

# Teachers

*Every man is a quotation from all his ancestors.*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson



*crossing the Atlantic, March 1982*

As a toddler learning to swim and snorkel from our yacht 'Hornpipe' in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, I learnt by trying to emulate my parents and keep up with my older brother, Sam.

Semi-mythical acquaintances, like Benoit the Tahitian pearl-diver, defined an unthinkable but still inspirational boundary of human depths: I remember his 110 feet, but Sam's less erratic memory has him diving to 90 feet (27m).

Our own frenzied spurts took us to 14 meters, ages 8 and 10, and our father could disentangle an anchor at 20m (all facts we proudly wore like badges in conversations with other boating kids).

However the lessons that have enabled me to become a better freediver have mostly been learnt out of the water. I see them now, as a kind of string of Aesop's fables that make up my life, and continue to do so. The nearer lessons are invisible, still in the process of assimilation, while those at a greater distance are familiar and well-defined.



*woodworking, New Zealand 1986*

Making wood carvings alongside my father David in his workshop I learnt that that initial ecstasy of inspiration will

never last you to the end of the task - after its energy was exhausted by the first gleeful hour of chiseling then if patience and discipline didn't take over you'd be left with a hacked-at block of wood that only half-resembled the intended camel/giraffe/whale.

Watching him steadily work to create elaborate works and an even more elaborate lifework, in the same way that he steadily devoured mountain ranges on our long hikes, I've witnessed the archetype of patience and discipline.



*David Trubridge, circa 2010*

Thanks to my father, I have never reneged on a training session, or quit when results were discouraging.

My mother, Linda, who hand-sewed stuffed animal toys, quilts and costumes for my brother and I, who consummately praised us for whatever we did while propelling us to something greater, represented a distillation of altruism that inspires me to this day. By coaxing and encouraging us - to write it a little clearer, to paint it a little more attentively, to play it a little more fluidly - she taught me that there was always more inside: more creativity, more potential, more depth.



*yoga with Linda, Caribbean 1982*

Thanks to my mother, I believe in myself and the infinitude of our capacity at whatever we set our minds to.



In my first years of freediving I was lucky to have Umberto Pelizzari as a mentor, and although he may claim I wouldn't listen to him, he did teach me, among many things, the difference between real actions and the proclamatory words that can sometimes disperse our intention for action.

I could list a town-sized group of people here and still only touch on the legion of teachers and examples that have shaped my life. My childhood friend, who was a kind of subconscious influence in my first tentative months of freediving, appearing in my sleep to tell me "stand in your dream"; my closest high school friends who have been both beacons and mirrors.

No one operates in a vacuum, and just as we acquire the tools of our predecessors we also share (blog about) or follow (steal!) the advances of our peers. It's unlikely that there is a single freediver, whether training partner or competitor, who I have dived alongside and not learned from in some way.



*Vanuatu, 1988*

I've always believed that creativity, innovation and perhaps even positive energy in general have a kind of syphoning quality to them: the more you draw from these pure mountain waters then the more will spring up to replace it, while on the other hand hoarding leads to stagnation of the source.

Dissemination of understanding and techniques should be as natural as their acquisition. It's thanks to those who share a similar view that I am where I am today, and as long as I am able to help others myself then I will still have access to the clean source that is nourishing my own growth.

- William Trubridge, Oct 2012

Beautiful piece of writing, William. And honest words coming from an honest heart. May all your experiences, past and present, all that you've shared here and that defined you, take you deeper and deeper. Wish you all the best in VB 2012!  
by Sergiu on 2012-10-03 11:46:45

That's a fine piece of work, Will  
by Fonduest on 2012-10-03 12:20:09

Great text, enjoyed reading it!  
by Jone on 2012-10-03 12:57:23

Nice article William. I met your dad when he came to give a designers talk in Sydney last year, got to admit I was surprised when I realised the family connection, but it makes sense. Later we spoke about the relationship of freediving to creativity. It seems to me as a sport freediving must be approached counter-intuitively to many other sports - relaxation instead of exertion, slowing down instead of speeding up etc - which is an approach that can be very useful in developing a profound (deep?) creative practice when so many others are concerned with producing excessive novelty. So I see this relationship in your dad's work. For me as a designer and freediver I think there is a direct connection, in that freediving has given me an ability to be less reactive and more reflective with my creative practise i.e. approach design problems slower but more thoughtfully.  
by Guy Keulemans on 2012-10-03 18:27:05

Every person grows, and realises more of themselves, only through others, particularly their partners, their children and their friends.  
by David Trubridge on 2012-10-04 00:29:45

I loved everything about this post, including the great pictures. I'm a writer and a free diving fan (I don't free dive, but I geek out about people who do). My own creative practice involves a short meditation and then a few prayers of gratitude before I sit down to work. Thanks for sharing all of your thank yous. I hope you don't mind if I put a link to this on my own site.

*by Dorothea Duenow on 2012-10-04 19:33:05*