

The HangLine

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A Diver with Attitude Part 2 of the TASK Model

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As divers we train to develop our diving skills and knowledge. We then improve on those aspects of our diving ability by practice - getting in the water and diving. There are a great many virtues a technical diver may possess; knowledge, good judgement, experience, physical strength, stamina, diving skills and many more but perhaps the most important of all virtues is a sound altitude. Without it a diver may be unknowingly putting himself or herself at risk. So where do we begin to address such a complex and variable issue such as attitude? Like anything, we can break it down into components.

For a technical diver a good altitude might begin with humility. Someone once said that humility is to make a right estimate of one's self. A key concept when we talk about recognizing your limitations. A diver who has an inflated sense of ego can easily get him into a lot of trouble by overestimating their abilities. It is important to dive within your means, and knowing those means requires an honest self-evaluation of what you know and what you can physically and mentally handle. This is

one of the toughest things to do in diving especially when peer pressure is added to the equation.

In addition to humility a good technical diver will always keep an open mind.



Always look at different ways to perfect your diving style and appreciate what other divers have to share, including those less experienced than yourself. It is easy to begin to assume that a particular diving style, piece of equipment, diving law or training techniques is the one and only. Life and evolution is about change and even though sometimes something different can be very difficult to accept, there is always some chance it is valid. Without having that





kind of attitude we cannot adapt to our external environment.



A technical diver's golden rule to survival is never quitting.

We do whatever it takes to survive the seemingly impossible.

Believe you can or believe you can't, either way you are right. Stress management training and survival skills development begin with - an attitude that teaches a technical diver that under no circumstances is he or she to give up, that staying alive is an absolute priority and if you set your mind to it you can overcome anything. It is this discipline that has saved many lives in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

When we discuss respect we are subject to a personal level of value that each diver maintains. A diver first needs to respect himself and the person he is diving with. They must also respect the equipment they are diving with, the training required to complete the diving, the environment and of course the risks involved in the dive. Failure to do so can lead to complacency and subsequently no self-preservation.

This brings us to honesty, being honest with yourself about your abilities and present state of mind. Those who cannot critically assess what their limitations are will predispose themselves to an unacceptable amount of risk. Self-evaluation can be difficult at times, as we are either over or under confident. We might even consider a balanced sense of confidence an important part of attitude.

One of the most serious viruses that can inflict a healthy attitude is ignorance. George Bernard Shaw said it best;

'No man can be a pure specialist without being in the strict sense an idiot.'

By assuming we are above learning or at a state where we can no longer better our position, we only feed an illusion. We are obliged to always give due and fair trial to new ideas and concepts. It is what keeps the evolution of technical diving fresh. Take a brief moment and consider the attitude you maintain towards diving. List on a piece of paper as many or the virtues you would like to think are important to a technical diver. Then ask yourself, "Does my attitude honestly reflect most of these attributes?"

Chances are you will find a refreshing need to improve on your approach to diving emotionally. I say refreshing because you have identified values that will make you perform better both in and out of the water. You will find yourself in a better position to learn. Keep in mind that this is a very personal exercise and there is no need to share your answers with anyone.





Lastly, do the exercise! If you think that this exercise is futile or not very useful than go back and reread the previous paragraph. It is true-diving is 40% physical and 60% emotional. That emotional state begins with attitude and we have only begun to address some of the virtues of attitude. Finally keep in mind that everything needs to be kept in perspective. Diving should be fun, but it has to be safe.

~Safe Diving

