

Philosophy Paper

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The greatest tragedy and downfall of American society is not in its loss of morals, tolerance of impurity, or selfish desires. The ruin of the western world comes through a simple but devastating phenomenon: the compartmentalization of self. As jobs, schools, and relationships become increasingly specific, the people who work in these specific jobs, go to these specific school, and engage in these specific relationships devote only that specific part of themselves necessary for that job, school, or relationship, assuming the other areas are left unaffected. There has not been a complete loss of morals, but rather, we understand that lack of integrity in one area does not affect other areas, and, consequently, if we are left unaffected by these inadequacies in others, we are unbothered. So too it has become with tolerance of impurity, because, as long as it is contained to one domain of our existence, it is allowable. And selfish desires are fine, given that they are kept to one aspect of a person's life; their marriage, their job, or their children, but not all three. The sad fact is that Americans have bought into the lie that people are not always, in every situation, the sum total of their parts, and that in certain situations, only certain parts of that person need be engaged, not the person themselves.

As with all ways of living that contradict the inerrant Word of God, this approach to life inevitably leads to destruction. Divorce rates are skyrocketing, businesses are closing due to lack of integrity, the regulations on movies, music, and TV continue to wane, and public officials continue to be elected based on a "what can he do for me" mentality, regardless of personal integrity. The prevalent thinking in America is still "if it doesn't hurt anyone else, or any other area of my life, it must be ok." The New Testament explicitly condemns a life of duplicity, stressing that all of life is to be lived to the glory of God, and a person is a whole, not a conglomeration of parts. Matthew 23:27-26, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are

full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” 1 Corinthians 10:31, “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” The idea of compartmentalization is ruining lives.

The application to the physical then, is obvious. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” The maintenance of the physical body is key to living a holistically healthy, successful, and glorifying life. A wealthy, successful, but overweight business man is a contradiction. Just as an athlete who has spend thousands of hours tirelessly training his body into top shape, but lacking the ability to read is a tragedy, so too is a prolific writer who has spent years to reach the top of her profession, but cannot reach the top of her stairs without a pause for breath halfway up. A healthy life includes both body and mind, because both constitute the whole individual. A healthy physical life is just as important in the development of a person, and should not be ignored at the expense of the intellect.

Unfortunately, this is the exact direction America has taken educationally. Physical Education programs are being cut, teachers are losing their jobs, and school boards across the nation are questioning the validity of their physical education programs. Pressure from the highest halls of government to raise the achievement levels of students on standardized tests has already cut daily physical education in most schools. Funding is now based on schools achievement on these tests; further causing school boards to reevaluate the necessity and practicality of a physical education program.

This could not come at a worse time for America. Among children and teens ages 6-19 years old, 15 percent, almost 9 million, are overweight, according the US Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention in 1999-2000, tripled from 1980, and surely higher now, 7 years later. The economic cost of health care associated with obesity is estimated at \$100 billion a year, about 8 percent of the national health care budget. Lack of physical activity is not only one of the greatest health risk factors among teens, but for Americans of all ages. A sedentary lifestyle, or physical inactivity, is associated with stroke, heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, various cancers, type II diabetes, depression, and obesity, which carries even more of its own problems. According to National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) data, inactivity and poor diet cause at least 300,000 deaths a year, more than the number of deaths caused by infectious diseases, firearms, motor vehicle crashes, and illicit drug use combined. The Surgeon General reports that Americans become increasingly less active with each year of age, and that inactivity as a child will lead to a sedentary adult lifestyle.

If it is truly the role of education to create competent, responsible, successful, contributing members of society, then schools cannot ignore these statistics or their implications. Schools exist for the furtherance of the students and their success as people, the ultimate goal of education, which is not based on a specified level of achievement on standardized tests, but rather constitutes the entire person: mind and body, growing and progressing in a healthy way. The role of education must be looked at holistically, with physical education as a key component. Physical education must be responsible for taking on the health risks that American children and teenagers face today. To do this, they must be given the ability and funding to do so.

To accomplish this proven and worthy objective, physical education programs must maintain a high level of quality, adhere to a focused set of directives, and center on the students themselves. While physical education does provide skill development, regular physical activity,

improved physical fitness, support for other subject areas, self-discipline, improved judgment, stress reduction, strengthened peer relations, improved self-confidence and self-esteem, and goal setting, it must happen in the three parameters given above and described below.

A high level of quality depends on a number of factors. There must first be commitment from the school board, the parents, the administration, and the faculty to this goal. This is necessary because if there is no belief in the program's ability to achieve the goals a physical education program has proven it can achieve, there will be no funding for that program. A lack of funds limits teachers, limits the pay for quality and experienced teachers, and limits the potential of the program. There must also be commitment from the teacher themselves for a quality education program. They must be willing to put in the time to improve their teaching, to incorporate new teaching methods, ideas, and technologies, and plan effective units. They must tie assessment into instruction and demonstrate to the students that they are learning something valuable. A high level of quality depends on these commitments, because it will take time, each day, to develop a program to its fullest potential.

Once there is an established commitment to physical education, there can begin a determination of a focused set of directives. While physical education is the only content area able to teach the whole body, educators must not try to incorporate everything in every lesson. Deep is better than wide. A program must first determine what it stands for, what its purpose is, and how it will accomplish those purposes. The problem most organizations face is that they are spread too thin, trying to reach too many areas, rather than do an excellent job at their area of expertise. A physical education program will naturally affect all areas of life positively if it is concentrated on affecting the physical area perfectly.

NASPE has provided six national standards on which any quality program should be based. These standards, which include references to physical, cognitive, affective, and fitness development across a lifespan, are building blocks for a program philosophy and list of goals.

Physical education should do exactly what its name implies: provide education of and through the physical. Of the physical, in the psychomotor domain, includes the teaching of movement skills, patterns, and abilities. Rhythmic and manipulative skills should be introduced, developed, and refined over the course of a K-12 education. Education through the physical includes the cognitive domain, teaching concepts, rules, strategies, problem solving, and understanding of sport and activity. Through the physical can also include affective objectives such as interaction skills, positive attitudes, cooperation, sportsmanship, goal setting, and improved character through sport and games. The fitness domain should be stressed throughout the curriculum, being the ever present goal in physical education; stressing endurance, flexibility, strength, body composition, understanding of the body's physiology, and ability to maintain lifetime fitness.

These goals must be present in a school's focused set of directives for a physical education program to be truly successful. It must know where it is going, and how it wants to get there.

Finally, a physical education program must center on the needs and interests of its students. The school exists for the students, and the physical education program, as part of the school, exists for the students. For this last necessity to occur, teachers and administrators must take the time to know their students, their backgrounds, their interests, and their characteristics that set them apart from students at other schools. On a smaller level, physical educators must take the time to know each student as personally as possible; knowing what motivates them, and

how to make physical education relevant to their specific situations. Integrity in this area requires true care for individuals, for their development, for their success.

Physical education is a necessary part of a holistic education. The nose must not be cut to spite the face, the body must not be neglected for sake of the intellect; it is a contradiction. For physical education to achieve its fullest potential of impacting all of life positively, it must be of high quality, have focused directives, and center on students.

If society wants education to solve the morality crisis, it must be willing to let it solve compartmentalization problem. This must be addressed practically, visibly, by supporting physical education programs, demonstrating that maintenance of the entire body is necessary for true health and success, not an option. Schools need to begin to teach students that they are a whole person, not an accumulation of parts. Physical education can do just that.

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