

Resistance Is Good for You and Your Relationship

Have you ever heard about resistance training? “Resistance training is simply a program of exercise, which uses one or more types of training system. Methods include exercises using body weight, such as sit-ups, press-ups and dips. Free weights and machines may also feature in resistance work.” It includes lifting weight and lifting your body. It also includes any force or pressure against the body that you must resist.

It’s important to note that resistance training develops endurance. This is unlike power lifting which is designed for building muscles. Resistance training is great for the body. “Resistance” is also great for emotional development. Those who read the Holy Scriptures would know that James 4:7 says, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” In the Bible, the Greek for resistance is “anthistemi” which means “to set one’s self against, to withstand, resist, oppose.”

It is imperative to understand that if there was no resistance, we would not fully develop. Our minds would be stagnant. Our relationships would be dormant. Our businesses would be sleeping. There would be little creativity and spontaneity. We often think that the wind at our backs is what really propels us forward. In reality, it is the wind in front of us—that force that’s trying to prevent us from going forward, that builds our stamina to really move forward. Without opposition there is no growth.

PHYSICAL BENEFITS OF RESISTANCE

Several years ago, I came across a research that stated, “Resistance training is also effective at increasing bone density, and in fact, may be more effective than aerobic training.” The research also indicated that “Resistance training offers several cardiovascular benefits. It can improve heart disease risk factors, it is helpful in cardiac rehabilitation after a heart attack, and it can improve heart failure.”

Here is more exciting news, especially for the elderly. “A small study out of the Tufts University Human Nutrition Research Center looked at resistance training in 16 older women with congestive heart failure. These women developed greater muscle strength and increased their walking distance in 6 minutes by 50 meters, but measures of heart function were unchanged. USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University in Boston enrolled ten frail, 90+-year- old nursing home residents in an eight-week high- intensity resistance training program. Nine of them finished the program, and those nine experienced an average gain in strength of 174%. Their thigh muscles increased in size by 9%, and their walking speed increased by 48%, leading the researchers to suggest that even the very oldest among us may benefit significantly from resistance training.” Wow! That’s wonderful. I have hope in my old age.

Here are some important facts about muscle memory and resistance: “Scientists have discovered that there are a large number of internal brain structures which work together with the input and output brain structures to form fleeting images in the mind. Using these images, we learn to interpret input signals, process them, and formulate output responses in a deliberate, conscious way. . . After a while, the "seeing- thinking-doing" gradually becomes "seeing-doing" because your muscles seem to "know" and "remember" just what to do. What you're learning now is speed, i.e. how to perform the task carefully and quickly. That's muscle memory. Keep this point in mind when it comes to emotional muscle memory.

RESISTANCE TRAINING FOR THE SOUL

Physical resistance is great for the body. As I alluded earlier, emotional and psychological resistance has great benefits for the soul. This kind of resistance is done by facing challenges and not avoiding them. It is looking straight in to the face of discouragement and obstacles and using them as gateways to opportunities and not shut doors of disappointments and despair. We also know that no good marriage is free from pain, stupidity,

discouragement, miscommunication, distortions, etc. These are to be used to enhance growth not to stagnate it.

Let me first share about spiritual resistance. Writer Susan Brinkmann shares this about temptation. “Temptations are the “weights” in our spiritual weight room. By employing the proper resistance, we strengthen our will and become better able to withstand them. There is one major difference between our spiritual and physical weight room. In the spiritual gym, it is God’s grace that gives us the strength to overcome our weaknesses, not our own efforts.” Notice what she shares about emotional muscle memory. “The simple explanation is that our brains memorize passageways from stimulus to response at nearly unperceivable speeds. What is also obvious is that once the electro-chemical coding takes place and becomes entrenched, it is very hard to dislodge.” The more we resist Satan’s temptations the more we develop spiritual, emotional, and muscle memory. We have heard the song “Climbing up the rough side of the mountain.” The truth is the rough side is better for climbing because the roughness provides places to put your feet and hands to climb higher. The smooth side might have no “roughness” and appears to be easier to maneuver, but when you slip there is nothing to hold on to.

From an emotional and spiritual point of view, the smooth side of the mountain represents a life without challenges, pains, or difficulties—no resistance. No pain. No gain. If we do not resist we will not grow. Without resistance, there is no character development. Without resistance, we die emotionally and spirituality. It seems to be natural to pull away from pain in our lives. The most successful people move toward the pain.

MARRIAGE

The most successful marriages are not free from pain. Successful couples are those couples who move toward the pain. Most divorces could have been avoided if the individuals used the pain for growth and not for poison. One great tip for couples is when a partner experiences emotional pain because of the behavior or words of the other partner, it is imperative to think that the one causing the pain really did not want to cause the pain. It was not done intentionally. Say to yourself, “Let me try to understand why my partner behaved that way or said those painful words.” That’s resisting. The happiest couples have learned to move toward the frustration and disappointments (resistance) and have developed emotional muscles that help them to successfully navigate the difficult routs through marriage. This must be done by both partners in the relationship. When it is only one partner resisting the pain correctly, this often makes division inevitable. Save your relationship; resist together. Get into the gym of marriage and start building endurance together.

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