

Bungee Jumping Culture

There is something about an individual that is willing to jump from a high place, attached to a rubber band. This modern extreme sport, known as bungee jumping, seems to have it's own culture attached to it. It's almost ethereal, hard to put your finger on it, but it is there. Perhaps it comes from the past, or is a morphing into a new spiritual experience, but the bungee jumping culture can be seen and felt.

So what is the bungee jumping culture? Where did it come from? Where is it going? The origins of the sport itself gives us a clue as to where the bungee jumping culture came from. Originally a religious ritual used on the South Pacific island of Pentecost to appease mother earth, it was supposed to proved for a good yam crop. It was also a demarcation, a rite of passage, for young boys to become known as men. Since as long as anybody can tell, these natives have conducted this ritual every spring, literally for thousands of years. The prevailing culture of the original land divers was definitely a spiritual one.

Re-discovered in the 1950s and promoted heavily in the modern world during the 1980s, bungee jumping has grown by leaps and bounds. The modern bungee jumping culture doesn't consist of primitive natives trying to appease the mother earth. However, there is a back-to-earth element to this extreme death defying outdoor sport. It provides a thrilling adrenaline rush that is next to nothing else on earth. Perhaps space travel could rival this effect, but I doubt it. The bungee jump goes beyond the limited religious and cultural conflicts of our modern day, and appeals to something more primitive, more basic. The modern bungee jumping culture is a multi-ethnic, multi-generational, and multi-socio-economic group, all looking for the thrill of their lives.

So what does the modern bungee jumping culture look like? It defies logic. Both young and old alike flock to bungee jumping events. There is simply a mystique that permeates this sporting event like no other. Back to mother earth, defying death, and telling the tale - all of these are the bragging rights of successful bungee jumpers. They all share in common this aspect of the sport - survival. Jumpers face a primeval fear, the ultimate loss - death, and overcoming that fear to complete a jump. There is a sense of accomplishment and victory that goes beyond mountain climbing and other extreme sports.

Taking the back-to-nature theme to the extreme, there is a new movement within bungee jumping called nude bungee jumping. It typically appeals to the green back-to-earth movement, as well as the frugal bungee jumpers. Commercial bungee jumping outfitters usually provide a discount, or even a free jump, if someone decides to go the full monty. This type of jump is usually done with a partner,

for a spiritual bonding that goes beyond the everyday realm. This is yet another evidence that the bungee jumping culture is evolving beyond normal boundaries, and we have yet to truly see what it will become.