

Faith in the Core!!

Inner core strength could be seen as faith, spirituality, and grace. After all, it is spirituality that is at the center of our being and faith that gets us through all difficulty be it training for our sport or the trials of life in general. An ice skater must work hard to have centered spins. Otherwise, the spin flies out of control, wobbles and bobbles, the skater gets nauseously dizzy, and often ends on the end rather than on a graceful edge. If our spirituality isn't at the center of our life and our life lacks faith, our life spins out of control as well. Faith provides us with the grit to bear with training, the grit to focus and improve, and the grit to pick up after a fall or a loss. Faith is hard to define but we see it everyday ...this depth of something extra that comes not only from training on this and that particular move or skill but something deep inside the athlete...something from the heart: Grace.

To nurture this grace in us, we have to turn to our spiritual sides and discover a faith in a higher being: God. This spiritual aspect of ourselves has to be nurtured and it takes as much practice to be spiritually fit as it does to be physically fit. To be a true physical giant, however, depends on a solid spiritual base. To succeed in our sport and gain fullness in our lives, we need to nurture a healthy faith in God.

Building Faith: Matthew 7:7 reads "Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you."

Ask for it. "God, if you are there, I open myself up to your Truth –I'll let you take it from here." God never turns down a request like this. Ask for faith to believe. Ask and it will be given. Like lightening and thunder or like a slow germinating seed...it will come.

Seek it. Learn about God. Learn about your faith. Attend church as often as you can. Read the Bible. Join a Bible study. Wonder about God, struggle with God if you need to. Talk to others with faith. Talk to others who seem to be spiritually centered. Ask them what God has to do with their successes or failures. How does God fit into the fabric of their lives? Learn about virtue and live virtuously.

Knock. Pray to God. Prayer is conversation with God. Talk to him. If you are a beginner, it may seem awkward – like talking to the air. Do it anyways. Remember first learning your sport. If the desire is there and you practice, grace and faith will come as sure as the skill came by practicing your sport. Pray everyday. Pray that God watch over you as you practice, study, or compete. Pray he help your competitors too ;). Pray he helps you learn and do your best. Sometimes, just sit quietly and listen. See if God has something to say. Try to build up to an hour of prayer a day.

God gives us free will. We can freely choose to invite him into our lives. He does not force himself in, he is a gentleman and waits for us. Often, that is why we don't notice him there. We haven't asked. Faith in God literally adds grace to our lives...and people can see it- in our actions and in our performances. Walking through life and training in a difficult sport can be lonely, bitter, and full of sacrifice even amidst success and joys. Walking it with God will add purpose to the suffering and exaggerate the joys! A faith in God creates a sounding board for seeking what is most important in life...your purpose and life's meaning. Whether that purpose includes a gold medal or a gracious defeat, walking that path with God will be walking gracefully with purpose in Faith.

Matthew 6:33 states, "But **seek ye first the kingdom of God**, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." ...