

MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS
IN A MODERN WORLD

relating

5 Reasons to Scare Yourself

WHAT STRIKES TERROR IN YOUR SOUL CAN ALSO BE GOOD FOR IT. BOO!

By Sharlene Breakey



DUET POSTSCRIPTUM/STOCKSY

1
-**Adrenaline is the new yoga.**

We measured brain waves of people before and after they navigated ScareHouse, Pittsburgh's haunted attraction, and found their moods had improved significantly when they came out. The fear made them ignore real-life worries—grocery lists, bills, the future. As long as we choose to do something scary, it can ground us in the moment, similar to the way meditation does. These challenges make us more confident: We can call up those memories when something nerve-racking arises, like a public speaking gig. It's like your own superhero highlight reel.

MARGEE KERR, PHD, IS A SOCIOLOGIST AND THE AUTHOR OF *SCREAM: CHILLING ADVENTURES IN THE SCIENCE OF FEAR*. WHEN SHE'S NOT TEACHING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH, SHE LIVES IN DENVER WITH HER WIFE.

3
-**Fear teaches focus.**

Climbing Mount Everest gave me mental training to talk myself through just about anything. At one point, a storm threatened when my Sherpa and I were ahead of the other climbers. We couldn't see anyone and thought they might have turned back. In deciding whether to forge on, I had to sharply focus and rely on what I had learned from all my preparations—not on the adrenaline I was feeling. Having to be so logical in a moment of intense fear showed me how often I can be illogically afraid of little things, like talking to someone new at a party.

SOPHIA DANENBERG WAS THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN TO CLIMB TO THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT EVEREST. SHE LIVES IN SEATTLE AND WORKS FOR BOEING.

2
-**When you make a scary leap, you might just fly.**

I walked away from my dream job at *Today* when I was 46. It was a pit-in-the-stomach decision—and I had no idea how much good would come from leaving. As close as I was to my family, it didn't take long to see that I hadn't been as present as I thought. Suddenly I was noticing people I hadn't quite realized were right in front of me, falling in love with and marrying an old friend. We pursued fertility treatments that were intimidating and painful but that ended with our son, Moses. And all that happened on this road inspired me to make my own show, where guests can be real about everyday and momentous struggles and triumphs.

TAMRON HALL IS A JOURNALIST, A PHILANTHROPIST, AND THE HOST OF A SELF-TITLED SYNDICATED DAYTIME TALK SHOW. SHE LIVES IN NEW YORK CITY WITH HER HUSBAND AND 6-MONTH-OLD SON.

4
-**Your example could inspire.**

I never thought I'd run for state office, but the chance to represent the rural communities I love has been so worth it. I am part of a fresh new wave of people, many of us women, who are stepping up—and I see how that is motivating young people, especially when I visit schools. When we dare to run for office, we teach them about civic responsibility and the importance of democracy. My scary decision encourages those kids, and my own, not to be afraid to stand up for what you believe, to make a change, and to run! Town council, school boards—it all matters so much. If you fight through your fear, you can really make positive change happen.

JEN METZGER WAS ELECTED TO THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE IN 2018. SHE LIVES IN ROSENDALE, NEW YORK, WITH HER HUSBAND AND THREE SONS, GIDEON, JASPER, AND SILAS.

5
-**You'll be proud of yourself.**

I'm outdoorsy, but I have my limits—fishing is not my thing. But on one vacation, my son, Jack, wanted to go deep-sea fishing so badly that I agreed to take him. The guide asked if I wanted to try. Seeing the look in Jack's eyes, I decided to go for it. I caught three fish and had a blast! As we age, it can be messy or scary out in nature, the way it never was when we were little, but I've learned that if you let go, it almost always works out. Plus, I was proud of myself for doing it, and my kid was proud of me for doing it and happy to have a mom who would do messy stuff with him. That kind of experience creates memories and bonds.

STACY TORNIO IS COAUTHOR (WITH HER SON, JACK) OF *101 OUTDOOR ADVENTURES TO HAVE BEFORE YOU GROW UP*. THEY LIVE IN MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, WHERE SHE RUNS THE BLOG *DESTINATION NATURE*.