

Title: From Spearfishing to Freediving - A Journey of Respect and Transformation

Presentation (Introduction)

This presentation is about my personal journey with spearfishing-how it started as a simple adventure with my family and slowly became a deep passion that shaped the way I see the ocean. Through the years, I faced many challenges underwater, but I also discovered valuable lessons about discipline, patience, safety, and sustainability. Spearfishing taught me more than just how to catch fish-it taught me how to respect the sea, how to stay calm under pressure, and how to protect what I love. These experiences eventually led me to freediving, where I found a deeper connection with the ocean and a new purpose.

How It Started

When I first started spearfishing, it was just fun and games. I would go to the sea with my dad and cousins, diving to touch the sand at the bottom-it felt amazing. I didn't even think about catching fish; I was just enjoying being underwater. One day, my uncle brought his speargun and took me on a few trips. I immediately became passionate. Every time I went to the sea, I felt excited. Over time, this fun turned into something deeper. I connected with the sea, learned its rhythms, and found meaning below the surface. Spearfishing became more than a hobby-it was my life. It helped me grow stronger, more confident, and more focused. It also built my respect for the underwater world, which slowly grew as I spent more time observing marine life. That respect eventually transformed how I approached the ocean and led me into the world of freediving.

The Importance of Sustainable Spearfishing and the Emotional Impact of Environmental Damage

When I first started spearfishing, the sea was alive. There was an abundance of fish. We could easily catch enough to feed the whole family and still see more left swimming. It felt like the ocean would always be full. But year after year, the numbers dropped. According to the FAO, over 34% of global fish stocks are now overfished, and nearly 60% are being fished at their maximum sustainable limit. The NOAA also reports that coral reef fisheries have declined by up to 30% in some regions. Every summer, I noticed fewer fish. At first, I thought it was just a bad season. But it became a pattern. Eventually, we would go out and come back with almost nothing.

It wasn't just us. The whole region was suffering. Fishermen started using bombs and poison. They placed nets too close to the shore. These destructive techniques killed not only fish but also coral reefs and entire ecosystems. Even young fish and harmless species were wiped out. The sea floor that was once vibrant became silent. The damage was heartbreaking.

Spearfishing at night became popular for profit. Some even used scuba tanks. The more efficient people tried to be, the more harm they caused. Fish populations couldn't recover. The same areas that once fed generations became deserts.

This decline deeply affected me. Spearfishing had been my passion, but it started to feel wrong. I couldn't bear to use my speargun anymore. I began freediving in sandy areas, just to avoid seeing the death of the reef. I wanted to remember the ocean as it was, not what it had become.

But I didn't want to give up. I realized that spearfishing could still have a place if it was done with respect. Take only what you need. Let the big breeders live. Protect the habitat. Teach others.

By spearfishing with care and awareness, we protect not just the fish, but the culture, the freedom,

and the soul of the ocean.

How Difficult Spearfishing Conditions Prepared Me for Calmness in Freediving

Spearfishing in Syria was never easy. Strong currents, bad visibility, cold water, and sometimes dangerous waves were part of my normal training. But I never saw them as problems. I saw them as part of the experience. When the current was too strong, I learned to work with it, not against it. When visibility was bad, I stayed relaxed and focused on what I could see. All of these challenges trained me mentally.

I remember one trip when the sea was rough and the waves were constantly hitting us. We were diving near the rocks. I had to stay calm and keep my breathing steady. I had to choose the right moment to dive, the right angle, and manage my recovery in difficult conditions. This kind of situation built a foundation of calmness in me that I now carry into every freedive.

These situations taught me something essential: if your mind is not calm, your body will not follow. The more challenges I faced, the calmer I became. This helped me so much in freediving, where being calm is not optional-it's necessary.

Now, when I'm teaching or training, I know that bad conditions don't have to ruin a session. They can make it stronger. I've seen other divers panic when things don't go smoothly. I stay calm, and that calmness spreads. What I learned from spearfishing in difficult seas became one of my strongest tools in freediving.

It's not just about being strong or skilled. It's about being mentally prepared. I'm thankful for every hard day in the sea because now I know how to handle the ocean in any mood.

Discipline and Adaptation

Spearfishing taught me discipline in a way no sport ever did. I had to wake up early, prepare all my gear, check conditions, and plan long hours in the water. In the beginning, I didn't understand the value of discipline, but spearfishing forced me to develop it. The more effort I put in, the better I became. It wasn't about luck-it was about consistency, awareness, and preparation.

Each dive required me to control my breathing, to stay relaxed and alert, and to observe everything around me. I had to adapt to changes quickly-maybe the current shifted, or the fish moved. I couldn't get frustrated. I had to adapt. That adaptability helped shape my mindset in and out of the water.

These lessons translated perfectly to freediving. When I began freediving, I already had the habit of preparing my mind and body. I knew how to calm myself, how to conserve energy, and how to focus only on what I could control. I already knew the feeling of holding my breath for long periods and moving with intention.

Spearfishing also trained my body. Long swims, diving with weights, carrying fish-it built my endurance and strength. But freediving refined all of that. It gave me grace, precision, and understanding. The foundation was already built through discipline, and freediving helped me polish it.

I see discipline now as freedom. The more disciplined I am, the more confident I feel in the water. That mindset has made me not only a better diver but a better teacher and a more aware human being.

Learning Safety Through Experience

One of the most important lessons I've learned came from a dangerous moment in the sea. It was after a long day of diving. We had already caught many fish, and we were on our way back when I suggested to my dad to check one last spot. It was a place I believed could have a big fish.

Sure enough, I found a large white grouper in a hole. I dove down and tried to shoot it. It wasn't a kill shot, so I had to dive again. And again. I ended up doing about twelve dives back to back, with almost no rest. I was obsessed with getting the fish out. Finally, on the last dive, I pulled it out and swam up with it.

As I reached the surface, I had an LMC-loss of motor control. I couldn't breathe properly, and I started to fade. My dad immediately saw the signs. He grabbed me, removed my mask, supported me, and helped me recover.

That moment changed everything. I was so close to blacking out, and it could have ended very badly if I had been alone. I realized how fragile we are in the water. No matter how strong or skilled you are, if you don't respect your limits, the sea will remind you.

Since then, I've become a safety-focused diver. I always make sure to rest properly, dive with a buddy, and stay aware of my energy and breath. That LMC wasn't just a warning-it was a lesson. Now I share it with my students to help them understand how important recovery, self-awareness, and buddy systems are in freediving and spearfishing.

From Hunting to Harmony

When the sea started to change, so did I. Spearfishing was no longer what it used to be. The fish

were fewer. The reefs were quieter. I started to feel sad every time I brought the gun with me. Slowly, I began diving without it.

At first, I told myself I was just exploring. But over time, I realized I no longer wanted to hunt. I just wanted to be there-to breathe, to move underwater, and to feel peace. I began to focus on my technique, on the feeling of stillness, and on connecting with the marine life without harming it.

One day, I saw a fish that I used to hunt, and instead of chasing it, I followed it calmly. I watched how it moved, how it hid, how it interacted with the environment. I felt something powerful. I wasn't there as a predator anymore. I was there as part of the ocean.

This shift changed everything. I started to teach differently. I talked more about respect, conservation, and connection. Freediving became my way of healing the sadness I felt about the ocean's condition. It also helped me heal something inside myself.

Now, I feel proud when I dive and leave nothing behind. I feel proud when I show others the beauty of the ocean without taking from it. Spearfishing gave me my roots, but freediving gave me wings.

This journey from hunting to harmony is one I wish more people could experience. It's not just about technique-it's about purpose. And my purpose now is to dive with love, with care, and with a deep respect for the world beneath the surface.

Bibliography / Sources

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