

How To Rescue A Drowning Man

by Heather Fowler

These are survival directives:

1. First, stop the boat.

We know you can hardly imagine this is necessary to state here, but it is. How else will you save the drowning man? You cannot idly move forward if the scene that needs remedy is behind you, right? Okay, stop the boat.

I don't know how you do that. Push the red button. Whatever red button you can find. You should stop soon.

2. Second, enter the water.

Yes, it is factual you cannot fly through the air to save something submerged in water. This is good to know, isn't it? A little practical tip about saving someone drowning, kind of like: Turn the stove on if you want hot soup. Is that ridiculous to go into? Perhaps so, but survival directives must state and restate the obvious.

3. Third, perform your best Double Armpit Tow

The trouble is, you must remember exactly how to do this. It involves throwing an arm across the top of a victim's chest and letting the victim's arms hang over your arm as you are sideways in the water, letting that victim's weight hang upon your body as you

swim. If the victim is small, you can do this easily. If the victim is large, you must re-evaluate the situation, think things like: How much do you want to save this victim? Was this victim a good person? What if they drown you, since you cannot swim that well, or what if you drop them? Do you go back later and pick them up? Does it matter if the victim is already dead?

All things are possible, including drownings and droppings. And remember Step 2—enter the water. If you are in the water, being pulled down by some asshole, you cannot breathe the water. You will have left the confines of your safe little boat to perform this rescue. On second thought, turn back! Turn back now. Okay—no. Disregard that; it was the voice of panic.

But what if someone fails to do Step 1 correctly as you are busy rescuing the victim? What if they do Step 1, but only momentarily, and then you and the victim are left in that water to die a miserable, shark-bitten death? There is nothing that clearly states in Step 1: Keep that boat stopped until rescue is complete. All things not stated cannot be implied. Do you trust the others on that boat?

Maybe you should consider a few more things before embarking upon actual rescue, like: Is the victim hot? Not stove hot, idiot. Beauty hot. Will this be a triumph to save this person (like perhaps they are some Nobel laureate), or are you risking your life to rescue an idiot no less idiotic than yourself? How badly do you want this rescue? Will you get sex for it later?

Also, importantly, what will you do if your Double Armpit Tow fails? What if the rescuee starts flailing and falling? What if you drop this person and they sink like a rock? Do you re-evaluate your position then, too, while you watch them sinking, thinking: You or me, brother--you, or me. After all, if you couldn't hold them once, you may not be able to hold them the next time if you do attempt recovery. More trauma for you. Really, should you even get off of

the boat? The boat is very warm. The boat is very safe. Nice boat. Dry boat. Happy boat.

But, attention coward! You must do what's right. Stop being so selfish! There is a body in the water, after all—SO rescue, rescue, RESCUE that man, you worm! Now consult Step 4.

4. Fourth, Tow the victim to safety

Using a sidestroke kick or a breast-stroke, provided you have not dropped the victim, swim him or her back to the boat or to the shore. If you do not know what those strokes are, I do not have time to explain them. Actually, I do not know how to actually perform either one. Please, I'm a technical writer, paid to write tons of this bullshit, it's just that today—well, today I feel a little colorful. Oh, and I hate my male boss—who does not believe I enjoy Adorno. Nor does he know who Adorno is—though he knows who Fred Flintstone is, Yabba Dabba Doo—and he knows how to use the company couches in diverse and irritating ways. But back to the saving. The strokes. Don't know them. Sorry. Improvise. Are you ready to rescue?

Go! Yes! Save! Still, what if you are saving and the victim is wearing on you, struggling with you, wailing or crying and trying to clutch at you? Shouldn't you have been told: "Instruct the victim to shut the fuck up and go along for the ride"? If you weren't told this, how do you deal with it? Okay, just in case...

5. Fifth, Instruct the victim to shut the fuck up and go along for the ride.

This whole saving thing is a little like love, isn't it—similarly (helplessly) underdocumented?

Dangerous!

With negligible rewards. An eternal struggle.

And again, what if the victim makes you their victim as you are de-victimizing him or her? Are you that victim's victim? Imagine hearing a svelte male newscaster's voice: "Another stunning young person died a tragic death today, attempting a rescue and recovery from the _____ Ocean." And did such towing make you someone's hero? Again, is the victim hot? Will you get sex for this rescue later? These are the serious questions.

Oh, and this version of How to Rescue a Drowning Man will never be published. I intend to use it, right now, to get me fired. Just consider it the subliminal version of the other overt version.

Then, go. Off that boat, friend. Meet that victim. Ready... Set... Fuck off, boss! Deep breath... Now, Dive!

