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# THE CrossFit LIFE

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## Is CrossFit Superficial or Spiritual?

For most people, CrossFit is more than trying to look good in a bathing suit.

Doug Germano explains.

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By Doug Germano

August 2012

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I was telling my girlfriend last night why I couldn't spend too much time with a certain group of people because they were too superficial. She looked back at me with a befuddled look on her face and said, "But all you do is CrossFit! That's superficial. You just do it to get big and build up your body."

I do love to lift big weights, and I've been gaining weight for a while now, but still, I was baffled. I couldn't even respond. I just spat out some flustered words and came off as an asshole.

To claim that my relationship with CrossFit is superficial blew my mind. I realized that even though my girlfriend is supportive of me and my passion for CrossFit, she doesn't really understand why I do it. She has come to the gym for a WOD, she's very supportive of the way I eat, and she's never complained once about all the early mornings I've woken her up to head out to the gym. She's even come out and watched me compete and has cooked me some delicious Paleo food. Despite all this, I've never really delved into the reasons why I love CrossFit.

I am incredibly passionate about CrossFit. When I received my Level 1 certificate, I realized that CrossFit is a very layered sport. It's not as simple as some other sports where an individual can just understand the rules and start playing. There is so much more to CrossFit. I compare it to "seeing the glitch in the matrix" (CrossFit being the matrix).



All images Courtesy Doug Germano

What I mean by this is that for years I was just doing WODs, puking on occasion, getting my workout in and trying to be a healthier person. But after years of indulging in the 21st-century phenomena that is the sport of CrossFit, I feel as though I have finally seen the glitch in the matrix. There is beauty to successful programming, finding a near-perfect macronutrient breakdown, going beyond perceived limits and completing tasks you once considered only for the Herculean.

I used to be extremely overweight. I was obese, couldn't perform a push-up and couldn't run 800 meters without stopping. I will never forget the day I tried to do a push-up with all the other high-school freshmen and could not move. That moment will be forever with me.

I've been doing CrossFit since March 2008 and haven't really looked back. I would say I am definitely beyond looking for results of fitness at this point. I am fit. I may sound confident of myself, but I am fit. I love human movement and I love pushing myself to my limits. Fitness as a hedge against sickness is such a simple but amazing idea. I wish more people understood the beauty in this succinct but astonishing idea. It truly calls everyone to treat themselves as athletes, as this is the way to be the healthiest. Every step an individual takes toward treating himself or herself as an athlete is a step away from illness and health issues.

At this point in my athletic career, I compete. I compete in CrossFit like I've never competed in anything. I push my body harder, further and faster. I love giving my all, and I love winning. Going beyond an old record is sacred to me. That moment, that split second that is entirely focused, entirely intense, the moment where I am wholly committed to the task directly in front of me, that is the moment I live for.



***When an athlete pursues performance, the reflection in the mirror is only a fringe benefit.***



That is the moment I dream about. That is the moment that motivates me as I wake up in the morning and stick to the program. It's why I'm committed, and it's why I hear people whispering that I'm overtraining. It is who I am. It is myself at my best. That moment of sheer pain, complete effort, going out on a limb and going for it—that's where I find virtue. Why? For a simple reason. Now I can perform hundreds of push-ups in a given workout, sometimes while wearing a weighted vest. The men I now compete against who tell me I'm a great athlete, who tell me what I do is legitimate, used to be intimidating. They used to be the men I looked to for inspiration. But now I am simply among them. CrossFit is a venue that has released a passion in me that nothing else could.

The sun cannot rise early enough for me to get out of bed and get in a workout. At the deepest center of myself, I love breaking limits. The moment of truth when a lift or PR is missed or taken is why I am a CrossFit athlete. Even if only it's only a 1-lb. or one-second PR, a victory beyond previous limitation is a sacred and deeply spiritual occasion. That moment is half of why I train. The other half is the better moment: the moment when even though I put out absolute 100 percent effort, another athlete beats me. In this instance I know I have hard work to do back in the gym. And thus, winning or losing, I'll be CrossFitting for years to come.

I'm not jumping out of bed before the sun rises to go make my muscles pretty for the mirror (or whatever else is considered superficial within the traditional fitness industry). I train to better myself: physically, mentally, emotionally and to an extent spiritually. When I'm in the middle of a WOD, it's a moment in time with no inhibitions, no distractions, no self-consciousness, just a cultivation of my core identity and humanity. I feel then that my personality is exhibited through what I am doing. That moment of fusion between being and doing is as close to a spiritual experience as I've come to know. This moment is when I am at my best. For me, this experience happens through my participation in CrossFit.

In the end, CrossFit has taught me that whatever it is you were born to do, do it to the fullest. Find what it is that you have an unquenchable thirst to pursue, then pursue it to such an exaggerated degree that you find, if only for a brief moment, who you are in the fullest and deepest sense possible.