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# The Art Of Fear: Why Conquering Fear Won't Work And What To Do Instead



## Synopsis

A revolutionary guide to acknowledging fear and developing the tools we need to build a healthy relationship with this confusing emotion—and use it as a positive force in our lives. We all feel fear. Yet we are often taught to ignore it, overcome it, push past it. But to what benefit? This is the essential question that guides Kristen Ulmer’s remarkable exploration of our most misunderstood emotion in *The Art of Fear*. Once recognized as the best extreme skier in the world (an honor she held for twelve years), Ulmer knows fear well. In this conversation-changing book, she argues that fear is not here to cause us problems—and that in fact, the only true issue we face with fear is our misguided reaction to it (not the fear itself). Rebuilding our experience with fear from the ground up, Ulmer starts by exploring why we’ve come to view it as a negative. From here, she unpacks fear and shows it to be just one of 10,000 voices that make up our reality, here to help us come alive alongside joy, love, and gratitude. Introducing a mindfulness tool called “Shift,” Ulmer teaches readers how to experience fear in a simpler, more authentic way, transforming our relationship with this emotion from that of a draining battle into one that’s in line with our true nature. Influenced by Ulmer’s own complicated relationship with fear and her over 15 years as a mindset facilitator, *The Art of Fear* will reconstruct the way we react to and experience fear—empowering us to easily and permanently address the underlying cause of our fear-based problems, and setting us on course to live a happier, more expansive future.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Everything you ever wanted to know about fear. Ulmer takes a radical approach to an age-old problem and delivers smart, exciting, and extremely fresh ideas.” (Steven Kotler, a bestselling author of *Stealing Fire* and *The Rise of Superman*)

“Beautifully blending practical, personal, and philosophical insights, Kristen Ulmer has expanded my mind and changed my life. Read *The Art of Fear* and you’ll always be scared again—but only in the best possible way.” (Michael Finkel, bestselling author of *The Stranger in the Woods*)

“What to do about fear eluded me until I met Kristen. I now use her advice daily... to take the pit out of my stomach, do a better job at work, and get much-needed sleep. You are going to love this book.” (Bob Roll, former professional cyclist, author, and television sports commentator)

“...[A]uthentic, original, and deeply helpful guide for turning fear to your advantage. Kristen Ulmer offers us a manual for living with freedom and joy in the midst of all the competing voices that arise to derail us on the journey.” (Sally Kempton, author of *Meditation for the Love of It* and *Awakening Shakti*)

“Who better than Kristen Ulmer to introduce us to our constant companion, fear, and turn him from an enemy to a friend? But this book is about so much more as well—how to embrace every moment of life with open arms.” (Deb Rieman, tech entrepreneur)

“For years, I dangled my ski tips over the edge of cliffs. Kristen got me to actually jump. Whether on snow, in your career, or just life itself, no one owns fear better than Ulmer.” (Christopher Sacca, Founder and Chairman of Lowercase Capital)

“Learning how to have an intimate relationship with fear is one of the best things you can do, and Kristen is masterful at teaching you how to do that.” (Dr. Andy Walsh, director of high performance at Red Bull)

“People have been avoiding or medicating away fear and anxiety for too long... Finally, someone who is clear about this enormous and important subject, with great practical advice that is simply spot on. This book will turn the fear and anxiety world on their heads.” (Kate Maloney, PhD, conscious living and social change innovator)

“Whether you’re a professional athlete, running a business, or looking to live a more authentic life, Kristen will show you the path to championship performance.” (David Ford, hedge fund manager)

“Read this book if you want to know the reason behind many of your struggles. It explains, simply, everything.” (Michael Staenberg, entrepreneur and head of the Staenberg Group)

“Kristen Ulmer’s *The Art of Fear* causes a radical shift in our relationship to this companion in life called Fear, shapeshifting it into an ally on which we may rely to wisely guide us on the path of the unknown.” (Michael Bernard Beckwith, author of *Spiritual Liberation* and *Life Visioning*)

“Ulmer unpacks this misunderstood emotion and lays out strategies for experiencing fear in an empowering

way. (Parade)

A REVOLUTIONARY GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING FEAR AND FOR DEVELOPING THE TOOLS WE NEED TO BUILD A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS CONFUSING EMOTION AND USE IT AS A POSITIVE FORCE IN OUR LIVES

We all feel fear. Yet we are often taught to ignore it, overcome it, push past it. But to what benefit? This is the essential question that drives Kristen Ulmer's remarkable exploration of our most misunderstood emotion in *The Art of Fear*. Once recognized as the best extreme skier in the world (an honor she held for twelve years), Kristen Ulmer knows fear well. In this conversation-changing book, she argues that fear is not here to cause us problems—in fact, the only real issue we face with fear is not fear itself but our misguided reaction to it. Rebuilding our understanding of fear from the ground up, Ulmer starts by exploring why we have come to view it as a negative. She goes on to unpack fear and shows that it's just one of 10,000 voices that make up our reality, helping us come alive alongside joy, love, and gratitude. Introducing a mindfulness tool called "Shift," Ulmer teaches us how to experience fear in a simpler, more authentic way, and transforms our relationship with this emotion from a draining battle to one that's more in line with our true nature. Influenced by Ulmer's own complicated relationship with fear and by her more than fifteen years as a mind-set facilitator, *The Art of Fear* will reconstruct the way we react to and experience fear—empowering us to easily and permanently address the underlying cause of our fear-based problems, and setting us on a course to live a happier, more expansive future.

I have been fortunate to know Kristen for almost a decade. I can tell you she practices what she preaches and it works! I had been so closed in by fear that I had almost completely isolated myself from people. Using the methods of this book she was able to get myself, a 58 year old hermit, to fly halfway around the world, solo, to Kathmandu, Nepal, a city that makes me think of the wild, wild West. I then went on a Trek to Everest Base Camp. It was such an incredible experience that I went back the next year and went on a trek around the Annapurna Mountain Range. As long as I have the means I will travel as much as I can the rest of my life. I would never have done anything remotely related to these experiences had it not been for the methods she teaches in this book! Once again, she practices what she preaches and it works! She woke me to an entirely new World where the future is unlimited.

This book seemed to promise me a novel approach towards coping with competition anxiety (I'm a nationally competitive amateur athlete). I wanted to like this book. I was excited to start it. The reviews were glowing, and the author seemed to be someone who could speak from authority. Halfway through the book, however, I was in serious difficulty. I found myself re-reading entire sections, trying to puzzle out the author's meaning. Finally, I decided to put the book down for 48 hours and come back to it, assuming that perhaps I needed to take a breath. Coming back two days later--feeling that I could approach the book with fresh eyes--I decided that it wasn't for me, but simply that this book was a hot mess. Ulmer starts from an excellent premise: fear is something that is inescapable, and rather than be repressed or ignored, it has to be accepted, and embraced. This is an excellent approach in many situations, especially when discussing common anxieties about social situations or performances. The approach is hardly novel (as she claims) but it is not one that is often discussed, and it certainly needs more exploration in popular books like this. Ulmer has some excellent seeds of thought in this book. However, they are buried in a tremendous amount of chatter, clumsy metaphors, outright contradictions (you will solve your relationship with fear in a few hours, but later mentions that it may take much time), and occasional segues into personal accounts which often didn't seem to relate to the point her text is trying to make. At random intervals, a zen story or koan is thrown in. Sometimes at an appropriate place, sometimes not. My impression of Ulmer is that she is someone who chose to write this book after an experience with zen--as a method or with an instructor--that resonated with her very strongly. In a rush to get her excitement about this experience on paper, she has put down 300 pages or so of nearly stream of consciousness writing that is occasionally baffling, sometimes illuminating, but mostly frustrating to read. It would have been good if her editor had accepted their own fear and had gone through this book with a much stronger hand. There is a good message in "The Art of Fear" but if you can find it, you probably have already heard it.

Many of us who compete at a high level, whether in business, sports, or just in life, understand that we have an unhealthy relationship with ourselves; certainly fear and anxiety. So I was happy to see all the positive reviews and excited to perhaps find a key, or a new nugget to help me with my own inner demons. About a third of the way through this book, I put it down in my lap and said - out loud - "come on, geez". Did she not have an editor, or someone to help with copy writing?? Do a search on the word "for" and it reveals a tick in her writing that quickly becomes exasperating, "FOR" when so many darn sentences start with or include "for", one begins to wonder if this book was written by

a freshman in high school. "FOR" when the word "for" is used so often it is frustrating, "FOR" the word is pretty useless, and then distracting and just plain unnecessary. But I digress. Kristen could have hired a decent editor, but she didn't. Kristen could have recommended other materials for those of us on a quest who want to consume more of this enlightening, delicious mental nutrition, but she didn't. Kristen could have included a glossary of terms, but she didn't. Kristen could have mentioned that she's a badass world champion one or two fewer times, and saved some of the ego-stroking, self-congratulatory self-praise, but she didn't. Kristen could have done less straight-up theft of Zen Master Genpo Roshi's materials, but she didn't. Frankly, I found the book sloppy and lazy and beneath the talents of this otherwise - and obviously - accomplished woman. The themes and concepts in her book are awesome, seriously and exactly the concepts that have given me so much relief for my own suffering. By the end of the book, one gets a sense that she is a lazy, sloppy narcissist pretending to be enlightened. Skip this one and buy Genpo Roshi's first book, Big Mind - Big Heart and start your journey there instead. I've read it several times over the years, but it's so great to come back to it. While reading Kristen's book, I kept thinking that her material seemed adjacent and then I saw her acknowledgement of him later. He should get royalties from this book. To all of her friends and family who created all of these positive reviews, I don't believe you actually read the book. These people are doing her a disservice by not holding her accountable to world class standards in her writing to match her world-class accomplishments in sports.

Kristen Ulmer was a "Fear Junkie" who lived to tell her story. Kristen's book, The Art of Fear, conveys the wisdom and intelligence embraced by exploring and arriving at understanding herself. Her book is our book. Kristen's book came out the day my mother died so the timing was auspicious. I invite everyone to take journey with her and I look forward to her next book.

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