



Extreme Fear: The Science of Your Mind in Danger (MacSci)

Jeff Wise

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Ever since the phrase "fight or flight" was coined in the 1920s, the common understanding has been that the mind respond to danger in one of two ways - either fleeing in blind panic, or fighting through it. But as scientists unlock the secrets of the human brain, a more complex understanding of the fear response has emerged. It turns out that the ancient brain circuitry wired to process fear is also intricately tied to our ability to master new skills, and that the icy sensation of terror can actually enhance both our physical and our mental performance. Veteran science journalist Jeff Wise, who writes the "I'll Try Anything" column for *Popular Mechanics*, journeys into the heart of the primal force to find its hidden roots: Where does panic come from? How is it that some people can perform masterfully under pressure? How can we live a more courageous life?

Reporting from the front lines of science, Wise takes us into labs where scientists are learning how we make decisions when confronted with physical peril, how time is perceived when the mind is on high alert, and how willpower succeeds or fails in controlling fear. Along the way, he illuminates the science with riveting stories of true-life danger and survival. We watch a woman defend herself from a mountain lion attack in a remote canyon; we witness couple desperately fighting to beat back an encircling wildfire; we see a pilot struggle to maintain control of his plane as its wing begins to detach. Full of amazing characters and cutting-edge science, *Extreme Fear* is an original and absorbing look at how we can raise the limits of human potential.



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