

# Total Body Radiance

## Turning Fitness into a Spiritual Practice

### Total Body Radiance Lesson #4



**Main Fitness Focus:** *Your main focus this week is on turning your breathing exercises into “Breath Prayers”, giving you the ability to tune into God’s presence wherever you are.*

Before I enter into the potentially dangerous territory of spirituality, let me give you your fitness challenge for the week. This week you are once again going to increase your steps by 100 steps per day. So, if your *increased* daily average step total from last week is 900 steps per day, this week you are shooting for an average of 1000 steps per day.

OK, and now on to the new stuff:

#### **\*\*An Important Note About Spirituality\*\***

I believe many of the issues of excess weight and poor fitness stem from spiritual issues – hurts that are not healed, needs that are not met, issues that are not resolved. For this reason I include spiritual practices in this program. If you can apply spiritual principles to your weight loss, you will not only lose weight more quickly, but the weight loss will be much more permanent because true healing is involved.

There are as many ways to practice spirituality today as there are people on the planet. Each person is responsible for seeking truth and applying it to their own lives. The truth I have chosen to follow is that of Christian Spirituality. I understand that not everyone appreciates that choice, and I am not here to shove my own faith down other people's throats.

However, please understand that it would be impossible to create a spiritually-based program that offends no one. With that in mind, let me suggest three different ways you might want to deal with the spiritual challenges of this program:

1. If you have a chosen path of spirituality that is other than Christian, let me encourage you to take my Christian-based practices and re-format them for your own belief system.
2. If you do not have a chosen spiritual path and are open to testing mine, follow through and see what happens. If you don't like the results, see point 1 or point 3.
3. Ignore all spiritual exercises and just focus on the fitness and nutrition guidelines. Your results will not be as solid as they would otherwise be, but the the rest of the information in this program will help you move forward, regardless.

With that disclaimer behind us, let's move on.

Christian Spirituality dares to believe that the Creator God of the Universe actually longs for a personal and intimate relationship with His people here on earth, much like that of a perfect father with his kids, or the perfect bridegroom with his bride. That may not be what you learned from any churches you might have attended in the past or from Christians you might have met, but that is, indeed, the message of the Bible.

However, the more I chat with Christians struggling to make their faith more real and intimate, the more I see that modern day evangelicalism is mostly all about "head faith", and leaves the heart out of it almost entirely for fear of falling into "emotionalism" - a valid concern.

The problem is that by fearing and avoiding the emotions, Christians tend to throw the baby out with the bathwater. No truly intimate relationship can take place without there being some emotion expressed between the two parties: joy, sorrow, anger, delight, worry, fear, etc. If our relationship with God is duty based and devoid of emotion, we will struggle to grow well and consistently in our faith.

As I struggled with this concept in my own faith, I found myself turning more and more towards Contemplative Christianity. There, I found excellent tools that I could use to balance head knowledge (still VERY important to a dynamic faith walk) and heart knowledge. Throughout the various levels of this program I will be introducing some of these tools. The first of these tools is “breath prayer”.

Breath prayers are simple prayers that you pray in time to your breathing. You can do these anywhere, and you'll find that they really help with focus and relaxation, in addition to helping you feel “connected” to God. A wonderful new tool for your wellness toolkit!

I learned the physical part of this exercise from the book “[Achieving Vibrance](#)” by Gay Hendricks. I've simply added breath prayer to the physical exercise to make it more complete.

Here's how you do the physical part of it (you'll find an MP3 recording of this exercise attached to this week's lesson that you can use when you practice this, but for now, just listen to/read the instructions):

1. Sit comfortably on a hard chair or on the edge of a chair or the bed, feet flat on the floor, back relaxed but straight – i.e. don't be leaning against the back of the chair.
2. Take in a deep, relaxed breath and arch your back letting your head drop back while you inhale. Stretch as far as you can without straining.
3. When your inhale is complete, hold for just a brief second without forcing, and then begin to exhale slowly while curving your spine the other way, tucking your pelvis under and letting your head gently drop to your chest. Again, hold for a brief, gentle second after the exhale.
4. Repeat this exercise for about 1 minute.

When you feel comfortable with this, add the following prayer phrases:

1. As you inhale slowly, pray **"I bind myself to God's truth, authenticity and integrity"** - and really visualize yourself "inhaling Christ" as it were. Pause for a brief second or two and then
2. Exhale and pray **"I loose myself from all falsehood, lies, and deception"** and imagine those things leaving your body. Pause.
3. Inhale and pray **"I bind my will, passions, and purposes, to the will, passions and purposes of God"** visualizing yourself inhaling these properties. Pause.
4. Exhale and pray **"I loose myself from false pretensions, selfishness, greed, and fear"** and exhale those things from your life. Pause.
5. Inhale and pray **"I bind my mind to the mind of Christ, to hear the thoughts, intents, and purposes of His heart "**. Pause.
6. Exhale and and pray, **"I loose myself from wrong thinking, behaviour, and attitudes"**. Pause.
7. Inhale and pray **"I bind my feet to God's path for me, and my hands to the special work He's ordained for me to accomplish in His Kingdom"**. Pause.
8. Exhale and pray **"I loose myself from the strongholds of unmet needs, unresolved issues, and unhealed hurts"**. Pause.

Pray through these same prayers one more time. Then repeat the exercise twice more, but this time, while standing. Stretch as far back as you can without straining and losing your balance when you inhale, and when you exhale bend all the way forward as far as you can, touching your toes if possible, without straining. Roll back up gently, one vertebra at a time while inhaling. When you're finished, pause for a moment and ask God if there's anything He'd like to say to you. Listen for a minute before moving on into your day.

Every day now, when you practice your “breath prayers” do just the prayer version of this exercise twice while sitting, and twice while standing. It will seem long at first, but it will transform your day. Then, whenever you're feeling stressed out, do them again until you feel the relaxation setting in. Of course, if you're in a public place, you don't need to do the stretching with the prayers – just the breathing!

If, while you pray this, feelings, situations, fear, or other uncomfortable experiences arise, ask God if there's something you need to do – ask forgiveness of someone, see a counselor, help someone in need, make something right – and go do that as quickly as you can. Then continue to pray these same breath prayers until you have peace.

Isn't that simple? I knew you could do it!

And now, your weekly wisdom and nutritional habit from Dee McCaffrey

**Main Nutritional Focus: *Eat something raw at every meal***



Choosing good health doesn't happen by accident—it's something you have to consciously work for. One of the easiest ways to ensure good health is to eat as many foods as you can in their raw form. Nature supplies food for us in its purest state, and nature has always intended that the food it has created for us should be eaten in that manner.

Think of the types of foods that most people eat every day. Most of them come cooked, pre-made, processed, and packaged. These foods are typically lacking in the essential nutrients supplied by fresh raw foods. Eating processed foods is a huge contributor to poor health and obesity. People continue to eat more and more while they are literally starving to death from poor nutrition. One of the reasons people overeat is because they are never nourished at the cellular level.

Fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds in their raw form supply thousands of nutrients that provide nourishment to our cells and are known to cleanse, prevent disease, and heal the body. When they are not cooked, these foods remain rich in enzymes, vitamins, and minerals.

Make it a goal to eat one serving of raw food at each meal, each day. The more raw and living foods you eat, the better you will feel. Your body will thank you a million times over and you'll receive the benefits that nature intended in every single bite!

**Here are some easy ways to get a serving of raw foods every day:**

- Eat fresh fruit for breakfast
- Slice up an apple and dip it in yogurt or almond butter for a snack
- Cut up apples into chunks and mix them into yogurt
- Use fresh fruits and veggies in smoothies
- Sprinkle sliced almonds or other nuts on top of your yogurt, oatmeal or cereal
- Grind flax seeds, sunflower seeds, and almonds in a coffee grinder and then mix them into your yogurt or smoothies
- Snack on carrots, cucumbers and bell pepper slices dipped into hummus
- Eat a salad daily<sup>1</sup>

And that's it for this week. Let's condense those points quickly into your tasks and habits for the week:



**This week's assignments:**

1. Write in your journal daily.
2. Continue focusing on “full” and “hungry”
3. Continue to drink your morning elixir of lemon tea
4. Continue to practice chewing every mouthful 30 times or until completely liquidized
5. Increase your daily average steps again by 100 steps per day
6. Continue to drink three glasses of Vitality Vinegar Tonic daily.
7. Practice “breath prayers” daily when you get up
8. Eat something raw at every meal

Now, see, isn't that a simple task for this week? I told you you could do *THAT!*

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<sup>1</sup> Dee McCaffrey, CDC ©2009 Tips adapted from *Plan-D: The Amazing Anti-Diet That Will Change Your Life Forever*. [www.plandee.org](http://www.plandee.org) Used with permission



## **Disclaimer:**

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As always, my thanks to "[TemplatesWise](#)" for providing the music for the recording!