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Staying Alive:: Applying Risk Management To Advanced Scuba Diving



Synopsis

Scuba divers are dying in caves, on wrecks, and in open water. These are not explorers pushing the boundaries of the known world, and they are not scientist seeking to prove new concepts and expand our understanding of the marine environment. These are ordinary divers. The man buying a coffee ahead of us in the morning; the woman we see walking her dog on our street. Brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles. Someone's wife or husband, mom or dad. Just regular people who are diving for the fun of it. These deaths are tragic, life-altering, devastating, a terrible waste. Worst of all, they are totally unnecessary, a sad mistake and often completely avoidable. In *Staying Alive*, Steve Lewis tells us there are very few diving accidents. Most of the heart-breaking events claiming the lives of scores of recreational divers are mistakes that result from established limits being ignored. Lewis revisits the survival guidelines originally proposed by the legendary Sheck Exley and shows us in eight straightforward steps how simple it is for sport and technical divers to avoid becoming a statistic.

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Customer Reviews

Steve Lewis has been an active technical diver, instructor and expedition leader since the early 1990s. He is currently a training, marketing and communications consultant in the diving industry for clients in the public and private sectors. As a speaker, educator, and blogger, he is best known for promoting safe diving practices to recreational divers who plan to use both open and closed-circuit kit, in caves, on wrecks and in open water environments.

I'm only part way through Steve's book but am already impressed! It is written with the wisdom of a true veteran and the integrity of a mentor who desires to see excellence in his students. Steve offers no nonsense guidance on risk management and safe diving techniques. He shares strong opinions where behaviors are safety critical, yet carefully describes "why" safe divers choose to do things in a particular way. More importantly he offers flexibility and ideas when there is more than one right way to conduct an activity. Doing "what works" makes so much sense when an individual can justify their approach as safe and effective. It allows for innovation and open mindedness in our sport. Complex activities are broken down into easy steps with explanation for every stage of the process. Activities are described thoughtfully and pragmatically rather than in a rigid and mechanical manner. Frankly, that is why I am still reading the book... I often pause to digest a meaty statement and want to savor its consideration before moving on. There is a phrase, "learning to shave on another man's beard." Steve's book embodies this concept. He has spent years in the trenches, in many varied diving environments and technologies. He offers the details of his lessons learned, giving you a fast track to safe, risk-aware diving. Every diver at any level can benefit from his wisdom and experience.

If you are a certified recreational or technical diver you need to read this book. For 30 years I have been teaching young and old to scuba dive safely. I have used several text books over the years to teach safe diving principles to my classes. The focus is always on safety. Well, diving is not safe. Diving is inherently dangerous, We are not only in the water, we are surrounded by it. And we breathe compressed gas at varying depths. Staying alive underwater while having fun, exploring, hunting, photographing, etc. and returning to shore unharmed is the foremost objective of every dive. Steve Lewis explains how to stay alive using 8 principles of diving survival and Attitude is the first principle. Newspapers refer to diving mishaps as accidents. Steve points out that the mishap is usually not accidental but caused by the diver's attitude, using poor judgment, oversight, bad decision making, arrogance, or hubris. A proper attitude is to be an informed and knowledgeable diver, one who continues their training and learning about diving beyond the receipt of a plastic c-card. Staying Alive contains information your instructor did not teach you. This book is for all levels of divers who want to learn how to manage the risks of diving. Enjoy diving, stay alive!

I read a lot about diving, diving accidents, non-fiction diving adventures, etc. I also try to take at least 1-2 advanced dive courses a year, in the belief that the more I know and the better trained I am, the safer a diver I will be. Staying Alive is a must-read for any scuba diver. At any level. The tone is serious, thorough and professional. If you're a newer diver, you'll quickly be shaken awake

from the "strap on an air tank and go look at the fishies" mentality promised in some dive schools' marketing brochures, mentality that can get a diver killed if taken literally. Steve stresses the nuts-and-bolts, real-world side of diving and does so in a direct and "here's how you do it" manner. He also shatters some "myths", e.g., at the outset, he states, "There is absolutely no reason to ever....EVER...run out of air on a dive" and then proceeds to teach us why. Very much like what aspiring new pilots are taught, when they learn that '98% of airplane crashes are the result of pilot error", Steve stresses that preparation, training, practice and self-reliance are the responsibility of every diver, regardless of certification level and includes dozens of examples of how to apply the techniques presented. I, for one, will be a much better diver as I continue to try to absorb and master what's taught in this book.

I'm a fairly new diver with about 100 dives under my belt, but I found this very helpful in terms of keeping me focused on safety and the "what ifs". I haven't found too many books on the serious side of SCUBA but "forewarned is forearmed" and this book does a great job.

This is about diving mindset and how to stay alive. While written with the technical diver in mind - especially the later chapters - the information is valuable (really critical) to even the most casual diver. Without being alarmist, the author explores the real risks with the sport (stuff the certifying agencies won't emphasize) and how to make yourself safer. The book gives you the tools to understand what risks you are taking and how to control them. To paraphrase one of the most important passages in the book: 'to prevent "trust-me dives" the weakest (least trained, experienced, etc) diver leads the dive'. If you want a book on techniques I highly recommend "Six Skills" by the same author.

Hmm, a little hyperbole about the danger of diving. Not much new here. Experienced divers will know this (or should) and most of this info is covered in open water and advanced open water certification. Those seeking advanced knowledge or safety information have better resources available. Divers who don't know this are probably not going to look here (or anywhere) for the information.

This is a good, solid, somewhat advanced book on safety. I say somewhat advanced as much of what is covered would not be geared toward somebody right out of Open Water cert, but it could certainly help them. This is more for advanced recreational and tech divers. The reason I gave it 4

rather than 5 is that it is a little like reading a text book. I found myself skipping pages that I thought were overly exhaustive, to parts that were more relevant to me. I am glad that the information is there, but it does make for slow reading at times.

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