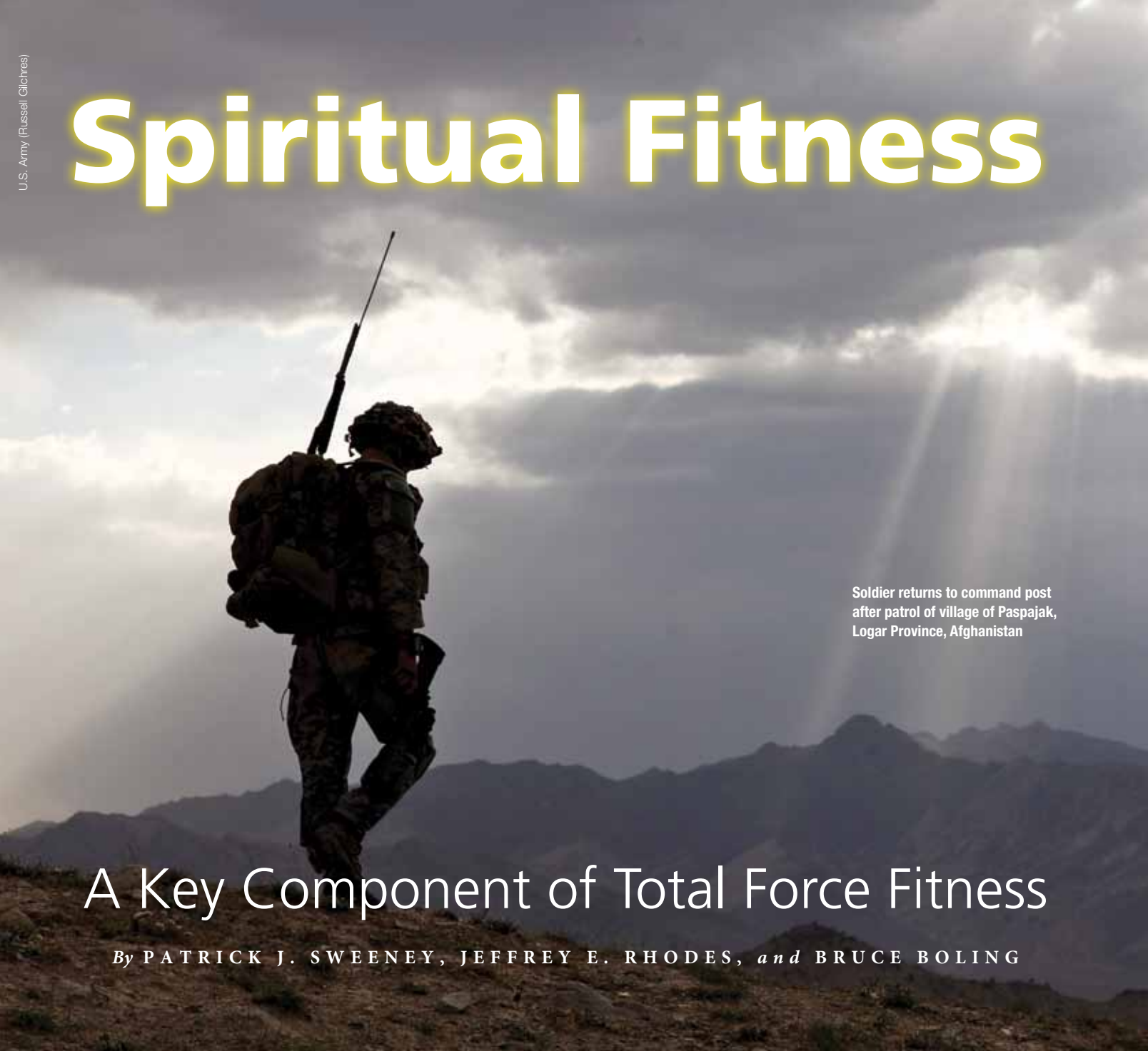


U.S. Army (Russell Gilchres)

Spiritual Fitness

Soldier returns to command post after patrol of village of Paspajak, Logar Province, Afghanistan

A Key Component of Total Force Fitness

By PATRICK J. SWEENEY, JEFFREY E. RHODES, *and* BRUCE BOLING

Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men. It is the spirit of the men who follow and of the man who leads that gains the victory.

—General George Patton

Commanders throughout history have understood the importance of the human spirit to overcoming challenges and great odds to achieve victory. General Patton's words highlight that the outcomes of battles and history often rest in the strength of spirit of Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Airmen. Leaders have the responsibility to facilitate the development of each member's human spirit to ensure he has the spiritual fitness necessary to accomplish the mission, bounce back from adversity, and make meaning out of his experiences.

The development of spiritual fitness also helps mitigate moral injury to Servicemembers by fostering the strength of will to behave

Colonel Patrick J. Sweeney, USA, is a Professor in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at the United States Military Academy. Dr. Jeffrey E. Rhodes, of Creative Computing Solutions, Inc., is contract support for the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury. Master Sergeant Bruce Boling, USAF, is assigned to 325th Operational Support Squadron, Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida.

U.S. Navy (Nicolas C. Lopez)

Sailors attend Easter sunrise service aboard USS *Carl Vinson*

in accordance with individual and organizational values. Moral injuries occur when Servicemembers perpetrate, fail to prevent, or bear witness to acts that transgress their values or beliefs. Such moral and ethical challenges can shatter an individual's beliefs about "the rightness of the world," degrade trust in leaders, and breed a sense of disillusionment and moral conflict.

A 10-year war on terror has stressed our forces and families to the point where members are bending and swaying under the pressures of multiple deployments and separation from family and friends. In an effort to address stress-related issues that the Armed Forces are facing and to enhance the effectiveness of the force, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) directed the creation of Total Force Fitness (TFF, pronounced *tough*). This program challenges Service leaders to reorient their thinking and training programs and to adopt a new holistic prevention paradigm to bolster military readiness and force preservation. Under this proposed paradigm, total fitness is more than just an appreciation for and development of members' physical prowess. The TFF concept encompasses eight domains: physical, medical, environmental, social (including family), behavioral, spiritual, psychological, and nutritional. The program also concentrates on bolstering the fitness of units, families, and communities. This article introduces a framework to assist Department of Defense (DOD) leaders and personnel in understanding and developing spiritual fitness.

Definitions

Before developing a common framework for understanding spiritual fitness, three terms need to be initially defined: *human spirit, spirituality,* and *spiritual fitness*. The following definitions are broad enough to include the diversity of spiritual practices in DOD and also precise enough to avoid ambiguity.

The *human spirit* is the essence and animating force of the individual. It is the deepest part of the self, which includes one's core values and beliefs, identity, purpose in life, vision for creating a meaningful life, knowledge and truth about the world (perspective), autonomy to lead one's life, connection with others, and the quest to realize potential. In this sense, the human spirit propels people forward to take on challenges to further growth, serves as a guide to determine what is right and wrong, serves as a source of courage and hope, and provides the strength of will to live with integrity and meet responsibilities. The development of the human spirit is about shaping the essence of character.[1]

Spirituality refers to the continuous journey people take to discover and develop their human spirit. It is the process of searching for the sacred in one's life; discovering who one is; finding meaning and purpose; establishing interconnectedness with others and, if one so believes, with the divine; and charting a path to create a life worth living. While the definitions of spirituality and religion are sometimes blurred, they are two distinct concepts. Spirituality is both a process and path people use to discover their inner selves and develop their human spirit. *Religion* refers to institutions that propose and promote specified belief systems. It is one approach people can use in the process of developing their spirit.[2]

Spiritual fitness refers to an individual's overall spiritual condition. A spiritually fit person has the ability to continuously gain understanding of who one is in terms of core values and identity; live in accordance with core values; find purpose and meaning in life; be open to and continuously seek education and experiences that broaden one's view of the world; manage thoughts, emotions, and behavior; be uplifted by strong connections with others; demonstrate the strength of will and resilience to persevere when faced with challenges and adversity; make meaning out of their experiences; and exercise the autonomy to create a meaningful life that will realize one's full potential.[3]

Domain of the Human Spirit Model

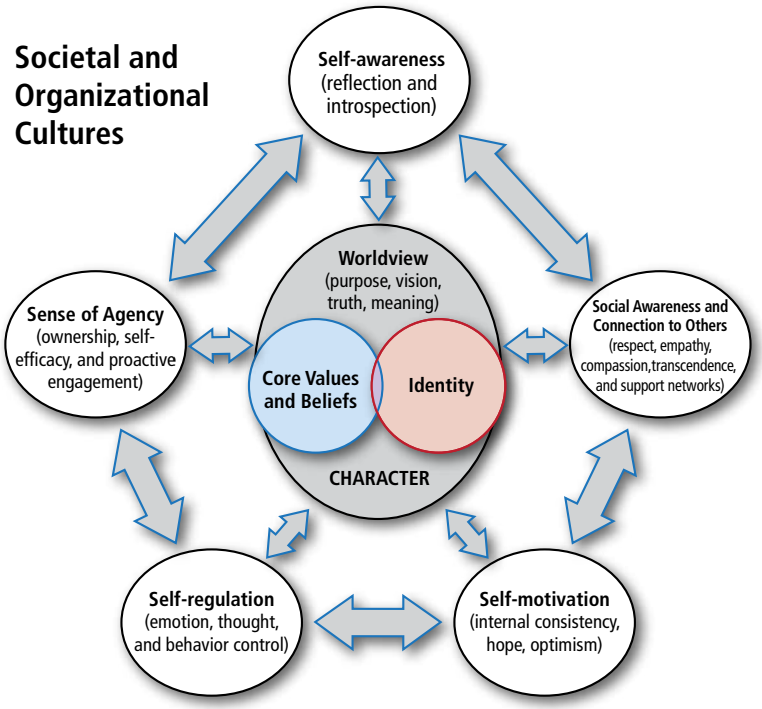
The domain of the human spirit model provides DOD personnel a common framework and language to understand and discuss human spirit development. The model was created by examining what develops when people engage in spiritual practices. By focusing on the psychological targets, the model goes beyond any particular means or approaches people use to develop their spirit to create a universal developmental model that is within the law. The domain of the human spirit consists of the psychological and social components depicted in the figure below.

These components are interrelated, and taken together they promote the development of the human spirit. The model provides leaders and mentors insights on how to best facilitate their own and others' development. A description of each component of the domain of the human spirit and its relevance to development follows.

Worldview consists of an individual's most central core values and beliefs, identity, character, and sense of purpose and meaning. Worldviews are the lenses people use to view and interpret events, determine how to act, and make meaning from their experiences. They are largely shaped through the socialization processes of the organizations that a person has been a member of, such as family, schools, teams, belief groups, communities, and military organizations. Servicemembers develop their worldviews by seeking out experiences such as overseas assignments, college courses, volunteering for nonprofits that serve the underprivileged, traveling, and seeking diversity in friends who challenge their current perspectives. A broad, complex worldview promotes openness to diversity and enhances individual adaptability to operate in dynamic and culturally diverse settings.[4] Worldview needs to be the central target of development in any program preparing leaders, Servicemembers, civilians, and family to meet the psychological and social demands of operating in dangerous environments, serving the Nation, and having loved ones serving away from home.[5]

Core values define who the person is and what the person stands for. They serve as a guide in determining right from wrong and appropriate behavior, especially in ambiguous and dynamic situations. Core values serve as a reservoir for a person to draw strength and courage to fulfill his duties and live with integrity. For Servicemembers, living daily by the mottos or the core values of their Service branches may be the most fundamental examples of practicing spirituality. Connecting to something beyond oneself is a central component of spirituality and the main theme for these mottos and values. The Air Force's core values—"Integrity first, Service before self, and Excellence in all we do"—explicitly stress the importance of putting service

Conceptualization of the Domain of the Human Spirit



Spiritual Fitness Outcomes

- Values-based Behavior
- Strength of Will
- Resilience
- Purpose and Meaning in Life
- Uplifting Relationships
- Openness and Acceptance
- Quest for Knowledge and Truth
- Enhanced Motivation to Leverage Skills to Realize Potential
- Greater Satisfaction and Commitment
- Increased Happiness

Adapted from Patrick J. Sweeney, Sean T. Hannah, and Don M. Snider, "The Domain of the Human Spirit," in *Forging the Warrior's Character: Moral Precepts from the Cadet Prayer*, ed. Don M. Snider and Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2008).

for the collective good before self-service. The Army's recruiting motto—"Army Strong"—implies that the collective body of all Soldiers is greater than the individual. The Navy core values—"Honor, Courage, and Commitment"—are all spiritual virtues that the Service asks its members to practice daily for the greater good of the unit and the Navy. And the Marine Corps motto—"Semper Fidelis"—demands its members to be "Always Faithful" to each other and the Corps. These mottos and core values share a basic tenet of spirituality: an individual understanding of and experience with that which transcends the self. This spiritual practice of fulfilling Service mottos and following core values supports a framework for managing daily unit demands, and provides a commitment for Service membership and mission accomplishment.[6]

Identity is a multifaceted psychological construct consisting of values, traits, knowledge, experiences, memories, and expectations that influence how a person views himself and his role in the world. Identity influences and controls the processing of any self-relevant information.[7] The following four facets provide DOD members a common identity: warrior, person of character, servant of the Nation, and global citizen.[8]

- *Warrior* is used to describe DOD members who view themselves as people who take on tough challenges, place duty first, complete assigned tasks, never quit or accept defeat, and never leave a fellow member in need. While each Service understands "warrior ethos" somewhat differently, once members integrate the Service's understanding of warrior ethos into their identities, they approach duties and living with a proactive, resilient, learning, and winning spirit.[9]
- A *person of character* is an individual who views himself as having the responsibility to seek the truth, decide what is right, and demonstrate the courage to act with integrity in all aspects of his life. The ideal state is to have each member of the DOD team perceiving himself as a person of character.[10]
- DOD members who view themselves as *servants of the Nation* foster the commitment necessary to step beyond self-interest to serve something greater. Contributing to the common good of the Nation and Service provides members with a sense of purpose and a way to make a difference with their lives, which provides a sense of meaning. This commitment to serve the citizens of the country also entails a sense of duty and a commitment with liability in terms of time, effort, and potential injury.
- Members who perceive themselves as *global citizens* not only take on the responsibility to serve and assist in making their local communities and the Nation better, but they also assume the responsibility to contribute to making the world a better place. This entails an active commitment to increase individual understanding of the issues facing the various levels of community they belong to and engage in activities to solve problems. Global citizens work to bring about the change they would like to see in their communities.

Character is shown through consistent moral and ethical actions for the purpose of maintaining congruence with individual and organizational values and beliefs. This

DOD (Linda Hosek)

Military family in play area at Warrior and Family Support Center, Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio

U.S. Air Force (Rachel Martinez)

Members of Air Force Special Tactics Squadron pray before starting 821-mile march to honor fallen comrade Tim Davis

integration of values and beliefs into self-identity assists in forming and strengthening character. DOD members' characters provide the moral compass to guide decisions and behavior, which is especially important when the potential for use of lethal force exists. They behave in a moral and ethical manner because to do otherwise would violate their sense of self. Thus, in all settings and situations within DOD, leaders and members with demonstrated character clearly establish the moral and ethical boundaries to ensure that operations are carried out within the law, and in combat settings, within the rules of engagement.

Providing Servicemembers the opportunity to serve and actually teaching *purpose and meaning* in serving is important in preparing and sustaining DOD members to meet the challenges of leading, operating in, and supporting operations in both dangerous and safe areas of operation. Purpose is a powerful motivational force that gets members to transcend self-interest and face the risks of injury or death in order to serve others. Core values linked with a sense of purpose provide a framework to find the strength of will to serve and make meaning out of adverse or traumatic experiences.

Self-awareness involves reflection and introspection, which enhance development of the human spirit. Through these processes, people gain insights into their most pressing questions about life: Who am I? What is my purpose in life? How do I create a life worth living? Who do I want to become? What can I believe in? How can I create a life that will make a difference and lead to happiness? And what happens after I die?[11] Answers to these introspective questions help individuals take responsibility for the development of their human spirit, form and shape their worldviews and characters, and create identities. Through dedicated reflection, people discover and build their human spirit. Reflection and introspection are important for people to make sense out of their own and others' experiences and, in the process, create new meaning and knowledge about themselves and the world. People use various activities to facilitate reflection and introspection such as journaling, listening to music, working out, sitting in a quiet location, meditating, hiking, watching the sun rise or set, and biking. The type of activity or location is not important: the keys are solitude and quiet time to reflect and assess the inner life. Through self-awareness, people gain the ability to chart and focus their quest to develop their human essence.[12]

Sense of agency means that people assume responsibility for the development of human spirit and that they have confidence they can successfully guide this quest. Agency empowers individuals by providing a sense of control over the development of their spirit.[13] DOD organizations can better facilitate a sense of agency by providing access to various resources including formal education opportunities that expose Servicemembers to topics relating to the development of the human spirit, traditional and online libraries that are well resourced with diverse materials, access to chaplains, and free use of spiritual and human development centers. Leaders must understand and appreciate that spiritual development is an individual journey and that there are multiple paths to developing one's spirit.[14]

Self-regulation is the ability to monitor, understand, assess, and control one's thoughts, goals, emotions, and behavior, or the ability to lead the self.[15] Self-regulation is a prerequisite to practice integrity, authentic leadership, and development as both a leader and a person.[16] There are three components to self-regulation: *standards, monitoring*, and *willpower*. Standards consist of individual core values, identity expectations produced by various facets (character, servant of the Nation, and global citizen), and the organizational ethical guidelines and core values.[17] Monitoring is simply individuals watching their behavior and comparing it against their standards. Willpower is the ability to change behavior to persevere in living by a cultural standard or by achieving goals. Willpower is a limited resource that gets depleted with use and fatigue.[18] Self-regulation plays a pivotal role in allowing DOD members to meet unique challenges, particularly in dangerous and high stress contexts.

Self-motivation refers to the ability to motivate oneself to act with integrity even in situations of risk and to persist toward one's vision of creating a life worth living even when faced with challenges. DOD members want to continuously expand internal sources of motivation to drive their actions and quests to develop their spirit. An individual's belief that he has the ability to control the development of his spirit also enhances internal motivation. Another important source of internal motivation comes from the integration of core values into individual identities. People are motivated to behave congruent with their values in order to preserve their sense of self.[19] Striving to achieve a *worthy purpose* is also a powerful internal motivating force that influences people to act in accordance with their individual and organization values. In DOD operations, members' self-motivation impacts strength of will, physical and moral courage, resilience to stress and adversity, meaning-making, and trust development. The strength of members' will or spirit rests in their motivation to act in a manner consistent with their core values and beliefs, identity, and the achievement of their purpose.[20]

Social awareness and connection to others refers to an individual's realization that relationships with others play an essential role in the development of the human spirit. To harness the developmental power of relationships, an individual needs to have the skills and abilities necessary to connect with people in a positive manner. These basic social skills and abilities include respect, empathy and compassion, transcendence of self-interests, effective communication, and trust of others.[21] Positive connections with others are critical for development and social resilience.[22] Support networks are critical in assisting individuals in meeting life's psychological and social challenges, especially when leading and operating in dangerous and stressful contexts, as well as in managing stress and promoting resilience. The bonds that unite people in social networks are based on trust. Social support networks also serve as powerful motivational forces to encourage Servicemembers to behave courageously and honorably.

The journey to develop one's spirit is influenced by multiple levels: *individual self-development, relationship networks*, and *organizational cultures*. Most people's worldviews are shaped by their families, philosophical or faith groups, schools, teams, communities, and society. Groups possess, communicate, and hold members accountable to a set of common values, norms, assumptions about how to operate and function, collective identity, and purpose—or culture.[23] Living and working in various organizational cultures creates social realities that influence members' perceptions of what is right and wrong, what the values are to lead and live by, how we should treat each other, what provides meaning to work and life, and what are noble purposes to pursue. Leaders can promote organizational culture to assist in reinforcing each member's development of their worldviews and the various psychological attributes that support these views.

social support networks serve as powerful motivational forces to encourage Servicemembers to behave courageously and honorably

Techniques for Leaders to Encourage Spiritual Fitness

Promote Organizational Culture. Clearly communicate core organizational values and purposes and discuss how conducting business by these values enhances both the organization and its people. An organization that serves a higher purpose and has a moral and ethical culture has the potential to positively influence members' worldviews, especially concerning purpose, values, and identity.

Ask Reflective Questions. In daily interactions, ask questions to get members to think about and question how they view the world to include assumptions, values, purpose, life vision, liability associated with serving, emotional reactions, behavior, and morality. These daily reflective prompts have the potential to enhance members' self-awareness, agency, self-regulation, and worldviews. Conducting reviews after significant organizational events is an opportunity to raise reflective questions. In units that apply lethal force, prompt members to reflect on how they would make sense out of taking another human's life, the potential of losing their own lives, and giving orders that result in the loss or injury of a group member.

Model Respect. Assume that all humans have value and that value systems are honored by understanding and learning from people who hold different beliefs and practices. Respecting others and being open to diversity creates opportunities for DOD members to experience and share different perspectives that encourage reflection and the expansion of worldviews.

Encourage Meaning-making. Promote opportunities to share perspectives and rationale for making decisions, especially if the decisions have moral or ethical implications. Sharing perspectives exposes members to a different perspective, reinforces how the organization's values are put into action, and encourages open communication. These meaning-making sessions are good forums for exposing members to multiple perspectives to help them learn and make meaning out of their experiences.

Empower and Challenge. Provide members experiences that will challenge their perspectives and skills. Overseas assignments, temporary duty in another country, working with members from another culture, and working on a diverse

team are opportunities to broaden members' worldviews.

Network Connection Checks. Establish uplifting relationships with group members and encourage subordinate leaders to do the same. Regularly check to ensure all members are connected to the group's social network. When operating in dangerous areas, social support provides members with strategies to manage stress, make meaning out of their experiences, sustain perseverance, bolster resilience, and promote post-adversity growth.

Offer Resources. Provide members with access to and time to use resources such as spiritual well-being centers, chaplains, enhancement performance centers, and places to practice their beliefs. That way, leaders can facilitate the development of subordinates' human spirit.

Conclusion

The spiritual fitness of DOD members is a critical component of force readiness. The domain of the human spirit model provides DOD with a common framework and language to think about, discuss, and take purposeful action to enhance members' spiritual fitness within the law. Individuals can use the model to assess their own spiritual fitness and to design plans to enhance the development of their spirits. It empowers members and leaders as active participants in strengthening the spirit of the force. Leaders have an array of simple techniques they can use daily. Promoting spiritual fitness is a vital component of the DOD TFF initiative and fully complements growth in the other seven domains. **JFQ**

NOTES

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Strategic Forum 277
Grand Strategy and International Law

Nicholas Rostow examines U.S. grand strategy—the calculated relationship between means and large ends—and the need to develop and implement it in an international legal context. The historical scope of this paper is wide, and the author draws cogent conclusions about the importance of international law and a state's power and values, with examples from Thucydides' Melian dialogue, Napoleon's total war, George Washington's Farewell Address, the Monroe Doctrine, the death of U.S. isolationism at Pearl Harbor, and how nuclear weapons helped define the Nation's vital interests and reinforced respect for basic legal principles of international conduct. Since World War II, international law has never been far from U.S. grand strategy because it has helped avoid a nuclear confrontation, preserve the balance of power in Eurasia, and prevent another world war.

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