

Safety Behaviours

Safety behaviours are things that we do to with the intention of keeping us safe. It is natural to want to keep ourselves safe, but sometimes the things we do can have the unintended consequence of prolonging a fear. Homer Simpson gives a great example of the beginnings of a safety behaviour.

Homer: *Not a bear in sight. The Bear Patrol is working like a charm*

Lisa: *That's specious reasoning Dad*

Homer: (Misunderstands) *Thanks*

Lisa: *By your logic I could claim that this rock keeps tigers away*

Homer: *How does it work?*

Lisa: *It doesn't, it's just a stupid rock*

Homer: *Uh-huh*

Lisa: *... but you don't see any tigers around do you?*

Homer: *Lisa, I want to buy your rock*



Now imagine that Homer starts to carry the rock around all the time, and that he is more worried about tigers when he doesn't have it with him.

How could Homer learn that the rock doesn't keep him safe from Tigers?

Do you think he would believe someone if they simply told him the rock was not actually keeping him safe?

How do you imagine he would feel, to begin with, if he experimented with leaving the rock behind? Would this feeling be likely to last forever? If not, why not?