a way and really focusing on my breathing, my sweating moment. I almost like it better when there is no music playing. It’s almost like a rhythm when I really get into a good flow. It’s almost like a competition that I have. Every time I go into the gym to see how fast I can go through a workout. Yet, how controlled do I feel during my workout and more important, how does my feeling increase the workout. Am I feeling weaker or am I feeling stronger, am I enjoying the moment? What I really notice that a really good workout by the end of it, I reach a pinnacle where I’m enjoying the moment and my breathing is in rhythm and it’s just a great experience. Part of the reason I train like that is for when I always used to play sports, I used to think play fast, but in control and very close similar to the old John Wooden quote. I really felt if I was in a good flow and playing hard, yet in control I always performed better and I also thought by displaying that playing prowess it rubbed of my teammates and they saw that playing hard, yet in control, we were more effective as a team. Even before we were playing a game or competing, I always really pushed it in practice. The better we practiced, the harder we practiced, the more we pushed ourselves. The better we flowed together, the

better the result was going to be on the field. We may lose the game, but we may play better and we could live with that. I always wanted to win, but if there was a game where we executed well a lot of that was how we practiced, how did we workout in the off season, what did we do to get to practicing at a higher level. When we practiced at a high level, we also played at a high level. If I'm working out at a high level, it makes me a better professor, it makes me a better family member, it makes a better husband, it makes me a better friend in a lot of ways. By starting the day with a workout where I'm in a good flow that flow carries over to the rest of the day. I almost think it's contagious when other people see it. I always preached that the gym is a community and if people see you pushing it, and they see you in control, it puts of a good vibe. When I see others in the gym and they may not even know that I'm watching them, and if I see them pushing it, they are doing it the right way, it definitely helps my workout. Play fast, yet in control-  
John Wooden!

Roman: Workout? Is there such a thing? Jump practices or blocks and working on techniques and trying to get better at my long jumps. If I was doing good in practice and feeling good, I enjoyed it way more. I would get out of the blocks with some of the guys and I'd come out of them just as fast as them and they were seniors. I'd get a rush and I'd just want to keep doing it. If I come fast just that one time, the whole practice feels good and I'm doing good and my body and mind respond to that. Jump practices are the same way. If I come out and I'm warming up and my legs are a little stiff and I'm not feeling so good, but sometimes I'll get to a point where I tell myself: "Do this!" My favorite part was my state high school's last jump. I've never felt so good and that much adrenaline because it was my last jump of my entire high school career and I wanted to get 23 feet



which is seven meters. It was surreal and I don't really remember anything, just the jump. I just of had more speed and power somehow and I jumped so much farther and higher that I've ever done before that my mechanics in the air went too fast so I went to the side and I messed up the jump, but the jump before that I kept getting further and further until that last jump. It would have been easily 23.5 feet if I would have put it all together, but at that point I didn't even care I didn't get 23 feet. That feeling was just amazing. I've never had that. It felt like I took a shot of steroids. I still remember that...big time.

Atle: I explain my workouts more like playouts. My lived experiences are considered like playouts because when I went rafting last summer and you could consider that exercising, but it was just really fun playing and moving, rowing-very challenging and different experience that I've had before. The excitement was unreal and it's like a new level of competition because you're competing against this water who is trying to knock you out of your raft. That it is why it was so different because you weren't competing against another person and it's a new challenge and you have to learn new skills. When I teach Zumba, I would describe them as a party because it is kind of a party. We are going and we are dancing with other people and that's a party. So I describe Zumba as a party where I'm dancing and playing and experiencing different things and creating, too.

Everyone has a different style of dancing. Sometimes I'll do a move and I'll wonder what it would be like if I added like a little hand gesture. Trying different things is playing and creating for me.

Acetylyne: I like to dance. Exercise that involves music is best for me or complicated foot patterns, rollerblading, step or floor aerobics, hip-hop, Zumba are favorites, but I also enjoy yoga (like the flow) and especially balance and power moves. Sports that involves

more fast-twitch than slow twitch muscle is more interesting to me. I like to run...two blocks as fast as I can, running miles, ugh boring! Power or dynamic moves intrigue me, moves that involve finding your center of gravity and working on range of motion.

Maybe I have a slight case of Adult deficient disorder, but I like the constant change and I want my exercise to not be too repetitive but it needs to have symmetry. Drive me crazy when I grapevine right and clap right and then the instructor grapevines left but still claps with the right hand, ack! Whatever I do I need to do the exact opposite, not some close approximation of the opposite.

6. What is your purpose of playing sports, moving, and/or exercising?

Magic: It's a feeling of being and I really feel like when I'm playing the sport I'm always thinking about the task at hand. What am I suppose to do? I'm always thinking about the situation that could possibly happen. I always thought I played really fast because I understood the game. I might not be the fastest and the strongest person in the world, but I thought I was effective because I knew I had a pretty good idea what the strategy would be, what the situation would be whether it was in football. For instance, if there was 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> I felt like they were going to be throwing. If there was 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>, I felt they were going to be running. I was always trying to line-up the other people. When I was in the sport, I was so focused on what was happening-the dynamics and the chest match between the teams or my opponent and I. it wasn't until after the game where I can really soak in what that experience was and is that feeling of being, an enlighten feeling. After I've finished playing the sport, it's an experience where I almost felt I had been set free. I don't know if that was my endorphins that were released from the physical exertion, but there is nothing like finishing a sport when you're done with it. Trust me, playing is the

best part! When I was reaching that pinnacle with my workout and I'm really pushing at the end and I could feel the sweat dribbling of my body and hitting the floor. I'm thinking about each breath coming in and out. I'm feeling my muscles tighten as I'm coming up on my last few rounds of sit-ups and planks which is a great feeling, but when I finish, it's almost like not in a negative way, but I'm set free and I'm released and it's a great feeling. I just finished a workout about half an hour ago and there is something about that process that just makes the rest of the day better. Now, what can I do next? It starts me off on the right track. Had I not gone to the gym today, I may be sitting on a couch and thinking about grabbing a beer or maybe I should just go eat something unhealthy. When I play sport and finish my workouts, I'm taking a step in the right direction mentally and physically. It's a feeling of an accomplishment. Playing a sport and working out it's a choice and not everybody makes that choice. I think they are missing out on a lot. One, I think it expands who you are and you're going to use muscles that you've never used before. Second, I think people that are not working out or playing sports, they are using parts of their mind they never use if they don't have this experience. By doing these things, it opens up the mind and it opens up the body. More important, it opens up yourself because I'm one of those embodiment people because I'm mind/body/soul person and you're missing out a lot in life if you don't open up those doors you have to offer in your body and it makes a more complete person. The same with sports. I always felt more complete when I was done. I knew more about myself, but I also knew more about the people that I played with, and I knew more about the people that I played against. It has helped me a lot in life read people and understand who they are and I've seen those raw emotions that sport provides and when you get someone in a competition

their character is sometimes very revealing. Sometimes I do some things on a playing field or when I workout out that I didn't know it was up inside of me-some of it negative, but most of it positive.

Roman: My purpose of playing sports is to try to achieve what my body can let me achieve. That is the reason I want to do track again because I have one more year and I want to know if that 22.9 feet is the farthest I can get. I don't want to disappoint myself if I don't do good. I don't want to regret that.

Atle: First, the purpose of playing sports is to work together with other people especially team sports and I play a lot of team sports. I play softball. We played intramurals the other night and there was a lot of people I've never met before so the purpose of that was getting to know new people and working with them and talking to them. I was an outfielder and you have to communicate. If the ball goes over your head, you have to tell them that you are going for it-it's mine, it's mine, it's mine! The purpose of moving is that I think the movement is enjoyable-any kind of movement. The purpose of me doing yoga is that I always find different meanings in movement. The other day we were doing lotus and you're laying on your belly and I'm on the ground and we are lifting our feet and lifting our hands, our hands are next to our side and the back is contracted. I associate that to holding the world on our shoulders and lifting it and being able to hold our things in our lives and deal with them. A lot of people think that they need to go run because they're upset so they just run and they go cope: "I need to go workout and then I'll be better." To me, exercising or moving is symbolic of our lives-holding the world and dealing with our problems and living with them. The purpose of exercising is new experiences I believe the human body thrives on variety and when we put ourselves in

different situations in a place that we've never been before that is enjoyable and purposeful. The purpose is to take our body/self to places we've never been before. We need it to keep us happy.

Acetylene: My main purpose is to have fun, next would be to stay in shape which is why I choose particular classes that feel more like a party or fun then a hard core workout.

Though I do love classes that challenge me physically but the challenge needs to be more cirque du soleil than powerlift. I want strength and form not just brute strength or jumping jacks and lunges.

Reflection & Epoche Questions:

1. While participating in sports or exercising, how do you think of your mind and body-as separate entities or working together? And if so, how is this manifested?

Me (probing question #5): I'm going to ask you to reflect on the following questions:

“Body-you need to tell your body what to do.”

Magic: I had that perspective, but as I examine things now, I realize that part of what made me such an effective hitter in baseball and yes, I knew how to swing a bat, but that came from just doing the very basic fundamentals of doing a karate chop drill on pitches and then it came to thinking about if I had two strikes and zero balls and the pitchers had to count and I only had one more strike before I'm out. Is he going to throw away a fast ball down the middle of the plate or is he going to try to get me to chase a bad pitch. It was about trying to learn how the mind game works. I started to realize that your mind and body play a big role when I'm swinging a baseball bat. If he is throwing a curve ball, I need to have my weight back so I can load my weight to really put some power into the pitch. And I was thinking how that mind and body thing works together and I started

thinking about how does this work in exercise. For instance, is my rhythm important when I'm riding a bike? How can I maximize my effort? Is my form correct when I'm doing a curl? Is my form correct when I'm doing a squat? When I'm running bases how am I rounding the bases, where am I touching the base with my foot when I go on the base. So I'm thinking that mind and body are constantly working together and really it is one. The more in flow you are with your mind and body, the more you understand this concept and the better you'd be able to perform. You'll be able to get enjoyment out of exercise. When I reflect on where I was as an 17 and 18 year old junior and senior in high school to where I am today is understanding the importance and valuing the embodiment philosophy and realizing that exercising is who I am, playing golf is who I am, fly fishing is who I am. It's the feel that I have and that feel that I have is that mind/body feel. It's more of an understanding.

Roman: I think they are separate. Your mind is totally different and your body is totally different because you can wake up, you can feel fine, you can be: "I'm not in a mood today" and your body is going to respond to that. if your body is not feeling good, then you're going to tell yourself that you're not feeling good.

Me (probing question #7): How is that separate?

Roman: They work together as a union.

Me (probing question #8): During your sports activity, how do your mind and body work together?

Roman: It happens as you're doing your activity.

Me (probing question #9): Can you give me an example when your mind and body are working together during sports (practice or competition)?

Roman: During a 100m dash when you come out the block and you feel good. I always feel my technique through my body and it's really good. If I can relax and don't tense up, it makes me feel good running and I get faster times. I'm constantly telling myself to relax and that allows me to get better from which a lot of people don't understand-you have got to relax! People tense up and they run slower times. People think too much during competition. I've been that way before. I've told myself that I was thinking way too much.

Me (probing question #10): When you think too much, does your performance suffer?

Roman: It is way worse. When I go out and I think so hard on my mechanics then I ran the worst time I've ever ran. If I just go out there and sprint for fun without thinking about it, I ran a better time. I have an example of this. I was long jumping at WSU two years ago and I was not jumping well at all and I was getting pissed off because I wasn't doing well. My knee was bothering me a little bit so I made that excuse to my coach that my knee was bothering me because I didn't want to run the 100, I didn't want to do anything because I was just pissed off. So I drove home during the meet. Right after there was a track and field intramurals and I knew I was going to take the whole thing because it was kids that were hung over. It was just easy I wasn't supposed to run because if you are on the track team, you are not allowed to play intramurals. I didn't even get in the 22s on my long jump at WSU. I had sweats on, I had a sweatshirt, I didn't even have my spikes on and I went on and didn't care with a nice good pace jog jump and I got into the 22s. How did I do that? And during my sport competition I couldn't even get that. And then I ran the 100 without a block because they only had 7 so I gave everybody else their blocks because that was going to be easy and relaxed and I've never felt so good in my

life because I was beating everybody. I ran the same time I run in competitions with blocks. I was wearing a sweatshirt and sweats. It was weird that I could do that and I didn't care. I was relaxed and just having fun. That kind of pissed me off because I was like: "Why can't I do that during competition?" Maybe if I didn't treat it as competition and was more relaxed and focused on the fun aspect of track and field. Like: "I'm just going to do my best and whatever happens-happens. It is a different attitude people have towards competition. It is hard to stay that way because you can relax and have fun during every meet, but sooner or later you're going to get to that point where you just want to beat a certain time. You can only get so much better until you start trying to work on your technique. My parents always told me to have fun during your sport that is why I just want to have fun, I agree. But it is hard to have fun when you're trying to get a certain time and technique right because you're successful at your sport.

Atle: Originally, when I played sports, I would separate them, but now as I've learner and grown, I connect them. They've always been connected and they'll always be connected. It is just the mindset that we have. For example, in sport, when I played basketball, I disconnected my mind and body because I didn't think I was that great at basketball, but I knew I had to do it to make my parents happy. It was a complete disconnect. I didn't have confidence in myself so it reflected in my body. I pretended my mind and body were disconnected (skill from confidence). But now, as I play basketball in intramurals, I realize how connected my mind and body are and I have confidence because I enjoy it and that shows in a way I play. I'm able to use more strategy, use my teammates, make more plays.



Me (probing question #2): What made you realize that your mind and body are connected?

Atle: What has helped realize body/self connection was stepping away from it for a little bit because I played all four years of high school and playing three sports every year and constantly playing. So stepping away from it and reflecting upon my experiences and taking competition in the pressure also helped me to connect my mind and body. I'm almost disconnected when I try to compete, but I'm fully connected when I'm playing sports just for myself. When I'm practicing yoga, in the beginning, I treated yoga as a body exercise, just something we do with our bodies, but as I continued my journey in yoga, I realized that the more I connect, connect the poses with actual things in my life, I was able to see the meshing of mind and body in exercise. If I connected to lotus pose which is a flower that grows in water and comes up and above the dirty, the scum of the earth and rises above and is able to bloom, so when I connected that to myself in real life- what does that mean to me? And then I saw the meshing in yoga.

Me (probing question #3): What did that meshing mean to you?

Atle: It means to me that sometimes there are things in life that we are never going to be able to control. The scum of the earth, we can never control it. Sometimes people say hurtful things to us, or they think little of us and they talk behind our back. And me rising above that is letting it go and still being able to function, bloom, and do my best despite the world.

Acetylyne: The majority of the time my mind and body work together without conscious thought. When I do think about movement it becomes more forced and I get caught up in

counting and become less focused on what my body is physically doing and more about what I “think” I should be doing next, or if I am on beat.

2. How can you modify the way you think about your sport, movement, and physical activities so they feel more like playouts, not workouts?

Magic: I’ve never really lost the competitive nature so when I’m exercising I look at my time and how fast am I going through. I have about four different sets of workouts that I do and I’m thinking about if I do it in under an hour, I look at that as a good day and I’m excited about that. The other one if I do it in under 55 minutes, I’m thinking of that as a good day. I’m competing against the clock, but I really want to stress my form, I want to focus on my breathing, I want to focus on what is my sweating activity like. There is just a variety of things I’m examining while I’m going through this process and I can usually tell how strong, how good of a workout it was that day so I’m always just trying to do anything I can and try to find any angle I can to make this somewhat a competition with myself. If I go out there and I do an hour and 1 minute instead of 59 minutes, am I feeling like I had a horrible day? No, I’m feeling great because I just got out of a gym, I enjoyed the experience, I probably saw some people in there that I know and I was able to talk to some individuals; that community and feel. Again, it gets back to setting a measuring stick for myself. I try to incorporate new things, too. I may see someone else doing something in the gym that I haven’t tried before and I’m thinking: “Hey, this might be an area in where I can improve some physical fitness or it might alleviate some pain or stress in my body so I try to also learn from when I see others do and I’m not afraid to ask a question or if someone wants to come up and criticize maybe something that I may be

doing wrong, I'm open to doing that. What I've learn over the last (my workout had gradually changed) six/seven years to more of a lifetime fitness focus.

Me (probing question #6): How is that comparable to playouts?

Magic: I look towards working out as means to activities that I want to do as part of a process. For instance, I love to golf, I love to hike during the summer whether is going fly-fishing or camping. I love to hike in the fall when I'm going hunting. By exercising, I feel much more comfortable when I do those recreational activities. It makes me have an appreciation for working out, but not only does it help me with those recreational activities, I feel like I'm a better teacher, I feel like I'm a better husband, I feel like I'm a better son, a better brother, a better nephew. It helps with me all focids of my life where I really value that exercise. Do I think of it as a workout? I guess maybe I do have that perception. I also think, not only do I enjoy the people that I'm coming to see there and sweating. I really enjoy getting in there and beating that time on the clock. I'm playing against myself in there. At the same sense, it gets back to that team concept that I can talk to people after we're done and share that experience, my workout experience and I can say: "Hey, you know what? You were really hitting hard on a bike! What are you doing down there holding that plank? Is that a pretty good workout? That's really impressive of you! I see you that you did 17 pull-ups. You've lost some weight and you're looking really good! You're looking stronger! That's great!" I'd be the first one to say that and throw a compliment out and I want to let them know that I really value what they're doing, too. It's not just about me in there. It's about the community and hopefully, that community keeps them coming back and its building relationships.

Roman: Because I have to work-out instead of just play. Anybody that's in a competition it's already starting to think about it because there is also other people around doing the same thing. Your sport becomes a workout to you. When we had a football practice and literally, the coach said: "OK everybody, we are just going to practice, but we are going to have fun and you guys are going to run your own practice and you'll have your own scrimmage." That was fun! I had a blast. I don't know if we were doing better or not, we might have been doing better just having fun-offensive line was making plays, the defense was doing better and we don't care so much about competition. The coaches stayed out of our way, the team meshed together and that was the best time I've ever had because we were having our own practice and we weren't worried about anything else.

Atle: Our body craves variety so changing fitness routines can help us keep interested. A lot of times something changes from a workout to a playout when we make it fun and the fun aspect comes from relieving pressure so we always have this pressure to lift Monday, Wednesday, Fridays our legs, or our abs, or our deltoids. We have that pressure to perform every single time even though we aren't feeling great and we are sore, but we still are going to do it and it becomes work. So that pressure aspect is no longer fun. But, if we could see our long term goals: "I want to be stronger. I want to be able to hike a mountain this summer." If we could see that long term goal, it becomes fun and we may tweak it or change it so that we are not crushing our bodies into the ground. So it becomes work when we are exhausted.

Acetylene: I generally do choose workouts and class that to me are more playouts. I though, have that freedom since I work in the industry I can pick and choose classes more easily than many others as my schedule allows me this opportunity. Though I do have to

attend classes that I know I will not enjoy as much and I go in knowing this and try to find other ways to enjoy the workout through those people around me, the fun the instructor is having, the music or knowing that I am burning so many calories!

3. Think about why you play sports, move, or exercise; in what ways does your physical activity contribute to your skill and knowledge growth? What types of physical activities, sports, or exercise do you participate in that contribute to your skill and knowledge growth?

Magic: It gets back to the way I exercise and move and to different activities and its being able to share your experiences with other people. What I mean by this, there is not a week that goes by where I talk to my students and I ask them: “How do you define a successful day? What do you do to define a successful day?” They may say: “I woke up this morning” or “I handed in my homework.” How I define what my idea of a successful day is? First thing is getting out of bed, but the other thing is-there has got to be a movement during the day! Maybe it is not going to the Rec Center, maybe it’s not going on a four mile run, but if I feel like I was moving throughout the day, I try to push the importance of movement and the value of movement. For me, it is attending the Rec Center, or walking 18 holes of golf, or some physical fitness. I really try to let my students know how that helps me cope with stress, how that helps me cope with depression, or how that helps me cope with relationships in my own life.

Me (probing question #7): How does it help you contribute to your skills and knowledge growth?

Magic: For instance, if there is a day when I’m not feeling a 100% what exercise and fitness has made me realize and engage my mental and physical capacities. I may look at

what am I eating during the day, what are my sleeping habits like? What activities did I do the day before that's making me feel so good or so poorly the next day. I guess what it has made me do is by exercising and playing sports, it has made me investigate other areas of my life where I get back to the whole process that's had a positive or negative impact. That has helped me with the knowledge or if someone said: "You know, I read a great book about diet and exercise." I'll be very intrigued to pick it up. *Omnivores Dilemma* was the book I read and there were certain foods and preservatives that after I read that I really tried to avoid. It has made me more curious about other things in my life that impact my exercise, my play, my sports: Golf, because it's a game that people see as extremely easy to go out there and hit a ball and put it in a hole which is the physical side of it, but what people don't understand is the mental side of golf and how frustrating and how it can ruin other people's lives and cause some stress. And I always try to think about golf as an analogy with life and a metaphor in life-don't sweat the little things and golf is one of those things that teaches you that if you miss a 3 foot putt, it is not the end of the world or if you don't get an A on that exam, is that going to keep you from getting a job some day. Things will get better. If you spill ice-cream on your new car seat, is it going to make the car drive any worse? Are people going to judge you because they see an ice-cream stain on your car? Or are the people going to judge you because you missed a 3 foot putt-they may. But, in a grand scheme of life, how important is that? What I learned from cycling is almost an endurance type of thing and there is going to be moments where you feel like your mind and body being extremely pushed, but there is going to be moments where you're going down that hill and the wind is in your face and the stream and the water is flowing, the smells from the wheat field coming up in your

nose and you can hear the birds chirping and it is like you're feeling the moment and that's when I like to say-Life is good! It almost got those parallels with life and there's times when climbing that hill or feeling the burn in your lungs, or we are doubting ourselves and we get to the top of that mountain and once we go down the back side of that mountain, the sun is in our face and things are good. I think sometimes in life there are moments when we feel like we are really being pushed and sure we can stop and fold, but often more than not, we've learned to endure and we realize that in time there is going to be brighter days and there are times there is going to be rough days, too. It's part of life. With strength training and doing me circuit training and the Student Recreation Center that is more hard work pays off. It may not pay off with more money or a job, but people value someone that goes in there and works hard. For instance, I'll see a janitor at the university where I work where they are cleaning urinals and cleaning toilets where no one has flashed, but I know the next day that I go in there and I value what they've done and I make sure I always let them know. Or it could be someone that is an administrative assistant that doesn't have a college degree and may have a GED and I realize again and it gets back to that whole team concept that I value their hard work and what we do wouldn't be possible if they weren't there. It doesn't matter if you are hitting a home run or if you're laying down a bunt in baseball to move a runner and advance a runner into a second base, everybody has a role that they play. Each one is equally important. In society we say: "OK, they are a professor and making \$85,000 a year and they are publishing." Well, that is great, but it wouldn't be possible if the HVAC guys didn't turn on the heating for the schools so the pipes didn't freeze and they provide a facility plumbing that didn't work at the school. It wouldn't be possible if we didn't have a

computer tech guys making sure we had an equipment to use. Everybody has a role and everybody is vital to the organization and that's great think about being in a team.

Roman: The success that I had is the big one, but also I enjoy it because of that success, I think. I feel good after a workout and my mind feels fresh and that is a big reason I do that. But I don't like when we have a practice that we don't work on what we need to work on because I don't feel accomplished. When you finish a great-WOW! Sweet!

When you go to the gym and you are not motivated to work hard, you don't work hard so you just don't feel good. That is why I enjoy a meaningful practice because you do get a good workout and you do feel good. During the sport, during competition, it is not going to be the same if you don't have that knowledge about your sport. It's like doing any kind of research before you're trying to write a research paper. That is kind of what it is with sports. You have to know about your sport. The technique is huge. Everything that you do technique is extremely important because if you start doing the wrong technique, you are not going to do as well which contributes to competition in your sport. For example, lifting weights contribute to your skill and technique. It is a huge factor on how you run. You can get strong and that would make you run differently. Not everybody lifts, but if you lift right that's when it can benefit for techniques.

Atle: Zumba's choreography and being creative and having to recall and remember moves and then combining rhythms. Combining our auditory system with our physical system, combining the two takes a lot of thought process and being able to move at a certain count. It takes a lot of mind and body memory. Yoga is meditating and being able to control your mind and body. Soccer's team strategy and working with others. Soccer contributes to my knowledge growth and skill because I learn through experiences of



working with other people. That takes analyzing other people's skills. For example, I'm not going to pass the ball to someone because they have a guard right on them so someone is on the way, obviously. So making mistakes and learning from them.

Acetylene: I think participating in exercise helps me not only physically, but mentally and emotionally. Physically I try to keep improving my moves and abilities doing more than I did the day before. Mentally I am creating new brain patterns by changing my routines and memorizing movement patterns in relationship to music. Emotionally exercise reduces stress and anxiety and creates a healthy release. Zumba is great for creating new movement patterns. Gravity and boxing are great stress relievers.

Reduction and Transcendental Self Questions:

1. How can you keep the enjoyment of your sport, play, human movement, and exercise activities?

Magic: You have to value the people and the relationships that you do those activities with. All these activities I've talked about, there is people I love to share the experience with. Do I love the physical games for myself and the superficial things? Of course, but more important than that, I love what it's done for helping me deal with depression, helping me deal with stress, but also helping me provide a message to others. Even though I have these stressful feelings or depressed feelings sometimes in my own life, these are things that I do to help me cope with these feelings. Also, I really have enjoyed the relationships. It's all about the people.

Me (probing question #8): When there aren't any people around you, are there any activities you enjoy?

Magic: During fly-fishing and golf, I reflect on dealing with depression and stress and dealing with anxiety. Either way, I'm happy and I'm enjoying any physical activities because I feel I'm benefiting and getting something out of that movement. When I'm by myself, I can focus more on those areas.

Roman: Improve! Find something different. Pick up a different position. If you're good at your sport, for example, soccer, you're good with your feet, or a good basketball player with good hand/eye coordination. I was a left forward and you might get bored with that a little bit so you enjoy it less so I would change to mid fielder. It's a different aspect. The same sport, but different position. For track, you can go from long jump to triple jump and try something different. If you improve, you're going to keep that enjoyment.

Atle: Listening to what is going on in our body. We overtrain a lot and force our bodies to be involved in physical activity. Sometimes this is harmful, but we convince ourselves that we must keep participating in this activity in order to achieve our goals. Our bodies are not machines and we like to pretend that they are. Our bodies have a life, they have a mind, they have cells, they have muscles, tissues, genetics and machines will never have that. In order to keep our enjoyment in sport, play, movement, and exercise, we have to connect with what is going on in our body, access that, and do an appropriate exercise. For example, if you force something in terms of movement, you're not going to enjoy it because you'll be disconnected from your body/self. If our body is suffering, we won't have enjoyment. We pretend we will because of competition, but we won't.

Acetylene: Recognize burnout and change up your routine. Changing what you do for your workout or how you do your workout can be very beneficial.

2. What would you say to someone who asks you if you workout or participate in sports? Think about the phrase “work” versus “play” and how you would like to view yourself-as a mover in activity/play or a worker in exercise and/or sport.

Magic: I always try to talk how this is a lifestyle choice. Part of the reason I do this stuff, it is who I am, it defines who I am. It is a lifestyle. We love to play! The older we get, we feel like we have to more serious and we have to get our stuff done at the office and we don't have enough time to workout or playout. You need to make time to do these activities because you can never give up play. It is what helps us keep sharp, it helps keep us young, it helps with relationships, but more than anything, I would say that it is a lifestyle choice and this is who I am; this is a part of me.

Roman: Right at this moment, I would say that I workout, but if I'm in sport, it is different. I would probably say: “I am a track athlete.” It is two different things. Working out means that I lift weights, but when somebody is working out for a sport, that's not working out, that's participating, but they are working out just not lifting weights. But they would also be lifting to get ready to participate in their sport. Me participating in sports is a full time job and something that I have to do, but it is working towards an achievement in my sport. Not really play in sport, but if you are playing a game of touch football, that's play because there is no competition involved-professional competition. I would say work because you're working for yourself. If you are not working for yourself then it becomes a job. When I was trying to get that 23ft, I was working for a goal, but since I haven't been getting any its kinda like work for a job. That is what I don't want it to be if I come back to track. And that's what I have to figure it out if it' be work for a job or work as trying to achieve the goal. If I can't achieve that goal then I got to know when

to stop. It is really hard and I don't know what to do. No matter what, I would still think too hard and I wouldn't relax as much when there is competition involved. When I'm working out by myself that's when it's fun because I can push myself and nobody else is pushing me or watching me or doing anything. So that's fun! I go and workout because it's fun and I go and push myself and there is no competition. I'm just competing against myself. With track you compete against yourself because you have to try and get your times, but it's kinda different track and lifting weights because you compete against yourself. But, if you don't do good, then you are not enjoying it plus there is probably a factor that you're always trying to compete against others when you are long jumping. There is other people long jumping with you and when you're working out, you're just lifting on your own.

Atle: I enjoy participating in exercise and movement and a variety of physical activities. You want to use the same words people are used to, so you say: "Yes, I workout," "Yeah, I play" because you want to connect to them. To me, it is more play, it is playful exercising. Sometimes I workout and don't enjoy things, but I'm like: "Oh, I have to do this." We think we have to, but we really don't. I would like to view myself as a mover, one who takes care of my mind and my body by practicing yoga. I enjoy playing the game of soccer, softball, volleyball, and basketball. I love hiking the Glacier lakes, hiking to mountains and finding hot springs, riding my bike for enjoyment on trails and the mountains. I'm totally playing. That would never be work for me.

Acetylyne: I play at working out! I do not view myself as a sports person, I am the sort of person who roots for the underdog, I can be competitive but I am not driven by my

competitiveness. I think staying healthy is important but I like to enjoy what I do for my workout and have fun.

3. How do you allow yourself to experience the pleasure of your sport, movement activity, play, or exercise?

Magic: I set goals for myself. For instance, this year I would like to shoot under 90 in golf-I've never done that before. It does give me pleasure when I accomplish this goal.

Me (probing question #9): When you don't accomplish this goal, does playing golf still give you pleasure?

Magic: Yes, it still gives me pleasure. It gives me pleasure because of the relationships I've had established and sharing those activities with people that I enjoy. The other thing is: the identity. I realize how positive these experiences are for me. I would like to say that I'm fairly happy person, very positive, very uplifting. Part of the reason I'm like that is because of the activities I incorporated into my life. Have you ever heard of saying: "If you surround yourself with negative people, chances are that you are going to be a negative person." If you look at your children and they are hanging out; you are the company you hang out with. By doing these activities, they only have the positive, for the most part positive consequences, positive effects in my life. I really enjoy the activity which is number one. I really enjoy sharing the activity and I really enjoy the way they make me feel.

Me (probing question #10): How do they make you feel?

Magic: They make me feel happy. They make me feel insightful. They make me feel conscious of others and how they are feeling, very empathetic. They make me value how fortunate I am. I think I am in a lot of ways. I have been really thankful for what I've

been given in my life. It is almost like a very reflective moment when I finish these activities. How fortunate I am!

Roman: Better performance in lifting so I can get stronger. If you get stronger, you're going to get better. And I have to have a clear mind, too. I might come back because I only have one more year and I'm just going to have fun and I can do better, but then I also could think that I only have this one year to get 23ft and if I don't get it, then I'll be pissed off. But, I'm just going to have fun and what I get, I get. But, I still feel I won't like it even if I don't get 23ft or over. You have to feel some kind of pleasure because you feel like you're doing something. Achievement is doing something instead of sitting on a couch and doing nothing. It might not be fun, but I'm staying active and I like being active. I don't like to sit around.

Atle: There are two ways that I allow myself to experience the pleasure. The first thing is the environment. I think the environment is extremely important to allow yourself to enjoy exercise or sport. For example, in high school when I played sport, the environment was competition and pressure to perform. The environment didn't allow me to truly enjoy the sport to my liking. You have to feel safe in the environment in order to enjoy it. If you don't feel safe, let's say you are going to a class and there is someone in there that has ridiculed you or prosecuted you, are you really going to allow yourself to enjoy Zumba; probably not. So it's a lot in the mind, the allowing I think happens in the mind. Also, to letting go of competition. Another way to allow ourselves, for example, when I go hiking with my husband, I love being outdoors, but if I think I need to compete because my husband doesn't hike mountains, he runs mountains. If I'm thinking I need to

compete, I'm running and I'm looking down and I'm going as fast as I can. I'm not allowing myself to enjoy everything around me.

Acetylene: I don't judge myself or compare myself to others. I just try to do my best and to have fun doing what I do. I try to make others around me have fun also. Laughing at yourself is the best way to get rid of being self conscious.

4. Describe your sport and/or exercise story for your body/self lived experience.

Magic: There is something about fly-fishing where you have to have a certain rhythm when you are casting-you're rocking back and forth with your arm. If you are not rocking in the right moment or the right way, your presentation of your fly to a fish is going to look out of whack and you are not going to catch any fish. Part of it is how your rhythm is when you are rocking back and forth and you're thinking: "Do I want to cast it over by this rock? Do I want to cast it somewhat upstream so it floats downstream by this rock? Do I want to cast it downstream and then reel it back towards the rocks?" So you're trying to think about the whole situation in all of those scenarios. How much line do I need to have out? Do I have the right color of fly on? But, it's just being in the moment. You're hearing the water. You are feeling the breeze. You are feeling the sun on your face. You are in some of the most pristine area that the world has to offer. It's just you and you are hearing the sounds, the smells, the feel. You are incorporating all the 5 senses in this one activity. Even if you don't catch anything, it's just the fact you are out there and its feeling that water rush up against your legs, smelling the dried heat and the pine trees, hearing the water splashing against the rocks, the birds, seeing how transparent the water is and all the different colors. It's a very positive experience and often to is when I do these activities I either have my brother, my wife, my uncle, my parents

around to share and reflect on the same experience. Now, they may not be with me for that day, but on these camping trips, I'll generally see them. It seems like when we go back and reflect it's one of those experiences that get more powerful as time goes on.

Roman: State track and every event that I did. I PRD and it was by a lot. I felt very good all day even though I had lower back spasms and I was taking ibuprofen and I was fighting it the whole time, but I had so much drive to trying to get better times. Technique wise, I didn't try so much harder, but there was more adrenaline running through. My head was telling me: "You have to do this!" My body was obviously doing it. That was awesome! I just felt great! In football, I fractured my ankle my sophomore year and I came back. I wasn't a 100% yet, but I still had to go and dress up. I was probably at a 95% so I didn't want to try and get hurt again and my coach didn't let me, but we were losing to a team by a lot and I was like: "I just want to get one play." And the coach let me go and pick whatever play I wanted. I was so excited and I was trying to get to players. And everybody liked me on my team because I was fast and I got the ball and told the quarterback what play I wanted to pick and I was literally feeling no pain and everything was awesome. I didn't care that there was people around and I juked four guys out and I scored and that was the last play and then I ran around the end zone in a huge circle and I felt so achieved because I came back from this injury and I did it again in my senior year against the same team when we were losing and my coach had said: "Just go out and give him a straight pass." They threw it out and I caught it and I juked some more guys and scored. Those kind of memories I'm always going to remember because they were so fulfilling. It's a surreal feeling when your heart is beating. People would come out to me and be like: "I don't know why you didn't get the ball more often." That kinda



pisses me off still at this point that I didn't. I'm glad that it ended on that touchdown in my last play even though I didn't get a lot of touches. That kinda proved to the coach.

Atle: One time when I was hiking I was completely aware of everything in my body/self. That was the most amazing experience that I've had. Recently, I went hiking and one of the hiking techniques in order to keep a long gait is to look forward rather than down. I think this also helped me with my experience. Look ahead, otherwise if you're looking down your feet would be short. That allowed me to take in nature to see what was around me and to understand that I was so small in this huge wilderness and when we got to the lake, we got lost for a while. But, when we finally got there is kinda feeling you can't ever describe it, because it comes from inside by taking in this beautiful glass, glacier lake. And that's an example when my mind was completely cleared. I was allowed to take in more than I've ever thought I could. More nature, my environment, things that are bigger than myself, not focusing on my opponents but realizing the whole spirit.

When I was doing a ½ marathon in Boise, I felt like I was on top of the world. I had 4 miles left. I felt my every step was perfect and exact bringing me to that finish line. That was my biggest experience in mind/body connectiveness while competing and running. I felt I had a perfect form.

When I taught a class I've had mind/body connection in yoga. It mainly came through breathing. Breathing is a tool our mind/body uses to show whether we are stressed or relaxed. As I slow down my breathing and its weird as an instructor to sometimes find those moments because the class is all about your students' mind and body. Occasionally, you get a byproduct of teaching a class which is this experience within yourself, this discovery. I discovered how short life is. I live in each moment, rather than think about

my past or think about what I need to do next. What does it mean to be in this body/self moment, right now and not looking at the clock. Each breath was a different moment and I'll never get that back, but I'm not worried about it. I'm worried about my breath now.

Me (probing question #4): Did you ever feel your teaching was perfect? For example, you knew that your cueing was awesome, your transitions were amazingly good so you felt everything went smooth. People were catching on your movement, you were transforming what you felt at that teaching moment, that connection you felt with your mind and body while teaching. Did you feel that connection was transferring to your students as well?

Atle: In Zumba lots of times when I'm teaching and I'm having a good time, everybody dances differently, no two people can dance the same because we are all different individuals. Sometimes we try to dance like other people, we try to move like the instructor. When I see other people moving like themselves, their movements are different than mine. We may be doing the same kind of dance, the same routine, but when I can enjoy it and make it my own and then I see my class making it their own, I feel like I've succeeded because once they've taken that dance and added their spice and sass to it then it is a perfect mind/body class, then I've gotten to them and it's their own and they'll keep coming because they love it.

Acetylene: I like music with my workout, I enjoy symmetry and patterns, rhythm and flow. My story would be movement that tells a story or emotion with music. The small details of finishing a move from the tiniest details in your fingers to the boldest arm gestures try to complete the movements, not just doing the movements.

5. What are some meaningful approaches, ideas, or opinions to sport and/or exercise?

Me (probing question #11): If you were going to try and help somebody start an exercise program or start participating in sports, do you have some meaningful approaches or ideas or opinions on how you can do that?

Magic: It's not something that is going to be a 4 week thing. It is a lifestyle. It is not just to lose 10 lbs, you're looking at it all wrong. It is a process. You are not going to be able to go out there and run 10 miles on your first day. You go from crawling to walking to running. Then, you do everything. I would tell them: "You got to be patient." But also, you need to value this experience and this time to make it part of your day. And it needs to be part of your life. If you're just thinking: "Oh, I'm going to do it one day a week or 2 days a week." You are not getting the idea. You need to make this part of your daily routine. The other thing is: when you begin this sport or exercise program, overtime you're going to build some great relationships, you're going to build some great friendships and you need to be not short-sighted and be thinking about your weight loss, but think about where this might go in a year of two, or 5-your life gains. And, just the knowledge you're going to be able to get. And also, how are you going to pass your experience and your knowledge on because there is going to come a point when someone is going to come to you or you are going to see someone that reminds you a lot of yourself when you first began. What can you do to help that person? What can you do to possibly make a difference in someone else' life and be sure that you reflect on this experience and think about how powerful this is to you and how it defines who you are.

Me (probing question #12): How can we help them value the process?

Magic: Become part of a community whether is going to a Zumba class or a yoga class, or just showing up to walk labs at the Student Recreation Center. Same time every day for 5 days out the week at 9am or if you're walking outside, put it in as a routine and part of your daily path. At first, just get used to your surroundings-maybe going into the Student Recreation Center is a big step or going to a yoga class is a big step, but maybe you come to the rec center and you're walking labs. Then, you decide to join a Zumba class and after you do Zumba for 6 months, you might think getting a spinning certification so you can possibly teach it one day. Get involved with a community! Part of that is the relationships that help you keep going to develop that lifestyle. The further you advance, pretty soon you might start going out and doing some stud on your own. You might decide to go buy that road bike and ride from your town to the next town. You'll have more courage and more fulfillment doing it by yourself, but it never hurts to have other people help you at the beginning. Don't be afraid to seek help from others. It is so important to join these communities (Student Recreation Center of a Softball League) are vital to your long term success.

Roman: The hard part is trying to get them off the couch. It has to be their decision. You can't make somebody do it because they are not going to enjoy it. Sharing my sport experiences and achievement can definitely help people relate and let them know that they should try it and see how they feel. For people to be active, they have to find a meaning behind the activity. Sharing stories is extremely important in helping people find meaningful approaches to sport and exercise. People like to hear what I've been through and relate to that. Experiences will get them acquainted with sports and exercise world and once they are out there, it will get easier. There is a lot of data out there, but we still

have more and more people on the couch. Most people are just intimidated. Motivation through external forces is a lot harder than internal motivation. All you can do right now is share your experience.

Atle: One approach that I might use it and since I teach group fitness classes, I have a theory in my head that people are naturally attracted to social activities. Think of any successful or largely populated activities; I think of football because those men are allowed to socially connect with other guys; there is no stipulations. I know in our society people think that guys cannot connect with other guys, but it allows men to be with other men connected socially which keeps them coming and loving football. So, in my head this theory, if someone came up to me who has never discovered themselves physically, I would try to find them a group. If people can relate, they will keep coming. If they can relate to someone else in a class, they would want to come back for more. That's innate, we are kind of born with that because we are social creatures. People say: "No, I don't need other people." So they'll come and run on a treadmill and watch television, but they are connecting with people because they are watching people on their favorite show, they connect with those people, they love their celebrities. They'll know their names and who they are married to, their love affairs, even that social connection and even though technology is in the way of socially connecting to another human being, they are still social in that aspect. "I don't like working with other people." So someone comes for personal training, they don't like working with other people, but they love working with their trainer; that is social connection.

Me (probing question #5): How can you help them relate to others?

Atle: With Vandal Fitness Training Program I've implemented at the SRC, I was also helping them to relate with others through movement. If someone comes to my gravity class and we are doing pull-ups, but they have an injured shoulder so they are not going to relate to the class because everyone is doing a pull-up motion and they can't. They are going to feel totally disconnected. Finding a way to make them feel like they are doing the exact same thing as the rest of the class will help them connect. When people are physically doing the same thing, like when you and I are both dancing, I feel so connected to you even though I may not know you, we may be completely different. We may not even speak the same language, but since we are moving the same way and the body and the mind are related and connected.

Me (probing question #6): Would you say that the movement is a universal language?

Atle: Yes, we relate through movement. I may not agree with you on a single topic in life, but since you and I are both running in a race (running a marathon, for example) we are best friends because we both are there together.

Acetylene: Everyone is different and how we approach exercise or sport is different, but we should try many things and do what makes us happy, and if we get bored, do not be afraid to change what you do. Also, as we age we may need to adjust what we do for exercise. Always try, experience and change, don't be afraid of what you haven't done you may love it.