

Acrophobia: You Probably Have It!



(Acme photo.)

1 One of our commonest phobias, or fears, the psychologists say, is acrophobia, the morbid dread of being in a high place. In some persons this dread becomes a fascination—a great desire to throw oneself out into space. Some vestige of this psychosis probably motivates No-reen Leonard, 24 years old, as she sits on a tenth-story ledge of a San Diego hotel, threatening to jump.



2 After an hour of this sort of thrill-producing action Miss Leonard was dragged to safety. Some psychologists say that this dallying with the thought of jumping from a great height is a strongly developed reaction to an instinct left over from prehistoric days when most life was in the reptile or fish stage. Their theory is that the creature that was to become man in one stage of development was accustomed to the feeling of suspension in the medium in which he lived—namely, water. A recurrence of the instinctive desire to lose the feeling of weight causes the craze to jump.

(Acme photo.)



(Underwood & Underwood photo.)

4 Flying offers the average person little of the fearful reaction associated with high places because, according to one theory, there is no connecting line to the ground to give the sensation of height. Nevertheless stunt men and many pilots must conquer a fear of falling. Here is Al Wilson, aerial stunt man, who was killed in 1932.



(Acme photo.)

5 High bidding. Five thousand feet above the Colorado river, in its Grand canyon of Arizona, these women pose at the bridge table. Their pose illustrates a psychological fact, that distraction, in the form of admiration for scenery or some method of relaxation, often subdues the fear of height.



(Tribune photo.)

7 Crazed and bent upon suicide, John Warde loiters on a ledge seventeen stories above a New York street. For eleven hours his grim play with warped emotions kept a crowd spellbound. Then he jumped.



(Tribune photo.)

6 Like Stunt Man Al Wilson, Betty and Ben Fox display control of fear instincts as they do a publicity-drawing big apple on a plank thrust from a nineteenth-story window of a Chicago hotel.



8 Getting a vicarious thrill out of Warde's actions. So strong is the instinctive desire to jump that the mere thought brings a perverse sense of pleasure. Similar in effect is the toying with other fears, such as that of danger of accident in a fast-moving vehicle, be it auto or amusement park ride.

(Tribune photo.)