



YOUR KINDLE NOTES FOR:

## The Gift of Fear (English Edition)

by Gavin de Becker

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### 32 Highlights

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 464

“Technology is not going to save us. Our computers, our tools, our machines are not enough. We have to rely on our intuition, our true being.” —Joseph Campbell

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 586

In *Why The Reckless Survive*, Dr. Melvin Konner’s exceptional book about you and me (and all other human beings), he points out that “We drink and drive without our seat belts and light up another cigarette... and then cancel the trip to Europe on the one-in-a-million chance of an Arab terrorist attack.” Many Americans who wouldn’t travel to see the pyramids for fear of being killed in Egypt, stay home where that danger is twenty times greater.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 751

I spent half my childhood and half my adulthood practicing prediction while perfecting denial.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 753

“I am capable of what every other human is capable of. This is one of the great lessons of war and life.” —Maya Angelou

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 809

One patient, Oliver, made it his job to be sure the ailing animal had everything she needed. Oliver asked to keep her in his room, “so she won’t be alone at night, just in case she decides to die then.” Eventually, the old guinea pig was unable to move and her breathing was labored. Oliver gathered several patients in my office, and the guinea pig died in his arms, surrounded by an unlikely group of mourners. There was not a dry eye in the ward as the patients said their good-byes and silently left the office. I have often shared with you the effects these events have on the patients, some of whom, moved by the death of one of the animals, cried for the first time about the harms they had committed on others. Now I want to share some of my own feelings. As I sat in my office watching the patients, all felons, many guilty of brutal crimes, most lost in a variety of addictions (you choose), mental illness (pick one), and regarded as the bottom of the barrel, I saw a glimmer of compassion, a bit

of emotion, and the glimpse of humanity that society believes these men lack (and in most situations, they do). It is true that the majority of these men are exactly where they belong; to unleash them on society would be unthinkable, but we cannot disregard their humanness, because if we do, I believe, we become less human in the process.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 839

“Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. For when you look long into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you.”)

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 909

Another characteristic common to predatory criminals (and many other people as well) is their perceived need to be in control.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1008

We must learn and then teach our children that niceness does not equal goodness. Niceness is a decision, a strategy of social interaction; it is not a character trait. People seeking to control others almost always present the image of a nice person in the beginning. Like rapport-building, charm and the deceptive smile, unsolicited niceness often has a discoverable motive.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1031

When people are telling the truth, they don't feel doubted, so they don't feel the need for additional support in the form of details. When people lie, however, even if what they say sounds credible to you, it doesn't sound credible to them, so they keep talking.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1055

Typecasting always involves a slight insult, and usually one that is easy to refute. But since it is the response itself that the typecaster seeks, the defense is silence, acting as if the words weren't even spoken.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1077

The unsolicited promise is one of the most reliable signals because it is nearly always of questionable motive.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1096

“No” is a word that must never be negotiated, because the person who chooses not to hear it is trying to control you.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1100

Declining to hear “no” is a signal that someone is either seeking control or refusing to relinquish it. With strangers, even those with the best intentions, never, ever relent on the issue of “no,” because it sets the stage for more efforts to control. If you let someone talk you out of the word “no,” you might as well wear a sign that reads, “You are in charge.”

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1147

It is understandable that the perspectives of men and women on safety are so different—men and women live in different worlds. I don’t remember where I first heard this simple description of one dramatic contrast between the genders, but it is strikingly accurate: At core, men are afraid women will laugh at them, while at core, women are afraid men will kill them.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1222

Trust that what causes alarm probably should, because when it comes to danger, intuition is always right in at least two important ways: 1. It is always in response to something. 2. It always has your best interest at heart.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1254

Humor, particularly dark humor, is a common way to communicate true concern without the risk of feeling silly afterwards, and without overtly showing fear. But how does this type of remark evolve?

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1378

With behavior, as with gravity, context will govern, but there are some broad strokes that can be fairly applied to most of us: We seek connection with others; We are saddened by loss, and try to avoid it; We dislike rejection; We like recognition and attention; We will do more to avoid pain than we will do to seek pleasure; We dislike ridicule and embarrassment; We care what others think of us; We seek a degree of control over our lives;

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 2001

Direct threats are not a reliable pre-incident indicator for assassination in America, as demonstrated by the fact that not one successful public-figure attacker in the history of the media age directly threatened his victim first.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 2010

This idea that the presence of a threat lowers risk and the absence of a threat elevates risk is hard for people to grasp, perhaps because it feels counter-intuitive, but it’s true, and it’s not the only fact about threats to public figures that surprises people.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 3099

One of the most common errors in selecting a boyfriend or spouse is basing the prediction on potential. This is actually predicting what certain elements might add up to in some different context: He isn't working now, but he could be really successful. He's going to be a great artist—of course he can't paint under present circumstances. He's a little edgy and aggressive these days, but that's just until he gets settled.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 3128

Though leaving is the best response to violence, it is in trying to leave that most women get killed. This dispels a dangerous myth about spousal killings: that they happen in the heat of argument. In fact, the majority of husbands who kill their wives stalk them first, and far from the "crime of passion" that it's so often called, killing a wife is usually a decision, not a loss of control. Those men who are the most violent are not at all carried away by fury. In fact, their heart rates actually drop and they become physiologically calmer as they become more violent.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 3133

Even the phrase "crime of passion" has contributed to our widespread misunderstanding of this violence. That phrase is not the description of a crime—it is the description of an excuse, a defense. Since 75 percent of spousal murders happen after the woman leaves, it is estrangement, not argument, that begets the worst violence. In the end, stalking is not just about cases of "fatal attraction"—far more often, it is about cases of fatal inaction, in which the woman stayed too long.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 3338

The fact that a romantic pursuer is relentless doesn't

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 3629

"MAN KILLED WHILE LISTENING TO HEAVY-METAL MUSIC." The victim, it turned out, was walking along listening to an Ozzy Osbourne tape on headphones when he was struck by a train. On the news clipping, a dark-humored associate of mine had written the words "killed by heavy metal, literally." The heavy metal in trains surely has resulted in many more deaths than the heavy metal in music, even so-called death metal music. The group Judas Priest did not create James Vance, of course, but in a sense, he created them.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 3811

Federal law requires that colleges maintain campus crime statistics and make them available upon request. This is so college students and their parents selecting a school can evaluate security and safety. There is no law requiring grammar schools or high schools to keep such statistics, but I wish there were.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 3880

The way circus elephants are trained demonstrates this dynamic well: When young, they are attached by heavy chains to large stakes driven deep into the ground. They pull and yank and strain and struggle, but the chain is too strong, the stake too rooted. One day they give up, having learned that they cannot pull free, and from that day forward they can be “chained” with a slender rope. When this enormous animal feels any resistance, though it has the strength to pull the whole circus tent over, it stops trying. Because it believes it cannot, it cannot.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 4686

Real fear is a signal intended to be very brief, a mere servant of intuition. But though few would argue that extended, unanswered fear is destructive, millions choose to stay there. They may have forgotten or never learned that fear is not an emotion like sadness or happiness, either of which might last a long while. It is not a state, like anxiety. True fear is a survival signal that sounds only in the presence of danger, yet unwarranted fear has assumed a power over us that it holds over no other creature on earth.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 4750

Rule #1. The very fact that you fear something is solid evidence that it is not happening.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 4849

In Emotional Intelligence, Daniel Goleman concludes that worrying is a sort of “magical amulet” which some people feel wards off danger. They believe that worrying about something will stop it from happening. He also correctly notes that most of what people worry about has a low probability of occurring, because we tend to take action about those things we feel are likely to occur. This means that very often the mere fact that you are worrying about something is a predictor that it isn’t likely to happen!

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 4918

Smoking kills more people every day than lightning does in a decade, but there are people who calm their fear of being struck by lightning during a storm—by smoking a cigarette. It isn’t logical, but logic and anxiety rarely go together.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 4983

We watch attentively because our survival requires us to learn about things that may hurt us. That’s why we slow down at the scene of a terrible car accident. It isn’t out of some unnatural perversion; it is to learn. Most times, we draw a lesson: “He was probably drunk;” “They must have tried to pass;” “Those little sports-cars are sure dangerous;” “That intersection is blind.” Our theory is stored away, perhaps to save our lives another day.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 5048

Near the end of his life, Mark Twain wisely said, “I have had a great many troubles, but most of them never happened.”

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