

Nine for IX Film Discussion Guide: *No Limits*

Key Concepts:

- Mental Toughness
- Personality And Sport
- Overconformity To The Sport Ethic
- Sport Marketing And “Selling Sex”
- Freediving
- Extreme Sports Performance And Gender
- Coach-Athlete Relationship
- Coaching Ethics
- Sport Subculture
- Moral Implications Of Extreme Sport Participation

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss examples in the film where freedivers state that freediving is more about mental capacity, rather than physical skills. What aspects of mental toughness do free divers need to succeed? Discuss if and how the mind can overcome physical limits of the body. What positive lessons can be learned from the mental toughness of extreme sport athletes?
2. Alternatively, some scholars argue that extreme sport athletes like freedivers engage in a form of deviance called “the sport ethic.” Analyze freedivers using the concept of the sport ethic.
3. In the film Tanya Streeter and Audrey Mestre were characterized and “young and sexy” women rivals which was good for the sport and brought unprecedented visibility to freediving. How did Streeter and Mestre benefit and how were they exploited? What role did the rivalry with Tanya Streeter have in the success, and the eventual death, of Audrey Mestre?
4. On espnW.com the filmmaker of *No Limits*, Allison Ellwood, states the most haunting question for her in the making of the film was: *If Pipin was so deeply in love with her, as he claimed in the book, why did he push her so hard to make such a dangerous dive for which his team was ill-prepared and under-financed?* What are your thoughts on the role of Pipin Ferreras, Audrey’s husband, in her death? According to those interviewed for the film, what could have been done to manage risk and increase the likelihood of a successful dive?

5. Before watching this film, had you ever heard of or seen freediving covered in the media? Freediving is one of the few sports where men and women compete by the exact same rules and gender differences in performance and [world records](#) are relatively small. Can you think of sports where the rules for participation are a) different and, b) the same for men and women? Can you think of other sports where the performance gap between men and women is narrow and sports where gender differences in performance are large? Which sports (gender similar or gender different) are most valued, popular, deemed legitimate and covered by the media in US society? How might sport popularity be related to gender and power?
6. In the film, the ghost writer Linda Robertson of *The Dive*, Pipin Ferreras' autobiography, said she found Ferreras "an unreliable narrator" because she didn't believe half of what he said. What do you make of the fact Ferreras refused to be interviewed for the film and how do you reconcile his characterizations in the film?
7. In free diving, as with many other sports, there are many husband-coach/wife-athlete duos, as evidenced in the film by Ferreras and Mestre, as well as Tanya and Paul Streeter. What might be the potential ethical issues and up- and downsides of having a husband-coach/wife-athlete relationship in high level competitive sports? How might a young female athlete be vulnerable with an older male coach within the coach-athlete relationship?
8. For many extreme sports, the majority of participants are White males. Scholars argue this makes inclusion for females and non-White males difficult. Based on who was interviewed for film and the participants you saw, does this hold true for freediving?
9. What are the moral implications related to an extreme sport athlete risking their own life, while in course incurring cost and potential harm to others, such as families, rescue workers, and society at large? What should the balance be between autonomy and doing what is best for others?
10. Can you think of examples in other sports where the Key Concepts listed at the beginning of this guide are present?

Additional Readings:

Brymer, E., & Oades, L.G. (2009) Extreme Sports: A Positive Transformation in Courage and Humility. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 49(1), 114-126.

EXCERPT FROM READING: Extreme sports and extreme sports participants have been most commonly explored from a negative perspective, for example, the “need to take unnecessary risks.” This study explored what can be learned from extreme sports about courage and humility—two positive psychology constructs.

Brymer, E., & Schweitzer, R. (2013). The search for freedom in extreme sports: A phenomenological exploration. *Psychology Of Sport & Exercise*, 14(6), 865-873.

EXCERPT FROM READING: Participation in extreme sports is continuing to grow, yet there is still little understanding of participant motivations in such sports. The purpose of this paper is to report on one aspect of motivation in extreme sports, the search for freedom.

Ellwood, A. (July 22, 2013). Read *No Limits* Director Allison Ellwood’s blog on the making the film http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alison-ellwood/no-limits_b_3634717.html

Ferreras, P. (2005). *The Dive: A Story of Love and Obsession*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Limited. (guest written by Linda Robertson)

Jowett, S., & Meek, G. A. (2000). The Coach-Athlete Relationship in Married Couples: An Exploratory Content Analysis. *Sport Psychologist*, 14(2), 157.

Olivier, S. (2006). Moral Dilemmas of Participation in Dangerous Leisure Activities. *Leisure Studies*, 25(1), 95-109.

Olsen, M. (2003) *Women Who Risk: Profiles of Women in Extreme Sports*. Hatherleigh Press.

Ostrowski, A., Strzała, M., Stanula, A., Juskiewicz, M., Pilch, W., & Maszczyk, A. (2012). The Role of Training in the Development of Adaptive Mechanisms in Freedivers. *Journal of Human Kinetics*, 32, 197-210.

Serra, C. (2006). *The Last Attempt*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corporation.

Smith, G. (2003). Rapture of the Deep. *Sports Illustrated*, 98(24), 62-72.

Tomlinson, A. & Yorganci, I. (1997). Male Coach/Female Athlete Relations: Gender & Power Relations in Competitive Sports. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 21(2), 134-155.

Wheaton, B., & Beal, B. (2003). ‘Keeping It Real’: Subcultural Media and the Discourses of Authenticity in Alternative Sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 38(2), 155-176.

Additional Activities:

1. Go online and read more about the sport of free diving by visiting AIDA Web site <https://www.aidainternational.org/freediving>
2. Watch the CBS *60 Minutes* piece on free diving December 1, 2013: “Death-defying free dives push boundaries” <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/death-defying-free-dives-push-boundaries-2/>
3. Watch the IMAX film *Ocean Man: Extreme Dive*. This film will take you on a giant screen adventure into the world of two freedivers and their unique relationship to the sea. Their goal: dive deeper than anyone has ever gone before...on a single breath of air. For more than 10 years, world champion freedivers Pipin Ferreras and Umberto Pelizzari have been vying for world records. Their passion is driven by a desire to overtake the other and also push their own physical limits to the extreme. An uncompromising love of the sea unites these two rivals, yet their different personalities and opposing diving philosophies are what separate them. Pipin is the "no limits" man who wants to go deeper and deeper.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8x2Ewz7r9nQ>
4. Read the IAFD/McCoy Report on Audrey Mestre’s Death and discuss the evidence in contrast with your own personal theories of the events leading to Mestre’s death. IAFD is the organization the Ferreras founded in opposition to the AIDA.
<http://www.deeperblue.com/iafdmccoy-report-on-audrey-mestres-death/>
5. Read about the training adaptations needed to develop a world class freediver by reading the Ostrowski et al. (2012) article listed in the Additional Readings.
6. Use the web to find out what Pipin Ferreras is currently doing, including his world record dive attempt set to occur in November 2014.

Join the conversation about *No Limits* in our [Nine for IX Knowledge Center Community](#) on Facebook. For our latest Nine for IX film series, visit espnW.com/nine.