



Bone Games: Extreme Sports, Shamanism, Zen, and the Search for Transcendence

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An inquiry into how ultra-endurance sports can induce preternatural states in athletes.

Bone Games: Extreme Sports, Shamanism, Zen, and the Search for Transcendence Details

Date : Published January 1st 1999 by Breakaway Books (first published 1984)

ISBN : 9781558215061

Author : Rob Schultheis

Format : Paperback 181 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Mountaineering, Climbing, Buddhism, Zen

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From Reader Review Bone Games: Extreme Sports, Shamanism, Zen, and the Search for Transcendence for online ebook

Sarah says

A new job, a new year, a new life. It's been a stressful month, to say the least. Thankfully, Bone Games was a blissful escape from it all. Not only was it very well written and a joy to read, but it reminded me that the meaning of life is truly much simpler than we've all come to believe.

We're trained to spend our lives building careers, wasting money, and keeping up with all sorts of complex and superficial relationships when, really, ultimate happiness may actually be found in the meticulous stripping away of these many pointless exercises.

Bone Games shows us the way to a different kind of existence— one that is informed by a painful sort of peace, simplicity, and truth.

Phineas says

A fun tale of true spiritual experience athletic daring.

Ann says

The guy is a good writer. Very descriptive. But I was thinking, "duh, what he's searching for is adrenaline", from the get-go, and he only figured that out at the end. Still, an entertaining book.

Melinda says

Interesting subject with plenty of muscular writing. My favorite chapter was the one with Dr. Andrew Weil, and the discussion about the necessity of faith. I couldn't relate to all the extreme sports talk, but the writing was good enough to draw me in.

Laura says

A macho guy very into his own head and seeking the thrill from going too far over the edge. Not a very bright bulb, in my opinion.

Karla says

Being sort of an adventurer, this book interested me on a couple of levels. First, because of the author's telling of his personal adventures, and those of people he's met. Second, because of his study into why some people can transcend stressful situations and turn them into moments of bliss or physical prowess. Schultheis doesn't make any solid conclusions, but his investigation is interesting and personal.

Ben Williams says

i think this is a good book for anyone who loves being outside, loves the feelings that accompany intense physical activity and adventures, and yearns for that freshness and intensity in day-to-day life. Schultheis does a nice job of bringing together his own direct experience, the observations of modern science, and the wisdom of Eastern traditions and masters--all in an effort to better understand (both experientially and intellectually) the intense presence and aliveness that comes through extreme activities, or less commonly through just being alive.

Jen Tatro says

After a near-fatal climbing accident, author Rob Schultheis found himself doing seemingly impossible things as he down-climbed to safety, then spent years trying to figure out exactly what had happened to him. Bone Games is the result of his investigations into the "state of grace" sometimes experienced in extreme athletic performance, ranging from historical and anthropological research to cutting-edge sports psychology and science.

Extremely well-written and packed with fascinating information.

Travis says

A nice collection of short stories about how to find the "zone" more often. It is an enjoyable read for anyone who likes being outside and exploring

Yitka says

Updating my review for this, as I just reread it and had a very different impression of it than when I first read it. (I'll leave my original review below, though.) Namely, I enjoyed it. Perhaps because I'm in a different place now with my own running/adventuring than I was four years ago, I found a lot more to identify with.

Again, the concept is great. The writing is original and often captivating. And this time around, I found Schultheis to be a more likable narrator--no doubt obsessive in his quest, but somehow this time I read his obsession as more authentic, being driven by genuine curiosity rather than ego. And perhaps some of his cynicism about the tamed, often sterile character of our modern lives take on is warranted after all. :)

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Original review from July 8-14, 2012:

"The idea of isolation, loneliness, for instance: shamans used it explicitly to break down the everyday

consensual reality most of us never escape. We constantly reinforce a kind of group-hallucination world when we are around other human beings, bending and shaping what we see, hear, and feel with grammar, belief, custom. Solo vision quests and games take us out into a nascent, alphabetic space, a sort of intellectual free-fire zone, where reality is in effect up for grabs, and the possibilities well-nigh endless."

Bah. I wanted to love this book so much. Had it recommended to me by a close friend with many similar interests, and being an outdoorsy gal with a spiritual side, I found the ideas behind this book extremely compelling. There are some beautifully wrought passages about communing with nature. Many of the anecdotes stirred something deep inside of me - a mix of fascination, imagination, adrenaline, and faith, all wrapped into one curious package. The ideas in this book can reawaken the child in you, wanting to believe in the magic of the natural world around you, thinking that if you only look hard enough for it, if you only believe in its existence fully enough, it just might appear to you.

Unfortunately, all this potential was squashed for me by Schultheis' lack of humility. I found him extremely judging at several points, and I grew irritated with his holier-than-thou commentary on others for living what he implies to be more superficial, less "enlightened" lives. He is obsessed with chasing an adrenaline high (as a means to a greater end of nirvana/enlightenment/superhuman abilities) at the cost of nearly everything else. There's a strange sense throughout the book that everything he does out in nature - the games, as he calls them - is solely in the pursuit of this elusive high, rather than appreciation or enjoyment of being out in nature. Be that as it may, I found it his scathing criticism of, for example, the marathon runners on Pike's Peak, to be deeply irritating...I also didn't relate to his disappointment that, as he writes, "Adventuring as an extreme sport has fallen on hard times; everything really good, big, and authentic has already been done, leaving nothing but screwy stunts..." I understand what he's saying, and even agree with it generally, but Schultheis was a little too grumpy/cynical of a narrator for me to be able to spend an entire book with. I felt as disappointed at the end of this book as he did at the top of Pike's Peak. Bummer!

David says

I will read this again and again!!

Kim Maltempo says

Overall, I enjoyed this read. There were times that I got a little bored with the book, to be honest, but the last few chapters reeled me back in. The author has a lot of great information about other cultures and various searches for transcendence that the different cultures/people embark on. The author's own stories are great as well, but at times, seemed like he was trying too hard to find the magic he once stumbled upon. I guess I've always thought that life is an adventure and you can find that magic in every day life, you don't necessarily have to go and try to kill yourself on Everest to do so, which is kind of where he gets back to at the end of the story. It did remind me of my friends, John and Prigg, and our ambition to create adventures, something that many people don't do anymore. Our adventures weren't anything necessarily death defying, but it put you outside of the norm, and made you connect with a raw sense of nature. I still feel this way during many of the ultras that I do, but that is more about finding power within myself, pushing myself past my known limits and comfort, while still connecting and communing with nature. The body and mind are wondrous things that weren't meant to be caged up inside an office in front of a computer day in and day out. If nothing else, this book urges you to get outside, try something different, and breathe a little. You never know what

magic you'll find.
