

# The Holocron





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Letter from the Editor, Crystal Neumann “Diamond Shank,”  
Editor-in Chief:

*Crystal resides in the Indianapolis area. She is currently a Knight with the Jedi Federation. Diamond is working on her skills in mediumship, healing, and herbology. Her hobbies include: gardening, dancing, and reading. She is a wife and mother of two beautiful sons. Her eldest son is also currently walking through the Jedi path. She began her path with the Chicago Jedi and is working on building the new chapter in the Indianapolis region.*

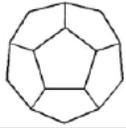
## **Trial of Transformation**

As you will notice, my Jedi name has changed from Diamond Firefist to Crystal (Diamond) Shank. Names are important. Names require a great deal of consideration when bringing a child into the world, naming a pet, during religious sacraments such as in the Catholic’s confirmation, and even in the Jedi community. Names are a part of one’s identity.

This brings me to my particular Jedi name change. As I have just been knighted through the Jedi Federation, I have been through many trials. No doubt, the trials in life do not end there. I came to the realization that throughout my Jedi path, I have gone through a transformation. When I started out with the community, I started out as “So-and-so’s sister.” I used to liken this to a Luke and Leia relationship (minus the kiss). However, Leia also had her own personality; she was her own person without Luke.

Today, I think I have made a name for myself and being “so-and-so’s sister” is just a part of me, but does not define me. I formed my own power and roles. I was able to plan a Jedi Gathering in 2015 in Indiana and do things that had never been done before, such the yearbook, award ceremony, and knighting celebration. I became a co-leader for the Indiana Chapter of the Federation. I am editor-in-chief for the Holocron. I became a Knight. All of this demonstrates my transformation from a member of Chicago Jedi to a leader in the Jedi Federation.

But what does the name change have to do with it? Ultimately, these are marks in my journey. Admittedly, the “shank” (yes, the prison kind) has been associated with me. I made a joke about “shanking” somebody after hosting a gathering for 2015 in Indiana. I know, “There is no emotion, there is peace.” I had to remind myself of this after all the stress in the event planning. My questionable joke, and the association of a shank, just has not left me.



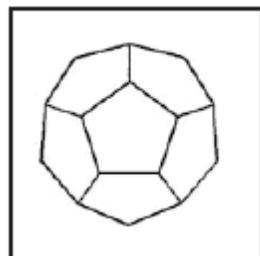
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Rather than be embarrassed about the association, I instead looked at this as my mark of commitment to the community and trial of putting together not just the event, but dealing with some of the chaos that went along with the weekend. In thinking about the term, “shank”, I also thought about what it represented. It is a small object, but it is quite powerful. Moreover, it is an object that is transformed from something else. I am all those representations. I transformed after really committing to be a Jedi. I am small in stature, but powerful in my thoughts and actions.

In the end, it is important that we learn from our challenges and our trials. This will allow us to not only learn from them, but this is an opportunity to improve on ourselves, reflect on what these trial mean to us, and help us transform into the people we aspire to be quality for the next time we try something. Learning from challenges can be helpful in just about anything we do such as playing chess, exercise, leadership and of course, on the Jedi path.





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A Letter from the Jedi Federation, Angelus Kalen

*The Jedi Federation is the gathering of offline chapters and affiliates to form a stronger organization. Inspired by the fictional Jedi in Star Wars, we choose to practice the Jedi Path as a way of life. We create a sense of community as we share our knowledge and resources with one another.*

**2016 Opening Address for the Jedi Gathering**

**“Daring Greatly”**

I want to do something a little different to begin our gathering. I want to read you a quote that has meant much to me and will hopefully set the tone and theme of our gathering.

THE MAN IN THE ARENA

by Theodore Roosevelt

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Since our inception we have certainly met our fair share of critics – both from outside and in. There were those who said the world won't take us seriously if we wear Jedi robes or that using a lightsaber was both impractical and childish. In the 2001 Jedi census phenomenon, people started to claim Jedi as a religion upon which the media had painted us to be a joke. This false representation led many to leave the Jedi Path. If that wasn't bad enough, we had people from within our communities tear down each other. Members would fling insults and state that another isn't being a Jedi. You aren't exercising the right way. You are just an “armchair philosopher” or an “online Jedi”. Essentially people were saying that my education is better than yours.



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How easily we forget the difficulty in choosing to walk the Path of the Jedi. We openly subject ourselves to critique and evaluation from our peers that we may learn. We find time in our already busy schedules to fill our minds with knowledge. We push our bodies to do more today than we could yesterday. In a society that focuses on the individual, we seek a connection to those around us and be part of something larger.

We ought to offer credit instead of criticism. We have Jedi who work through their physical limitations, learning a martial art or training through their fibromyalgia. We have Jedi, whom outsiders would see as brutes, show they are quite capable as mystics and scholars. The reverse is also true; we have Jedi whom others would think of only as a nerd or bookworm prove themselves as capable athletes. We have Jedi who were shy or commonly overlooked be given the opportunity to find their voice and become leaders and teachers in the community. These Jedi who take even one step on the Jedi Path are putting in more effort in their improvement than the rest of society.

And yes we will have our blunders and challenges. In fact, we have made it part of our culture though we call it “trials.” We have situations that test us and mentors who push us beyond our self-imposed limits. We want to make sure a Jedi has the physical fortitude, the emotional strength, the intellectual tenacity, the social graces, and the spiritual core to face anything. Success is not achieved easily. We will run into those walls. However, run into them enough and it is not we who fall, but those walls that do.

We persist because we can see beyond. We know there will be a time when we move from Padawan to Knight. We recognize that a meeting between two Jedi is the beginning of a thriving chapter. We acknowledge that our gathering of Jedi is actually part of a larger organization spanning the US.

We have already accomplished much. What was once one website has now become numerous forums, academies, and groups where people can learn to be Jedi. Once there was no textbooks, no training manuals, no autobiographies and now we have literature written by Jedi themselves. In 2002, a handful of Jedi came together to train and share knowledge. Now we have yearly national gatherings with over 30 participants and more gatherings springing up around the globe. We have moved offline in a way that census never could show daring to state to the world that Yes, we are Jedi.

Daring greatly is precisely what Jedi do. Jedi from Chicago dared to stop Multiple Sclerosis in its tracks and raised nearly \$1000 for the National MS Society. Jedi from California dared to end abuse running a Spartan race and raising over \$2000 for a Joyful Heart Foundation. While their present is uncertain, the Jedi from Colorado dared to plan for their future. Being the youngest group to form, Jedi from Indiana dared to be the first to say “Yes, we are a chapter of

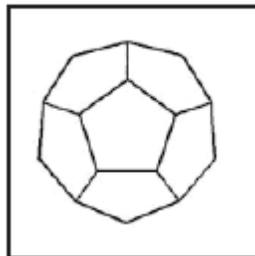


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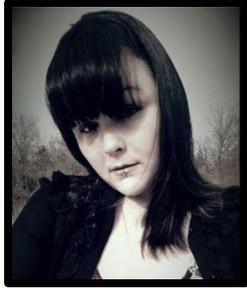
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the Jedi Federation,” striving to be a shining example. Even now each of you have dared to come to this national gathering hosted by the Jedi Federation. For some it is a financial hardship, others a time constraint. Yet, you see the value in this community, a group that pushes each of us to be better. I am fortunate to stand amongst you. I am not with those who do nothing not knowing victory nor defeat. You choose to dare and do so daring greatly.





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## **Trials of Love (Poem) By Samra Caltha**

*Samra Caltha is an Independent Jedi living near the Gateway to the West. She enjoys reading faerie cards, learning about plants, insects, & the Force, writing, and just living to be the best version of myself I possibly can for myself and my 2 children. As a great Real Life Jedi once said, "Just Be A Jedi."*

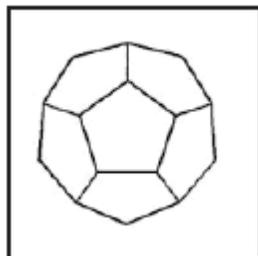
Dreams Dashed

Lives Trashed

Hearts Smashed

All Part of the

Trials Of Love.





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## Trial of Fasting By Connor Lidell

*Connor Lidell is a 24-year-old Jedi Apprentice studying under Angelus Kalen of the Jedi Federation. He has been a Jedi student for over a decade. He has completed the training program at Temple of the Jedi Order where he is a retired licensed minister and knight. He also holds a faculty position at the Institute for Jedi Realist Studies, where he trained under his first mentor, Jedi Knight Jackie Meyer. He currently Co-Chairs the Indy Jedi alongside Diamond Shank, and he wants to give his Indy Jedi family a shout out for being awesome!*

(a shorter version of this article appeared on my blog JediVoices on August 17, 2016)

Trials come in many forms. They can be tests that we pass; they can be obstacles that we overcome. In a mythological sense, trials are rites of passage that change us from the inside out or the outside in. We are baptized by fire and reborn of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus commanded. We sit in many hours of meditation to transcend our ego in Buddhism. We kill our first animal in tribal villages. We have our first child. Trials are anything that fundamentally changes you.

In most rites of passage, these changes are just beyond our grasp. Just beyond our current power. They stretch us and ask us to dig deep. But, they aren't so difficult that we fail. If we are failing, it is no longer a trial or a rite of passage; it is a lesson. One we can learn from and return to the trial.

I want to discuss a trial that we can all practice now. It is within all of our grasps as we speak. Fasting. Now, fasting is not only giving up food. You can fast from anything that you find pleasure in. Giving up food, though, is such a deeply uprooting action because it is universal to us. It is moving consciously up the vibrational spectrum from groundedness to spirituality. You are leaving the needs of the flesh for the development of the spirit.

This is alchemical. This is the internal change, the internal sacrifice, the internal love, the internal discipline that fundamentally creates a shift in your mind.

Discipline. When you fast, you automatically show how your behaviors are tied to your commitment to spiritual growth. You are saying that the needs of your mind and spirit are more important than the base desires of your flesh. And, this is important for maturation. A contented soul takes his base needs into consideration, but he does not let them own him.

Love. When you fast, you show that giving up something as necessary as food (for a short, pre-determined time) proves to yourself how much you care about spiritual growth. Sometimes, it is hard to see the abstract commitment of wanting to grow spiritually, and fasting is a way to make solid that commitment.



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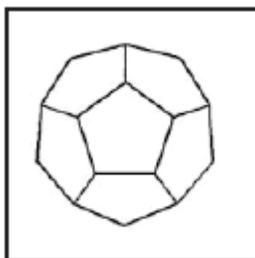
Sacrifice. When you fast, you are no longer indulging yourself with delicacies. You are intentionally giving up energy, satiety, and the joy of food in order to feel the joys of spiritual devotion.

Removing decadence allows you to focus on YOU. Your center. Your needs. Your desires. Your growth. And, it will change you if you don't hold on to your pre-conceived notions of what you think you need.

Let it all go.

Fasting is the fastest way to experience spiritual devotion. It is instant and physical. That is what I like most about fasting. When I do a three-day water cleanse, I feel myself emptying of the crap that I've filled my body with (both material and spiritual).

So, in deciding to fast, ask yourself this: What am I holding on to that I could let go of? How could fasting contribute to that process? How will fasting as a trial completely change me? How will I be different?





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From the Youngling's Corner: Trials of High School and Social Media By Eli "Gold" Neumann

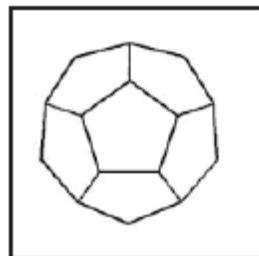
*Eli is a 14-year old teen who lives in the Indianapolis area. He was first published at the age of 9, and intends on writing creatively and expressing his thoughts. He aspires to be a video game designer, violinist, and comedian. Gold is currently working on his mediumship and astral projection. He enjoys good food, hearty belly laughs, and loyal friendships.*

Some may think the tough part is about academics and having good grades, but in my opinion, I think it's more about being calm and observant in the face of obstacles. Sure, some of the obstacles include getting grades, but in high-school, everyone seems to base it on their social status. I think grades are more important and everyone agrees ... though others continue with their snap chatting, blogging, doing any type of social media possible.

Believe me when I say, during English Composition, I sit next to three girls who text like there's no tomorrow. Yes, they are texting during class! They don't actually care about grades until they see their grades, but it just seems they are not caring at all about their education. I have heard the worst excuses such as "Every time I look at a paper, my eyes hurt" and "Meh, I'll do it in the morning". This isn't even the worst of it!

This is the reason I hated social media and still don't use it, but I thought I might try it to see what's so great about it. Apparently, a person making dumb faces is funny, calling your best friends "ho" is acceptable, and people spreading lies about others is all done in fun. In my opinion, social media is more work than it's worth having—at least with my age group right now. People say "You get friends," but if you had friends, don't you think they would not insult you?

People say social media is good. Don't get me wrong, social media isn't bad as long as you use it respectfully and effectively. My trial in high school is seeing how social media negatively influences those people's accountability or not done with this trial yet, and my fellow teens and that they responsible with this technology



around me. The trial is trusting responsibility with technology. I'm I just hope that I can reach some of will listen, be considerate, and be tool.



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## The Trial of Trials By Angelus Kalen

*Angelus Kalen (Gabriel Calderon) has been involved with the Jedi community for well over a decade. He began with what was then the JEDI Academy, which is now the Institute for Jedi Realist Studies (IJRS). He continues as a senior instructor at the IJRS. Angelus also became involved with the Jedi Resource Center which organized offline Gatherings. At the encouragement of the organizer, he started an offline group in Illinois in 2006 - "Chicago Jedi".*

It is interesting that whenever I would type "trials", my fingers would spell "trails". It has occurred frequently enough that my phone autocorrects the word to "trails." As I reflected, I found how similar those two terms are. Trials are commonly seen as a test or examination – a courtroom trial, medical trials, and our own Jedi Trials. They are often long processes with some desired result. We hope that justice is found, a new cure discovered, and the Knighting of a Jedi. Trials happen as part of our road of transformation.

Joseph Campbell, most known for the Heroes Journey, would explain that the initiation of a hero would transpire with "the Road of Trials." One would face many challenges that test and try a person's character, strength, and determination. Those familiar with the story of Luke Skywalker may think of his time on Dagobah under the tutelage of Yoda. He would swing through vines, run through the swamp with Yoda on his back, do a handstand, and lift rocks using the force. He learned much about the Force and even had visions. Perhaps we find an abundant amount of stories about trials, not just in Star Wars but in other mythologies as well, because of our own human nature to seek challenges and thus find a personal connection.

While Luke underwent many physical, emotional, and mental trials, I propose that it would be his spiritual/psychic encounter that would be the most grueling, as evidenced by his failure. Luke felt a pull to a cave that was strong in the darkside. Rather than listen to Yoda's counsel on not taking weapons, Luke proceeds to battle with a figure resembling Darth Vader. As the helmeted head is cut and rolls on the ground, the mask is removed only to find the face of Luke Skywalker. Psychologist Carl Jung would see this duel as an encounter with "the shadow" – a manifestation of one's own fears and deficiencies. One's shadow becomes stronger the longer it is avoided. Moreover, the confrontation is not to be violent; the shadow must be integrated, which in itself can be a life-long process. Therefore, as Luke beheaded his own shadow, his only success was in killing a part of his individuality, one that could actually bring him much strength.

For any person on the Jedi Path, the trials hold much significance. Whether we wish to become a Jedi Knight or simply improve ourselves, there will be hardships to face. They differ for each person. Some whom have had issues with weight their entire lives will find the physical to be most challenges. Others that have anxiety about public speaking will find difficulty with



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the social trials. Perhaps what will be the most taxing is sitting in a room with one's peers and having a light shine on your weaknesses.

It will not be easy nor quick. While a specific challenge may take the span of an hour, all the training and preparation leading to it may have been years. That same person with social anxiety could have taken class after class on communication, rehearsed speeches in a mirror, and even practiced with some friends. As she stands before the audience and delivers a calm lecture, no one knows the fear and dread hiding behind her eyes. She has come to realize that she is still alive and the world continues. Perhaps the next time she has a public speaking engagement, the fear will lessen until there comes a day when she is comfortable being in front a crowd. When you have faced your "trial," there is a transformation, even if only a small one. Yet that small change will make a huge impact.

