

## Cardinal Virtue and the Well of Fortitude

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In this article, the author seeks to inform the reader of a new concept—The Well of Fortitude. More of a model for self-leadership, the Well of Fortitude also serves as a mental concept that provides a sense of direction in the leadership of men and women, whether in the military setting, higher learning setting, church setting, or any other environment. This concept is influenced widely by McCoy's *Passion of Command*, Grossman's *On Killing*, Stephen Covey's whole person model, and virtue ethics. It is the author's goal that this concept resonate with the reader, causing personal conviction and positive change in the Cardinal Virtues—Temperance, Wisdom, Justice, and Courage.

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*Courage is not simply one of the virtues but the form of every virtue at the breaking point.*  
-C.S. Lewis (1942)

Napoleon Bonaparte noted that the moral is to the physical as three is to one. This being true, that brings us to the concept of human factors. In short, human factors define the ceiling of an individual, team, or unit's capacity to function. It is proven that everyone will become a casualty at some point, either a physical (injury to the body) or soft casualty (injury to the mental and/or emotional aspect of a warrior). Some will break later than others, and some will be detected or undetected; this breaking point is different in each individual. Described in Lord Moran's (1966) *Anatomy of Courage*, "in the trenches a man's will power was his capital and he was always spending, so that wise and thrifty company officers [leaders] watched the expenditure of every penny lest their men went bankrupt. When their capital was done, they were finished" (p. 39). More simply put by Vince Lombardi, "fatigue makes cowards of us all" (Phillips, 2001), and that includes mental, emotional, and spiritual fatigue. The realization that human factors determine human success or failure mandates why a model of self-development or, better said, self-leadership, is necessary to improve each individual of an organization and the organization itself. All organizations should adopt the Well of Fortitude

self-leadership model in order to deepen the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual capacities of the leader and the led.

### Well of Fortitude

The Well of Fortitude (WoF), introduced by Lieutenant Colonel Dave Grossman (1995) in his book *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*, is the spark of a greater concept that, this author believes, needs to be taken further. The WoF serves as the metaphor for self-development, self-leadership and the development of subordinates. Grossman articulates, “emotional stamina on the battlefield [is] a finite resource... [under stress] each man draws steadily from his own private reservoir of inner strength and fortitude until finally the well runs dry” (Grossman, 1995, p. 89). Missing in Grossman’s concept is what constitutes the private reservoir of inner strength and fortitude of an individual. Taking this metaphor further, consider the WoF to consist of an individual’s physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual depth or capacity. Stress of any kind pulls from one or more of these capacities, when one capacity is drained the others are affected; worse, when one capacity runs dry, the individual will break, physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. This concept applies not only to combat, but all aspects of life: in school, in training, on a forced march, or in dealing with one’s spouse and family.

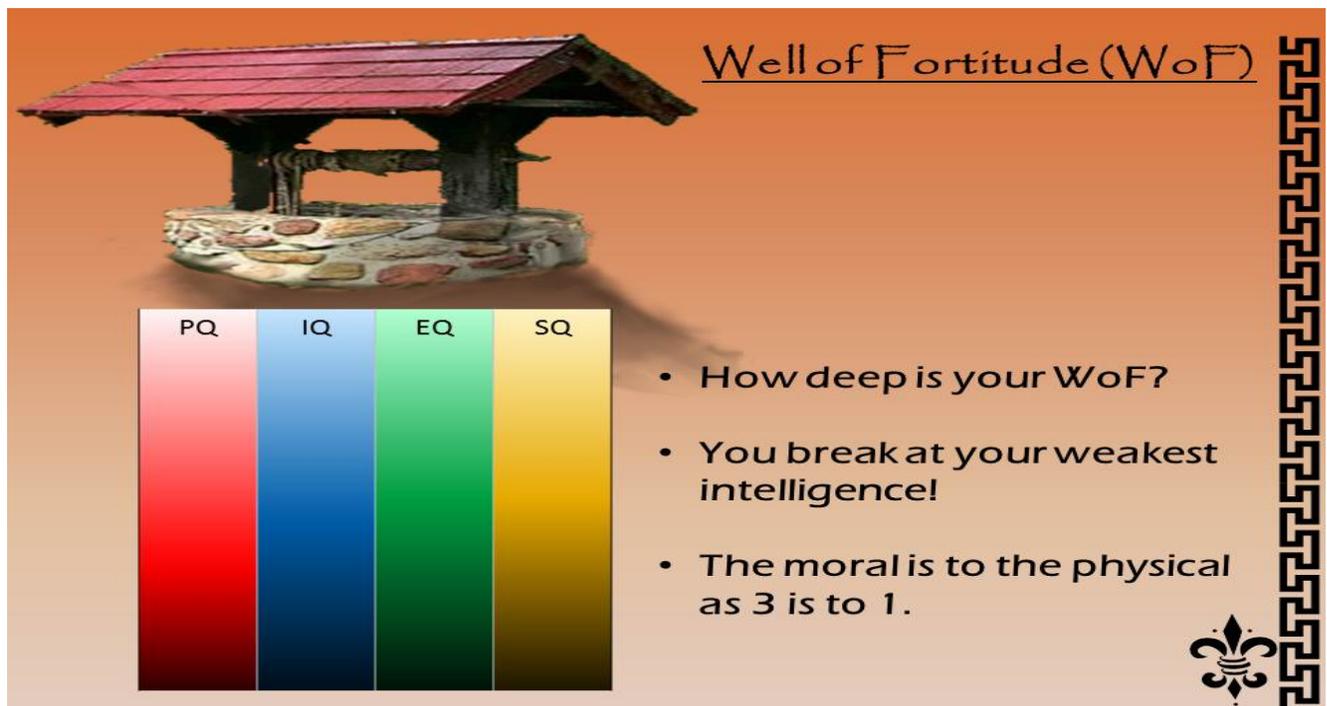


Figure 1. Graphic representation of the Well of Fortitude (WoF).

Just as a gem has many facets, a whole-person has multiple facets. Dr. Stephen Covey (2004), author of *The 7 Habits for Highly Effective People* and *The 8<sup>th</sup> Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*, references the model of the four intelligences. The four intelligences serve as the dimensions of the WoF.

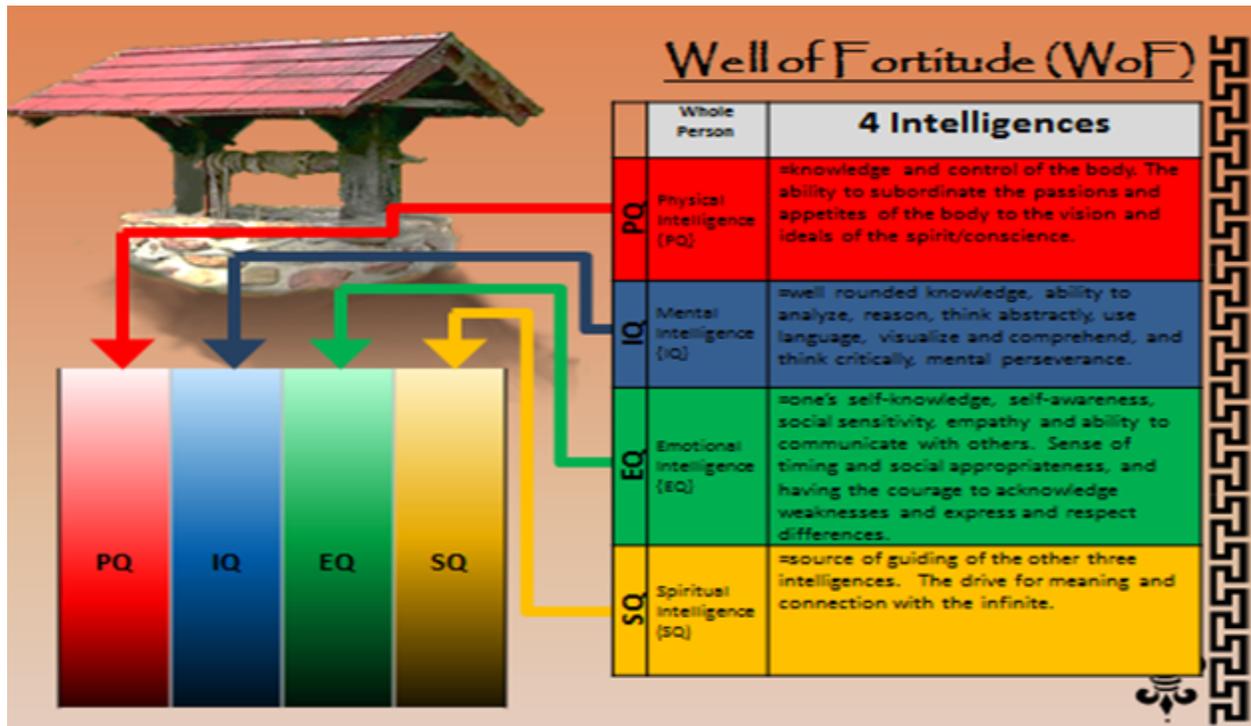


Figure 2. The four components/intelligences of the whole person.

The above table gives an individual and/or leader a focus on the dimensions one needs to be cognizant of and purposefully train in and improve. The four intelligences are separate, but also overlap. Because the intelligences overlap, and are interdependent, for an intelligence to mature, the others must raise in level too. It is crucial the reader understands how the four intelligences parallel the four Cardinal Virtues. Each of the Cardinal Virtues is affected by all of the intelligences but there is a primary intelligence for each virtue. See Figure 3 below for a snapshot of this point.

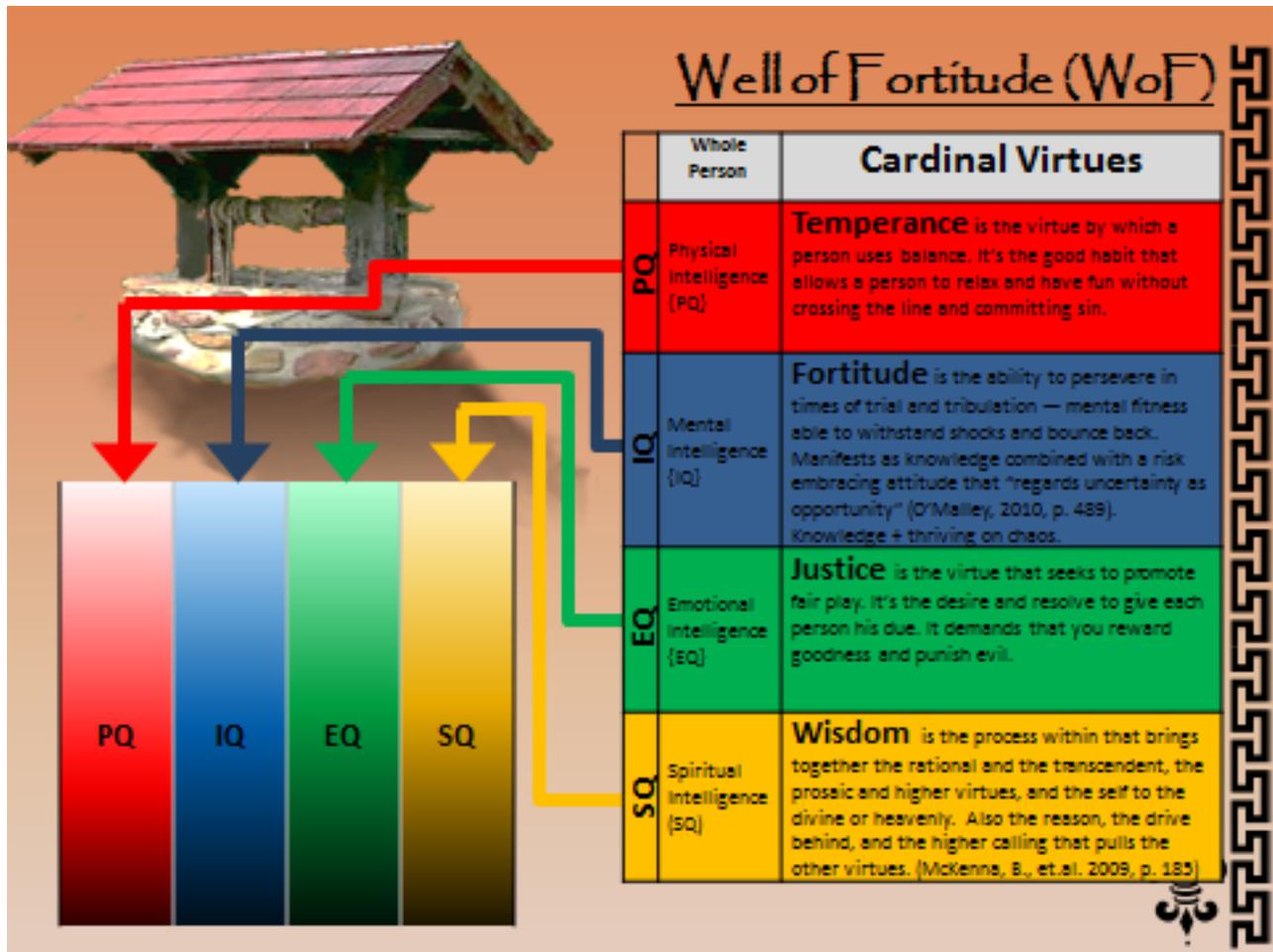


Figure 3. The four intelligences with corresponding Cardinal Virtue.

The use of the four intelligences gives the individual and leader categories within the WoF in which they can focus, measure, and train. The intent behind the WoF model is for individuals to deepen their intelligences' capacities and promote growth in the Cardinal Virtues through self-leadership. Additionally, the WoF serves as a tool for leaders to promote and encourage self-leadership in subordinates. Colonel McCoy (2007), while commanding Third Battalion, Fourth Marines, aimed at deepening the WoF in himself and his men, "within the battalion we approached this challenge in several ways—psychologically, philosophically, and physiologically" (p. 31). His battalion approached growth in the WoF through physical conditioning (PQ), cognitive training (IQ), mental imagery of chaos expressed in suffering casualties and the actual act of killing (EQ), and finally tactical decision games (TDGs) or discussions on the moral imperative or justness of killing (SQ). The result was a unit that exceeded the mission and thrived by spiraling upward in discipline, cohesion, and comradeship (McCoy, 2007, p. 20-21). Now, with a broad conception of the WoF, each of the four intelligences will be discussed.

### **Physical Intelligence (PQ) / Temperance**

Physical Intelligence (PQ) does not solely refer to a supreme level of fitness, either muscular strength/endurance or anaerobic threshold. Instead, the aim and point of deepening PQ is to eventually become the *master of oneself*, a textbook description of the Cardinal Virtue of Temperance. Importance of PQ cannot be overstated, as “scientific laboratory studies are producing increasing evidence of the close relationship between body (physical), mind (thinking) and heart (feeling)[emotions]” (Covey, 2004, p. 41). There is more than physical fitness and nutrition when it comes to PQ. As an example, Brigadier General Anthony Jackson, while battalion commander of Security Forces Kings Bay, GA, would wake himself at random hours between 0200 and 0600 (the hours of weakness) and run back-to-back physical fitness tests (PFTs) every day, training his physical fitness and his ability to handle physical shock and sleep deprivation.

### **Mental Intelligence (IQ) / Fortitude**

Mental intelligence (IQ) is what most people think of when they use the term intelligence; however, for the WoF, it is more. IQ encompasses an individual’s comprehension, analytical, and reasoning skills (Covey, 2004), but also blends with the mental positivity characterized by the attitude of embracing chaos (O’Malley, 2010). Additionally, IQ lies in the domain of Fortitude within the Cardinal Virtues. IQ is trained through a well-rounded acumen of reading, mental exercises, debate/discussion, and an active pursuit of learning (whether school-driven or individual domains of study). Additionally, for IQ to grow, the scale and discipline and acclimatization of learning must increase, leading to deeper reservoirs of mental perseverance and tenacity. For example, this author, when promoted to corporal, initiated a search where leadership became a central consideration and a life-long quest for more knowledge and understanding. This, in turn, over the past two decades, has led to voracious reading on the subject, attainment of a Masters in Science degree in Leadership, and current pursuit of a Doctorate of Strategic Leadership degree from Regent University. This deepening of IQ capacity has added richness, reward, and a deepened desire to positively impact the world surrounding the author. It is this exercising of the mind, much like bodybuilding but mind-building, and positive mental perspective of viewing uncertainty as opportunity that improves the mind’s capacity to persist and endure.

### **Emotional Intelligence (EQ) / Justice**

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is reflected in relationships. It is the combination of an individual’s competency in four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Goleman, 2002, p. 30). These areas, in tune with the whole person, dictate our dealings with others in all relationships.

Self-awareness consists of an understanding of one's guiding values, an accurate measure of one's strengths and weaknesses, as well as one's self-confidence as a result of knowing themselves. "From self-awareness—understanding one's emotions and being clear about one's purpose—flows self-management, the focused drive that all individuals and leaders need to achieve their goals" (Goleman, 2002, p. 45). In Goleman's book, *Primal Leadership*, he elaborates on the scientific brain activity that results from negative and positive emotions, validating why one must manage, at least be aware of, one's emotions—freeing "us from being a prisoner of our feelings" (2002, p. 47). The end state of self-management is the managing of negative feelings while maximizing the expression of positive emotions. Social awareness consists of the ability to empathize and read organizational currents and culture. It is impossible to recognize and assess accurately the emotions of others if one hasn't the skill to recognize and assess accurately the emotions in themselves. The last area of EQ is relationship management which is the woven mesh of the first three areas. Major David Abrahams, author of the article *Emotional Intelligence and Army Leadership: Give it to me straight*, defines relationship management as "an individual's adeptness at using emotional intelligence in a group setting when organizing groups, resolving conflict, connecting in a personal way, and analyzing social dynamics" (2007, p. 90). EQ ties to the Cardinal Virtue of Justice in that it is the intelligence that controls relationships one has with others: family, friends, acquaintances, and even combatants.

### Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) / Wisdom

Spiritual intelligence (SQ), the most difficult intelligence to describe, is the intelligence that has the most impact on the entirety of the Well of Fortitude. General Charles Krulak (2008) stresses the importance of SQ:

The leader...must first tend to his own character, and then to the character of his subordinates. He must, in fact, touch his own soul before he can ever hope to touch the souls of those who serve under him. There is deep and subtle truth in the Latin expression, "Nemo dat quod non habet," (You cannot give what you do not have). (p. 1)

The above quote illustrates how lacking spiritual intelligence prevents the leader from affecting, or, better yet, advancing the SQ of those he leads. SQ, the guiding force of the other capacities, must be developed in individuals and, more importantly, in leaders. Men will not follow a leader they do not have faith in. They may go through the motions dictated by positional authority, but giving only the bare minimum. In a time of crisis, follower loyalty will falter. Authentic leadership is based on faith in leadership and is first seeded by the leader's character. The overarching value and necessity of SQ is clear in General Krulak's (2008) words:

In peace and in war, I have confidently gone to the deep well of my faith in hard times, and I have always found sustenance and comfort there. My experience has convinced me that spiritual faith—faith in God—must become the solid bedrock of an individual's character. (p. 1)

The above quote perfectly captures the importance of spiritual depth in the WoF. The development and training of SQ is hinted at by General Krulak; one must *touch* his own soul before ever being able to affect the souls of those he leads. This *touching of the soul* implies a knowing and understanding, a defining and developing of the soul. Likewise, McKenna, Rooney, and Boal (2009) reinforces General Krulak's position that "wise leaders have a metaphysical, even spiritual, quality that does not bind them" (p. 179) and provides a depth to the SQ component of the WoF. SQ is developed through the "educating and obeying of your conscience" (Covey, 2004, p. 349). SQ does not prescribe a specific faith, religion, or belief; however, the individual must have a transcendent (divine or heavenly) credence. The individual's SQ component is infused by the PQ/Temperance to live it, the IQ/Fortitude to persevere in dedication, and the EQ/Justice to interact with the world. Competent SQ entails the individual's alignment of life choices and actions with self-actualization.

### Deepening Your Well of Fortitude

Jim Rohn's quote, "We all inevitably suffer one of two pains...either the pain of self-discipline or the pain of regret" (2008), exemplifies how the WoF is to be approached by each individual. Likewise, leaders must support self-leadership in subordinates, promoting, educating, rewarding, and facilitating the deepening of the WoF. In the attempts to deepen the WoF, an individual must fight and overcome internal desires and urges. To combat this nature in humans is an impacting quote that has served many to win out in struggles to train harder, read more, study or pray more consistently, or any other struggle over gluttony:

I am your constant companion. I am your greatest helper or heaviest burden. I will push you onward or drag you down to failure. I am completely at your command. Half the things you do you might just as well turn over to me, and I will be able to do them quickly, correctly. I am easily managed- you must merely be firm with me. Show me exactly how you want something done, and after a few lessons I will do it automatically. I am the servant of all great people; and alas, of all failures as well. Those who are failures, I have made failures. I am not a machine, though I work with all the precision of a machine plus the intelligence of a human being. You may run me for a profit or turn me for ruin—it makes no difference to me. Take me, train me, be firm with me, and I will place the world at your feet. Be easy with me and I will destroy you. – Who AM I? HABIT! (Habit Patterns and their Powerful Role in our Lives, 2008).

Through the conscious decision to deepen the WoF, the self-discipline to overcome desires and urges, and the effective use of habit, the individual will have no limits in deepening the WoF.



Figure 4. Check the depth of your well.

### Conclusion

The importance of this model for self-leadership and as a measure of performance for a leader cannot be understated. Take, for instance, the frequent and dogged issue of under-age drinking and high-risk drinking by young adults 18 to 24 years of age. In research conducted by Logan, Kilmer, and Marlatt (2010), a sample of 18- to 24-year-olds is taken, comparing self-assessment of character virtues to the likelihood of high-risk drinking. The research indicates “that temperance is associated with abstinence, lower-risk drinking, lower blood alcohol levels, and fewer consequences even among heavy drinkers” (p. 320). Imagine the positive implications of virtue training on 18- to 24-year-old military men and women. As U.S. Army General Schoomaker stated, “while technology has helped...individual soldiers still do the fighting...Warfare fundamentally is a human endeavor. It’s a test of will. It’s a test of things deep within us” (Shamback, 2004, p. 54). A required component of a complete leadership model is a model for self-leadership. Implementation and unity of effort toward the WoF is the most important factor for individual growth; it is the limiting factor to one’s potential and life-long success.

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### About the Author

Major Schiller enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1992 and became an officer by way of the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP) in 1999. Recently completing an operational tour with 1ST BN, 4TH MAR, holding the billets of Charlie Company Commander, Weapons Company Commander and Battalion Executive Officer, Major Schiller has assumed duties as the Marine Officer Instructor (MOI) at the University of Notre Dame. Major Schiller is an Expeditionary Warfare School graduate, earned his M.S. in Leadership (MSL) degree, and is now pursuing a Doctor of Strategic Leadership (DSL) from the School of Business & Leadership at Regent University. Questions regarding this article can be directed to the author at: jschill1@nd.edu.

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