

An exercise in motivation

Sad truths point to need for more visits to Campus Rec



Sitting in church yesterday, my over-productive mind began a-wanderin'. I don't think I registered about half of what Pastor Larry was saying to us (so sorry, Larry).

I was thinking instead about my ass. Oh yes, my ass. I was sitting in that holy sanctuary thinking about my rear end when I should have been concentrating on scripture.

Actually, it wasn't only my behind that was taking over my brain. It was my stomach and my hips, too. I think my ankles even crept in there and took up some space.

Why was I consumed by thoughts of myself when I should have been thinking of selflessness and good deeds and Holy, Holy, Holy? Because of what I was wearing. (Don't worry, there's logic to all of this.)

I thought about what I was wearing because, in fact, it was not what I intended to be wearing. I couldn't wear what I wanted to because it didn't quite fit anymore.

Now, if not being able to fit into a favorite piece of clothing doesn't get you down, I don't know what does. There's something very frustrating about not being able to wear half of your wardrobe. I think maybe it's the fact that you can't wear half of your wardrobe.

So yes, the aforementioned has recently become a problem for me. Existing on "food" that is pre-cooked/frozen/delivered/beer is certainly not a good way to try to live a healthy lifestyle.

It would probably do me a lot of good to borrow someone's four-food-group-conscious mom to take with me to the store. That way I'd at least be sure to stock my cupboards with sustenance that's good for me.

Unfortunately, there probably aren't a whole lot of moms out there willing to spend an hour with me (I really don't know how mine does it), so I'm gonna have to take care of that one on my own.

The other thing I need to take some gal-darned responsibility for is exercise.

Oooh, it hurts just saying it. Know that I'm hanging my head when I tell you that I didn't go to the Campus Recreation Center last year. Ever. At all.

But hey, I wasn't a total slug. I rode my bike to class (nearly) every day and even took it to the trail every once and a while. One time I even did crunches in my residence hall room.

Everyone knows, though, that one needs more than just a sporadic stint of exercise to maintain the buff bod that most of us are hoping for. For some reason, that's just never really registered with me.

I have a problem with getting too pumped up to work out and get into shape. By this, I mean that I have a tendency to get very worked up about a work-out regimen and stick with it for all of about 2.7 minutes.

It's not that I plan it this way. I do set goals, and some of them are even realistic. I usually plan to go to Campus Rec about three or four times a week and give myself an hour there. But after a couple of those weeks, the amount of time I spend at that mecca of fitness dwindles drastically.

Now, this is very frustrating because I do have this great desire to be healthy. I want to be a lean, mean fitness machine, and I am quite aware that this takes work.

But I, being an average, normal college student, have a natural aversion to work. I just don't like it. We don't go together well.

Working hard at anything takes a certain sense of motivation, which I seem to have lost somewhere along the way. (I think it was in that intro to anthropology class I took sophomore year.) In the beginning of my college career, motivation was oozing out of my navel.

That's what I need now. No, not necessarily anything oozing from me, but a great big fatty slice of the big M. Once I get that, I'll be sure to get back on track in the exercise department.

So I've been thinking about how to get motivation, and I've come up with a couple of ideas.

I could ask friends to shake their heads in disgust and throw things at me whenever they see me on campus. This would create a fantastic sense of guilt and shame, prompting me to find comfort in the nice people at Campus Rec. I'm not sure if I'd spend more time working out or crying, though.

OK, even better, I could hire someone to do

that for me on a regular basis. (*No, not go to the gym but to give me the guilt.*) I've heard that Radu is really good at that. Oh, wait, I don't think I have the extra \$.75 to call information for his number.

Maybe I should just get some random psychotic off the street to physically chase me to Campus Rec. The running in terror alone would be more exercise than I get most days.

Perhaps the best thing to do would be to become a self-motivator. Yes indeed, this has to be the only solution for me.

This way, I'm the only one who can make myself feel cruddy for not following through on my work-out schedule, I don't

get anything thrown at me and I don't have to spend a thousand bucks on a trainer. (A thousand bucks on a trainer, my foot. Everyone knows that I need that money for parking.)

If I can't quite figure out how to get started, I'm sure there are books on this somewhere. If you know of any good ones, let me know. Maybe I'll find the motivation to read them sometime.

So here I go, off to the gym, on my way to a healthy new me. Yep, I'm going. I'm walkin'. Just watch me walk over there. Any time now. Any time ...

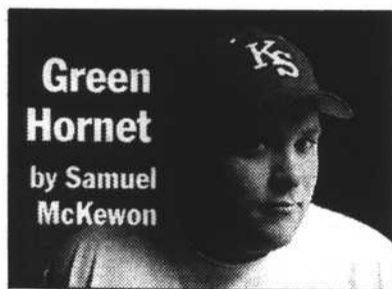


MATT HANEY/DN

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Organized chaos

A few bad apples shouldn't tarnish religious groups' reputations



The easiest target on campus: gays, drug users? Nah, I'd say Christians.

And do some of them deserve it, for pushing their beliefs so hard and trying to change what they so obviously believe is an unjust and decrepit world?

Sometimes, I think they might.

But every once in a while, we shove too many people into one category without looking at what's really going on. Christians are among the most stereotyped, simply because they're easy to stereotype and so often see their hardline peers put their foot in their mouth.

Such is the case with the group Champions for Christ, a sports-related unit built to promote the word of God in professional, collegiate and high school sports.

When the phrase "building better disciples" shows up on their Web site, I get worried. When I find out that Curtis Enis, a Chicago Bears running back, quit the group because they were always hitting him up for money and trying to brainwash him, that worried me, too.

I've never been one to believe that sports and religion mix. God, I'd say, simply doesn't care who wins or loses in athletic contests. He never has.

But over the years, sports and religion have

become more and more intertwined. Groups like Fellowship for Christian Athletes have generated a massive following around the nation. Champions for Christ sets up big-time sports camps with names like A. C. Green and Mark Brunell attached to them. This isn't going away.

For a long time, it seemed like such a negative thing. Anymore, a reporter asks an athlete a question, and the subject turns to God, wholly skipping the point. It's always the winners that do it, too. If they win, well, it was because of God.

Rarely, if ever, have I seen a loser say it was because of God, or more accurately, that God's will dictated they would lose this particular game. My favorite was boxer Evander Holyfield, who was told by God he would knock Lennox Lewis out in the third round of their heavyweight title fight. It never happened.

Or how about Demetrius Underwood, a 1999 draft pick of the Minnesota Vikings who said he was torn between football and the ministry and thus left the Vikings with part of his bonus money, holed up in a Philadelphia hotel - not telling anyone he was there, including his family - finally to give himself up, officially leave the Vikings, then sign with the Miami Dolphins a few weeks later. Yeah, right.

This list, from the Atlanta Falcons' Eugene Robinson, a pastor who was caught soliciting a prostitute before the 1999 Super Bowl, to Deion Sanders who changes his mind on the subject every 20 minutes, goes on and on.

Often, way too often, we affiliate groups like FCA and Champions for Christ with these wayward athletes when we should not. These groups, and others like it, preach the right kind of ideas, the basic ideas that Christianity is founded on and how to apply them to sports.

In my phone conversation with Dave Jamerson, former NBA player and president of Champions for Christ, I learned that associations like these get grouped with bad-acting athletes who are off on their own.

Jamerson was one of "those players in college that said the Lord's Prayer before games and never knew what it meant." He figures that these days, about 50 percent of the athletes who publicly thank God aren't really doing it out of a love for God but rather as a sort of fad.

Not a bad fad, Jamerson said, because any glorification of God can't be all bad.

But it can turn bad if the athlete turns out to be a bad apple, spoiling the rest who have put God into their sports lives.

"Situations like that can hurt us," Jamerson said. "I have players that come up to me and ask 'Hey Dave, what should I say when a reporter asks a question about the game?'"

"I always tell them, answer the question about the game. You don't have to work God into every answer. It has to be sincere."

What Jamerson points out, and what he's absolutely right about, is that the base of the relationship with God has to be a personal one. Say whatever in public, but live it, too. It's what Jamerson's group preaches in their sports camps of which there are four for girls and four for boys.

Jamerson said the camps are national, and only about 5 percent of it is devoted to religion, while the other 95 percent is a high-quality camp staffed by professional stars. It's open to anyone, but mostly Christian kids attend, Jamerson said. One Jewish boy went to the basketball camp and loved it.

"His mother was worried," Jamerson said. "But he had a blast while he was there, and he's

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coming back.”

Stories like those that involve Champions for Christ and FCA always get pushed to the back burner, if only because of their louder, more defamatory mates who seem on a seek-and-destroy mission for all that is not holy.

Jamerson and others - like NU Receivers Coach Ron Brown, who is active in such groups - are the ones worth listening to, if you choose to hold those beliefs.

In a sense, Christianity and sports do mix, because, as one Husker football player said, "God gave me these abilities. It's my job to show what he's done for me."

I can buy that as an honest, sincere answer. It's often said that anything organized corrupts the individual. It's a phrase often used with religion. Not always, I say. Sometimes, the individual taints the cause.

All of us, including occasionally attacked fundamentalist Christians, need to learn that lesson. It's one thing that Champions for Christ teaches and it's worth remembering.

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