

A Fine Line: Searching for Balance among the Mountains

Graham Zimmerman

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In his memoir *A Fine Line*, Graham Zimmerman reflects on the dangers and demands that mountaineering exerts on those who feel its lure.

By his mid-thirties, Zimmerman had already been named New Zealand Alpinist of the Year and awarded the prestigious Piolet d'Or. His climbing success encompassed many of the world's most technically challenging peaks. He writes that he thrills at the challenge of finding climbable seams and treasures friends he's made in his quest to find uncharted routes to the apex he's pursuing.

But Zimmerman's book also recognizes the heavy toll that such a passion extracts from climbers, their loved ones, and the changing environment. He has experienced firsthand the close calls, injury, and impact of deaths in the climbing community. He's also witnessed the effects of climate change, noticing where glaciers are disappearing and how once safe places have become dangerous. Ever ambitious and eager to test his technical skill, he searches for a way to survive a sport that has taken many lives and to become a good partner and contributor to the larger climbing community.

Zimmerman is honest in recording his evolution as an alpinist. He covers his doubts and mistakes, plus his growing awareness, which alters how he approaches climbing. He uses his voice to stem the detrimental impact humans have on the climate. Descriptions of memorable expeditions show his love and respect for the mountains and his partners, as well as the technical aspects of his training to reach a summit and safely return. He shares lessons he's gleaned and describes using his knowledge in geophysics and personal experience to influence lawmakers and make improvements in the community.

A Fine Line reveals the realities of climbing and highlights an intentional approach to reaching the tallest pinnacles and living a balanced, meaningful life.

WENDY HINMAN (September / October 2023)

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