

Spirituality, Marathoner Flow, Athletic Identity,  
& Athletic Injury: A Heuristic Inquiry

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# ineffable & “wordless”

- “I can’t tell you. Not in words that make sense. I can’t say what it is to become lost in the Great Mystery, in the Creator’s Dream. Words don’t tell what it’s like...”
- Gear & Gear (1991). *People of the Fire*, p.376

# Overview of Inquiry

- What:

“What are the perceptions and experiences with spirituality, marathoner flow, and athletic identity of the injured marathoner?”

- Why:

Based on my living experience.

- How:

Methodology, heuristic inquiry.

# Outline of Elements

- Constructs.
- Methodology.
- Sources of My Data.
- Summary.

# Constructs

- Spirituality.
- Marathoner.
- Flow.
- Athletic identity.
- Athletic injury.

# Different Approaches

- Plato

Training the mind with the same vigor as you do the body (linear) (Hamilton & Cairns, 1961).

- Lao Tzu

Training without training, doing without doing (nonlinear) (LeGuin, 2019).

# Methodological Approach: A Design in Action

- Qualitative research design.
- Heuristic methodology.
- Moustakas's (1990) six heuristic phases.

# Six Phases of Heuristic Analysis

- Engagement – interest.
- Immersion – living question.
- Incubation – doing without doing.
- Illumination – constructs.
- Explication – making the interior exterior.
- Synthesis – data/sonnets?



# My Heuristic Journey

- Internal search.
- Nature/meaning of experience.
- Methods/procedures for investigation/analysis.
- Phenomenon with depth.
- Self-awareness/self-knowledge.
- Creative self-processes/self-discoveries.

(Moustakas, 1990, p. 9)

# Heuristic & Nonlinear Concepts

- Self-dialogue.
- Tacit knowing, wordless.
- Intuition, between explicit & tacit knowing.
- Indwelling, sonnets knowledge versus inspiration.
- Focus without focusing moving inward.

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(Moustakas, 1990, p. 5)

# The Marathoner Needs Both

- Linear western knowledge.
- Nonlinear eastern inspiration.
- No need to choose.
- Linear/nonlinear integration.

# Sources of Data

- Self-dialogue.
- Self-interview questions.
- Journal entries.

# Spirituality, Marathoner Flow, Athletic Identity, & Athletic Injury

- Ineffable & “wordless”.
- Completely absorbed in a moment.
- Based on choice.
- Integration of knowledge & inspiration.
- Serendipity.
- Ask for permission to do this study to discover how an injured marathoner describes & perceives these experiences.

How I use these 5 constructs

# Spirituality

- The purpose of my study is to explore the perceptions & experiences of marathoner flow, changing athletic identity, & athletic injury, relative to spirituality.
- Overarching interpretation.
- One's own lived experience of awe that is a personal, subjective experience & a relationship with what some perceive as unknowable except in a spiritual way.
- Cognitive, emotional, & intuitive means of knowing do not lead to spiritual knowledge.

# Marathoner

- One who trains for and runs a 26.2 mile race.
- How I navigate research.



# Flow

- Being completely absorbed in the moment where action & spiritual awareness of the moment are combined with the paradox of control.
- New possibilities emerge.
- Choosing to let the race come to me.
- Continuing as a personal, subjective experience unknowable in cognitive, emotional & intuitive ways.

# Athletic Identity

- The degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role, within the framework of a multidimensional self-concept.
- Shifts in self-identification.

# Athletic Injury

- Any specific distress that results in psychological strain.
- Effects on mind & body.
- An injury for the marathoner presents a void, the non-known, which is experienced as a lack of flow.

# Summary

- What: Question “What are the perceptions and experiences with spirituality, marathoner flow, & athletic identity of the injured marathoner?”
- Why: Based on my living experience.
- How: Methodology, heuristic inquiry.
- This is important to continue because...

- combining the spirituality of marathoner flow & the injured marathoner's identity using heuristic inquiry from a researcher-participant positionality is unique and fills a gap.

# Potential Applicability

- Daily mind & body training applies to all athletes.
- Retains athletic identity.
- Could prevent injury.
- Facilitates rehabilitation & healing.

# Further Exploration

- Describe & explain the experience of the phenomenon.
- Implement findings regarding mind-body integration to observe outcomes when observing injured marathoners.
- Develop ways to operationalize mind-body integration in rehabilitation/healing, training, & racing.

# References

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