

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

This proposal will review

- “a non-linear, dynamical, nonequilibrium living systems” approach to both change & spirituality.

○ (Rubik, 2002, p. 703)

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.

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).

The Marathoner Needs Both

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

Outline of Elements

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

Constructs

- Spirituality/ overarching.
- Marathoner/ how I navigate research.
- Flow/ possibilities...on the road/in the pool.
- Athletic identity/ shifts & integral to self-worth.
- Athletic injury/ mind-body & non-known leads to lack of flow.

How I use these 5 constructs

- Spirituality + Marathoner / Athletic Identity(Athletic Injury)
= Flow

Let Marathoner = X

- Spirituality +X / Athletic Identity(Athletic Injury)
= Flow

- Solve for X

Spirituality

- The purpose of my study is to explore the perceptions & experiences of marathoner flow, changing athletic identity, & athletic injury, relative to spirituality.
- Athletes see to their own spiritual health on an individual basis but experiences remains piecemeal.
- Cognitive, emotional, & intuitive means of knowing do not lead to spiritual awareness/knowledge.
- Importance of embracing rituals as spirituality embodiments.
- Inadequacy of words to exteriorize transcendence. We can know more than we can tell. An awareness/knowledge that cannot be fully codified & acquired without language.
- One's own lived experience of the mystery and awe of the phenomenon is a personal, subjective experience & a relationship with what some perceive as unknowable except in a spiritual way.
- Overarching cross-cultural interpretations.
- Provides psychological resilience for adversity like athletic injury.

Marathoner

- One who trains for and runs a 26.2 mile race.

Flow

- Being completely absorbed in the moment where action & spiritual awareness of the moment are combined with the paradox of control.
- Choosing to let the race come to the marathoner.
- Continuing as a personal, subjective experience unknowable in cognitive, emotional & intuitive ways.
- Identified as a spiritual awareness/knowledge.
- Part of the marathoner's athletic identity.
- Subjective & part of the marathoner's inner lived experience.

Athletic Identity

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

Athletic Injury

- Any specific distress that results in psychological strain.

Methodological Approach: A Design in Action

- Qualitative research design: Heuristic inquiry.

Moustakas's six phases of Heuristic Inquiry

- **Engagement** – interest.
- **Immersion** – living question.
- **Incubation** – doing without doing.
- **Illumination** – constructs.
- **Explication** – making the interior exterior.
- **Synthesis** – data/sonnets? linear & nonlinear narrative.
Researcher-participant uses intuition & serendipity to
decide which to use & when.

My Heuristic Journey

- Internal search.
- Nature/meaning of experience.
- Methods/procedures for investigation/analysis.
- The mystery of the 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.

○

(Moustakas, 1990, p. 5)

Sources of Data

- Self-dialogue.
- Self-interview questions.
- Journal entries. Journaling will include writing long-hand using both structural linear conventions like writing every day combined with nonlinear conventions like stream of consciousness.

Spirituality, Marathoner Flow, Athletic Identity, & Athletic Injury

- Ask for permission to do this study to discover how an injured marathoner describes & perceives these experiences.

Summary

- This is important to continue because...

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

Potential Applicability

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

Further Exploration

- Describe & explain the experience of the mystery of the phenomenon.
- Develop ways to operationalize mind-body integration in rehabilitation/healing, training, & racing.
- Engage confidently with athletes' spirituality.
- Implement findings regarding mind-body integration to observe outcomes when observing injured marathoners.
- Rather than having the goal of finishing or setting a personal record (PR) at the next marathon, the goal becomes the experience of flow.

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