



“Everyone sees BASE as this super hardcore, dangerous thing, but it’s one of the most peaceful things I’ve ever done.... Jumping takes your mind off the trivial, material things that go on in the world.”

Is it a challenge sometimes to give your students that trust?

In the past, I’ve told someone not to jump, because they worried me. But, it takes a lot to worry me when it comes to these sports. I’m confident as an instructor. In a lot of these situations, I can get myself and my student out safely. I’ve had to several times.

BASE jumping is different. It’s more of a mental game. My job is mainly to reassure them that they know the procedures. It’s more of a personal development session than a jump training session; we go through all of the mental stuff. All the stories we create in our heads are the biggest limiting factors. I have to focus on the guys more in that section, because a lot of the guys feel like they have something to prove. Some have walked away, because I’ve given them that option: “You don’t have to do this.”

I sometimes find myself leaning over the bridge, gripping the rail and telling them, “You’ve got this!” Then I look down and I have white knuckles and need to calm down before I jump.

When students make it to the bridge then doubt whether they can or want to jump anymore, I have them step back, calm down, and try again, if and when they are ready.

I’ve spent days training people and then taken them up to the bridge to have them climb over the rail and decide it’s not for them. That’s fine. It’s not for everyone.

Where do you BASE jump?

BASE jumping is quite illegal in many places, because it’s considered trespassing. Legal places in the U.S. include Moab, Utah, where there are tons of legal cliffs, and Twin Falls, Idaho, where they have a legal bridge. We don’t typically bring new people to Moab, because there’s more danger surrounding cliffs. A bridge is safest, because there’s open space around you as you fall. A cliff and a building are the most dangerous. If the parachute opens off-headed (to the side or under you), then you are likely to hit the cliff if you can’t react in a split second. New people can’t react as quickly, so having Twin Falls fairly close is awesome. I can take on a bigger workload and take more students to a place where it’s super safe.

I love that you call jumping off a bridge “super safe.”

It is! There’s inherently risk associated with BASE jumping and skydiving, but each is as safe as you make it. It’s not just dumb luck when you go off a jump. It’s very calculated. We consider wind conditions, the thermals that could potentially affect the jump, and etcetera. I teach my students all of these things. I wouldn’t go jump something when I’m not

confident in my pack job, it’s super windy, and it’s a cliff. That’s a recipe for an accident.

Try putting your passion into words for us.

When I saw that first BASE clip, my whole world changed. It’s everything I talked about from age 8 on. I found pictures and articles on the Internet and read everything I could about it. For school presentations, my topic was always BASE jumping. The education specialist (I was homeschooled) asked, “Aren’t you going to find a new topic?” and I said, “No, this is what I love.”

My first jump: the freedom! Everyone sees BASE as this super hardcore, dangerous thing, but—in all reality—it’s one of the most peaceful things I’ve ever done. You don’t have the option of wondering what you’ll make for dinner or what bills you have to pay. You have to focus one hundred percent, and that focus is the most freeing thing ever. Jumping takes your mind off the trivial, material things that go on in the world.

After my first jump, I thought, “There is no way I can go back to living my life the way I did. Now that I’ve experienced this, I want to explore all the possible potentials.” There’s so much growth through BASE jumping, through taking up, aerials, wingsuiting (which I do as well), or ski BASE jumping. It’s one of my passions to explore all of these, to see what they’re all about.

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