



Dangerous Edge: The Psychology of Excitement

Michael J. Apter

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Apter examines the reasons why people take part in dangerous activities, and explores the complex relationship between excitement, anxiety, panic and euphoria. He discusses the psychological mechanisms which court danger and the counter-instincts which seek to contain the risk. This seeking of risky but limited excitement is, he argues, an important social safety valve and channels energies and desires that would otherwise find expression in criminal and wantonly destructive activities. However, this craving for excitement can escalate and lead people to attempt ever more risky, foolhardy and ultimately fatal feats. Apter highlights these dangers and suggests ways in which such escalation can be avoided.

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