

Fitness Training

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I HAVE NOTICED IN recent months the steady improvement in the already excellent physical condition of my colleagues on the Duke Law faculty. I am told that this is a consequence of the work of a Personal Physical Trainer who provides individual sessions of supervised work on exercise machines, pushing each trainee to the limits of his or her ability to bear pain.

This observation has led me to several thoughts. First, I wonder if *U.S. News & World Report* would consider establishing a new measure of excellence for law schools, to wit, the physical condition of its faculty. This has long been recognized as an important qualification for academic work; the first president of the University of North Carolina was selected for his foot speed and strength, qualifications fitting him to deal with the anticipated student disorders. The personal physical condition of a faculty would seem at least as important as the excellence of their school's physical plant, to which that worthy publication devotes attention.

My second thought assumes that such rec-

ognition could be achieved. It is to wonder if our law schools might then be adequately motivated to provide the services of a Personal Physical Trainer as a standard fringe benefit for law professors. The general increase in fitness would prolong the careers of distinguished scholars and teachers, and provide role models for law students, inspiring them to lead suitably ascetic lives, especially fitting perhaps for those who might otherwise be tempted to waste their high incomes on high living. Some of them might use their excess income to endow Personal Physical Trainerships not only for the faculty, but for law students as well.

Indeed, might this not usefully lead to the universal requirement of such positions in law schools. The Association of American Law Schools ought to consider whether a school not providing this service for its faculty should remain eligible for membership in our Association. And the American Bar Association Section on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar ought consider requiring regular, supervised workouts as a required part of every

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curriculum. This would certainly confer more benefit on the students than much that we soft, pudgy intellectuals do for them. At the very least, such trainers should count toward the required faculty-student ratio.

While all this seems promising, it leads to my third thought, which is a concern. Perhaps this trend may lead to an imbalance in our lives. Might we possibly become excessively concerned with our bodies? What would this do to our minds? (Not to speak of our immortal souls, which might be saved by more traditional forms of self-flagellation.)

Perhaps there is a real need for some compensating discipline for our intellectual activities. Perhaps, in addition to a suitable number of Personal Physical Trainerships, a law school needs an equal, or perhaps a larger, number of Personal Intellectual Trainerships. It would be the duty of each Personal Intellectual Trainer to keep his or her clients intellectually alert and in peak mental condition.

Doubtless there is room for some imagination in the work of a PIT, but clearly the basic tool would be Socratic dialogue. A law teacher most in need, say one who is in a state of intellectual incapacity or bankruptcy, would meet daily with his or her PIT to be rigorously questioned on his or her reading. He or she would also be asked daily to account for the writing that he or she had done. Physical evidence of output would be expected, and the output would be examined for content as well as spelling. Indeed, it would be subjected to the most scathing criticism of which the PIT

is capable. 15-20 minutes of this sort of workout every day should quickly elevate the intellectual condition of the trainee. Gradually, the PIT might hope soon to improve the condition of the trainee so that he or she could go 48 hours between workouts. The long term goal would be to get him or her in such condition that a weekly group session would suffice to keep the trainee fit.

These thoughts have led me further to wonder about the attractions of PIThood as a career. It might be especially attractive to senior persons no longer able to think usefully about their own work. Indeed, I am wondering if I might find utility in my eighth decade by commencing such a career. How many trainees would seek my services? What should be my fee for a 15-20 minute workout? I am thinking in the hundred-dollar range.

The gratification such a career might afford may seem at first consideration to be elusive. But what pride one might take on seeing a trainee take charge of his or her own intellectual fitness, and even undertake to train others! Perhaps, one's trainees might on their own organize to provide any continuing need for this form of support, rather on the model of Alcoholics Anonymous. Such an outfit would need a suitable name. The best I can provide at the moment is Lawteachers Understanding the Need for Constant Hassling. It lacks the style of AA, but it yields a suitable acronym. I await the advice of readers as to whether there might be a market among lawyers and law students for the services of a PIT. 