

Examples from the Campaign

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This article enshrines the current understanding of risk in our society within a research paradigm. It is a sobering article on the paranoia within our society and the costs of feeding this paranoia.

It is estimated that the average USA teenager has seen 10,000 deaths on the TV screen by the age of fifteen. The vast majority will never actually see a single violent death in all their lifetimes. Some of us get our fix from risk for real; the rest of us satisfy our craving second hand. We are excited by the things we fear most. We want to live in a dangerous world. So by imagining the world is a more dangerous place than ever, we are just keeping ourselves entertained in a world that has become worryingly safe. We are programmed to need risk, we do not seek total safety but our own level of danger. Risk is a balance of benefit and danger. We can make mistakes because we misunderstand the dangers, but the consequences can be just as serious when we exaggerate or ignore the benefits. Ian F. Lewis

Sport, health and fitness are under threat through 'over-safe' lifestyles:

"Risk is crucial to life... Without an understanding of risk, there is no achievement, there is no sense of the need to strive for things and no sense of how to cope with failure. Children have to be allowed to fail, to face risk, even danger at times, in order to recognise the emotions triggered by those events, find ways of coping with them and develop their own judgement. When children haven't developed a solid basis of judgement in the face of risk, adolescence may be harder to deal with. In fact we may be unwittingly sowing the seeds for greater health-risk in teenagers due to our reluctance to let them experiment as younger children."

Kate Figs, The Guardian, Aug 14, 2000

The Creativity and Arts are troubled by aversion to uncertainty:

"The coming of the information economy offers the tantalising promise of a modern alchemy, the ability to create wealth out of nothing. Modern economies will not be constrained by lack of resources, but only by lack of imagination, of creativity, of idea... The cultivation and exploitation of imagination will need new organisational forms. Hierarchies will have to be built on respect rather than power. Ownership will increasingly be vested in the creators rather than the financiers, and education systems will change to reflect the need to create knowledge rather than to collect it. It could be a new Renaissance, challenging the existing order and creating a new one."

Charles Handy: Demos 1996