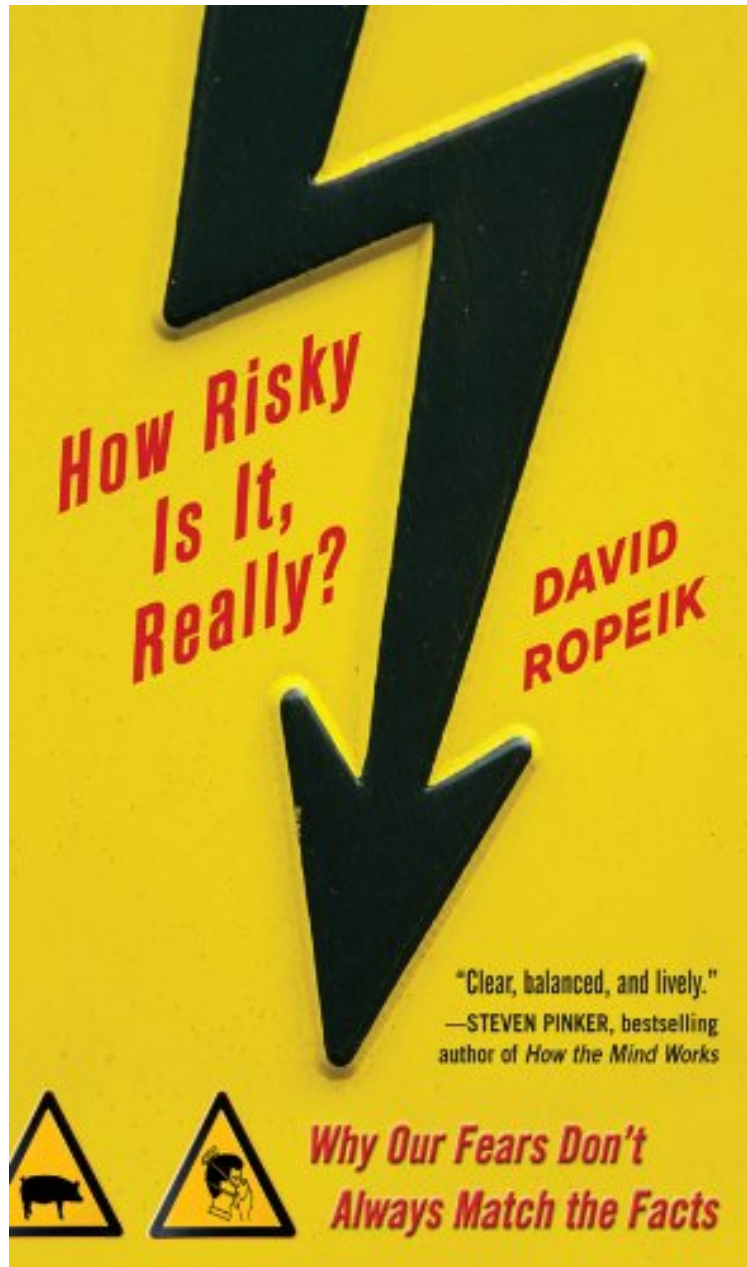


How Risky Is It, Really?: Why Our Fears Don't Always Match the Facts

David Ropeik

DOC | *audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#242266 in eBooks 2010-03-05 2010-03-05 File Name: B003O86EZK | File size: 25.Mb

David Ropeik : How Risky Is It, Really?: Why Our Fears Don't Always Match the Facts before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How Risky Is It, Really?: Why Our Fears Don't Always Match the Facts:

22 of 22 people found the following review helpful. Lively analysis of the misperception of risks By David J. Aldous

This book focuses on the psychology of how we perceive risk, complementing an earlier book *Risk: A Practical Guide for Deciding What's Really Safe and What's Really Dangerous in the World Around You* giving hard data on what is actually risky. The author, who lectures on risk communication, knows how to hold an audience's attention, and succeeds admirably in conveying serious content in popular style and language. To me, the central feature is a list of 13 factors which can make a risk seem more threatening or less threatening than it really is (Trust; Risk vs benefit; Control; Choice; Natural vs human-made; Pain and suffering; Uncertainty; Catastrophic vs chronic; Can it happen to me? New vs familiar? Risks to children; Personification; Fairness). Also noteworthy is his discussion of the role of the media in making the world seem scarier than it really is -- a well-informed discussion, because the author worked as a TV reporter for 20+ years. The book points out how the "perception gap" can be harmful: individuals continue risky behavior unaware, while over-worrying about the wrong things; public policy is shaped by self-interested or ideological pressure groups, or by public opinion driven by scaremongering media. There are suggestions for you as an individual on how to identify and counteract these psychological risk factors. The book concludes with a discussion of the public policy aspect of risk communication. It is hopeless to try to impose some purely rational cost-benefit analysis on the public, rather one should start by taking these predictable psychological factors into account. All these points are discussed via entertaining real examples. So the book deserves 5 stars for significant interesting content not readily found elsewhere. My only quibble is that the people who will read this book are probably those predisposed to rational analysis, not the ones who might benefit most.

24 of 27 people found the following review helpful. Mostly just author's opinion on controversial topics By fauxgt4I

I was expecting more of psychology / neurobiology book based on the description provided. While there was a bit of that from time to time in the book, a lot of it worked out simply being the author's personal opinions about how risky a number of controversial issues are today (Vaccines, global warming, GMO's, etc.). While this may be of some interest to some people, I purchased this for more of a meta approach to risk-analysis, not a long-winded series of examples. The first few chapters had some really exceptional material on risk neurobiology that I enjoyed quite a lot, which is why I don't give this 1 star. Overall, the content of this book that was interesting to me could have been presented in a work maybe 1/5 of the length.

Pros: Interesting stuff on neurobiology in first second chapter
 Provided good definitions for terms to help discuss topic
 Cons: Often repetitive overly wordy. Could have used some significant editing
 Good portion of the book simply controversial examples author's opinion on what's right/wrong.
 Occasional typos scattered throughout (found 3, and I'm no student of grammar)

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Reveals why we believe and act the way we do. By webedI

found this an easy read, but well worth the time spent to gain valuable insight into why we believe the things we believe and act the way we do, especially about serious things. The book lays out the scientific basis for risk perception but does not dwell on the difficult to understand brain function. Instead the author leads by example after example of human response to various "risky" situations - some of which we perceive as being more or less risky based on specific risk perception factors that he identifies. When you are through with this book, not only will you understand risk perception much better, but also you will understand how and why the media presents situations to you in a manner that strongly influences your perception of the risk involved.

"Clear, balanced, and lively." -- Steven Pinker, bestselling author of *How the Mind Works*

ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE "RIGHT" RISKS? Do you worry more about radiation from nuclear power or from the sun? Are you more afraid of getting cancer than heart disease? Are you safer talking on your cell phone or using a hands-free device when you drive? Do you think global warming is a serious threat to your health? **GET THE FACTS BEHIND YOUR FEARS** AND DISCOVER . . . **HOW RISKY IS IT, REALLY?** International risk expert David Ropeik takes an in-depth look at our perceptions of risk and explains the hidden factors that make us unnecessarily afraid of relatively small threats and not afraid enough of some really big ones. This read is a comprehensive, accessible, and entertaining mixture of what's been discovered about how and why we fear too much or too little. It brings into focus the danger of **The Perception Gap**: when our fears don't match the facts, and we make choices that create additional risks. This book will not decide for you what is really risky and what isn't. That's up to you. **HOW RISKY IS IT, REALLY?** will tell you how you make those decisions. Understanding how we perceive risk is the first step toward making wiser and healthier choices for ourselves as individuals and for society as a whole. **TEST YOUR OWN "RISK RESPONSE" IN DOZENS OF SELF-QUIZZES!**

About the Author David Ropeik is an international consultant and widely sought-after public speaker on risk perception and risk communication. Ropeik is an instructor at the Harvard University Extension School's Environmental Management Program and taught risk perception and risk communication at Harvard School of Public Health (2000-2006). He was a commentator on risk for NPR Morning Edition program and has been a guest host for NPR's "The Connection." He has written articles about risk perception for *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *LA Times*, and *The Boston Globe*, and *Nova* among others.