

**DETRAINING
THE BODY**

**DETRAINING
THE MIND**



*An experience and perspective on
training, our personal well-being and
nature.*

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How do we enjoy the body, the tiredness, the movement?

What is our limiting paradigm?

Learning to learn?

Power what seemed impossible?

Philosophy as a fresh mentality?

Learning from psychological and physical injuries?

How to use a symbolic and imaginative framework?

The game as wisdom of maturity?

How to express our potential?

Nature as a kaleidoscope for our mind?

Learning to suffer, to fail and to be afraid?

The rest movement?

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First and foremost

I am neither psychologist, nor religious, nor theologian, nor philosopher, nor professional sportsman. This means that I explore in what I write as one explores who observes himself. I studied three years of Anthropology and finished a degree in Civil Protection and Emergencies (Integral Management of Socio-natural Disasters) and specific training in Humanitarian Aid and Logistics, sustainable development and circular economy, etc. I dedicated a few years to volunteering and working with rural communities. I am a Mountain Guide, Divemaster and some other qualifications that make it seem that we know a lot.

The true matrix of what I write comes from having walked, traveled, learned many disciplines, participated in groups and read a good number of books. Above all, from having made a ton of mistakes and blunders as well as the ones I continue to make. So, there is no big difference between you and me, I just sit down to write this because I like to write and share something that I think can be interesting.

Why

It is often easier to build a house from the ground up with new materials than to renovate an old home. It is not easy to renovate, to redesign our interior space and our facade, it is not easy to resignify. However, the path of "**remodeling**" has an exceptional value in spite of the effort, or rather, thanks to it. Above all, the path of renovations and drawings and ideas make it an incredible game. ***Why then, to enjoy the path of continuous training as part of our life.***

Specifically, I don't want to sell that you can set yourself on fire and start from scratch. It doesn't work like that. We have genetic, cultural aspects, an educational process, a construction of our body, a way of thinking, a mind with a historical line. By reading the Tao Te Ching or going on a yoga retreat for a month, we are not going to be born again in every aspect of life, especially when I am talking about physical development. These "revelatory" experiences may help us to listen to ourselves and become aware, to refresh ourselves, to change perspectives, to see the nature of certain things, but when we return home and to a series of socio-environmental structures, not all the repairs will take care of themselves. It sounds tiring, but it is a source of tranquility: we can intervene in this disconnection with our body, with sports, with nature. We have a voice, a vote and direct action.

There is some factor or perspective that we can set on fire by certain revelation, those casual *Satoris* that gives us the experience of life. But let's put our feet on the ground, the rest is a lot of habits, effort and processes that need patience, some healthy discipline, creativity and love. Thinking only about the result would be madness, suicide. And I think I see many times a society with suicidal tendencies. Productivity, blind goal and sacrifice without conscience are direct shots to the joy of a path. Ironically on the path we find those micro-keys to true growth. That is why it is necessary to **unlearn** certain issues in order not to continue using materials that in the long run will fail us.

Another big part of the attention will be not to become engrossed in the elements, to avoid obsessive fanaticism with something that suddenly seems enlightening, for a technique, or for a book, a diet, a concept, or whatever. It is just another tendency to magically look for the key to everything in one thing, no more than a convenient and quasi-survival reaction for that mind attached to old ways. No, what we want to do is a little more... surpassing. ***We have another reason: to offer other perspectives of improvement and growth.***

Unlearning does not mean throwing everything away. We love to think of ourselves as minimalists and detached doing this, but the years and perspectives teach us that this is also nothing more than an immature reaction. There is much of what we have already learned as well as our ***way of doing*** that can be recycled and re-signified.

More than one, like me, will have been educated in rigorous discipline. One day one finds oneself in crisis and all this loses meaning, but surely sometime later we will reconcile ourselves with that value that is there and that we violently discarded. We recover that material inscribed in our education, **discipline**, and we apply it in a much more interesting and attractive way.

Imagine throwing a pile of iron grilles from the windows of a house into a dump truck because it suddenly seems old-fashioned. It wouldn't take two days in a Walmart to realize that we threw away a very valuable and high-quality material, compared to all the showy and aesthetic, but cheap stuff that is sold in quantity nowadays. It was necessary to refresh, to rethink it, to detach ourselves from a possible symbolic charge and emotional reaction. It was not necessary to throw everything away just like that. Not always.

One last metaphor more... how many times have we reacted and discarded the teachings of an older sister, father or mother, only to admit years later silently and alone that they were right. We missed the message and the value that had been instilled in us, we discarded it in that brutal process of individualization. This needs no guilt. It is a perceiving, an observing, a

looking back and looking ahead. We had to be wrong, it had to be that way, but without that observation, there is nothing. Headless chickens. ***A third reason then: to reconcile, to recycle, to reinvent ourselves.***

So, let's keep this in mind: a good reform, a good **detraining** process seeks to be **fresh, sustainable and holistic.**

Fresh in terms of light and original. Like when you get out and feel the breeze after a dip in a lake. Original as from the origin, going back to the origin. Being fresh, creative and original does not mean throwing everything away, nor does it mean being a compulsive accumulator of routines and knowledge. Freshness is critical thinking and an attentive look. Lift the chin, relax the shoulders with a correct posture, inhale, exhale, observe the movement happening.

Sustainable in terms of using correctly what we have looking forward, preserving and taking care of ourselves. And here I have a header phrase:

The fire that illuminates much is quickly consumed. From dear Fëanor, in "The Lord of the Rings". A friend who lives in Patagonia once told it to me when I came back destroyed from several snowboarding missions in Chile and saw me on the verge of *Burnout*. Read it again. You don't have to have camped that much to understand how important its meaning is. When we were kids, we threw leaves on the fire that gave a lot of light, but they didn't heat, they just crackled, they made noise. The noble hearth, the fire I trust, is wiser, it illuminates what it must illuminate and lasts if it has to last. That is the fire that saves your life and feeds you, that maintains the motivation of a group, that makes the tired ones look away and gives them tenacity. It does not need to walk with pretensions and outbursts, it is passionate in its essence, in its quality embers, not in the light show.

Holistic in terms of each part as a whole. We focus on the elements, but we do not lose a broad view. An appreciation that embraces every aspect of us and in each element, we discover the *Holos*, the whole. This is not an incorrect use of the word, but I am referring to the true philosophical concept of Holistic. Under this approach we are not interested in simply adding parts. There is more to it.

You must tear down parts of a building to restore it, and the same goes for a life that has no spirit.

Rumi

Learning by doing.

From the beginning to the end, I propose not to forget this. To *learn by doing* rather than by wandering mentally in questions and in planning and verbiage that immobilize us.

It is only necessary to take care of the other person if it is a team sport or if it is a risky activity. *Learning by doing* in an intimate relationship with ourselves, of respect and affection, altruism and detachment. It is a game of errors, of mistakes, of insurmountable walls that make us redirect us in the mental labyrinth.

Learning by doing is an old phrase, from the past. From the transmission of crafts, arts and skills from generation to generation. Learning by doing is lived, not understood. You can analyze and decorate and put a thousand factors and ideas on the table as we do with love and relationships, but there is no other way than having the experience in the flesh, that shared experience, that path that appears when you start walking. If you do not empathize with this, you will hardly be able to receive something of value to your growth and this is not wrong, there are many ways to Rome.

It is not bad to remember that people with a good critical capacity, such as several Greek and Roman philosophers, spoke of learning by doing. A concept that in the Buddhist East is simply the texture of spiritual experience. There is no need to point it out, it is obvious, it is there.

You learn by doing, because even if you think you know, you won't know for sure until you try.

Sophocles

It happens in sports disciplines that one teaches someone some move, or trick, or technical challenge. Suddenly the trainee finds that it was easy, much easier than he thought. It doesn't take long to say that it's not so difficult then, all that incredible stuff that motivated him. The mind uses what was learned along with it to feed misconceptions that are sometimes fascinatingly far from possible reality. That's a clumsy imagination, but that's okay. It happens to all of us. We get a set of *muscle ups* and think we're going to unlock all the calisthenics tricks. We do a snowboard *backflip*, and we think we're ready to fly ten meters.

More than once I've taken a colleague to do a snowboarding descent that they didn't know about and that I knew was at the limits of their possibilities, they thought they were not ready. When we got to the bottom, the same thing always happened to me. I hear the: *Ah, but it wasn't that hard. I can be at forty degrees of incline calmly; I was not afraid.* It is not necessary

to say much, one laughs. Of course they can, but you don't buy ready-made dessert all the time either.

To ski that, we learned by doing a lot. We learned what mountain orientation, what day, what schedule, what to say, what not to say, what it means that it gives us security that there is someone next to us who has more experience and who makes micro-decisions. All that makes that moment possible or not. Five more degrees of inclination are achievable from the technical aspect, but the human being is much more than a technical aspect. The miles of travel, the suitcase of mistakes is what teaches us this, not the fanciful ideas.

The most important thing is not what we believe, but the simple fact that we did something tangible, we learn by doing. Our body incorporates it into its matrix. Thinking that we know it is not enough. If it is so easy or so possible, do it. Don't tell me you can do it. You must expose yourself to error, to the silence of the one who acts, to the muscle that flexes, to the critic eyes that analyzes, to the psychology of action, to the mind that says enough or go ahead. Who does, concretizes.

One day I had to paddle for twelve hours in a river, with a headwind. The river was going down in theory, but I was going up. I didn't think I could. I just had to do it because as soon as I slowed down, the current pushed me upstream, a madness, a paraphernalia, a nightmare. I had no shores to rest on for very long stretches, as there was quicksand on one side and reeds on the other. I neither said nor thought I could. The situation meant that I didn't even think about whether I could or not. The only thing left to do was to paddle, paddle by paddle, hour by hour, error by error, breath by breath. Reality unfolds and one is attracted to it, we do not build it just like that. The sea finally appeared, and I sat on the sand, excited. I learned by doing, I wouldn't make a ton of mistakes again, but I learned by doing, it's in our veins now. We all go through experiences like this at times in our lives, words can't describe them.

Learning by doing. Learning by doing. Learning by doing.

Let's go again.

For whom and how

I do not write only for high performance athletes or for elite mountaineers or snowboarders, but I write for **any individual** with a sporting curiosity who wants to **explore** his or her mind and body, anyone with an interest in all types of movement. I believe that this material could be useful to both.

- People who want to look good
- People seeking relaxation through sports and training
- People who want to get close to the outdoors.
- People who play sports at an amateur level and want to improve their skills.
- Professional athletes
- Sportsmen and others
- Anyone in need of new perspectives.
- Anyone who wants to feel healthier (healthy as psychophysical and social health, I am not going to be describing macronutrients or the thousand sciences).

I have a healthy obsession with how we learn what we learn, and how we have forgotten to enjoy the journey. I am fascinated by both the infinite access to audiovisual information and experience, as well as the disconnection from the deep and simple value of **movement**. In that misplaced treasure I see the great source for breaking down the limits we think we have. This affects both sporting heroes and mere mortals among whom I have the pleasure to find myself.

If you want to empathize with what I write, you must first know that you will not find what you are looking for if these are formulas. This is not a method, but a style, we are not talking about a structure, but rather a more holistic view. I intend to navigate through details of various sports disciplines and mainly the outdoors environment that I have experienced over the years. I seek to convey the sensation and even spirituality as much as the appreciation of sporting results, it can only be through personal experience, the only one I can speak of with some authority.

When I reflect on untraining I am referring precisely to the action of unlearning, dismantling and taking a fresh perspective on the act of training the physique in general or a specific sport discipline. It is not about forcing a combative and reactive posture, but on the contrary to find the **beauty and potential** in each sporting gesture as well as in one's own **mind**. I personally do not see any separation between physical and psychological training. Nor is there any dualism between this and a way of life and spiritual perspective. That structuring is nothing

more than theoretical, a conceptual illusion, although for the purposes of making this text understandable, I may refer to physical training time in certain circumstances and sections.

It is not my intention to discredit the training methods developed today, but rather to challenge ourselves as training subjects. Over the years I have been able to take elements from the gym or swimming, as well as mountaineering, soccer, slackline, fishing, kite surfing, stand up paddle, freediving, kung fu, cycling, camping, woodcraft, yoga, stretching, balance boarding, snowboarding, packrafting, rowing, functional training, kayaking, climbing, boxing, calisthenics, running, trekking, Tai Chi, ping-pong, dancing or simply from an activity like sanding, plowing, snow removal or climbing stairs. I have an unconditional love for putting myself in the shoes of the *Beginner*, the novice, the kid who wants to climb trees. From balancing the body to make a good turn on the motorcycle to sweeping without twisting the back or creating a new power exercise on the bars, everything expresses in its element a part of the Whole that is movement.

This little writing arises mainly from the desire to share an experience and sports perspective of life, based on a personal path, perhaps outside of what we call conventional. There is no negative in the conventional, but I greatly appreciate the decisions and personal experiences that build me. Every year my body and mind feel better, and it makes me even more eager to be an apprentice again, a novice, someone who makes mistakes as well as someone who makes a respectable freeride descent with quality or goes for a walk in a Japanese garden or a contemporary art museum, or wants to use the dumbbells for other types of exercises.

Not to be afraid to leave conceptual limits behind, to give free rein to our natural curiosity, which is very different from intellectual anxiety. Examples include reading Stoic philosophy, the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola or the *Tibetan Book of Life and Death* by Sogyal Rinpoche, as well as studying art and seeing the conception of the body in the Middle Ages, knowing the origin of break dance or electronic music, brutalist architecture, or understanding how the first crampons and snowshoes were made.

Everything is nourishing, motivating and youthful as long as we keep the key of **Playing**. A child, a puma and a monk learn by playing. By play I also mean avoiding snobbery, cold intellectualism and academicism, lack of empathy for others. And it sounds religious, yes, I take the best of that too. While training and untraining we meet a lot of comrades, and each person has a personal map, his *Bagua* (of Feng Shui) just as important as ours.

Returning to what is important, one of the fundamental pillars of this sporting pursuit is training as a goal. Training as an end without the need to be justified by a function or objective.

However, this does not mean that I am a Shaolin monk who only meditates with training; there is also a function and an objective, although its concreteness is only a logical consequence. If it is about aesthetics, aesthetics will appear, if it is about combat power it will appear, if it is about any other kind of objective, this can also be fulfilled and unfold.

I downplay the importance of success, the summit, as there is always another summit; mountaineers know this very well. The **wheel of anxiety** starts and ends with us, and we are blessed to be able to work this into our day to day lives in multiple details. We don't need a West Face of Mont Blanc every day. The mind that climbs that mountain is the same mind that falls on the wheel when it gets anxious waiting for the bus or walking fast to get to....

The crucial thing here is to accept that we have a limited and conditioned mind. This is the first step to be able to generate a unique and non-transferable value, as well as enduring and inexhaustible. Sometimes that game of training is made in our mind as competitive and fast, other times it is a calculating strategic game, as well as many other times it is merely spontaneous and fresh or simply like playing Solitaire. To **associate training or outdoor sport with pressure or burden is a sign that we are on the wrong track.**

Knowing how to rest is also knowing how to train. Knowing how to be social and relaxing is knowing how to train. Knowing how not to take what we preach so seriously is knowing how to train. To know how to give ourselves a break, to accept our body, to accept injuries, to accept that life has more than just a sport, to know that some of us have our family and friends is also training.

We are an organism that needs to maintain **permeability**, because otherwise it will be very easy to fall into biases, into our seductive ideas, into our obsessions, into those crazy fictions. That anxious and compulsive walking madness. We do not want the frenzy nor the consumerism of experiences nor the media hyperstimulation in our matrix, because ironically all this leads us to infertility and lack of reconnection with our body-mind. Do we see the wheel? How **you do what you do**, marks the true success of the movement.



The Enso, the Zen circle. It is not explained but experienced. It is not traced, but It is in the circle. It is gesture and movement, but it is nothing of it alone. A brushstroke, a continuous stroke that we would define in the standards of the circle, as imperfect. But no one sees it as flawed, but beautiful and it remained so for thousands of years. The mind is in the Enso but it is not just the mind. There is nothing missing or left over. One neither becomes nor is Enso by the intellect. These words only imprison it. The Zen circle in experience invites us to detach ourselves from the frantic need to want to define, explain, and break down everything by the mere word. Communication is not given by words. Movement is not given by the intellect. Philosophy is not learned by studying, the open air is lived free.

" Stop moving and be still, and stillness will move you."

Zen Poem

The movement is in us, it is expressed in us, it is transferred by us. If we want to put a quote of romantic beauty to this, we can imagine the white light passing through a crystal prism and decomposing itself into colors. Light did not cease to be light. Prisms, transparent objects and their contents are traversed by light expressing itself in different ways.

1. The illusion of failure

One of the greatest impediments to enjoy and grow as people, professionals and/or athletes is the taboo of failure. Our mind is culturally educated and molded under the institution of productivity, performance guided by results, projection and comparison with those who show they know, social fear of making a fool of ourselves in front of others, self-repression of individualities so as not to be judged, etc.

The repression of failure is what often condemns us to become unmotivated in activities and sports that we really liked, as well as to freeze and end up stagnating. *I don't like to dance.* Not very nourishing speeches about how such a thing was not for us when a great majority of the times it means: *I didn't like the social pressure when I danced, I didn't feel comfortable, I don't know how to enjoy it.* Or in sports: *I'm not into sports routines. I don't have good elasticity. Ah not that...* We say it and we will be that. We change the discourse, we change our narrative, we change our perception of what we define as failure and the game changes.

The syndrome is typical of any human society. By the mere fact of living together and seeking to minimize the risk of human error, almost any group ends up sterilizing itself and turning off the lights of **original creativity**, stigmatizing failure. Again, by original I mean the origin, what was already said and done and is in us, but we do not express it.

Being prisoners of words

An example of this social sterility and way of thinking in which we fall back on is the wear and tear we make of words. A few months ago, I was listening in a podcast to Ido Portal talking about the term movement and the culture around this life experience. In my opinion, he rightly observes that even the word *movement* itself ceases to be movement when it is institutionalized and used as if it were a formal school. Movement as a new sports institution becomes socially defined as what is not movement, and therefore, in the human error a series of rules and structures are generated that condition its essence and end up turning Movement into something static and rigid. It is perceived unconsciously what it is to fail when looking for movement.

Does this mean that we can't define anything, that we can't define failure, that we must be in a haze all the time? Definitions and structures were and will be used. I don't need to battle against impossibilities. Not at all. The question may be somewhere else: How do we live what we live, how do we experience what we go through. How we decide not to pigeonhole our

body and accommodate ourselves to definitions and talks and texts. How we conceive inwardly the physical movement, the game, the mistakes and failures as an indivisible whole, an imperfectly perfect circle. The symbolic load of the word failure is an enormous and heavy burden. To re-signify it, to nurture it, to approach failure anew is necessary.

I am a voracious reader and happy to be one, however I continually notice how many times depending on my mood or my level of attention, I end up giving too much credence to concepts and ideas. Suddenly it seems that what I live in the mountains, at the gym or wherever, makes sense based on those words and ideas I learned. I changed the glasses with which I see superficially. Thus, everything so clear-sighted becomes obvious to us. That's when it's time to go for a walk, hang on a bar, feel the shoulder blades, drink a mate, feel a little cold and breathe again. The subconscious is voracious and quickly settles into a new identity that I find in a podcast or book.

Words imprison us in terms of intellectual nourishment and in terms of the discourse that identifies us and with which we are framed and make ourselves be framed. It is the same for those who promulgate the entrepreneurial mind, success, modernity or conservationism, the new ways of relating, the old ones. Everything can be tinged with an unhealthy attachment and, above all, with our own ignorance. To read a couple of things or to investigate something does not mean that we really know what we say we know, the fact of knowing is made on the way, with stones, dust, encounters and perspectives. Who really wants to see, has seen more in a wise look of one who has walked a lot than in a thousand words of those who in theory knew.

Something very classic in this matter of words happens in any mystical approach to the concept of God. I touch this subject to erase a little those spiritual and sports frontiers. A word that in the XXI century demands many explanations and small letters, concept-experience-*holos* that ended up expressing many times everything but what it can mean. That is why in normal language many are careful, and we are careful to name God for the sole reason that in the minds of others it does not generate erroneous and conditioned definitions of what we want to express. It seems then that a great part of the blockage in verbal or physical expression is simply to save us problems, justifications and to keep us within parameters of acceptance because we do not like to be misunderstood, judged or rejected. This self-restriction avoids exposure.

Something very curious is that we are also learning that many of us are even **more afraid of being accepted than of being rejected**. We doubt that this acceptance comes from understanding, we feel it more like pigeonholing. *I accept Marcos with his ideas of movement,*

outdoors and Tao and all that. But we do not have access to their minds and in the face of that risk of being misunderstood, it is better to be rejected. They are all nuances of the chimera of failure.

Perhaps we are more afraid of failure than we want to assume.

The problem is when we start speaking restricted by fear and insecurities that make us want to explain everything. I am insistent on this since we are going to see how similar this way of thinking is in the sporting arena and the way we express ourselves bodily.

Being prisoners of our physical expression

Just as we take care of the words we use in social interaction; we take care of our physical expression in training spaces and in the open air or even dancing or leading a kind of life. It is already known how we move, what we like, how we perform in space. The most interesting thing is that we are prisoners of ourselves!

We lose focus repeatedly and the restriction and conditioning take hold. We unconsciously take refuge in rules we don't understand. Whether it's the type of movement, the type of speech or the supposedly perfect material for a certain outdoor activity. It's all in our mind, since we will always, always see reprobation from some person or group, so over time we appreciate how much unconscious energy we lost in justifying or conforming.

All these smacks of the opposite of movement, freedom and motivation. Just as in theory we dance because we enjoy it, there is no difference whatsoever with other physical aspects. We are not doing anything we do to survive, we are not hunting and gathering water, nothing is as important as we tell ourselves it is.

I believe very few people when they tell me that they don't care what others think. It wouldn't be good if we didn't care either. It's not about clowning around in a gym or dressing up to go to the mountains. According to stoicism that would be as pedantic as the neo-rich who want to show it. That is to dismiss things in a novice way, it is to fall into fanaticism and an acephalous activism, it is not to accept that we are social beings living in communities. We do not need to identify with those characters, we want to **recycle** words and knowledge, **to** empathize with our nature as well as with what is already done and learned, the **middle way**.

The real physical failure occurs with the death in life. **The expressive death and the chaining of movement.** The illusion of failure makes us tell ourselves that we fail when we make a

mistake in a movement in a sporting discipline, in a required time, etc. It is all madness, a huge fiction, a meaningless game. Failure is measurable, it is useful as a measure of growth, it makes us grow, it makes us perfect ourselves, but we are no longer talking about the demon of failure that leaves us frozen in the dark night, infertile, static, comfortably dead.

I wrote these pages in much silence as well as many conversations during a period of three months in Buenos Aires. A few days ago, I went to the beach with two friends. In an evening of cooking grilled fish, drinking wine, playing with the balance board and practicing glacier rescue maneuvers, the subject came up. What is failure? As innate sportsmen and adventurers, we are not indifferent to the subject of failure. Juan tells us that he once heard the origin of the word failure. We are not surprised to learn of its Latin roots and its appearance in Italian as *fracassare*: to break - to crash. Nautical failure, of the ship that fails. That splits, breaks. In Spanish, my mother language, is Fracasar. That why is such a strong word.

Just as we wasted the word *Tragedy* by the exaggerated use in television news and newspapers, we lost the root of *Failure*. We call any accident, obstacle, mistake, change of course as failure. Failure: to break, to crash. Do you follow me? We have a countless number of big failures in our lives. Those failures from which one is only shipwrecked. And still, one comes out ahead. But to overvalue everything as a failure is to exaggerate the situation and therefore create a limiting imagined reality. **And that exaggerated reality creates us.** In other words, every stumbling block, every change of course, every rough sea makes us fail. We don't seem to want that,

Are we interested in justifying our conditioning reality?

Putting us in check

More than answers, we can write down some questions. The questions are the ones that can teach us the most to personally delve deeper into the issue. *Pencil and paper! Blackboard! Notepad on our cell phone! The fact of writing down helps us to demolish fantasy castles. Perhaps we are applying automaton speeches and by writing them down, we are weakening them. It is healthy to be ashamed to read and listen to us out loud, there is nothing serious.*

Let's read carefully question by question, with time and pause. The book is short, let's not rush.

What personal failures can we identify in our lives?

And in our sporting life?

And in our professional life?

Can we quickly identify any common elements?

Do we remember any sporting failure that has left us with a great lesson?

When we remember this teaching, does it sound like an old speech, or do we really feel it present?

What is the tale of failure we are telling ourselves?

Do we know how our minds operate in storytelling?

Do we know what place our mind gave to that concept of failure that we defined some time ago?

Did we just come up with a new definition of failure?

Can we unlearn what failure means in our sporting life?

Do we feel we justify ourselves too much?

What makes us uncomfortable about our body and the way we speak?

What about what we don't say and keep to ourselves?

What sport and outdoor activity would we like to learn? What is stopping us?

IMPORTANT: As we answer ourselves and ask questions, we can notice where what we are talking about is physically present. Attention can lead us to experience the answers not only in the forehead, literally in the forehead, but if we take a deep breath and lower a shift, these questions can go through our whole body, our chest, legs, arms. There are answers that we realize that seem to have a great presence in the forehead, a pressure. But when we want to pass a little bit the intellectual horizon, we find ourselves with an experience of questions and answers and observations that are perceived in an integral way. It is not something pseudo-scientific, but it is a sensory experience that enables other parts of our body, links us to certain themes, to certain discourses and narratives, or to real outbursts of attention and lucidity.

Deep breathing is characterized by making us feel our whole body, that breath that can anticipate decisions or be made after reactive emotions. We are not interested in the idea that we generate of this and the justification, but the experience itself. The same that one has when regulating the breath to meditate and disarm a fiction. That I suddenly feel that I frown with a question does not mean that the answer I am giving is wrong, but there is something in how I experience that interpellation that was generated with that question that I can release, relax. I can breathe by watching myself tense up and re-read the question.

I hope some of these reflections and questions have helped us to have some fun with our own minds. If there is something that any athlete or adult person has learned, is that **there is no better liar in most circumstances, than oneself**. We do not need to delve now into concepts of integral psychology, psychoanalysis, logotherapy or any other current. We can agree that when we have traveled a certain path of self-criticism, we find ourselves with a Self, tremendously skillful in inventing stories, tales and justifications to maintain the ideas that at some point served us and at the same time keep us "coherent". But whoever is attentive knows that when we lie to ourselves too much, we begin to feel anxious, suffocated or more than just uncomfortable.

In the discourse we blame the others, but it is in us. Sportingly speaking, this is expressed in a thousand and one factors and even more in outdoor activities that lead us to believe true those walls that we invented to protect a useful identity in the past. But to break those limits, perhaps we can more than fight, let them evaporate like any kind of illusion.

You're from the mountains, uh you're from the gym. I don't do well in the board. I wouldn't do that; I always eat such and such for breakfast. Yoga is just a fashion thing. You like to suffer because Etc., etc. Well, after that accident I think you know it doesn't go that way....

All this is simply foolishness. We shut ourselves and others in constantly. We want to define and identify others to keep things tidy and in place. None of this is very interesting when we are talking about detraining.

We cannot be constantly correcting ourselves and each other in our oratory. That kind of rigid and serious activism is useless. It is not about suppression and reaction, but about how we are affected by what is said to us and what we say to ourselves.

Just as an injury is normal in any sport, an accident is part of the mountains or the seas. Greater or lesser risk, greater or lesser ridiculousness. Whatever. If we want to be prisoners of the madness of opinion and our own pressure, so be it. But we can also simply conceive of failures as fanciful chimeras.

The childish and wise look

Have you seen children undergo psychoanalysis for losing a soccer game? Or for breaking an arm? Or for falling while learning to snowboard?

What a great way to train, to learn, to move. The child's gaze is explorative. Not to mention that it lacks miles of travel, millions of problems in its paths, but it is incredibly rich. The gaze of Josefina, the daughter of a friend, has always stayed with me. I took her when she was seven years old and her younger sister, who was about four, to walk along the shore of a lake in Patagonia. We wanted to find a way through the trees, puddles, mud and roots to simply get as far as we could. There was no specific goal. It was pure exploration. I was 28 years old, and I was just as or even more committed than they were. We organized ourselves. Jose started by opening trail, running branches, jumping over obstacles. I told him that we had to make the smallest one go safely and I would trust his judgment. We started making bridges in the mud. Tita, the little one was also having fun and was observing leaves and bugs, she even suggested a path for us. The three of us got into such a state of exploration that more than half an hour passed. Jose looked at me when we reached an impassable point, for which we had to get into the water. He had fire in her eyes. There was no unfounded fear, there was spirit. We came back talking about some idea of how to get past that obstacle.

When we were eleven years old the scouts made us play a game called Roman Colosseum. There were weapons in the middle like spears, shields, swords, sacks (everything had foam rubber for protection). The game was so epic and new that there was no rule of how to be good. There was no inhibition in trying some movie jump, some strategy, whatever. All that exploration was a fundamental part of the game, it was the motive and end. The dexterity, the creativity, the use of space, the exploratory play above all. **The child's mind is fertile ground. The adult mind needs to be plowed and watered to become good again.**

Of this, which I am describing very basically, one could talk for hours, write hundreds of pages. And we are not even talking about animal puppies. There we can have fun. Play as a learning mechanism to hunt, survive, fight, etc. But when I say For, it's a mistake. Nothing is for something in nature, but is a consequence of, and therein lies an even more interesting essence.

The game printed in that look is the one that allows chronic failure. There is no taboo. It is a quantum machine constantly recalibrating itself through experience, sweat, mistakes, lost fights, victories, sensations, defeats. Yes, it gets tired fast and there are a thousand things to

say against the infantile mind. But it started here, in the look. **The look is fresh.** The best of all is that we can recover this capital and add to it all our life experience, our maturity and searches. It will be up to us as adults to break down boredom, one of the Achilles heels of children, and nowadays of almost all of society. But before that, let's continue talking about the beginner's mind.

2. The beginner's mind

Shoshin(初心): Learner's mind, beginner's mind. In the roots of Zen Buddhism and martial arts lies this source. In turn this element comes from even further back, in the fresh lines of Taoism. This is where we are going.

Optimism is not foolish naivety, creativity is not impulsiveness, the beginner's mind is the one that does not need an accumulation of preconceived ideas to feel safe. Taisen Deshimaru in *Zen and Martial Arts*, gives us a nice tour of this way of learning. However, those who are not related to this world, like me, will look for empathy in other environments. But when one looks for it, it appears.

The apprentice mind is part of many currents of thought and where it does not seem to be named, it is very easy to make it part of.

Play with the concept.

Today we have YouTube videos, tutorials and even podcasts to learn whatever we want. We also order the book we are looking for our e-reader or we send it by mail services in 24 or 48 hours. It's a Pandora's box, it's a flood of information. Clearly most of our energy goes into differentiating what's good and what's bad, what's useful and what's not. A large part of the content in the 21st century is guided by advertising, and this means that more than quality, we can find what is interesting and attractive and adapts to a series of human psychology formulas of persuasion, but it does not mean that these are the best ways of learning. We seem to love it. We get our ear licked, *bread and wine*, simple and transgenerational concept. We get stuffed and drunk on content and ideas.

Even if we pay for lessons in a new sport, there is a tendency to watch a lot of pre-class material, bordering on the negative. And let's touch on topics like diet, physical appearance, well that's where we'd get into a podcast discussion. The problem is that consuming information does not mean learning at all, just as eating only processed food does not nourish us properly.

Let's get back to business. Personally, one can STOP FOLLOWING; stop feeding algorithms with doubts, STOP CONSUMING visual information and choose precisely the content according to specific moments. Silence what generates anxiety, look at what helps us to be where we are. Nowadays, to stop seeing is much more valuable than seeing everything and

accumulating. Does the trend of minimalism brought from Japanese culture seem a coincidence as an answer? Although the real problem is not there, it is not in the objects, it is in our cell phone and the data-saturation and the absurdly brutal consumption of stimuli, of colored mirrors.

The MOST BEAUTIFUL VALUE IN LEARNING IS THE VALUE OF EXPLORATION. That value has no terror of failure, of being judged, it is a constant, burning flame, it is curiosity. It is undamaged by constant comparison.

You don't know how many athletes in the extreme sports environment (climbing, snowboarding, mountaineering), who fall into always feeling incomplete or amateur, or that they must go for more frantically because when they grab the Instagram always appears someone doing everything with more style, more precision, more extreme, more visual.

The worst of all is that we know very well how it is behind the scenes of it. How there are mistakes, perspiration, bad shots, falls, accidents, suffering, fights, exposure, video editing, etc., etc. Although we know all this, it still puts pressure on us in an unconscious way. We are much more vulnerable than we think, and our mind is much easier to be guided by noises and tendencies.

The learner gets bored if he/she is full of information. And the adult who is aware of this may choose **not to be informed all the time** to keep the mind less biased and preconceived ideas when learning something. We don't live on candy. Personally, I use this way in a lot of activities I do and that is why I feel the need to share it as it has given me a lot of serenity. I am going with a concrete example.

When I first learned how to do Freedive, I consciously decided not to read anything about it. Many people will call this reckless. But it was never my intention to risk my life, on the contrary, it was just to be much more aware of what was happening to my body and my mind in the activity, I could be more attentive to the dangers. I don't dive more than 20 meters, I didn't even try, since I practice alone, I'm not a professional, and I'm not interested in having a blackout. I like to dive without fins and sometimes without ballast, explore corals and caves, meditate on some sandy bottom, follow the fish. I make a small personal record every now and then and in that dynamic I constantly feel slimmer and slimmer. The truth is that the most interesting thing was when I applied the FreeDive to solve big problems in navigation and boats, that's what I'm going to talk about. Today I can stay about four and a half minutes (4:35 my record- December 2022) if I relax on the surface, and diving maybe a couple of minutes (for swimming and stressing the body in the submerged activity). For those who understand,

know that there is nothing superhero in all this. Again and again, I repeat, the important thing is the beautiful value that this activity has for me and the way I learn it.

Let me explain how: Free Dive is diving without supplementary equipment. Simply by holding your breath, it's free diving. It's exactly taking a breath and swimming underwater like when we were kids. Only with the name it seems more sophisticated. For as long as I can remember, I played breath-holding competitions with friends, or swimming across a length of a pool without surfacing. So many of us have done it. Life found me at the age of twenty-six in the Ionian Sea working as crew for a Russian captain on a charter sailboat. Playing in my spare time, in bays where we anchored (dropped anchor) at five to ten meters, I started to dive.

Always close to the anchor chain just in case, I amused myself for hours seeing that I could go more meters. I had a safety paradigm as a kid. I had never been in a pool deeper than five meters so any deeper than that was dangerous. I consciously decided to just enjoy and learn without reading anything. I mentally wrote down the depths of three and six meters at which I needed to compensate (blocking the nose and blowing gently to uncover the ears). Amazingly as an explorer, I discovered that I could swim to ten meters with no problem. And not only that, but I could also last longer by being more attentive to the marine fauna, to what was around me, by observing.

I realized that the most important thing of all was relaxation. I held on to the anchor chain on the surface, looking at the sea, the colors, breathing deeply. I had to relax every muscle in my body. It was meditation, it was meditation in all its nuances. It was aquatic meditation; it was the opposite of classic sports productivity. It was aesthetically balanced and healthy for my more adrenaline-driven way of life. To be better, I had to let myself be better, you know? That fighter's tenacity didn't apply yet, first I had to learn to let go.

Do you understand the value? I might have read in a blog that Meditation and Relaxation were the key to success. But I discovered this by doing, I learned by doing. So, the result was nothing more than a consequence of the rehearsal. Meditation appeared, it blossomed by itself.

One day we were in a bay by the island of Paxos, and it started blowing a lot of wind, the anchor was loose, it had turned over. We moved about ten meters, and the blowing stopped. We had no place to maneuver because it had filled up with boats and the captain was going to try to pick up the chain and get out to open sea but that meant we had no chance to anchor there again. I spontaneously offered to dive and turn the anchor and bury it. It was eight meters deep, it seemed feasible. I had not read that it was not possible. Nothing crazy, it

seemed possible. He, with good predisposition and confidence in my judgment, agreed. I swam, relaxed and reached the bottom. I grabbed the anchor, placed my feet on the sand to make strength and with a good pull I managed to do the maneuver. You don't know how beautiful and perfect it is to perform these movements in slow motion. It is artistic, one is in the silence, watching the boats above while everything happens in another *Tempo*. It is surreal. I buried the anchor and went back out. We didn't lose the place.

I was so happy, without expecting it, my game had a practical use. I am not a sailor, I am not a man of the sea, although I do love the water as much as I love the mountains or the forests or the pampas or the desert. I learned in the trade and that is why I was not very clear about what was right or wrong and with that naivety I have made tremendous mistakes, but I have also contributed some solutions to various problems.

The following year I worked on another boat in the Spanish Mediterranean. That's when my desire to dive exploded, an activity that I mixed with the new discovery of Stand-Up Paddle and distance swimming. That year I learned to calibrate ballast to go down calmly, I had fun doing some more artistic shots with the GoPro how to fall to the bottom (I made a little ball, and, in the belly, I put a couple of pounds and let me fall ten, fifteen, twenty meters). I especially enjoyed going down to ten or fifteen meters and doing zazen or half lotus to meditate. I still do that. There were also the moonwalks on the sandy bottom. It's the astronautical activity I can do without being from NASA. I also set about removing the algae from the entire hull of the eighteen-meter ship with a spatula in apnea, I have done a tremendous amount of diving for two months to get the job done, great training. Life shows me another tonality through me.

Training was playing, playing was meditating, meditating was diving, and everything was organic, natural for my body and healthy. The habit came consequently, not a day goes by in the sea that I don't want to jump into the water, and when I feel tired, I always remember that when I'm at the bottom I'm calm and at night I sleep better. The body gets tired while diving, a general and peaceful tiredness, it is not painful.

In these last three years at sea, I had several adventures and emergencies in which freedive allowed me to solve complex problems in a different way. This year it happened in the Port of Ceuta on the African coast. By coincidence, two boats hooked their propellers to the mooring lines almost simultaneously. One vessel became dangerously stuck with no way to maneuver. Shouts and all that and the captain who already knows me told me the situation and I went with the Stand-Up paddle to see how things were going. The first boat had three turns to the propeller, and it took me a couple of minutes and concentration underwater doing

a lot of force to free it and the other one a little less. For me it was magic, it was the most fun I could be having all day, and so many hours of playing on my own put me at total ease to move under pressure. The points of creative learning are joined backwards, not forwards waiting for a result, they are points that are joined once realized.

The year before that, a slightly more intense anecdote happened, in a bay on the border of Spain and France, the anchor got stuck in an old iron of some old harbor structure. There was nothing indicated on charts or applications. We were so unlucky that the anchor was literally caught between two pillars with no chance of getting it out under sail. The situation was truly delicate as there was no choice but to cut the chain, lose the anchor. If the tide changed, the chain would begin to be damaged, many complicated factors. That bottom was at twelve meters and that anchor is not a light one. But with the captain's calm and wisdom we worked together. He showed me how to make a safety buoy that I could release and leave floating where I worked (so the jet skis wouldn't run over me) We did this, I swam to the anchor, put on my goggles and spent a couple of minutes watching. The chain was taut, so we had to coordinate with the movement of the waves to get it unstuck. To do so much force at twelve meters was a first for me so I had no choice but to go back to what I always do: relax. And relax, and relax, and relax. I couldn't concentrate the pressure in my head, relaxing and concentrating was the only way.

The first time I dived, I saw where to step without hurting myself and how to grab the anchor and the second time I tried without success, I was just out of air because of the physical stress. I came back and just like that, with the captain shouting me not to worry and the whole scene, I relaxed a third time deeply, went down, positioned my feet, put my back straight and with a lot of strength I unlocked the anchor and walked moving it a couple of meters. I returned to the surface and realized that at least two and a half minutes had passed. It was one of those days that brings a smile to my face. I love the water and all it has given me.

For the people of the sea and for the sportsmen of the environment none of this is unbelievable. And that's what it's all about, that it doesn't matter if it's unbelievable for others. For me the learning process of freediving is incredible for me and that's why it's almost impossible for me not to be motivated. I'm still a learner, obviously I read techniques and things later, I saw the movie *Jago* and it fascinated me, but the way of learning was so ingrained that it's impossible to lose that imprint.

Sometimes I must test how much I can resist in a pool or puddle. There I was able to experience how literal it is that one lasts longer and longer. Try it. Take a stopwatch, relax, grab the edge of the pool and lower your head. The first time you might last thirty seconds.

Come up, wait a couple of minutes, relax. The second time the time may double. The third time you may be surprised. It's so metaphorically perfect exercise, we don't know what we can and don't need to know beforehand. Finally, the FreeDive was unwittingly the channel of expression through which I incorporated meditation in a palpable way. It comes to me today. I spent years reading things, practicing, but it was all very millennial style mindfulness App or routines that were not intuitive to me. Unintentionally, something unexpected brought meditation into my body.

Later we will also touch on the importance of mental verbal repetition (mantras, prayers, songs) for this type of activity. Another source of incredible peace and self-improvement.

The beginner's mind is not stubborn

The learner's mind does not need information in excess, but this does not mean that one is reluctant to what can be transmitted to us, to interact and expose oneself. Personally, it is one of my great aspects to work on. It is normal that when faced with the need to distance ourselves from indoctrination, from the projections that other people make on us, as well as from the need that human beings must show others what is right or wrong, we end up reacting and being stubborn to maintain our way of learning.

But be careful, this is also the opposite of movement, of free and fresh learning, of a rich and attentive gaze. Interaction is fundamental when we want to learn how to learn. Stubbornness is of those who toxically cling to their way of doing, often comes more from the hand of the doubts that one has. I am one of those on many occasions. But a free mind does not need this but is permeable and keeps in constant contact with the environment in which there are also other individuals who can offer us knowledge.

This happens a lot in the bars. It is a very social space, and one is more open to be told a tip, a correction, or show a creative exercise and more. More than once in gyms and parks I have been approached to chat and exchange experiences and searches. Personally, I use the bars to practice dynamic and explosive exercises, I enjoy creating some movement, but I have no experience in the normal school of calisthenics. A very precise detail can make a huge change. Once I was seen trying to do a muscle up and a guy came up to me with the best of intentions and showed me that if I twisted my wrists and held them steady on the way up it was easier.

And it did. I could have learned it on my own, but I'm not advocating that we must learn everything on our own. It's not about that, it's not about individualistic pride.

As we get into what is natural, what is spontaneously healthy, what is organic, we are calibrating more precisely each activity and observing how sometimes we want to learn alone, other times we are blocked by this discourse and we are unlocking and opening to learning, many other times we need formal mechanisms. In my case Yoga is something that when the time came, the apprentice being ready (me), the right teacher appeared in a conventional gym with very normal people of city routine that was between forty and sixty. I read Indra Devi and many books and practiced many things on my own, but I wasn't getting to the point. Acting different for the sake of it ends up being an act of immaturity.

I decided to start in a chain of gyms that was convenient for me by location and when I went to do my exercises, I read that there were Hatha Yoga classes included and after a while I was with a group of twenty women learning the warrior posture and enjoying enormously a conventional class in a conventional space but with a free and happy look. The Marcos who was doing incredible sports and travel all of a sudden couldn't even do half a lotus or hold a posture and all of that seems to me an incredibly rich experience. How many injuries and anxiety I would have saved myself if I had not been so stubborn in the number of times I was offered in the last five years to do yoga (nowadays I do just stretching sessions and I love it more, for me it's more simple and clear)

To put it simply: we unconsciously and consciously shape an identity. We say what we do and don't do, how open we are or aren't, how much we like or dislike routines or conventions, what we are good at or not. We spend more time defining an identity than bringing it consciously into our daily lives. By the time we buy into the discourse, it's old hat. We become regressively disconnected from our values and image and consequently from our body. We don't grease the bicycle. The shifter no longer works so well, everything is hard. And we go stubborn, without wanting to check the mechanism, without wanting to maintain it, to improve it. The movement we are looking for is slipping away.

This identity is expressed in our daily life, that moment and environment where we generate changes and tendencies, weak points, vices and more. It is our day-to-day life that is the ground to enjoy the process of Detraining, clearing the mind. Reinventing our training experience, which starts from how we can express ourselves more powerfully and naturally. This totally applies to more relaxed issues such as maintaining a good state of health, feeling good, relaxing, having a physical appearance that we like. Let's not believe that there is only one way, let's not close ourselves in this way of seeing things. If something does not close, it

does not close. Nothing happens, the most important thing is to keep the flame of movement above all.

Do-it-yourself

Any kind of knowledge is possible to learn in another way. One can read the results and the best formulas. We can read or watch videos but if we do it without awareness, we do not generate good judgment. Judgment is perhaps the gold of this century. Judgment as critical thinking. Critical thinking as constructive thinking, conscious, with perspective, with self-knowledge, critical of its own limitation.

There are simple disciplines to learn on your own, such as Stand Up Paddle, but when you get into the technique, you can discover a world of micro-movements, postures, ways of thinking, intuitive reactions and more. All this is possible to learn by being aware of the playfulness of the process, accepting mistakes with ease. When we nurture this way of approaching one sport or exercise, we can easily apply it to another because the rewards are great. The feeling of solving a small problem, a question, of enjoying a movement. It is so pleasing that we want to experience that in any field. A first slalom with a longboard, a new exercise at the gym, a first handstand, some dynamic pushup, the first time we walk backwards with the rollers, the first time we stand on a slackline or for example learning another language. The more we nurture a curious approach without needing so much information, the less afraid we are to learn. Then we can access those who know more and all the information, with a more relaxed look.

The balance board, that simple roll with a board on top, is a spectacular element to develop this way of learning. We forget the thousand instructions, we abstract ourselves, we enjoy the balance. We see how it becomes progressively easier to balance and not to tremble. We remember a little video or someone we saw. We try a grab, we play, above all we play. By the time we realize it, we can be doing squats on top, or testing stability with one foot and a thousand other things. I'm not recommending that you practice Free Dive alone, not at all. I had years of experience in the water, and I know my body and mind in the fear of the sea. There are a thousand low-risk activities that can give us just as nourishing nourishment.

I like elements that can be used in multiple spaces, that's why I came to the balance board. Let's go further. A chair is also a dumbbell, it is a weighted element that can be used in a thousand ways to train. There is no rule on how to use the chair, however, I assure you that

we could generate a perfect routine with this element. Now as I write, I sit on a high stool. I stand a lot of times while writing, I use the stool to feel the muscles.

The broomstick. Just as there is the traditional Bo with which Kobudo is practiced (a stick of greater weight and thickness, with which martial art is done) a broomstick was the element with which I trained my back for more than ten years. I have SLAP in one shoulder and scoliosis, so it is very important for me to constantly calibrate, to take care of the strength on both sides, to appreciate that hemisphere of my body. Not to coddle it, not to do assistive care with my other body part. We tend to always rely on strong muscles, on what is safe. Thus, the left-handed person becomes excessively left-handed, the right-handed person the same, the one who has an injury in one ankle, reloads the other, etc. The experience of defying this tendency is beautiful and can be experienced in any movement.

You will be amazed at the multiplicity of techniques, exercises, postures and games that can be performed with a broomstick, working muscles we didn't even know existed. Clearly, we can watch videos with two hundred different exercises. But we can also discover them on our own. When we discover an exercise on our own, we generate a very valuable psycho-neurological activity. We feel a very strong connection with the understanding of our body. We are aware of what muscle we are working on, what sensation it gives us, what we could do, etc, etc. We can easily watch videos and whatever, but we don't miss the opportunity to play with any element that intrigues us. Balance is one of the variables that I would recommend trying to add in any type of exercise.

Today it is very fashionable to talk about Neural Plasticity, Epigenetics and several very attractive terms in the field of science. It is not my intention to delve into them, since I am not a scientist. They are used in books and talks to give a serious backing to things, although later we only end up doing pseudoscience by touching topics that we do not understand thoroughly.... It is good to investigate and read as a curious consequence, but it does not make the spontaneous movement that I want to transmit here. That field of research does not correspond to me.

The question is even simpler. We ourselves in a short time can experience the pleasure of becoming psychologically flexible, of enjoying learning, of challenging what is not so obvious. The older we get, the more we resort to enjoying the fact of doing well something we already know how to do well. However, I hazard that anyone can experience greater reward in trying to do something we don't know how to do, don't do well, or say we don't know how or can.

The value that is there does not need to be explained by cute terms like Neuroplasticity. It is enough to observe how this single overcoming and amusing practice, later serves as fuel to learn other things, and more things, and more things, and more things. And not only more, but with more quality, more joy and less prejudices. The mind begins to detach from the result, and it is observed as a mere consequence. My athletic body in the mirror is a mere consequence of having a healthy mind connected to the activities I want to do in a certain way. We catch ourselves suddenly becoming more positive, more resilient, more creative.

The mind can be fresher and the habits that we incorporate can arise from the attention on the good that something that seemed too far away does us. I care about the micro-results, the ones that make you go to bed calmer, more serene, and eager to start another day. I am not talking about stimulus-reward. Since the stimulus itself becomes attractive before the reward arrives. The micro-result is the path itself, no more. The second I get up from the stool because I feel hunched over, stretch my back, continue at the computer but improve my posture, that is a golden micro-result, and it is the path itself.

If we are not doing well with the desire to go training to lose weight we may:

- We don't like the way we train, the type of training or the environment.
- We lack some fresh air.
- We don't appreciate the day-to-day routine.
- We are obsessed with results
- Suffering from comparison and anxiety due to network overstimulation
- Not everything is rosy.

Maybe it's all this. It's great, we can reinvent all this, it's crazy to suffer the way. Obviously, there are ups and downs, injuries, days when we look ugly, or fat, or bald, or disconnected, or out of breath. To deny those days is a big mistake. Those things are enjoyable in their own way too. However, in general terms it cannot be a martyrdom, otherwise it would lose sustainability.

I emphasize again the outdoors because I am quite sure about it. We still have in our blood the need to be in contact with nature. Some will need it more than others, but I am convinced that the air in the face, or the water, the green of the trees, the feel of the grass, the aromas, the irregularity of nature, the temperature changes, and many other factors, make the outdoors indispensable in our lives as a matrix of motivation and balance, of spirituality and connection with the body.

Another example of the apprentice's exploration by abstinence.

When going to a new town or city for a walk, today Google Maps is widely used, a very useful and beneficial tool to save us doubts and go faster to the attractions. It is worth asking ourselves if we want to save doubts and go faster or what we want to experience.

I've encountered many people like me who, when traveling to an unfamiliar place, decide not to use Google Maps for the mere purpose of interacting with the environment and looking up. Call it poetics and romanticizing, but I find the answer in something simpler and deeper. Interacting with the environment, what I already said. I want to go to the cathedral, I ask in which direction, I try to speak the language they speak, I interact, I sign. I look up, I look at a dome. My body and sociality participate in this walking.

Many people love to read and watch in movies those chance encounters or anecdotes of travelers or tourists with locals, the Italian who invites them to the wedding of their cousin or things like that, the chat with a lady who was in some war, the Bosnian who buys them a few drinks, the group of girls or boys with whom they end up partying. Nothing is sought, but in the street, there is life. That movie world is there and here, and it doesn't come out of some secret magic, but rather from being in touch with the reality that unfolds before us and with us. In the new society, not using Google Maps on certain occasions, is a mechanism of exploration. For an older person this is naïve and obvious, however our generation and those to come were born in another paradigm and therefore, our way of perceiving and learning from the world has its differences in many details related to technology and connectivity. For certain things it is very productive, very effective, very useful, but to be more than just skilled machines, it works against us.

Google Maps is great, I use it and would use it when I know what I want it for. But it can't decide how I experience my life or my relationships. On many other occasions, as a safety habit, we use it without bringing to the table how many factors we miss out on in life. **Not using Google Maps is an allegorical example of exploring through the omission of information tools.** At the core of this example is also the perspective we can have on our sporting experience.

3. Sports spontaneity

Spontaneity: Natural and easy expression of thought, feelings, emotions.

Overstimulation and overcrowding of cognitive processes and activity is our doom. I come back to the same thing. We want to have a good love relationship, and we see a thousand Instagram posts on how to do it, we want to be athletes or successful people and we read and watch a lot of videos or follow all possible referents. At the beginning it would seem appealing, motivating and productive, however we may find that as soon as things do not go as we are told they will go, we feel lost, or we are still in the same initial situation. It has that naive essence of someone who, for example, learns to use a new seasoning for cooking, finds it incredible and starts using it in every dish. Wow, I didn't know that cumin gave these tastes... well, maybe not every meal can be saved with cumin, and even less by just adding more and more. Locking ourselves into hyper-information would be a trap, as well as into the pseudo-solutions we are regaled with in posts from accounts we follow. These seem to me to be two of the great risks we run today. The accumulation of objects has gone out of fashion, today they are experiences, digital information, stimuli and promises.

Sporting spontaneity, on the other hand, is not just another seasoning, it is the style of cooking. It is the deep breathing that puts us where we are at the moment we are, it is the lightness of a creative movement, it is the carefree admiration of someone else's performance, it is the mindless learning, it is the bending of arms that we suddenly understand in every fiber, it is the athletic overcoming that we do not plan but for which we leave the elements prepared.

Spontaneity, rather than being cultivated, is noticed as one who receives the breeze, and it expresses itself in us in a certain way. It cannot be structured, nor molded, nor learned as we normally learn. Little by little, with time and habits, with attention and motivation, we learn to give it more space. It shows us, like a mirror, what this Naturalness is all about. What makes us special and unique.

"There is nothing so much in the way of being natural as the desire to appear natural."

François de La Rochefoucauld

Sport spontaneity is expressed in details, not only in big decisions like: *oh no, my thing is crossfit, uh I think I have to leave the gyms and turn to nature, or come on, let's change sport.* The spontaneity I want to talk about is the one that makes us smile when we train, sometimes when we sweat, even when we suffer a little from the weight of the backpack. More than one

of us will have come out of exercise and the body asks to walk, to look at the trees, to feel the legs. Sometimes we do a routine, and we feel that we want to feel the twisting of the spine, or the stretching while hanging. The routine did not reach us, nothing happens. The body spontaneously leads us to do what it wants, the muscular intelligence warns us that the wrists want to train too, that the fingers want to move, that my heels are stiff.

A common meditation exercise is about awareness of our body. Lying down or sitting, we go through the fibers of our feet, legs, waist, abdomen, chest, arms, neck and head. We feel the nervous system, we notice how it may be more difficult to detect one hemisphere than the other, how one ear is more sensitive than the other. This exercise, like any other meditation practice, tries to bring us fully into our present. Its implementation ended up generating a very nice sensation when I felt my body training. Without looking for it, without expecting it, I found myself after a walk, a pedal stroke, or an exercise routine, doing this physio cephalic review of my body. Mine is anecdotal, visual but alienated. What is important is your experience, you who read: to value this spontaneous integration of practices, experiences and ways of doing.

What was already there, and we did not value

Spontaneity also comes from old habits, exercises and techniques that have passed into our subconscious. I spontaneously decide to sleep on the floor sometimes not because I have paranormal knowledge, but because when I was a kid, I used to camp a lot sleeping on the ground and I associate it unconsciously to deep sleep, austere but healthy. My back stretches, I don't tend to rotate, I use only a thin pillow under my neck and sometimes another one under my knees. If it is wood flooring it is much better as the temperature of it is much more in tune with the body as opposed to cold stone or ceramics. I could not plan this; I could not do it every day. But my back asks me to do it every now and then and I put up less and less resistance. Curiously, I then approached texts related to the use of the Japanese tatami, the bed close to the floor, as well as natural materials such as hemp. An interesting balance between elements of material culture and organic needs.

Spontaneity could then be expressed as a healthy and authentic style of moving, in relation to our history, our learning, our genetics, our present. But it is only in writing this that I realize that any more precise explanation would be a lie, because I don't know. I can simply accompany spontaneity and learn along the way. Even if a *paper* comes out tomorrow that explains the concept to me, it will not make me experience it. The same thing happens with this unlearning thing. I'm not interested in passing on formulas, because it simply won't be right until it expresses itself in your life, not mine.

Learning to learn

We think we know how to do sit-ups, but we don't, the same with push-ups, barbells, kettlebells, dumbbells, trekking, mountaineering, surfing, anything. We think we've learned. We do it decently, we experience from time to time a certain pleasure, a certain benefit, a certain moment of clarity. Have we really learned?

I wonder how much of it was more like learning to repeat and copy. To repeat the physical exercises, like learning to repeat the emotions and sensations related to that activity. How much is consciousness in what we do. **Consciousness is attention and attention is rest, the opposite of what we would tend to define.**

Learning to learn is a path of awareness of the fact of learning. Then come words like intuition, conscious effort and all that. But before the word, there is the momentum. Learning to learn is being aware of a learning mind learning something. It seems obvious, but is it?

When one begins the path of observing the learning self, one finds that certain things we did, did not have so much of our presence. Untraining, unlearning, are allegories to the simple value of taking a deep breath and contemplating that person experiencing learning in the present. It sounds so ethereal but at the same time this is so right here, so down to earth.

Whoever hits the punching bag may do so mechanically, gradually honing the technique by simply repeating the exercise, but may also be present to what is happening there. Repetition exercises challenge us to experience this. Rowing, push-ups, mountain stepping, counting offer us the chance to get fully into what we are doing. When one enjoys the awareness of every fiber of our body performing a movement, nothing else is necessary.

I learned to suffer wrongly. I learned to suffer knowing that it was worth suffering on a mountain climb or carrying a lot of weight because there would come a time when it would be rewarded: a summit, a big meal in the evening, a success. Stimulus-reward system too basic. One day I went snowboarding, and the reward was not the summit, but going down. It was interesting because on the ascent I would spend the time looking at where to go down best, where to jump, what to avoid. So, the climbs became lighter, and the experiences added up. **But both are lies with short legs.** Today the bodily suffering due to great physical and mental demands, needs to be apprehended in me in a different way. Physical pain is not eliminated, psychological fatigue due to wear and tear is not avoided. Avoiding, justifying by results, trying to distract oneself, are survival techniques that leave us halfway. How I embrace this, how I embrace pain. Suffering in the routines, in the mountains, in the recovery from injuries has a

large mental quota of resistance and forcing by the *How* should I feel, how should I justify what is happening, what story am I telling.

According to more than one spiritual current, if sadness, anxiety, pain, wear and tear, shadows, knock on our door, we can only open it. **Let them come in, have tea and leave.** Many times accepting physical pain brings a smile. On more than one occasion I have looked at a friend on an adventure and we have said to each other, "This is so fudsfpieqwr8u- hard! Automatically sharing the suffering, we each had in our heads, made us relax and carry on. **The mind weighs us down more than the pain itself.** Muscles hurt, shoulders hurt, but the mind is ultimately the heaviest and most pressing organ. Sometimes sharing this, or laughing at the pain in certain situations, makes us downplay the whole story of the suffering we create and compresses us.

These small episodes put us in check and make us wonder if we learned wrong or simply copied formulas and results. These events are the pattern breakers, the ones that make us realize that cycles begin and end in one.

Mushin- No thought.

It is trendy to revitalize and appreciate oriental concepts about life. There is a book on *Ikigai*, another on the elements of Buddhism applied to business, multiple Tao, etc., etc., etc. However, just because it is fashionable does not mean that we cannot take advantage of access to texts and concepts that previously went unnoticed. We are constantly tracking down archetypes to fight against, but to no avail. In a religious-spiritual desolation in the West, it is no coincidence that for a couple of decades we have been looking outside for the solution.

This also happened mainly in the last five years with Stoicism and the revaluation of texts by Seneca, Epicurus, Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius. We are spinning on a social-historical wheel and many times we believe that we are the first to discover great things, although more than that, it is only a rediscovery, a revaluation, a re-reading.

I like to put perspective to the issues at hand, to avoid those tricky biases that lead us to fanaticism and shortcuts. Knowing this, we can indeed approach other forms of knowledge with the eye of the learner and not the consumer.

Mushin is the essence of Zen, the salt of its spiritual land. *No thought* is to silence the conventional *modus operandi* with which we act. I am posed with a difficult question, a paradox, a situation, then I reflect, analyze and respond believing myself to be conscious.

Mushin is to regain confidence in the mind-body. And you have already read about this. Now I am writing this text, and I am not directing every command of my fingers to write a letter. This is happening. Going a little further, there is a way of writing where you don't use chapter outlines or know how to follow the story. They call it creative writing. I once wrote a book like that, and the experience was transcendental. My dedication was to generate the space and conditions to simply sit in front of my computer, every day at 8 am after getting up, tidying my cabin on the boat, washing up, preparing the mate, preparing the table and finally opening Word Office. I would read the last two lines of the previous day.... I would close my eyes for a while recovering the images I had of my characters and continue.

It was hard at first, but it became more and more entertaining and incredible. It was constantly keeping the capacity for wonder alive. The book was writing to me. I don't know if it will be a best seller or something of superior writing, but this novel is beautiful to me and has accompanied me in many moments. I spent my afternoons at sea with readings of oriental philosophy and topics that interested me in science, historical novels and some swimming. All that was my source of information for writing, nothing from the internet. The sea gives time for everything. I'm going to laugh, in a few years I'll probably be ashamed of what I wrote, it's part of the game.

From Deshimaru and Susuki *"if we reflect on every gesture, effective action is impossible"*.

The body can be free and act. When we learn a new sport, we could live Mushin, to live in the no-mind. Many times, we want to learn a new discipline from someone and they give us a tremendous amount of information. When I learned to Kitesurf, I was impressed by the list of fundamental details that made the WaterStart and sailing possible. I'm no child prodigy, but at 30 years old I had already learned a significant number of activities and applied this way of learning, so when I felt I was being weighed down by so much information, I remember very pointedly telling myself that I could let my mind rest. I didn't want to set the sail at one o'clock and the correct foot posture as well as the bar at the right angle. I just wanted to kitesurf. This small spiritual-psychological ceremony that is done in one by abstracting oneself from the analytical and systematic mind, is the perfume of jasmine. I wanted to kitesurf and be in nature and it happened within minutes. Everything was there I just didn't allow myself to be aware of what was happening, I didn't enjoy the perfume. Seeing the sail in the air, picking up speed, floating on the water, feeling the wind, being part of the environment.

One class later, my instructor saw me getting excited because I was already doing a couple of navigation exercises. We are tender and it's hard for us to stay in the middle of the road. I was drifting and moving the sail too much, the adrenaline was doing its thing. He approached me without criticizing me and told me about when he had learned to surf in Brazil. A teacher saw that he didn't catch any waves, but he put everything to try, repeatedly. He told him to go behind the break and float for a while. It took a long time until the teacher signal him to come back, so much so that he was cold and bored, then he came back, stood on the first one and surfed. His mind left that technical and effervescent compulsion. He saw the whole, the sea, the waves, him in the sea, he relaxed, the sea surfed him.

I could see this in every freestyle snowboarding trick, it's not my skill, but the few that do come out, came at times when the No-Mind took place. When I was obsessed with pulling a first 540, I was only getting further and further away from the result. I wasn't reaching it for repetition. I was forgetting that the trick on track or off track was built from the elements of the environment, the me feeling the board, etc. So romantic and so true, why do a trick if there was no perspective and pleasure from it. I needed to admire and appreciate another person doing a trick, showing me that it was possible and that it was not only in videos, that it was an aesthetic sporting gesture. I remember my first 540, it came out after seeing Aidan, a fellow snowboarder, do it with admirable neatness, flying a few meters. After a while it came out. That day I tried a big air freeride backflip. I laugh, I didn't land it. But it was spectacular to spontaneously understand at speed that this was the hill where I could try flying and see everything upside down.

We are not an order, a calculation, an indication, a mind ordering, we are not a fiber, we are a person in nature. Nor is it the dumbbell, the pull-up technique, the running methodology, but it is a whole. One is Mushin.

We like the madness, the merry-go-round, all that. But let's think about it, nothing makes sense in that logic. We do sports and exercise to stay healthy because being healthy in theory makes us happy. However, we have the possibility of fulfillment in every minute of outdoor activity or indoor training, and we waste it. It reminds me of the story of the fisherman who worked a couple of hours a day and was happy with that, which a city man did not understand when he met him. Maybe you heard the story, look it up.

What is the deeper meaning of what we are doing by doing physical activity? Well, come on, we already studied that before it was part of survival with hunting, fishing, gathering and all that shelter, and now we have none of those needs and it seems that the body takes any form, society is looking for explanations, as well as the concepts of aesthetics, we are looking for

meanings and justifications. Isn't it crazy that we choose as fortunate beings in the world, to train or do sports activities, and yet we complicate ourselves?

We invent problems to keep ourselves busy. The meaning, the effort, the fullness, the perfume is in front of us and at the same time we are part of it. It is not external. The body and the training provide us with channels of expression and connection to our present nature.

Experiencing a cultural trip or getting to work on a personal social or ecological project, rather than losing focus, may hold one of the great keys to all of this: **nothing was ever that serious**. The mountaineer who can only see the mountain is like a galloping horse biased by fear. Let's walk through a couple of places where serious issues do happen, put things in their place without the need to justify what we do. This applies also to professions, not only to our physical activity. Look up, look around. Let's walk looking at our feet. We are not more aware and mature only for posing some humanitarian issues.

How do we define aesthetics?

What about sports aesthetics?

Personal aesthetics?

Do I inhabit my mind-body?

What is Alterity?

Do we exercise Alterity?

4. Strengthening the Mind

The question arises in this Mind-Body-Environment if we are strengthening our mind and not only the muscles of the body. A mind understood as part of nature. Is there something like training? Something like mental well-being? Something like philosophy? Something like sport? Something like fresh air? Do these compartments exist outside our mind? Is there a conceptual reality or is it a social game of survival?

We are not going to delve into this. These are the kind of doubts in which philosophers, sociologists and mystics have wanted to dive for thousands of years. However, the mere exercise of asking ourselves this question from time to time, allows us to deflate the obsession that leads us again and again to personal self-boycott. The right book for the right person at the right time is to the mind what the right sports activity for the right person at the right time is to the body. Have you noticed this trap? Yes, mind and body are one thing, and reading and movement are one thing.

It is important to appreciate more than just the training, the body or the sport, because there is no such thing in isolation from the rest of our life. The mind is present in every aspect, not only in the sea, the mountains, or the swimming pool.

What we call Nature? What is it? Is there anything that is not nature, is there anything artificial? Again, we define what is nature and what is not. But rather it could all be seen in intensities of connection or disconnection. As living and permeable organisms, we are not outside nature. The mind is often weak, there is brain fatigue. These are symptoms, conscious or not, accepted or not, but present almost unequivocally in any human group in the 21st century.

Ignacio Larrañaga was a Spanish Capuchin priest. He wrote a book called *From Suffering to Peace. Towards an inner liberation*. I like to go through used bookstores whenever I have time and so I was surprised to open this book in a Spirituality drawer. The first thing I read was *Beginning at Home*, a few introductory paragraphs that get right to the point. We must save ourselves, even if we spend our time pointing fingers at the other ones. The book is unexpectedly a gem of sharp, practical spiritual psychology. Almost logotherapeutic, to then offer to those who want a more religious approach.

What I intend to convey here is how, understanding that we go through life sometimes very extreme, very ups and downs, very anxious, stubborn, locked in stories and fictions, something more important than training the body in isolation, is to train the mind. Better said, the mind-body.

In one chapter Ignacio proposes us to see the importance of *Strengthening the Mind*, to get rid of oppressive fear, compulsive doubt, brain fatigue and all its symptoms such as depression, lack of motivation, lack of self-esteem.

First step: Don't resist. Yes. So trite and Zen. Do not resist to the obsession, to what is repressed. He defines it very graphically as wanting to compress a spring. The more we press it, the more force it has to jump through the air. And so, it happens to us, over and over again. We throw away a training session, a sport, healthy habits, whatever, because suddenly we lie to ourselves and we find ourselves unconsciously locked in a fantasy world where we do not allow shadows, images, doubts to enter. Everything MUST be right and so it breaks. We oppress ourselves so much that one day it all ends, we suffocate fire with too much wood.

We accept symptoms such as disengagement and demotivation from what used to make us well. Or we accept that we are sleeping badly, or that we are reactive, or that we are not getting a running time, or an exercise like the vertical, or we do not have the weight we want. We accept that we are not in control of everything that happens inside us. The sporting and psychological impotence, above all, comes from oppression.

We accept our brain fatigue and lack of control. We become aware of our carelessness, how we suddenly see ourselves in the mirror and we no longer like ourselves so much. How we are comparing ourselves sportingly, how we see some things as silly.

Second Step. Naturally diminish the flow of thoughts and thus recover the mental energy that we consume. Release the mental activity at will. Offer new courses for the river. Dams will not work. We will be touching on how we can accompany the internal changes from another more peaceful and less violent place, less driven by reactivity and emotions that we sometimes take too seriously. Less imprisoned by our illusions and speeches. Mushin.

Step Three

Exercising concentration, relaxation and silencing. I save myself. Neither Epictetus, Rumi, the Bhagavad Gita, Deshimaru nor the most motivational sports book is going to get me out of the mud.

Abracadabra, are we happy now?

No, we have already read tons of books with similar steps to these as well as videos, movies, reels, quotes. Nothing lasts and everything passes away. The one who talks about God, finds their self for a while and loses him again. The one who finds their nature going down a first snowboard descent of some remote peak, feels in Nirvana but it is not forever either. Nothing

is forever. The mind, whether we get along with it or not, is always there and we shape reality without much decision in it.

According to Enric Corbera, the reference of bio- neuro- emotion, happiness is an internal state that is nourished by constancy, coherence and the capacity to love. Happiness is not a right; it is a decision.

I like the definition; it is nice and light. Although when we talk about decision, it is not the decision as we perceive it by hand, like a Hollywood movie, like being the captain of my destiny and that's it, without perceiving anything else. The decision with conscience, with attention, the decision to persevere in the path of a mind that untrains itself and goes through the middle way.

As we seek to untrain and learn to learn, we are also needing to pay attention and give due care to the mind that guides the boat. To have this attention even in the repetition of thirty sit-ups or ten squats, we can appreciate the integration of what we learned and what we can learn without paradigm limitations. What I learned in my life, the meditation techniques, the activities that give me peace, the manual works like gardening or furniture restoration or pottery or drawing mandalas, everything has already implicit part of this mental strengthening, and therefore nutrients for a healthy life.

When we have those *insights*, in which we suddenly appreciate something we were already doing, everything is a little calmer. Untraining the mind to strengthen it later, it is not about throwing everything overboard as we have already talked about. But to appreciate and recycle. To be a little calmer in all that, to integrate, to commune elements, to see a whole. The personal historical line is also a whole, it is not a cut segment.

A personal example:

The conception of space and objects: another meditation exercise I learned was to concentrate on specific objects and observe each detail, its form in space, its textures. It is seeing an object for the first time. I practiced this for many years a bit in play, and once without realizing it I was doing the same thing with training objects. I would stare at the dumbbell, or the mat, the bars. I would reach my hand over and grab the object and integrate it into the movement. I don't really know the concrete results, I don't want to sell that I was suddenly a machine, but the experience itself is rich enough to give me peace when I feel disconnected from what I'm doing.

I see the fit ball for the first time, and I see my body using the fit ball and I see the contraction of my abs and the posture of my shoulders, and I appreciate the balance. It would be hard for me to describe it; it is perceived all at once with a firm smoothness. There is no more discouragement, or doubts or fears. Like a sincere embrace with someone you love. I didn't want to usefully integrate meditation exercises into the gym, but when you strengthen your mind and work day by day on dismantling those intellectual boundaries, things naturally blend together. I was pressing this, sticking to the steps of the recipe. This experience happens to me before I write my travel journal, I look at it as I look at the pen, the mate and the thermos.

This leads us to the demolition of the unconscious walls. If we understand that there is no such thing as an isolated body. But that mind-body is one and the same thing. That in turn the mind-body is in a space and everything is nature, we stop perceiving the training or the open air or whatever as a hermetic cubicle.

I train by eating fruits in the morning, by drinking my mate while writing and keeping my back posture. By walking down, the street when I am overwhelmed, by refreshing myself, by reading a light book when the mind is tired, by indulging in a treat, a beer after a tremendous adventure. I learn by writing a personal journal, and I train healthily by keeping my house clean (also the mental house) and getting up early putting everything in its place. I train when I inhale and exhale consciously knowing that breathing is the mother of so many things, I train when I sweep, when I lift a chair, when I move a piece of furniture, when I help my mother to prune a tree, when I swim in a lake, when I learn to take care of plants, when I generate healthy habits, I train by accepting mistakes when chatting with people who have different opinions, I train when I take a step aside or remain silent, I learn when I look at my body while training, when I accept pain, when I enjoy fatigue, when I dismantle the idea of suffering or guilt. I train when I catch something in some remote place and eat it, also when I play a soccer game with friends, or fix my bicycle. There is no distinction between learning, unlearning and training. Everything is movement.

"...Our contemporary education, then, indoctrinates us in the glorification of doubt and has in fact created what one might almost call a religion or a theology of doubt, in which, to be considered intelligent one must show that one doubts everything, always point out what is wrong and seldom ask what is right, cynically denigrate all inherited philosophies and spiritual ideals, and in general anything done out of simple good will or with an innocent heart..."

Sogyal Rinpoche, in The Book of Death.

It is always easy to be skeptical in triviality, skeptical with what is outside, with what does not define us so much. The question is who is skeptical with our personal construction, with what we think we know or say we do not know, with what we have of "experience", with the things we are "proud" of. Who goes beyond the intellectual frontier and political correctness to really question, to break, to disintegrate.

The true open mind, the one that is so widely sold today, does not travel through intellectual relativism or comfortable skepticism, or constant dissatisfaction. The true open mind that someone seems to be talking about in a wise book, deals with deeper roots.

On Prayers, mantras, temples and recycling.

A personal experience led me to recycle many things that I had reactively hidden. And I think it's interesting to share it by exposing me a little bit. I have seen how many adults recover habits from home, from some place where they were educated. Taking care of plants or going to the square to think, visiting grandma every Wednesday, etc.

I had a strong Catholic upbringing, so the Rosary was something incorporated into trips and pilgrimages, the *Our Father* was daily bread, the prayers, etc. Also, when I was a scout I had a Christian upbringing and knew a lot of prayers.

I learned without being aware that the temple was a place of silence and prayer, of contemplation and pause. It was also a place where I got very bored. With age it became a place of escape, of self-absorption or contemplation. After some time, the temple was lost as well as the prayers. Travel, a less religious perspective and always curious about the world, ecumenism and all kinds of knowledge had taken me away from the belief in the God spoken in Catholicism terms and structure.

So, I stopped praying. I learned mantras, studied and navigated mainly Buddhism, Hinduism, Stoicism, the sciences and Taoism. Zoroaster was more interesting. I was unwittingly taking elements of everything. However during all these years, I could observe how certain learning was imprinted in my cultural DNA and it made no sense to deny it. On the contrary, as I stopped caring what the people around me thought, I appreciated more and more all the non-transferable capital I had.

The mantras while they have done their thing, I did not have them incorporated like the decade or the Rosary. The scout prayers were much stronger than any Taoist mystical repetition. I

progressively let my mouth repeat prayers when I was paddling a river alone, when I was walking long distances, when I was swimming, when I was ski touring in the Alps. When I was walking and the mind was overflowing with ideas and analysis of personal episodes, I began to let old prayers take place and so the mind became serene. Now with a much greater and calmer consciousness, without fanaticism, without waiting for something. I had built into every muscle the fact that by repeating prayers, my body needed to relax, I could see the trees, feel the breath, stop navel gazing. **Repetition, which seemed the opposite of spontaneity, was the most spontaneous thing in the moments when I lost my balance.**

When I started freediving and wanted to stay at the bottom for a long time and needed to embrace the fears of the deep, the dark or the lack of air, I also started to let in what I had already learned as a kid. There is only one Argentinian song: *El fantasma* from Árbol, and the Rosary that give me the peace of mind and spirituality to enjoy in another way the bizarre fact of being drowning. I also made a progressive move to mantras that kept the vocal essence of those prayers and went on to recycle both.

Sing here my being nothing, sing here my being everything.

This is interesting because when I started to break some personal records, without realizing it, I was applying this. Repetition was fundamental. Surely, you have another education, another experience. In that past there are elements that, without touching romanticism, are healthy and possible to recycle. To open the door to them, to enjoy them in our present. This acceptance led me to that empty space I was reading about. One day when I reached four and a half minutes underwater, I had stopped repeating, I saw Marcos floating in a black space, I enjoyed it, the repetition opened that door, the door of Nothingness. By the time you realize it, you are already a compulsive thinking machine. At least for a few seconds something different was felt.

The marathon runner, the cycle-traveler, the mountaineer, the long-distance walker, or even anyone who suddenly finds himself exposed to a large psychological-environmental demand, **can afford to stop oppressing what he already has inside with a very important value.**

Any kind of manual regarding this would be a lie, a selling of a rigid product for something that can't be. We are not like that. Let me quote Da Vinci.

No one should imitate another

A painter should never imitate the manner of another, for then he will be called the grandson of nature, not the son; for nature being so abundant and varied, it will be more proper to go to her directly, than to the masters who learned from her.

This brings me to something more important. Spaces.

Temples

Just as we have prayers, songs, healthy habits inscribed in our growth, spaces appear that allow us to order ourselves. The fact of going to the gym, in my personal case, is a source of tranquility, it is a commitment with myself. I do not apply it all the time, but in specific moments and places. The spaces have the elements arranged to generate tendencies. There is no white magic. If the gym doesn't work for you, nothing happens. There are no rules. There are times when that space doesn't do me any good and I can make up for it by going to a square to move. It depends on our state of mind, our reality, our motivations. I think the most important thing is the energy of an organic and healthy movement.

Friends who need their two soccer games a week on a synthetic field, people who routinely go to the riverside in the afternoon to walk their pets, someone who, to read, goes to a café that he likes very much and that he used to go to when he was a child.

When dealing with spaces, I learned as a child, as I said before, to associate temples with calm, meditation, contemplation. A silent space, often cool, where the body is predisposed to go down a change.

This corporal and spiritual education is so much a part of me that when I began to travel, I naturally immersed myself for hours in Muslim mosques, Orthodox temples, Jewish, anthroposophical spaces. A curious thing is that science and natural history museums generate the same psychological states in me. I would go into a mosque and tend to copy how they prayed, and I would relax. In a traumatic episode I had in a country where there were no churches, I ended up more than once seeking silence and spirituality in their chanting repetitions.

Space has meanings that are transmitted to our body by education. **Spaces that we associate with something negative can be re-signified, re-learned.** I used to associate going to the river in Buenos Aires with the pessimism of not having money to travel. I would

look at the river and think a lot about what I did not know. I would go fishing or to drink mates but I always had a touch of anguish. Today I am on an interesting path of de-training. I brought elements to experience the river in a different way with the same look of an apprentice and at the same time of a journey. I am going to paddle, I decided to learn kitesurfing in the Rio de la Plata. It's been five years since I started looking for hiding places, places to train, corners that transmit me something very particular. I could have learned to kite before but I always had a need to learn it in my hometown because I knew it would do me well to see that space with another perspective. To join someone who sees that river with a fresher look. There is another important point, to open yourself with otherness to the perspective that others have of a certain space and enjoy it.

I am sorry to talk so much about myself when what is important is you, those who read. But if I go away from personal examples, I would be giving you something that is not quite real in me, that is not quite alive, that has so much personality in the experience of spaces that to dissociate this would be my trap. I intend to convey the feeling, not the content of what I say.

It is easy to visualize how many people suffer with associating a space with an ex-partner, it brings back memories that make them anxious or uncomfortable, etc. It is normal at the beginning to avoid those streets or spaces, however with time and perspective plus a determined attitude, we can remodel our experience of those places. Or the place could remodel us positively. I am sure that all this that sounds so pseudo mystical, can be seen in your lives. That is amazing about human beings, each person is a world.

The spiritual space, the training space, or the space where we live is in constant interaction with us, it shapes us, and we shape it. When something doesn't work, we step aside and look at this Wheel. We subtly see that we can redirect or let go.

A similar approach to architecture and interior spaces can be seen in certain oriental traditions, although when going to the details it can also be seen in many wise people of any culture. I have seen similar appreciations in Mediterranean and Alpine villages as well as in a country house in Buenos Aires or the Puna. There tends to be a greater appreciation and awareness of the human-environment interchange in places where open spaces, forests and sea are closer and more integrated into daily life. It seems that intuition and sight become sharper and lighter. The house is not a bubble, but part of the environment.

In these temples, squares, houses, gyms and mountains, we can also dive deeper and observe the strength of the archetypes of space. I leave this open for another time. What does

the hut mean? The garden? The climbing wall? The dojo? The house on the sea? The municipal library? The snowpark? The base camp? The pilates room? The workshop?

Separate point. Returning to the game, Gaston Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space* points out:

A quiet leaf truly inhabited, a quiet gaze surprised in the humblest of visions, are operators of immensity. These images make the world grow, the summer grow.

The training space and us training, and the muscle that moves when doing an exercise in that space, in my perspective is an operator of immensity And I do not say this from the justification of mystical delirium. But from the simple fact of experiencing nature in our own nature in space.

We translate: to inhabit learning, to inhabit training is to untrain and leave the old skin behind. To inhabit the effort, the climb, the pain, the muscular elongation, the perspiration, the sporting gesture, the fear, the frustration, the error, the demotivation and everything. To inhabit the scene and the moment in which we are doing physical activity.

I write down. Recycling of:

- discipline.
- healthy habits
- Spaces
- interests and hobbies
- spiritual experiences
- exercises and movements
- manual activities

Gestalt in Movement. Movement in Gestalt.

A few days ago, I was on a river crossing in the Andes. I wanted to work on the theme of fear because in the last solo experience on another river, things had gone badly. I noticed that I was still physically expressing fear, muscle tension, biased decisions, nerves. In the evenings I listened to some podcasts on philosophy and psychology that accompanied me and with which I unraveled some mental knots and gave me a kick with which I wrote in my journal. The whys no longer came into place, but the how became important. How I was living what I was living, how I was experiencing, how I was deciding. The why was for the armchair of the city with a glass of wine, but there, with the rhythm of the Drum in the river, the *How* took a sudden protagonism. Although it seems excessive, imagine the whole day alone for several

days, in which one finds oneself ten hours doing physical activity, plus looking for shelter, cooking, sleeping. What you are thinking is distilled, like the river itself. What one reflects, listens to a podcast and observes, is taken more accurately than in environments with over-stimulation. **What you listen to, you listen more. What you read, you read more carefully.**

The thing is that in a certain podcast the Perles couple and Gestalt therapy appeared almost by coincidence the day I was meditating on the integration of life instead of the constant classification and definition of elements. I had read about them, however, as you have surely experienced, one can read a book or watch a movie in a moment of life without it meaning much to us, and then in a second round generate an incredible learning and feel everything strongly.

I am not going to define and describe Gestalt in detail here, but I will highlight certain ideas that may be of interest to us. Gestalt puts the focus back on our active role and responsibility for our own life. We perceive our reality and make decisions accordingly; we create images and explanations and meanings. We generate mental forms and when we say this, we become friends with the *Holos* we named at the beginning. It is not a sum of parts, but there is a whole that must be appreciated as such, a large form that we need to see whole to understand. Imagine that I have a specific injury in my ankle, it would not be enough in a gestalt perspective to break down the hyper specifics of the physical injury in that location. There are several elements that participate in an injury from the posture, the incorrect compensation of the injury with another part of the body, the psychological fear of doing more damage that produces muscular tension, etc.

Gestalt therapy would help us to approach our problems and perceptions in a more integrative way instead of a rumination of punctual elements that all at once should make sense of the whole.

Fritz and Laura Perles propose the "How does what happens to us happen to us? More than the exhausting why... In its bases is the:

- **Here and now:** by paying attention to our way of experiencing the present, we will consequently modify the projection of the future and how we observe the past. In the present we are unified and that here and now is what gives body and form to the experience of the past and the projection of ourselves in the future. It is in this second in which I write this that I inhabit my present.

- **Awareness:** of what is happening to us. Today, where we are and how we are. By seeing these ways in which we see reality, we can formulate in a different way this present

and projection. How we think what we think are processes that make us aware of our present and be able to participate in its modification.

- **Responsibility:** by becoming aware of being here and now, we assume responsibility for our life and consequences. Avoid illusions. It avoids pseudo-mysticism that takes away our participation in creation. Today the topic of the fiction of free will has become very trendy. Does it exist? Interesting to talk about, however in the psychology of the street and daily life it ends up justifying the inaction of people, the lack of commitment with oneself, avoiding responsibilities and consequences with those next to us. We are losing ground in the fertile field of ourselves. We were weighed down by the "I", the why, all that. However, the gestalt responsibility is lighter...lighter. It is a, Marcos, look, what I say I am what I say I am. I take a step aside and I observe myself, and I observe the hows that make my day to day. And it's all good, let's relax, it's not a business goal to accomplish, it is letting things fall back into place.

As we read more of Fritz and Laura, we will encounter people who explored a lot of Buddhism, various philosophical currents and more. Like any other therapy or approach to psychology, it is prone to criticism and has things that may not work. However, I like to take it at face value. It brings us closer to ways of perceiving our life from psychology. Just as I perceive a practical street philosophy, so psychology is a playground and application of our daily present. When we get tired of digressing into spirituality and things a bit far away like Zen Buddhism, we suddenly find scientists from Europe who propose integration, it can be useful for us to continue the path of self-realization with explanations closer to our social-personal reality.

Everything changes, tomorrow Freud can give us the right keys to a problem. The day after tomorrow, Anthony de Mello or Indra Devi, or Nāgārjuna, or any other celebrity. The beautiful thing is the process, the path. In the specifics of sport and the outdoors and detraining, we can play a little bit with the comparison and relationship and say that in that here and now, by becoming aware of our way of seeing things, is how we detrain our mind and body to produce appropriate forms.

In Gestalt, how we speak is fundamental. The personal narrative, the narrative with us can be positive. We can say to ourselves instead of Why couldn't I? How can I see this differently, how can I do it better, how do I feel? I don't mean naive optimism, but avoiding rumination, cognitive burnout, victimhood, helplessness, anguish, and so on. How we talk to ourselves and talk about the environment around us, makes us modify it since the perception is within. I am not referring to some strange magic, all this is more down to earth than perhaps we think.

If I want to see problems and impossibilities, I will have them. If I want to learn to see things as they are and see myself as I am in my day-to-day life, I will see that too, it takes time and practice and attention. That is the fun part, we are participating in the order and cleanliness of our internal house, in the restructuring of space, in the location of furniture and plants.

Failure is measured by what we say failure is. However, as we develop in society, under yokes such as Solomon's syndrome (I recommend reading this social experiment by Solomon Asch. How we lose our criteria and authenticity for not wanting to stand out in a group, for fear of differentiating ourselves and not being accepted), our personal narrative suffers from unconsciousness, massification and adherence to reasoning tendencies, lack of attention and involuntary modification. When we realize it, we are self-destructing or simply self-reproducing as just another person who fits into today's problems and dynamics and looks for answers in the same way and justifies the fiction of our life with the same script.

In a gestalt way, we observe our present and act on our body-mind connection, how we enjoy training and healthy living, the outdoors, how we talk to each other, how we take care of ourselves. We unify, integrate the physical, emotional and intellectual. **We leave a little bit behind the technique and the elements to develop an Attitude.** We open to the world and to ourselves, we pay attention, we broaden our perception.

Be as you are, so that you can see who you are and how you are. Stop for a few moments what you should do and discover what you really do. Take a little risk if you can. Feel your own feelings. Say your own words. Think your own thoughts. Be your own self. Discover. Let the plan for you emerge within you.

Fritz Perles

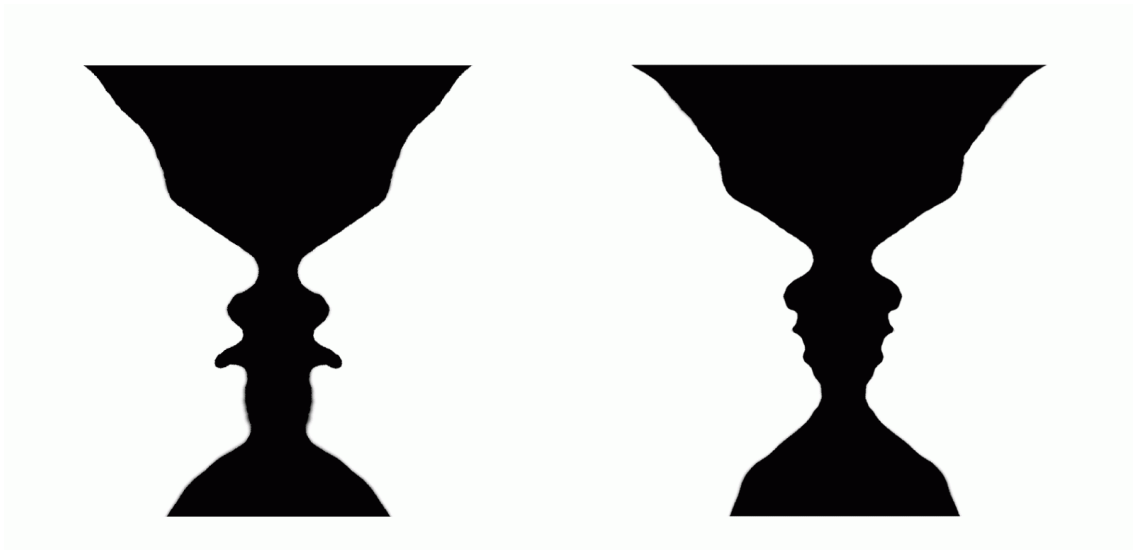
I particularly like the last sentence. It is easy to trace their spiritual perspective on the matter. Let the field of the self be fertile again. It is no longer enough to say, I don't want this because I lived this. Let the plan for us emerge within us.

Observing oneself when talking about Gestalt

First, I am not a psychologist. So, I am in no way recommending therapy. I am interested in approaches to life and existentialism, to integration and self-realization. I don't even come close to finding the source of all solutions but face the prism. On closer inspection, humanism and Gestalt have an institution in the individual. It is very close to concepts of Buddhism, however it is not Buddhism. It puts the individual first. I wonder, is the individual as individual as it is defended or are we *divisive- "dividual"*? Is there this unity that we defend with tooth and claw? In the spiritual philosophical field, I go back to the East and the bases of other religions.

The Gestalt as the stoicism are quasi conjunctural, they are great fertilizer for our land, but they are not tAll. Humanism is not the religion of the XX- XXI century? A very interesting and beneficial illusion and fiction, but it is still a fantasy, an intellectual game.

Okay, we've had enough of all this cool and deep stuff. Let's go back to the river now, to paddle, to fish and set up our shelter, to focus on the threats and observe the terrain. No Gestalt, no stoicism, no individual or training or detraining, no mindfulness or Carpe Diem, no concepts. These are all embellishments, not much more. Recognizing this, breathing deeply, stretching the body again and walking, make us not sink in hyperinformation, intellectualization, creation of new problems and chimeras. We put things in their place, let's breathe, well, we walk again lighter.



5. Freedom of the Air

If one surrenders oneself to the places, they also surrender themselves and with prodigality. Of course, the walker sees only what was already in him, but he needed these conditions of availability to open his eyes and access other layers of the real. Without inner receptivity, without a transparency to the space and the genius of the places, nothing is done, the walker goes on his way leaving behind him a possibility that he did not know how to perceive.

In Praise of Walking. David le Breton

We talk about Lumens, the properties of green color, ideal temperatures, the use of natural textures. We talk a lot about many bright and attractive things and it's great, but we're so caught up in the fact that warm light is good for us that we forget what we're already doing in that direction. Every time I have a barbecue, someone stares at the fire. The colors of it, the lights and shadows, the aroma, it's imprinted in our genetics. But we didn't need genetics to mark this for us to know it was good for us.

The same happens with any study of interior spaces and the use of elements that give us tranquility or lower anxiety. Indoor plants or the nervous activation of feeling bare feet on the grass or a hemp carpet. In all this we end up getting entangled and forgetting that there are simpler things.

We are living organisms in nature, and although by mental processes and social consequences we fall asleep: we enjoy without social or cultural difference a sunrise or a sunset. All the fantasy and fiction we want to believe is later. **The instant of the pink lights of the sunset, as well as the hypnosis generated by those Cumulus that change with the wind, or the formation and breaking of a wave, or the lightning that crosses the sky, are elements of nature that place us all in the same place of Astonishment and Beauty.**

I continue. The morning light on the leaves of the trees, the smell of damp earth, the rustle of plants in the wind. The unconscious listening to birds, the sand between toes, the colors of flowers, the hues of water. Every observable and experiential part of nature is habitable and shapes us.

Dancers, singers, martial arts fighters, bodybuilders, office workers who train in the afternoon, anyone can nurture their professional development and personal well-being with nature. Holy Remedy, originality in the truest sense of the word, roots. We can disarm today's hyper-specificity and immobility. Take water from the river who is thirsty.

What we call free air is us being free. The integration of Nature into the narrative of our lives is the crucial axis of unlearning. It is everywhere and within. I do not pretend that you live it as I do, that you need to sleep bareback or go into cold water to recover the present. We let nature flow without conceptions. I love the curious intrigue of those who for the first time dare to do a mountain trekking or those who learn a board sport, or those who begin to enjoy a mate in a square or a small bicycle trip.

But it is also spectacular to appreciate the concentration and direct contact with the elements when you see someone cooking with fires, or gardening, or swimming peacefully or walking their dog.

Great mountaineers and explorers have already written wiser and older that if there was something they appreciated, it was a good walk in the woods. And for those who are fonder of water, know well that there is no better sleep and tiredness than the one experienced after a day of swimming, paddling, surfing, kite surfing or diving, that healthy tiredness of the whole body that makes us sleep deeply.

In demanding sports such as mountaineering, we lose perspective. We are more concerned with the time, with the dangers, with the mission and success, with the effort. We underestimate the energy that comes from appreciating movement and inhabiting observation. We are fortunate, we have in our visual memory an unimaginable number of postcards.

My chest overflows as I write this and recall the number of unparalleled moments I had with the snowboard, with the ice axe, with some good view of a white valley and the rock. I have a very special love for snow, an element of nature that gives me peace. However, I often go without paying attention. It is everywhere, it is an immense richness that we have the possibility to experience what we do, yet we fall asleep, we forget, and so we even go anxious and distressed even in the mountains or in the seas. This is proof p that we carry anxiety inside and it will stay inside if we close the pores of our system. We can embrace natural environments, the wild, what is easier, but it does not mean that suddenly life is solved. Free air must circulate in the inner temple.

That's a beautiful thing about sharing a wilderness activity with a newbie. You see everything with fresh eyes. Or not just a beginner, but someone from another environment. When I go to a nature reserve with my sister, who is an artist, I see and perceive other things. And she sees details that go totally unnoticed and make me forget about the kilometers, the schedules, the slope and a thousand things that I have incorporated.

The free human being in the forests, lakes, beaches, pampas, recovers the compass of what feels good and what does not feel good. It is easier simply because of the decrease of stimuli driven by the effervescence of hyperconnection.

When we return to the city, we can fine-tune our aim to detect issues that make us unbalanced. The problem of adrenaline in risky sports is a serious trap playing against our health. I have noticed on several occasions and observing myself over an entire season how several mental wellness alerts had been activated. For example:

- My concentration and quantity of reading had decreased. As had the quality of what I was reading. This is based on my own history. It is what continues to serve me today as a constant pacemaker to see how unfocused, overstimulated or anxious I am. Reading on paper even more gives me clear signals of calm and relaxation, true rest. The book in nature has even more nuances as well as intuitively understanding how it makes a good balance in the type of reading. If I read two months in a row self-help books or papers or books about sports and explorations, I do not generate the sensations I need. It's worth a single act more than several books sometimes, that's why I must pay attention and let myself read more fantastical or historical things... Reading fiction, more poetic-spiritual books or adventures stretches the mind in another way, it takes other psychological muscles. **When all this doesn't work well, an alarm goes off.** My brain is so busy with other things that I need to ask myself if I want to leave them that space. I enter the exhausting cycle of hyperstimulation.
- Sleep: the normal tiredness from outdoor physical activity, simple as walking or camping gets me back on axis in the kind of deep sleep I enjoy. As well as the subconscious activity in dreams. The constant adrenaline activity made me sleep poorly; I was not processing well what I was doing. Another alarm goes off. There is more craze for risk than a Self in nature.

It would not be a psychoanalytic obsession, but an intuitive, attentive, present observation.

Adaptation

When it seems that in the routine of working life we have the factors under our control, in the wild nature there is constant adaptation. When walking, a foot does not necessarily go in a perfect straight line, not even the knees, the adductors, the abdomen, the balance of the body. The use of the eyes, ears and nose.

The nature calls for constant Adaptation and Flexibility and that value is enormous.

Some of the clearest elements of this are changes in temperature, wind and humidity. The quick and unconscious appreciation of what we like, watching the shadows and where to rest, etc. It is not about air conditioning, fan or heating. Wanting to carry this in the safety of our equipment is morbid. The wild should not and does not have to be neat, tidy and comfortable all the time. It is adaptability that grants us mental comfort. It's great to see a climber in the waves and a surfer in the snow, a mountaineer in the city and a city dweller in the woods.

The outdoors is just the liberation from the expectation of keeping certain issues UNDER OUR CONTROL. *No, I'm from the beach, leave me alone. or on the contrary, sea water and sand are so uncomfortable....* The human being who learns dwells in himself.

Obviously, everything is uncomfortable or rather, out of our possibilities of order and control. And that is gold. It is gold, all that we like to repeat about neuronal flexibility, concentration, active meditation, mental health, etc. It's all there. We don't need to be in control, we don't need to be good at what we do all the time, we don't need to keep everything in order.

The body in the exposure of more than a week to trekking and some swimming in waters for example, allows us to find the right muscular balance. All that about the bone mass and our proportion. The diet, everything is leaving behind the processed information, and we see it in the day to day.

The body asks to stretch, asks to move the upper trunk when we only walk, asks to bathe, to clean itself, to eat fresh food such as fruits and vegetables or, in my case, to fish or cook meat on the fire. It asks me at night to see the stove or the flame of the heater at least. Also to put aside the music in my headphones and listen to what's going on around me. I have seen totally city people who after a few days, become very observant, more so than me. I love it when someone perks up and says, "It's going to rain, isn't it? Neither she nor I know that we feel a change of humidity on our skin. We also sense low pressure, bugs, birds. That person may have seen the frenetic activity of the ants but did not consciously associate it with what he said. The point is that he said it spontaneously by being part of nature.

The outdoors I am interested in is not that of the classic expedition that brought productive triumph to the wilderness, nor is it the media adventure of bringing all comfort to the landscapes. Nor is it that of one who goes to "Experience Life in the Outdoors". One can simply begin to feel freedom by spending more and more time in more intimate contact with the wilderness.

In this I get less relativistic and surely many people don't like it. I always have those discussions in which they tell me: Well Marcos, maybe not, that person is not into nature, he/she is a loft person, into other things. I have a quiet certainty that with the right accompaniment, place and activity, anyone can experience the discomfort of nature. Perhaps by day four of hiking, camping or traversing, you will feel in crisis, dirty or tired. I would venture to say that if someone was not exposed to really unnecessary or too limiting experiences, after a few months in your city, they will feel a certain need to experience something of what they experienced there. Dersu Uzala knew that feeling, as did Kipling's Mowgli metaphorically or Buck, that strong dog described by Jack London.

Sometimes I find it funny how people tell me they wouldn't do it, but they have no self-perspective. An acquaintance of mine spent five hours in the farm working and doing physical activity. For me that was already a huge activity in nature, but she didn't appreciate it as an outdoor activity.... The other, visual thing that I do is simply a step that is taken like any learning, with that feeling a little bit of nerves, of amazement, of open-mindedness. **Nobody is really learning if they think they already know.** If I think I already know what it's like to go into the wild, there's not much to learn or say or untrain. It's bringing hermeticism to the most permeable and dynamic spaces.

If you are exposed ten nights to cooking with fire, to having to make yourself comfortable with a log and watch the flames and the stars, it will have such an impact on the deep mind that it will never be the same. If your way of getting clean is to get into a lake if you must walk through a forest and look for a place to take a nap, to watch sunset after sunrise after sunset. There we can feel all that of the lumens, the texture of the materials, if you are a lark or all that, if such a muscle is asleep. Is there.

Although it is said time and again that everything is in the mind, now it is my turn to turn the cake. As permeable beings in contact with the environment, it is unthinkable for me to detach myself now from the importance of the situation and environment to which I am exposed or to which I must live. The environment channels us into certain values or others, into one diet or another, into certain sensations or others, into certain addictions, or pleasures, or tendencies of thought. From the order of our home to our workout space, to the type of path we walk,

everything has an exchange with us. Perhaps with many more miles of emotional and cognitive learning, I can be happy in the harshest conditions on earth such as a prison cell for months in some conflict zone. But today, by becoming aware of our environmental dependence, we can begin that path of mindfulness.

Just as a clean table directs us to be tidy and clean to start writing with our computer, a nature in constant movement, uncomfortable and full of nuances, asks us to be adaptive, flexible and very attentive to everything that happens. But beyond the words, it is quite normal to see how the looks become simpler, the mental *loops* in which each one is becoming less serious, the conversations more direct, the altruism more spontaneous. Everyone expresses themselves and is expressed naturally based on their individuality. This is a continuous learning and untraining, the typical “Volver a Volver”. A thousand nights camping does not make us wiser, although perhaps for the one who walked with consciousness, more attentive to the road. Later, when it is time to be in a city or place with less rugged terrain, it is easier to be creative and generate activities or walks or whatever it is that reconnects us with that self that we like, that has less anxious mind, that is more learning, fresher.

We are constantly recycling our sporting and physical past. The discomfort sometimes arises from carrying structures that are no longer useful, from materials that are no longer necessary, or on the contrary, from disregarding what we have learned and falling asleep.

You don't have to force yourself to do something amazing to get back into the swing of things. Sometimes, as in my case, it is enough for me to avoid taking a cab or a bus and visit my parents by walking around the blocks where I know there are many trees. One small gesture can be associated to another and thus, waking us up again. If I have confinement in Buenos Aires, I like to go for a walk when it rains or it is very windy, but it is also very nice to appreciate the tea watching the rain after having gone dancing. I mention dancing because it is a very important physical-artistic activity. Nature is expressed in the dance, and it is cognitive liberation, just like lighting a fire and looking for a place to sleep.

While I was writing this part, my sister recommended a book by Masanobu Fukuoka called *The One- Straw Revolution*. It was about natural farming. As soon as she gave me the book, I read the prologue and I was attracted by his personality expressed in his spiritual approach to nature. Scientific and spiritual, of action and with an interesting cultural background. I share two quotes that express very well important questions about the nature we are trying to understand.

Nature is everywhere in perpetual motion: conditions are never exactly the same from one year to the next.

The world has become so specialized that it has become impossible for people to understand anything in its entirety.

We can ask ourselves several questions:

What activities momentarily free us from the need to check our mobile phones and networks?

Do we know the path that leads to addiction?

Do we recognize when we are over-revving?

Can we think of activities or environments in which we detach from hyperconnectivity?

How does this hyperconnectivity affect our contact with nature, our relationships, our family contact, our projections and daydreams, our physical health?

What outdoor things do I like or would like to know about?

What elements or spaces of nature in the place where I live give me peace of mind?

Us being free is the essence of what we call free air. If we carry a prison inside and we are not open to anything, nothing much will happen unless we place ourselves in a situation of survival where there are no more options but to look and do. On the other hand, if we recognize that we are fallible and then permeable, free air awaits us.

6. The symbolic framework

It shows up in school, in us as individuals, in recreational groups, political parties, families, an army, a tribe, a religious group, a climbing community, a CrossFit team or runners, a snowboard crew, etc.

The symbolic framework is the dreamlike fantasy that makes symbolic allusions and justifies emotions and ways of doing. It is a story we tell ourselves and play a part in. How real is it?

A high-performance athlete who strives every day to beat his records has a symbolic framework as much as a political group. What there is in common in any of these things is fantasy.

The bad thing... to forget that it is only a symbolic framework, an abstract, subjective, fictitious conception. From Larrañaga:

Disillusions derive from illusions and disappointments from daydreams. People start by climbing on the roof of fictions and thus the fall can only be fatal. They begin by deluding themselves, closing their eyes to reality, cherishing excessive fantasies and the awakening cannot but be bitter and enormously frustrating.

Sports frustration. Aesthetic frustration. Frustration in relationships. Frustration in our life routine. Professional frustration.

Instead of the unconscious symbolic framework constructing us, we can take a step with a historical perspective (of our own life), recycle it and reinvent it. The awareness of the game of fictions that we live in our personal and social mind is fundamental to stop conditioning a training, a sports goal, a search for the wild, etc.

The symbolic path is an acceptance of the complexity of our conscious and unconscious mind. Struggling to empty the mind constantly only makes matters worse. We are not Buddha by wanting to be Buddha.

Instead of fighting against windmills, we can turn to our memory, to the environment, to the imagination and find a symbolic framework that suits what motivates us and channels our nature. Surely with time and dedication we will even be able to get rid of this too, to be able to write like Deshimaru, a simple unadorned book on how to sit zazen and meditate. But during this, we continue to live in a society that is incredibly complex, hyper-stimulating, with too many things that we feel we are missing. As well as a society with an artistic and poetic capacity and need.

An entrepreneur, an economist, a community manager also has unconscious symbolic frames with the mere fact of having referents in their area and a creative image of how they want to live that professional experience.

Marie Kondo, a Japanese referent of order in the house, detachment, and many other values and concepts, also creates a symbolic framework when she writes a book like *-The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing*. The fiction of greeting and thanking the things we are going to get rid of and give away is something else in this framework. It is a symbolic element.

Symbolic framework is expressed in much more than we think. The question is how conscious we are of it. If there is no attention, it ends up molding us in series, liquidates our natural individuality, turns us into repeaters of sentences and speeches. Two sides of the same coin. Look at some examples:

- The Olympic javelin thrower who has a tattoo of a Spartan.
- The American with the American Dream.
- The Latin American who raises a flag of the Pachamama.
- A communist who quotes from the Manifesto when he talks.
- The yoga teacher with her meditation elements, clothing and diet.
- The climber with his campervan, his photos attached, his bedside books.
- The Jew with his kippah and Torah.
- The runner who watches motivational movies and feels some of the archetypes in her training.
- The Argentinean fan with his soccer team jersey.
- The surfer with his baggy shirt, the necklace, the way he walks.
- The economist or investor who gets excited about *The Big Short*

Of course, are exaggerated examples, but still real ones.

The tattoos that today are so normalized in Argentina and other countries, apart from being a vindication and appropriation of the body as well as a generational emancipation, are also a very clear expression of symbolic frames. A furious need to show. It is curious, today it is more interesting in Argentina the young man of twenty-five-thirty years old who is not tattooed. Today Carpe Diem and nomadic work is a symbolic frame. Sometimes symbolic frameworks are mixed with consumerism, such as the consumerism of experiences or stereotypes. It means that the symbolic frame is being imposed unconsciously and we adhere to it in order not to be left out. Sometimes we also internalize them so much that we forget that it is just an

illusion. There are frameworks that are metaphorically speaking, like web designs that Wix or WordPress offer us, they are used by thousands of people because they are easy and nice. We have alarms, if we start to comply with all the punctuation of ideological, political thoughts, clothing, way of living related to our environment and activity, then the symbolic framework is creating us, and we do not want to recognize it. It is not serious, but nobody wants to be a mold.

Having said all this, I open the door to the Symbolic Framework as an interesting element to incorporate as carefully as possible in our path of retraining and detraining in sports. The symbolism of movement expressed in the details is a powerful source of motivation. Giving value to how I arrange my desk for writing or reading, how I dress for training, whether I take care of my face, how I perform physical movements, how attentive I am to creative impulses, Taoist-Stoic symbolism has personally given me a good hand in rediscovering my motivation. When I was a teenager, it was Indiana Jones, The Jungle Book, Amundsen and Antarctica or the figure of the Gentleman.

None of this is too serious, it doesn't have to be. When we believe them too much, we begin to lose it. We don't want fanaticism; we don't want fantasy to build us up and make us live in contrasts of reverie and disillusionment. In the long run, the sporting and training momentum is in the micro-present of each movement, the rest is just superficial chat, cool, but small, nice, but fake. The symbolic framework can be chosen with a little freer will, a little more attention and help. Some people resonate with Renaissance, others with pirate life, others with Silicon Valley culture, others with Berlin Vibe, others with Tolkien, others with Japanese minimalism, others with Mediterranean life, others with Franciscan austerity, others with the motivational background of Avatar, or Apple or the Matrix or the Crypt world and futurism, others with the story of Tony Stark or Frida Kahlo. Real or fictitious, it doesn't matter.

History offers us several stories, groups and cultures with a multiplicity of symbolic frameworks from which to draw. Just as there are just as many in the literary environment. The All-Blacks rugby team has a clear symbolic framework. The emblem animals of many countries are. The *Programmer's way* is another symbolic frame of this decade, that way of doing things to succeed and be happy with nomadic, well-paid work. Well, here we go. Clean slate let's entertain ourselves.

7. Down-to-earth philosophy

We have the most serious definition: *A set of knowledge that seeks to establish, in a rational manner, the most general principles that organize and guide the knowledge of reality, as well as the meaning of human action.*

Philosophy: Love of Knowledge. And everything we already know about the school. But also, as the Royal Academy suggests in my mother language, there is another definition of Philosophy and surely it can be of interest to us.

Strength or serenity of mind to withstand the vicissitudes of life. Way of thinking or seeing things

Returning to physical care, training, health and sports development, we learn that there is no real compartmentalization of our physical-sports life. Compartmentalization is just an illusion.

Philosophy is not a link but part of the material of the chain. It is living experience in our daily life. This is how it was conceived in various schools in Ancient Greece and elsewhere. Philosophy is in the street, in the gymnasium, in the open air.

In retraining and relearning what physical activity is all about, it is very valuable to incorporate philosophical knowledge in an organic way. If you ask me what will excite you, what will challenge you, I really don't know. Each person is a world full of variables and magic. I see social trends when it comes to reading philosophy. Again, the revaluation of Stoicism and Epicureanism is not accidental. It seems that texts such as Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* or Epictetus' *Enquiritidion* give us a philosophical framework for today's problems. Stoicism flourished as a practical path and at the same time in communion with many concepts of Eastern spirituality. This is not a coincidence. Philosophical and spiritual searches seem rather to be reactions to what is happening. We think we anticipate but in reality, we react. Technology and its advances happen and then we become aware of their results, consequences and social repercussions. This is followed by trends of thought, romanticization of old schools of philosophy or currents of spirituality.

Also, the sports that are taking value today are not casual, as are the forms of training. We are shaped by much more social and technological matrix than we want to accept. Again, it is not necessary to fight against this but to find value and opportunity.

We relax in the living room of our apartment, empty it of visual stimulation, put a cushion on the floor and close our eyes. In our conscious and subconscious, we have a huge amount of

words and images from the networks, the internet, the streets. **How we imagine ourselves, what values we choose, how we feel physically comfortable.** With this we take a less anxious approach to philosophy.

The moment of using the psychological lifebuoy has passed. Now we want to be aware that philosophy, that strength and serenity of mind can be nurtured with attention and care. In the same way that we think of a diet or routine or taking care of plants. Philosophy does not cease to be the training ground and enjoyment of our mind daily. Today perhaps Schopenhauer gives me some lines with coherence, tomorrow, Bauman, another day Margaret Mead.

It prevents us from childish fantasies and daydreams, helps us to keep our feet on the ground and to understand our body daily. For a mountaineer or surfer for example, this is fundamental because it is very normal to get carried away by the enormous, forgetting the less noisy day to day. We get married to concepts and currents of spirituality because they have that of promising more, of dreaming more, but many times we are not prepared. An average Westerner does not absorb Buddhism or Shintoism just by reading. We have a mind that was precariously trained, nothing happens. We don't need to be able to do everything.

Philosophy nourishes us and helps us to become fertile ground. More than just giving us concepts and ideas, above all it provides us with less dramatic and heroic perspectives to inhabit, sports activity and outdoor sports objectives feed this approach and vice versa. It generates a cycle, a healthy circle. In my opinion, there is no real training if we do not train our attention. Critical thinking, which is essential to make good training decisions, is not brought by storks.

A high-performance athlete is often uneven, looks like a legend and example and then suddenly we find someone full of pedantry, with socialization problems, with unhealthy extremes. How long can this last? But more importantly, do we really want to be a muscular and strong person who does not know how to rest, how to accept an injury, how to talk about his vulnerabilities, how to relax one day and enjoy the family? You don't have to worry about leaving things behind like keeping what you naturally want to keep.

"When I run after what I think I want, my days are a furnace of stress and anxiety; If I sit in my place, full of patience, what I need flows to me, without pain. From this I deduce that what I want also wants me, seeking me out and attracting me. There is a great secret here, for anyone who can understand it."

Rumi

A child's experience of the sea that became philosophy

Philosophy is alive, it is not words, it is here. I propose you to trace in your life similar experiences, habits, ways of seeing, *modus operandis* that keep on giving you rewards. Here is my example, yes, a bit too extreme, but I am sure you all have examples with the same dynamics of philosophy applied to your life. It is at the limit of embarrassment for me to share it, so let's get to it, otherwise we do not grow.

It ended up being the engine of change for many negative situations in my sporting life. More than the personal narrative, I think it puts visually this revaluing, recycling, and appreciating elements that were discarded such as routine or discipline. It is impressive the number of things that one carries in the backpack of life tools unnecessarily, now I count a good one but there is a good list of mistakes.

The Atlantic coast in Buenos Aires has cold, windy seas with currents of all kinds. The water is not crystal clear, and everything is rather...uncomfortable. It is not the Brazilian paradise, but as any kid who knows the sea and thinks of the mysteries of the African coast thousands of kilometers away, getting into the water despite these discomforts is a must. The sea is rough, lot of trouble, waves, factors, it is not the Mediterranean Sea.

When I was 9 years old, we started vacationing at Miramar. For some reason my mind as a child associated getting in the water with adventure despite the effort. And as a child I established a rule that I did not break except on rare occasions. I would go in the ocean twice a day every time we went to the beach no matter if it was raining, windy or freezing.

At 22 my friends knew that I had done that for many years, perhaps without breaking the rule until I was... twenty? In winter the law was one dip in the sea, not two. Beyond laughter or criticism, I always had a quiet determination.

I was not lying to myself. I knew it was going to be cold, that walking to the water was already hard, I visualized it and immediately remembered that Marcos was always happy once he passed the critical point. He always, always swam and fought the waves and felt extremely full and vibrant. Marcos knew that the Marcos who overcame the cold and got out of the comfort of the lounge chair was energetic and vibrant when he was sweeping through the waves.

The equation was very simple. I had implanted a difficult habit knowing that it was something that did me a lot of good beyond the effort. This experience is what allowed me to learn little

by little to suffer without suffering, to have accepted pain, to try what is physically uncomfortable without giving it so much psychological twist to justify the pain.

At fourteen when I started going to Patagonia, it was totally logical that the same applied to cold water lakes of between seven and fourteen degrees. So, I discovered without much effort the health that that temperature gave me.... It was the same as when I was a child. It was Marcos swimming in a lake in an incredible landscape in the mythical Patagonia, as well as someone who floated in the sea and overcame a huge wave and looked at the horizon. My rule was another, every lake or river I crossed, I was either in or in. The overall perspective of the subject as the physical sensation post-swim was the source of constant energy and motivation. It wasn't neurology studies or Wim Hof theories or books on self-improvement, it was an authentic search for that future self that appreciates effort. That action became philosophy. I found by chance a *modus operandi* with a philosophical basis playing with my future self. It is a philosophy that is talked about in several books. When one is well and can see things clearly, one makes decisions for that future Self that knows is going to walk with doubts.

This very experience of the sea is what made me more unconsciously than consciously associate any kind of swimming or immersion in water with peace of mind, virility, a fresh mind, a renewed self. When I started working in the sea I started freediving as an organic consequence of this. When I did the Divemaster course in Egypt, I always had more resistance to the cold and a tremendous desire to stay in the water. The dots connect backwards.

The most important thing is the break with the pressure of today's hedonism. When I started writing these pages, I was in an apartment with a pool on the terrace. The water was twelve degrees and no one was going. I could not go a day without getting in. It generates a series of bodily and psychological reactions that I find difficult to explain. It was there since a stubborn 9-year-old Marcos found a concrete experience of exploration, adventure and wellbeing in the implementation of an iron routine. Swimming was what made me refresh myself and feel awake to continue writing. The habit that today has a philosophical framework, strong roots.

Yes, I broke the routine. But if I see a trend curve... no way, everything is still as good. There is no need to become obsessed. I stopped having a routine like that self-imposed one about going twice to the sea every time I go to the beach. Critical thinking, adaptation, being in society, attention, watching what is going on, etc. But the inner capital is non-transferable, and I am certain that it will accompany me all my life.

The funny thing about this experience is that on multiple occasions when I need to take on a specific routine or challenge that is hard but that I know is positive in my life, I remember the cold sea on windy days.

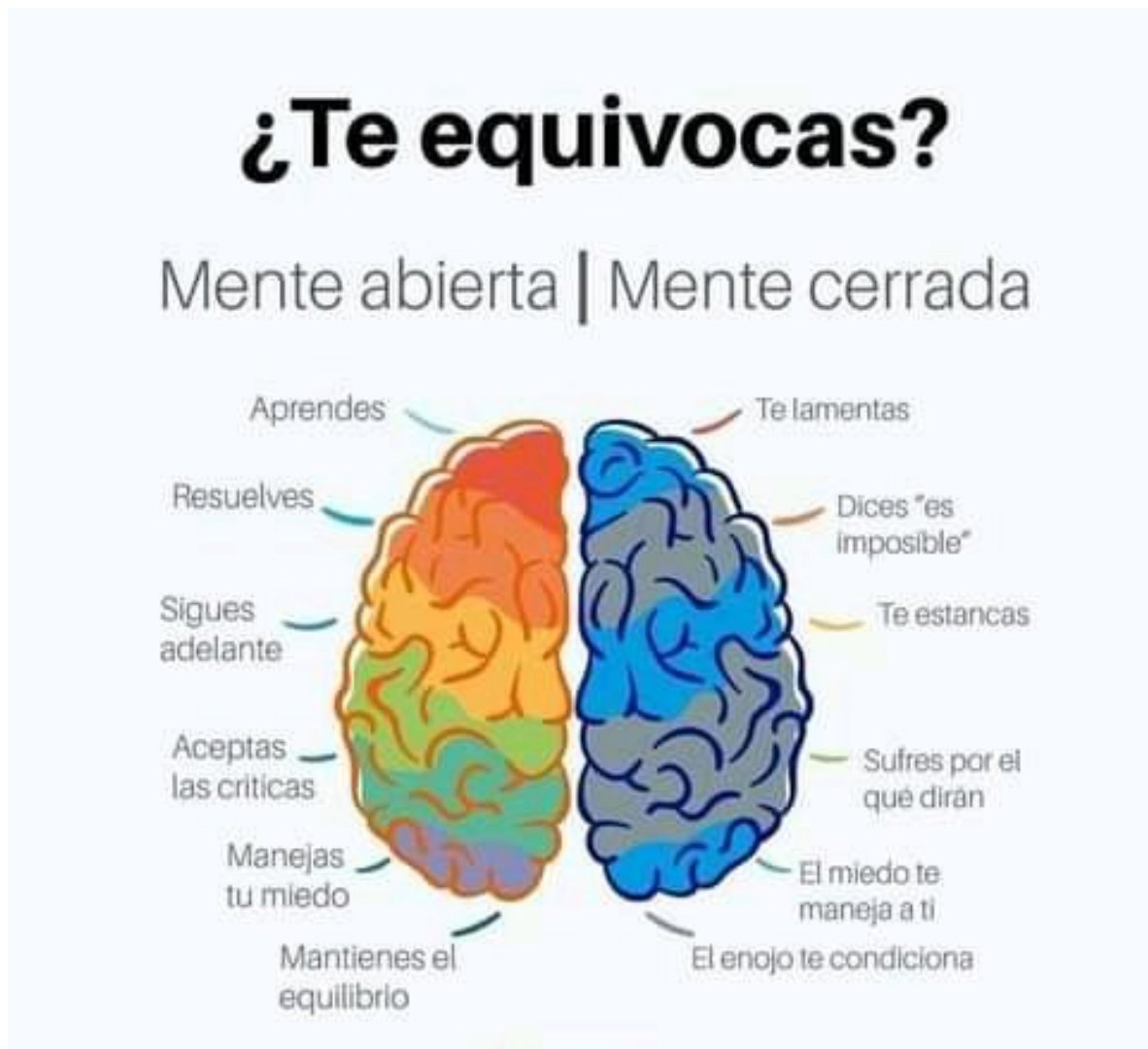
I don't trust the mind and its snobbish ideas when we are reading and rambling but trust much more the honest impact of nature on me. If we trusted the mind always, we would shortly stop exposing ourselves to the discomfort of camping, being in winters or going to sweat in a barre box. We would also spend more time planning and criticizing than acting since we have everything in the survival apparatus to maintain safe structures instead of taking them apart and taking risks.

Mind in the mind, body in the body, self in the environment. There is not much more, whether we like it or not, mind and body do not go separately, and body and mind do not go separately from the environment. The last capacity of dissociation of these three conceptual elements (I say conceptual because there is constant permeability and interchange) is proper of some mystic or very punctual character. Seeking to be by phrases and theories like one of them, is the best way to get away from that possibility. We do not push the river.

I live part of the year in Buenos Aires, a chaotic city of 20 million inhabitants. There are two, three months yearly in which I experimentally try new combinations of perspective and routines to make my visits more than just a lot of partying and family. In this exercise I discovered how Marcos believes in his doubtful and anxious thoughts after two weeks in the city and becomes stagnant. He resumes the old roles of family, friendship, clothing and previous behaviors. I can coldly identify that I don't like this Marcos very much. He modifies his thinking subtly; he begins to go through archetypes. The awareness of these facts took and will take me years and annotations in the little travel book.

The commitment to myself in Buenos Aires still needs commitment to a specific course, a training group or an activity in which I commit myself like taking a friend rowing, paying for a gym, noting down places I must visit to train my mind. It is not natural for us to be a spontaneous light every day. It is good to take care of ourselves, generate the right environments and be more cautious with stimulation. In some places we are much more consumer products than elsewhere and trusting our thoughts is a possible mistake. **The strategy many times is to plan calmly before the storm** and not negotiate this guideline we made for ourselves.

Anyone who has read a little bit of Greek classics will see applied philosophy everywhere. I don't have much more to say about this, your lives are even more interesting because you are the protagonists. The philosophy at play, in the game in which we are living, is living philosophy.



[From <https://es.quora.com/C%C3%B3mo-de-poderosa-puede-ser-la-mente>](https://es.quora.com/C%C3%B3mo-de-poderosa-puede-ser-la-mente)

8. Rest

When we do a course of something new that demands a great effort, we have a high muscular and cognitive stress. Sometimes we walk out with an enormous physical fatigue due to stressing the muscles, as well as mental fatigue, we are half gone. To learn how to learn is to expose oneself to constant mistakes and to feel tired afterwards. And to accept to be tired and to rest, which seems childish, but is one of the great overcoming nowadays. Knowing how to really rest.

What we are talking about

Do people who lie in bed and scroll through their cell phones or watch Netflix series for hours rest? When we read a little about how this is related to dopamine and specific circuits associated to stimulus-reward, we understand that we are not really resting. We would say that we get away from ourselves, that it makes us not think about our problems and for a few minutes or hours we are abstracted. The reward we were looking for in the hustle and bustle was to lie in bed and watch news and feed anxiety with more anxiety. The feeling of false mental and physical rest that gives us the consumerism of video platforms or social medias is very similar to the binge of food with sugar.

I don't care in this chapter to drill into your head the sadness of the subject and the conspiratorial world and the manipulation and all that. But simply to accept that what we define as Rest, is not so.

Rest is not a selective adaptation that we make with our mind. Rest is not much of what we think it is and perhaps we are far from understanding it in a text. If I say rest, what image comes to mind? Well, beach, mountains, let's go further. In our routine, what image comes to mind? Do we have to force it? Walk the dog? Go to a square? Walk?

Rest seems that in the XXI Century is a beautiful Holy Grail that no one understands and just as God has a thousand names and manipulated interpretations, so does rest, and everyone explains it and sells it as part of digital products.

Is deep breathing rest?

A hammock in the garden is rest?

Does the image of rest we have matter? We see that beyond any personal imagination, rest has a key element. There is communion between a relaxed mind and a relaxed body. This is very different from an overstimulated mind and a body lying down, or an overstimulated body and an idle mind. We don't have to lie to ourselves, it is not rest to do a risky sport. I am one of those who know that it relieves our head and allows us to be full, but the rest is not there, but afterwards. And the same happens with a social activity. The rest of those who take a nap when they take a nap, of those who look at trees when they look at trees, of those who lie down on the ground when they lie down on the ground, make a fruit smoothie and let the body and mind breathe deeply. The one who lets the soul elongate.

Sometimes we athletes use the *Active Rest* story to justify stressful activities on days when we don't do our primary activity. We are good at lying to ourselves and justifying our inability to get bored or stay quiet.

An active rest is associated with fine motor or low muscle stress movements. It can be tidying up something in the house, watering the garden, walking through the woods or the streets of a neighborhood. Active rest in a day that we stretch and for example we work the wrists or ankles, rather what we can feel of low intensity. With tranquility above all, with calm, with silence, with quiet music, like the day when the sea is calm, and the breeze is soft. Floating in the water, swimming chest, calm sea. Active rest or any rest is allowed to flourish because we give it the conditions for it to happen.

In Chamonix, an alpine valley with an unstoppable amount of adrenaline and risk, I began to have small rituals that motivated me to rest. One was to associate a break with a coffee at *Tête à Tête*, the café of a Spanish comrade, opposite the village chapel. That café was integrated with a short walk through the old town and looking at the architecture of some of the houses. Entering the church and meditating for a while, calming my body and soul. **If what I imagine in my mind already gives me peace, it is a good sign, if I imagine my body relaxed, my mind calm, I am on the right track.** Imagination creates more accurately by experimenting and testing what we can incorporate as rest. Very few people would tell me that healthy rest (understanding it as mental and corporal rest) is to stay scrolling on the mobile for hours.

Space

Space is that great question that we can answer during our rest. Rest allows us to appreciate the place where we are and when we are and here, we can discover new things.

If we leave an object in the same place for a long time, we tend to normalize and forget about it. It happens with photos, with texts, with many things. And the tendency to forget is personality driven.

I could have a corkboard where I write down motivational phrases, I put plans, etc. But is likely that I will write something, click on it and it will hang there for days, weeks, months and then it will be integrated into the environment, and we will stop giving it importance. It doesn't seem to fulfill the function we wanted to give it. It didn't work. You can try a white board and markers, where writing and erasing is easier and more entertaining. This makes it do its job.

If I leave a couple of dumbbells in sight to remember to train, they are likely to be left there collecting dust as well. Here it depends on each one, but it is convenient to play and try. Sometimes just the fact of changing them in our space, makes us use them. The same thing happens with a training bar that is placed on the doors. If that bar is placed in a space with a view of the bathroom, perhaps unconsciously we do not use it because we are not motivated to be training looking at the toilet. Maybe just by placing it in the opening of a living room door with a view of the garden, we naturalize it as: Hanging + visual pleasure.

This placement thing happens with everything, with where we put the fruits that make us eat fruits, where we put the alcohol, and so on. I know that if I put the Balance Board in a space with a garden view, I tend to use it whenever I get saturated from being on the computer. I know that if I leave too many beers in the fridge, I have too much easy access and want to drink when I am depressed. On the other hand, if I am depressed, I have as a counter stimulus the balance board with a view of the garden, a white board with a new sentence that I decide to put that day, a map on the table as a wind in my mind. Every day I have a pile of books on a table in sight. If I leave them for weeks in the same order, they become part of the landscape. If I change the book on top, move them around, or rearrange them, I tend to become interested again. By no means is all this a disciplined list of things to do, but rather mechanisms and details that unfold naturally as we become more attentive to how we are where we are. It is not always about escaping and going to safe places of pleasure or all the egotistical stuff of now, but about being attentive and changing the perspective.

Shifting furniture, training items, photos, etc., is a learning exercise to keep a fresher learner's mind. Stop taking for granted that That's the way it is in our space. Again, habits and objects

meant can either be a good thing, or become overly burdensome, or simply subtract. It's amazing the power of these details. At home I don't buy flours, I don't eat flours. I re-signify the hunger for sweets with a fruit, or by going to a little bar and eating a croissant with a coffee, and there I am happy because the atmosphere is modified, I go to a place I like to go, I eat just what I want to eat, I do not overcrowd myself and I even read something or it is a reason to chat with someone. This is part of the rest. I mean there is no such thing as rest detached from the environment. We will eventually come to rest in ourselves, to us as temples, but once again we live as flesh and blood human beings developing in a day-to-day life with ups and downs, stimuli and a thousand things.

Some time ago I put a small rug with a cushion on top of it. On the cushion is a miniature Sri Lankan elephant, a sacred animal. The elephant symbolizes for me, putting the elephant on the table. That is, what matters, what needs to be talked about. It was given to me as a gift with that concept. I put it on the cushion, and it symbolized that I'm going to meditate and stop spinning, I'm going to be where I am, to stop intellectualizing everything. I'm going to get to the point. For a week the placement in the living room worked, but after two weeks I forgot about it. I stopped looking at it carefully. I realized this and moved the cushion literally two meters to another wall. I went back to meditating and sitting there on my way back from a hard emotional day. Maybe next week I will change the location, change the cushion or the elephant. What I know is that beyond the combination, it is good for oneself to have an element-space that relates to being in the present and resting. To contemplate physical tiredness, or anguish, or pessimism, or sadness over a physical injury, or also to be present for a moment of gratitude. As a phrase says *The Finger That Points to the Moon, is not the Moon*. On the cushion with the elephant, I want to see the moon, not the theories and palaver they tell me about what the moon is like. **This text is verbiage, it is not the moon.** The path of personal rest you can give yourself is yours, it is not my formula.

An experiment with Instagram

In 2020 I deleted Instagram. I didn't close the account, but I deleted photo by photo, I asked the company for my entire archive, and I totally deleted the information (or I think I deleted everything). I made this decision because of a long premeditation and experimentation on the net. Writing and rewriting the change in my behaviors, my tendencies, my anxiety, the time I was wasting, what the content was generating for me, etc. I opened the account to first understand where social media was going and it got out of hand. By experimenting we get lost, because we are not as smart as we think we are, not as strong, not as attentive. When I

realized I was living all the symptoms of an addiction for which I had set out to experiment with the network and understand them. I was not resting deeply when I needed to.

Among that experimentation I had set out to do was:

- The exhibition: to question oneself, to see how I reacted by showing a character that was too personal to a diverse public. As well as what product of oneself we show consciously and unconsciously. It's interesting, we designed an Me-Product.
- The addiction to use: if it had in me the repercussion that WhatsApp or Facebook had until now.
- Writing down all the behaviors and ways of relating that there were. It was an incredible nest of new relationship mechanisms.
- See socio-technological stereotypes. I call it stereotypes expressed in a technological element. Also, archetypes. The way of the hero, the entrepreneur, the sportswoman, the cute, the single, the married, the shy but obsessive, the insecure, the stalkers- Etc. An abominable and unbelievable world. A bachelor who suddenly shows up partying and free. The best friends list, the likes, the likes, the likes, the likes, the comments, the ignore, the seen, etc. Anyone who participates makes to the social network of **uncommunication**.

Let's get down to the important stuff. I deleted everything; after posting a few things to coincide with the documentary *The Dilemma of Social Networking*, I received incredible feedback as well as talks and conversations with people with whom I didn't have that much of a connection about how the use of this social network was affecting their lives. Insecurity, feelings of anxiety, isolation, lack of communication, not connecting. Wasting time, especially wasting time. In other words: the opposite of a healthy network. Also chatting with athletes and various, I found common patterns like this of always feeling further away from those standards of perfection than before. Motivation was demotivation.

But this is not the point of this section. The point is that I spent a year without a social network, a nice detoxification that resulted in good and bad things. On the good side, writing a book, learning to concentrate, getting BORED again, incorporating meditation, getting back to my more spontaneous life and meeting people in bars and on the street. I opened more. The bad was the acceptance that we were not important, that everything was in our mind, and that also isolated me.

Let's go further, up to here there is nothing very special. Yes, it lowers anxiety, you relearn how to be bored, you get back to reading, all very simple story. The interesting thing came when I opened Instagram again.

I was on the boat in the Mediterranean and I drew an outline of what I defined as my Digital Identity. I imagined for a while what a digital identity was, today it is no longer a fantasy. The digital identity deserves the same or more care than our physical identity. I established a strategy to use the network in a sustainable way and not to use me. It's been a year since then, during which I suffered ups and downs and fell into some traps like starting to scroll too much or watching stories that really didn't interest me much or at all. I'm still not over the kitten thing. It served me to connect with people I hadn't seen for a long time and also to develop a professional image. I chose an aesthetic and a way of publishing. But the mind is amazing, and it always looks for a twist and makes us betray them. Again and again, I go back to redirect the subject.

Key to this: the strong experience of detoxification and establishment of stimuli and physical habits in replacement made me today, without expecting it, to be able to let go much more easily when I need to or to be aware of when I get some addictive behaviors. The reward I could see within a year was enough motivation to quit for short periods of time. I deleted Instagram for a week a few days ago to write more and it didn't change much for me. I've done this several times before when I needed to fully dedicate myself to something. It's interesting how the day after deleting it you suddenly recover dead WhatsApp chats or start reading news or other things. **So, there is a stimulated physical experience of contact with the cell phone apart from the social network itself.**

This is important because when we talk about detraining, today in the 21st century we cannot ignore the detraining of our physical experience of the cell phone. How many times do we turn on the screen while we train? Do we establish a rule? At what moments do we forget about the cell phone? Can we think of something positive over the negative in those experiences of detachment? Suddenly the Places and Houses magazines in the bathroom made a sense we didn't understand. If we see three people turning on the cell phone screen while we are having dinner together, it makes us want to turn on the screen. The same thing that happens with alcohol, the environment influences us.

The speech of it being a useful network and all that is not very new, but it certainly has its share of truth. I know firsthand how Instagram gave some people a source of work or visualization. Yet we repeat speeches to justify exaggerations and abuses. Time and time again we try to focus on our personal and social well-being. What things are controlling us?

We need to be able to decide about our Rest, because I really wonder at what cost we are living the way we are living.

Efforts that seem to evaporate with time, can have their fruits in hindsight. We can generate a strength in neural connections if you want to put it in important words, between detachment from networks and increased activities that give us personal well-being. Regaining that connection and continuing to strengthen is becoming easier and easier. To erase networks for a couple of weeks is to respect ourselves a little. To regain the territory of our time and its experimentation. We can't stop eating chocolate and force ourselves to eat oatmeal and water instead, if we give up the cell phone, we offer ourselves something else tempting at first. Little by little.

Untraining the body and untraining the mind makes no difference. Learn to learn with a healthy mind, recreate our space, the Feng Shui of all the elements that we let be part of our Inner House.

In the network, our body has a digital form, programmable, measurable, comparable, possible to produce, reproduce, create, edit, recreate. The body that begins to take on an identity in what we show can shape us unconsciously. Good or bad? Each one will make his own process.

Worlds in nice words

I share some terms that may interest you, a motivation to rethink our rest and interior space.

Metanoia

Many definitions, many etymological manipulations. Change of mind, repentance without association to guilt. Redirecting our path, transformation.

In Christianity, transformation of the heart in the presence of God. In agnosticism, transformation of the soul in the presence of the Universe, in atheism, a transformation of our human perspective and way of living in this world. Whatever, you got it.

We can keep our courage in rhetoric, in the simplest of retracting what has been said, in walking backwards and mending what has been damaged with other appropriate words. To say something more correctly, to express it as we perceive it should be expressed.

Metanoia are constant sparks in our day to day life, we do not need to go to the existential transformative mystical Metanoia marked by some supernatural episode. We love all that, but daily metanoia, appears like fireflies in the forest.

Micro satoris, micro-outbreaks of attention to what we say and how we say it, what we express, how we move. I watch how I put my hand on a Handstand, finally one day I look at it and understand the mistake. One day a deep breath makes me perceive the amplitude of the rib cage and the role of the abdomen. In a ceramics class I realize that I have a frown once again, my mind relates difficulty to narrowness. I change the verb, I change my own narrative, I change the gesture, I relax the frown.

I speak without precision; I speak a lot. I am conscious, I regret without guilt my lack of precision, of clarity. I want a more organic, more mature, more professional verbal movement, I open my eyes.

Yes, there is also the Metanoia, the resounding change of perspective, the existential transformation. All that is not found because of the action of seeking, that turn appears as a consequence of the performance of that self that seeks and thinks it knows what to find. Metanoia, the change of mind or perspective, or path simply passes in a state of attention.

Kaizen

From Wikipedia:

改 (*kai* in Japanese, *gǎi* in Chinese) means 'change' or 'the action of amending'.

善 (*zen* in Japanese, *shàn* in Chinese) means 'good' or 'beneficial'.

What we sin by naming continuous development is rather continuous transformation. An integral predisposition to change and growth. The theme of development became attached to kaizen when companies began to apply the "kaizen method". This application is also very interesting, but not relevant.

I am going to make my own interpretation after reading extensively on Kaizen.

Self-development in Kaizen and the so-called Evolution in Life. Although evolution within the Taoist-Zen-Japanese culture might be more related to Kaizen as the fact of revealing oneself more and more purely and naturally.

I say this understanding that evolution or development are words that are not linearly consistent with Taoist naturalness, but are too much of the individual will, with that Western heroic narrative. Taoist naturalness is less egocentric.

If we want to make Kaizen resonate, that self-development, that change and benefit, we are once again faced with a process of attention, of opening our eyes, of keeping the field fertile, of walking through the forest of the mind with our senses on. Of allowing the change in us rather than changing. Of letting ourselves grow, rather than deciding to grow. This difference seems to me substantial when it comes to approaching what I refer to as unlearning and untraining. I open the doors, the ones I did not know, I open the attention, the senses, the will, the spark, so that everything catches fire. Like this, every day. Kaizen.

Ataraxia

Absence of disturbance. He who walks wisely, does not let the sun shine on him, does not let himself be dazzled. Avoid excessive perspiration, exaggeration, sudden movements in hot climates. He walks steadily, but more quietly, taking advantage of shadows and breaks, the hours of the day and night. Go forward, contemplate. When we speak of diminishing passions and desires, we are not saying to punish them, to suppress them. We find ourselves

at a point in common with Metanoia and Kaizen. We appreciate more the inner temple and the inexhaustible peace to which we can resort if we do not let ourselves be carried away by exaggeration, colored lights, constant noises, stimuli. We see them, we appreciate them, we have fun too, but Mental Ataraxia, stoic pillar, avoids drama, effervescence, anxiety, hyper excitement. It asks the mind to walk more stealthily, listening to the rustles and birds in the forest.

Back to the ring

Rest as a prelude.

Vacations, sports trips, three- or four-day tours of parties and social events, etc. It is hard to get back to the routine, to the habit, in fact I am writing this section as a mechanism to get back to writing after having had an intense weekend. Getting back into the swing of things is more important than many other things. As someone who prepares the elements calmly for a barbecue: salads, tables, plates, charcoal, fire, lights; we prepare our space and mind to let in the training and habits. We cannot force the times. Respect what can be a whole day of tidying up for example our apartment or office, cleaning the windows, preparing the computer, writing on the blackboard, stretching, playing music that is in accordance with the need for stability and return to calm. From calmness we return to physical activity.

A rough sea takes a whole day to become calm and it is not something that can be forced no matter how much discipline you have. Here we are talking about a healthy, creative and motivated development to continue in a training learning process integrated to our life. To make attractive to us all those things that we knew were good for us. Nobody likes to be forced to do something with threats, and it is not necessary to threaten ourselves.

Accompanying personal hygiene and care to reconnect with the body is important. Be it nails, facial wash and creams, haircut, shaving. Drinking water, stretching the body, giving real importance to music, I repeat it again. If I happen to be at the computer, I often put on my headphones but with nothing playing. Just the ritual of doing this means I'm going to concentrate.

In the first days we can stop doing everything at the best time so that we stay motivated, do not get overtired, do not overdo it. That makes us want to play again the next day with the body and mind. To get rid of short-termism. Knowing that this caution will allow us to grow better in a couple of weeks.

We can find ourselves continually unstructured in routines, processes and games by a particular way of life such as travel. However, applied awareness, attention and years make it possible to find keys and ways to maintain concentration and habits within the unstable. Just as the outdoors demands constant physical adaptation, travel demands constant mental adaptation. It is possible. It is possible to keep a schedule or time to write our diary, to read the pages we set out to read, to stretch the body, to keep our minds focused. It is possible to take a cold shower and give ourselves five minutes of meditation at night, just as it is possible to take a sacred fifteen-minute nap in the snow on a long day of winter mountaineering. Fundamental to my happiness.

Whenever I listen to a thinker who starts to shut me down in everything they say, I don't distrust the person, I distrust myself listening to the person. This has a name, Authority Quotation. For a fighter, if something is said by Bruce Lee, it is a quote of authority. It is good to meditate on this so as not to get too attached to the authors and give more interest to the content. I accompanied the last pages of this book, reading the Moral Epistles of Seneca to Lucilo. I wrote down and transcribed some phrases that I believe can help to support this middle path, which is different from wandering aimlessly and trying everything for the desire of wanting solutions served or for the fear of missing things. Nourishing the mind with good and less comfortable writings gives peace, it is giving good food to the spirit, it is more vegetables and less candy for the mind. When a book becomes too obvious, too easy, too much that everything is fine and flower power, I understand that I am reading what I want to be told, not what puts me in a questioning situation. In other words, I'm eating goodies that only make me want to eat more. Three quarters of today's books are written as suggestive and interested consequences to the social situation we are going through, they have a lot of copywriting and design of a consumable product, rather than philosophy without fear of consequences. Very much like the phenomenon of the number of series that are released today and respond to cinematographic algorithms of consumption.

Seneca, Lao Tse, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Mother Teresa, Krishnamurti, Dostoevsky, Epictetus, De Mello, are interesting people who have no trouble turning us upside down. They are not characterized by always telling us what we want to hear. In short, Seneca cared less about having a good SEO than I do.

Our concentration protects our inner wisdom as a hand protects the flame of a candle from the wind.

What is done with a distracted mind bears little fruit

*That's right, I don't change my mind: run away from the crowd, run away from the few, run away from even one. I don't know anyone I would like you to associate with. And consider what is my opinion about you: **I dare to trust you to yourself.***

This last quote is out of context and sounds a bit sociopathic. But if we put it in its place, we understand Seneca's concern for his friend, whom he guides on the essence of solitude and retreat to meditate and take perspective. He hits the nail on the head, in solitude he exposes himself to that worst of counselors, that anxious and biased self. Solitude and retreat are not a guarantor of awareness and mindfulness, nor of maturity, just as life training is not synonymous with balance and health or money is not synonymous with happiness.... The last words are of great value. At that moment, as one who is not afraid to tell a friend the opinion, Seneca gives him the good one. At that moment he sees him able to trust in solitude. At that moment, as it may not be in many others. To dialogue only with oneself, to believe only what one experiences of the body and mind, to answer oneself based on the questions that we ourselves formulate, is a delicate game and one is not always in a position to play that game.

I can't find anyone better that I would like to be with you than yourself.

I liked this last sentence he says to Lucilo. How nice to feel deserved of that, that we are our best company.

I retract

To finish this book I will leave you with the story I named before in one of the chapters.

"A rich man, a businessman, well dressed, with expensive clothes and a spendthrift disposition, was strolling along the harbor, when he met a modest fisherman. The fisherman was working in his nets and in his small boat, and he had a bucket full of a lot of freshly caught fish. The wealthy businessman asked him:

- Listen to me, you are very skilled! You look like a very good fisherman! You are alone and with this small boat have caught a lot of fish. How much time do you spend fishing?

The fisherman replied:

- Well, you see, the truth is that I never get up before 8:30. I have breakfast with my children and my wife, I take my family to school and to work, then I go quietly reading the newspaper to the port, where I take my boat to go fishing. I spend an hour or an hour and a half, at the most, and I come back with the fish I need, no more and no less. Then I go home to prepare lunch, and spend the afternoon quietly, until my children and my wife come, and we enjoy doing homework together, going for a walk, playing. Some afternoons I spend with my friends playing the guitar.

- So, you tell me that in just one hour you have caught all these fish? Then you are an extraordinary fisherman! Have you thought of dedicating more hours a day to fishing?

- What for?

- Well, because if you invest more time in fishing, 8 hours, for example, you will have 8 times more catches, and thus more money!

- What for?

- With more money you could reinvest in a bigger boat, or even hire fishermen to go out fishing with you, and thus have more catches.

- What for?

- Well, with this increase in turnover, your net profit would surely be enviable! Your cash flow would be sufficient to have a small fleet of boats, and thus, grow a fishing company that would make you very, very rich.

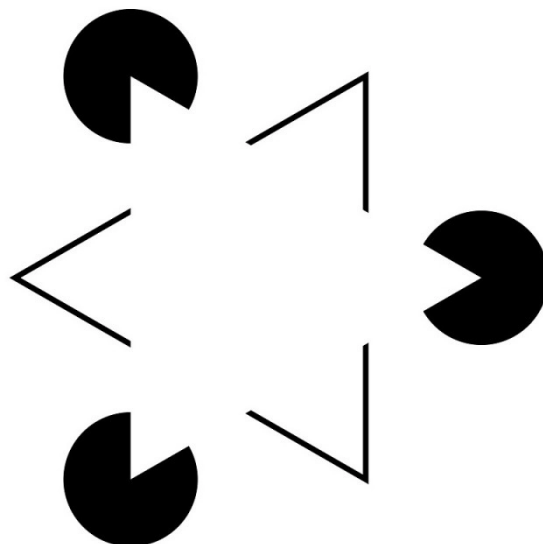
- What for?

- But don't you understand? With this small fishing empire, you would only have to worry about managing everything. You **would have all the time in the world** to do whatever you want. You would never have to get up early, you could have breakfast with your family every day, you could take your children to school, play with them in the afternoon, play the guitar with your friends...".

Now it will be a matter of continuing to walk, trying, making mistakes, freely committing to what we are doing. There are no excuses, it's just a great path that we can afford to enjoy.

Good Winds!

Buenos Aires,16-01-2023



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