

Trusting the Rope (Personal Faith)

Whenever teaching people to rappel for the first time it is always interesting to see how they will react. While most are anxious about it, some are absolutely terrified. It doesn't always matter that they just watched others with more experience rappel safely and effortlessly. Their brains often cannot see how dangling from a thin rope 100+ feet above the ground could turn out well. It is especially interesting to watch the process as first-timers face what many consider the most difficult part: going over the edge. One of the reasons it is so hard is that they must shift their trust from their own feet to completely trusting the rope to support their weight. When that pivotal moment comes that they have to lean back and put their weight on the rope, some begin to sway backward only to second guess themselves and lean back forward before the harness has a chance to hold them. Others tend to bend over at the waist, thinking that sticking their backside over the edge equates to leaning back on the rope, though they never really put their weight on the rope. I even have seen a first timer start leaning back, getting far enough back to have nothing directly below, before panicking and letting go of the rope in an attempt to grab onto the wall instead.



For most people, rappelling is difficult because it is initially about trusting something they don't necessarily understand or don't have personal experience with. However, once they make that leap of faith and give it a try, they learn that their faith in the rope actually provides a lot of important benefits, including safety, stability and freedom. It makes something that should be difficult much easier. While they still have to have faith in the rope each time they rappel after that, it becomes more and more a natural part of their life each time they do it.

The Message

This story has several important tie-ins for life and spirituality. Having personal faith is an important element of spirituality. Faith, of course, may be applied to religion (such as faith in God, etc.), but there are other important objects of faith as well. Faith in oneself, including skills and abilities as well as faith in ones intrinsic worth, can help overcome self-doubt and discouragement and improve performance. Faith in others, including family, friends and other groups creates a sense of connection, purpose and support. Faith in the nation, the Marine Corps or in a unit creates an important trust, connection and teamwork that results in greater unified meaning and efficiency. Faith in personal values and meaning can have a strong influence on the way one lives life. These are just a few of the important types of personal faith that are an important part of spiritual fitness. Being aware of what you place your trust in, and how that faith lifts you can give you greater connection, stability and freedom as you deal with life's challenges.

(JT)