

# Building the Fish Pond with Dad, Hawaii

As told by Kelly L.  
Boston, Massachusetts

Story Narrative:

Submitted by Kelly to the [Women Mind the Water](#) digital stories project, in conjunction with the Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street storytelling website and traveling exhibition "Water/Ways."

This story was recorded at School for the Environment, UMASS Boston.

"Aloha. My name is Kelly Michael Luis. My connection with the ocean stretches back to my childhood. My parents separated when I was very young. I lived with my mom. However, during the times when I wasn't with my dad he spent most of his afternoons building me a fish pond. All that really means is piling a bunch of rocks in a semi-circle around the shore. It created a safe space for all the kids to swim but it also attracted a lot of marine life. I remember the days I got to spend in that fish pond looking at the fish, poking at the rocks. That was my most formative memory of, just pending time with my dad, having that space for us. However, when I think about it more, my formative memories are because I just spent a lot of time sitting on the beach watching my brothers swim.

They were fisherman. They dove. We would be fishing in the middle of the night and for me I felt I didn't have that connection with the water until I went to college. It was there that I started to take marine science courses and I eventually became a research diver. It was really beautiful. I had my moment to connect with the reefs and the water. I remember the moment when I put on my first scuba tank and I just sunk down and sat on the sand. I looked up and I could have just stayed there all day. A lot of people like to swim around a lot; for me that wasn't the case. There is so much to see in 45 minutes of tank.

And, now that just having all those research experiences and being able to reflect on my connection with the ocean and now getting my PhD and using satellites to understand how Hawaiian coral reefs are changing with climate change. I guess my story continues on how I am further going to be connecting with the ocean."

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