

Chuang tsu: Confucius and the old swimmer

The Writings of Chuang Tzu: Book XIX, Part II, Section XII

Confucius was looking at the cataract near the gorge of Lü, which fell a height of 240 cubits, and the spray of which floated a distance of forty lî, (producing a turbulence) in which no tortoise, gavia, fish, or turtle could play.



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He saw, however, an old man swimming about in it, as if he had sustained some great calamity, and wished to end his life. Confucius made his disciples hasten along the stream to rescue the man; and by the time they had gone several hundred paces, he was walking along singing, with his hair dishevelled, and enjoying himself at the foot of the embankment.

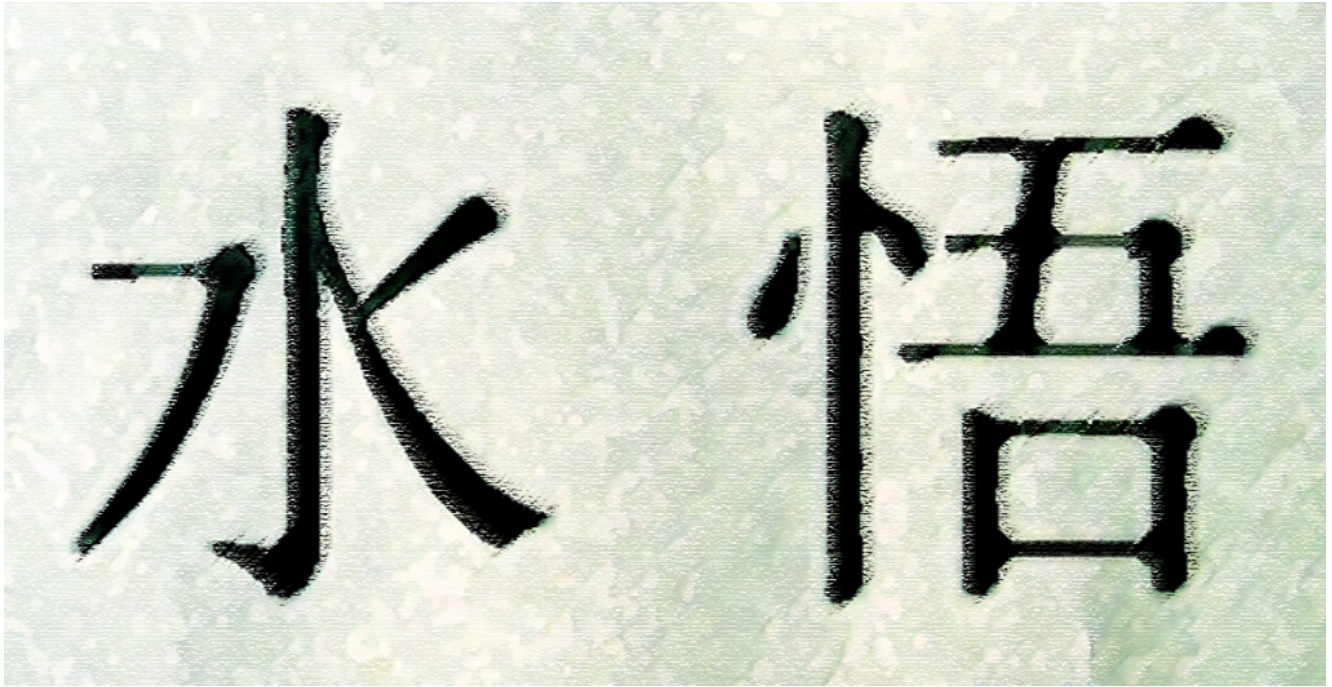
Confucius followed and asked him, saying, 'I thought you were a sprite; but, when I look closely at you, I see that you are a man. Let me ask if you have any particular way of treading the water.'

The man said, 'No, I have no particular way. I began (to learn the art) at the very earliest time; as I grew up, it became my nature to practise it; and my success in it is now as sure as fate. I enter and go down with the water in the very centre of its whirl, and come up again with it when it whirls the other way. I follow the way of the water, and do nothing contrary to it of myself;— this is how I tread it.'

Confucius said, 'What do you mean by saying that you began to learn the art at the very earliest time; that as you grew up, it became your nature to practise it, and that your success in it now is as sure as fate?'

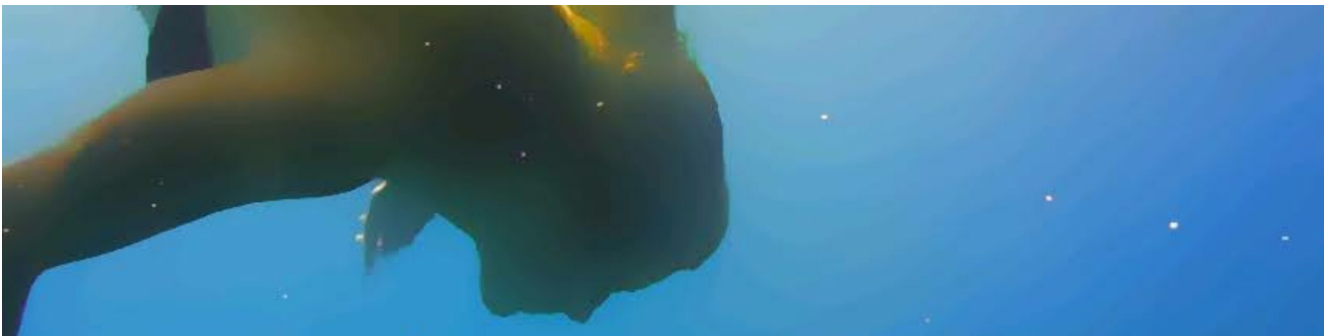
The man replied, 'I was born among these hills and lived contented among them;— that was why I say that I have trod this water from my earliest time. I grew up by it, and have been happy treading it;— that is why I said that to tread it had become natural to me. I know not how I do it, and yet I do it;— that is why I say that my success is as sure as fate.'

The Writings of Chuang Tzu: Book XIX, Part II, Section XII



The word “Aquawareness” represented by the Chinese characters Shuǐ and Wù (“Water” and “Understand”)

Back to basic swimming



by Giancarlo De Leo

In recent years, water-based sports, fitness, and wellness activities have multiplied exponentially.

From a business perspective and for advancing the culture of water, this phenomenon is undoubtedly beneficial.

On the other hand, the numerous and varied activities that are currently taking place in the swimming pool often distract

human and technical resources and, mostly, even users from achieving the main objective of swimming schools; the one for which they were born, their first and real reason to be ...

This simple consideration leads to a new mission: re-evaluate and emphasize the research and guided discovery of personal aquatic skills, elevating them to the highest level.

Hence the need to refocus on the real goal: that is to say, the consolidation of safety and self awareness **in the water and of the water**; the construction and improvement of the basic and essential swimming skills of each user of the pool.

How to achieve the result? through a series of educational experiences and exercises developed and tested for this purpose in over 40 years of teaching swimming and almost 30 as an instructor trainer.

Unexpected outcomes naturally emerged and far beyond the first aims: the appearance and definition of the contours of a new discipline with unique contours.

Paradoxically, at first glance, it might seem like just another creative attempt to monetize a water-based fitness activity; However, it embodies the heart and the essence of pure swimming:

[Aquawareness.](#)

Giancarlo De Leo

www.aquawareness.net

www.fuorimag.it

www.ocean4future.org

Aquawareness Vs Traditional Meditation



How does Aquawareness compare to traditional meditation in terms of mental clarity

Aquawareness and traditional meditation both aim to enhance mental clarity but do so through different mechanisms:

- **Aquawareness:** This practice utilizes water's sensory

properties to promote mindfulness, potentially enhancing focus and reducing emotional reactivity. The active engagement in water may stimulate brain regions associated with attention and relaxation, fostering a unique state of clarity through physical movement and immersion.

- **Traditional Meditation:** Methods like mindfulness or transcendental meditation primarily focus on stillness and breath control, leading to decreased activity in the Default Mode Network (DMN). This reduction helps diminish mind-wandering and enhances cognitive control, promoting sustained mental clarity over time.

In summary, Aquawareness emphasizes sensory engagement and movement, while traditional meditation focuses on stillness and mental discipline to achieve clarity.

[1] The Emerging Role of Meditation in Addressing Psychiatric Illness, with ...
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3109319/>

[2] What does neuroscience say about the best type of meditation for me?
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-does-neuroscience-say-best-type-meditation-me-hodges-ed-d->

Aquawareness key principles



The main principles of Aquawareness focus on fostering a mindful relationship with water and enhancing swimming skills. Key principles include:

1. **Mindfulness:** Encouraging swimmers to be fully present, focusing on sensations, balance and movements in the water.
2. **Breath Awareness:** Utilizing breathing techniques to observe water reactions, and searching new balances, enhancing the swimming experience.
3. **Body Awareness:** Developing consciousness of body perceptions in static positions and dynamic movements to

improve technique and prevent injuries.

4. **Emotional Connection:** Fostering a deeper emotional relationship with water, viewing it as a nurturing element.
5. **Holistic Approach:** Integrating mental, physical, and emotional aspects for overall well-being while swimming.

These principles aim to transform swimming into a meditative and enriching experience.

Storia e virtù dello stile a rana

<https://www.ocean4future.org/savetheocean/archives/62955>

Dal mito di Leandro, a Tarzan



<https://www.ocean4future.org/savetheocean/archives/61317>

Aquawareness approach and
traditional meditation

practices

How does Giancarlo De Leo's approach to aquawareness differ from traditional meditation practices

Giancarlo De Leo's approach to **Aquawareness** differs from traditional meditation practices by integrating physical movement in water with mindfulness. While conventional meditation often emphasizes stillness and introspection, Aquawareness encourages practitioners to engage actively with their aquatic environment, transforming swimming into a meditative experience. This method focuses on the sensations of water, promoting a dual awareness of both the self and the surrounding elements, enhancing self-awareness and mental clarity through movement rather than stillness[1][2][3].

Citazioni:

[1] [PDF] Articles by Giancarlo De Leo – aquawareness
<https://www.aquawareness.net/bibliography/?pdf=11>

[2] Aquawareness: bibliografia ragionata – Fuori
<https://www.fuorimag.it/aquawareness-bibliografia-ragionata/?print=print>

[3] Aquawareness <https://www.aquawareness.net/aquawareness/>

Aquawareness in brief: benefits, goals, mission.

Main Mission

Giancarlo De Leo created the concept of **Aquawareness**, combining basic swimming and mindfulness to enhance physical and mental well-being.

The practice is based on the idea that immersion in water, our first vital environment, alters “terrestrial” perceptual parameters, providing an ideal opportunity to enhance concentration, relaxation, and awareness. Specifically, it helps refine proprioceptive abilities, those related to balance and touch.

Aquawareness includes techniques of breathing, floating, gliding, and elementary, slow, and fluid propulsive movements. It offers apnea experiences with an approach similar to “insight” meditation, transforming every aquatic activity into an experience of deep awareness.

The approach highlights two key awarenesses: **in the water** and **of the water**, nurturing a profound connection between the swimmer and the aquatic surroundings. De Leo critiques the overemphasis on “pre-packaged” techniques that focus solely on performance and associated gear. He advocates for a return to discovering one’s innate aquatic skills, which he refers to as “basic swimming,” not necessarily intended for competitive or fitness purposes.

Through this rediscovery and the continuous development of “pure” swimming abilities, there is a constant improvement in the interaction with water, in every circumstance and environmental condition, even the most challenging ones.

The fundamental goal of aquawareness practice is precisely this: to maximize safety in water. In critical situations, this skill can make a difference, becoming an essential survival ability, both individually and collectively.

In the water, those who can be self-sufficient and save themselves not only have the ability but also the moral obligation to assist others who are less capable.

It is essential to emphasize: Aquawareness, in addition to the numerous secondary benefits that will be illustrated and that integrate into the holistic, fitness, and wellness context,

has the primary mission of constantly improving swimming skills. This objective aims to increase individual and collective survival chances in challenging environmental conditions.

[1] Aquawareness: sources – Fuori
<https://www.fuorimag.it/aquawareness-bibliografia-ragionata/>

[2] Aquawareness: a fascinating concept that combines water ...
– Fuori
<https://www.fuorimag.it/aquawareness-a-fascinating-concept-that-combines-water-and-mindfulness-to-enhance-both-physical-and-mental-awareness/>

[3] Giancarlo De Leo – Academia.edu
<https://independent.academia.edu/TolomeusArounder>

[4] Aquawareness <https://www.aquawareness.net/aquawareness/>

[5] Aquawareness <http://www.aquawareness.org>

[6] Back to basic swimming – aquawareness
<https://www.aquawareness.net/back-to-basic-swimming/>

[7] [PDF] Aquawareness: a fascinating concept that combines water ... – Fuori
<https://www.fuorimag.it/aquawareness-a-fascinating-concept-that-combines-water-and-mindfulness-to-enhance-both-physical-and-mental-awareness/?print=pdf>

[8] Fuori (@Fuori_magazine) / X https://x.com/Fuori_magazine

Additional Benefits

Having defined its purpose and main mission, Aquawareness also presents intriguing aspects and parallels that make it comparable to various holistic disciplines, such as yoga, Vipassana, tai chi, and others.

- **Mind-Body Connection:** Like yoga and tai chi, Aquawareness fosters a deep connection between the mind and body. Through specific exercises and water awareness, it aims to achieve an improved overall psychophysical balance in daily life, even outside the

aquatic environment.

- **Mindful Breathing:** Mindful breathing plays an essential role in all practices, including Aquawareness. Its purpose is to soothe the mind, improve concentration, and encourage relaxation through breath. However, Aquawareness offers a distinctive feature compared to other practices: the water's immediate reaction to any alteration, even the smallest, in lung volume. This invaluable "Archimedes" feedback serves as a crucial partner in enhancing our awareness.
- **Body Awareness:** Similar to the Feldenkrais method, Aquawareness focuses intensely on body awareness and movement. The water, with its enveloping touch, becomes an ideal tool for enhancing proprioception.
- **Thanks to hydrostatic thrust, buoyancy enables the adoption of unusual or difficult movements and postures to maintain on land, providing new opportunities to explore and enhance joint mobility and flexibility.**
- **Authentic connection with nature:** The mentioned disciplines encourage rediscovering a deep bond with nature, integrating one's inner self within it. In Aquawareness, this invitation becomes redundant, as the connection with water, the quintessential natural element, forms the foundation of the discipline; the contact is complete, or rather, literally "immersive".

- **Fuori** Magazine:
<https://www.fuorimag.it/aquawareness-advantages/>
 - **Aquawareness.net:** <https://www.aquawareness.net/>
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Aquawareness targets

Aquawareness is a holistic practice that combines swimming with meditative techniques to enhance water survival skills and promote well-being. Unlike traditional competitive sports, aquawareness focuses on improving safety and confidence in aquatic environments rather than competition or intense physical training[1]. The practice incorporates mindfulness meditation as a tool to navigate various water environments effectively, enhancing internal and external awareness through equilibrium, motor skills, and sensory exploration[1].

The primary objectives of aquawareness include:

- **Enhancing Body/Water Awareness:** Encouraging mindfulness of body movements and interactions with water.
- **Improving Swimming Skills:** Enhancing swimming abilities.
- **Promoting Relaxation:** Using water for stress relief.
- **Rediscovering Sensations:** Recapturing primordial experiences of being in water.
- **Improving Mental Presence:** Turning swimming into a meditative experience.
- **Connecting with Nature:** Fostering a sense of unity with water[1].

Overall, aquawareness aims to empower individuals with water survival skills, promote personal autonomy, and encourage social responsibility and safety[1].

Citations:

[1] <https://www.aquawareness.net/routes-trails-horizons/>

Who are the most influential figures in the history of aquawareness

Who are the most influential figures in the history of aquawareness

The search results did not provide specific information on influential figures in aquawareness. However, key contributors to the field include **Giancarlo De Leo** and **Domenico Maiello**, who have significantly shaped aquatic education and awareness. Their work emphasizes understanding water safety and swimming skills, promoting a holistic approach that integrates physical and mental well-being in aquatic environments. This focus has influenced educators and practitioners in the realm of aquawareness.

Citazioni:

[1] Most influential person in history – Reddit
https://www.reddit.com/r/history/comments/llsihz/most_influential_person_in_history/

[2] The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_100:_A_Ranking_of_the_Most_Influential_Persons_in_History

[3] Top 3 Most Influential People in History! – YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RB7zFdBnRM0>

[4] The 100 : a ranking of the most influential persons in history
https://pitt.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?vid=01PITT_INST%3A01PITT_INST&docid=alma9912665653406236&context=L&adaptor=Local+Search+Engine