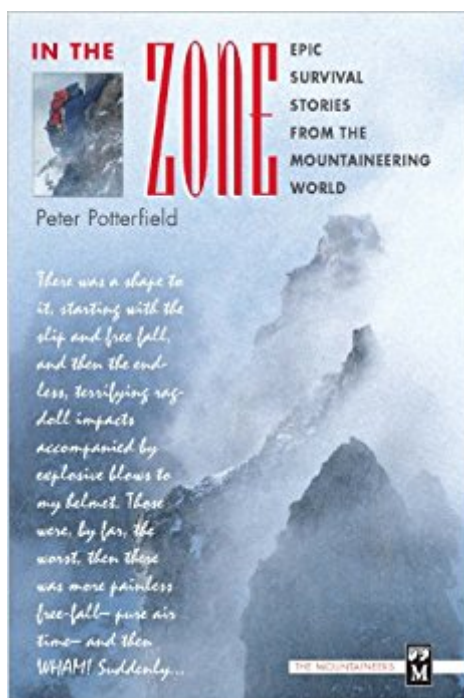


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# In The Zone: Epic Survival Stories From The Mountaineering World



## Synopsis

\* Colby Coombs on Alaska's Mount Foraker\* Scott Fischer and Ed Viesturs on K2\* Author Peter Potterfield on Chimney Rock in the North Cascades To climb is to risk, and nowhere is that more evident than in these true-life accounts of three men who faced the ultimate challenge in passionate pursuit of their sport. Veteran journalist with 25 years of climbing experience, author Potterfield is a master craftsman who has himself been in the zone. These stories, the result of extensive interviews, reveal that the keys to averting tragedy lie in the head and heart as much as in technical proficiency and physical strength. There is the story of Colby Coombs' disastrous experience on Alaska's Mount Foraker, which ranks with Joe Simpson's *Touching the Void* as one of the greatest survival stories of the genre. On K2, experienced climber Scott Fischer (who lost his life in the 1996 Everest tragedy) and partner Ed Viesturs battle for the summit in the face of numerous setbacks, severe injuries, and harrowing weather conditions. Peter Potterfield recounts his own riveting tale of hope and desperation after a climbing fall that left him trapped and badly injured on a narrow ledge in Washington's North Cascades.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When a climb goes wrong, shows Potterfield, it can become the threshold to a grim, life-changing experience. Along with the survival stories of others, veteran climber Potterfield tells a harrowing tale of his own brush with death and dramatic rescue on Chimney Rock in the Cascades in 1988. Then there is Colby Coombs, who, after an avalanche killed his two companions on Alaska's Mount Foraker in 1992, struggled for five days to make his way down, despite a broken neck, shoulder and

ankle. Potterfield's other story features Scott Fischer and his determination to climb K-2, in Pakistan's Karakoram, in 1992. On his first attempt, Fischer fell into a crevasse and dislocated a shoulder. Crippled and in pain, he and his partner persisted; they saved the lives of three other climbers before reaching the summit. Potterfield eventually pieced together the details of his own rescue, which was the most technically elaborate in memory. It involved 100 people?climbers, law enforcement officials, army helicopter pilots, ham-radio operators?in a 36-hour operation. Photos. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Three harrowing tales... stories of those who have survived the 'pain, grief, and world of trouble' of a good climb gone terribly wrong. (Outside magazine) Forget the hype about the new 'extreme' sports; mountaineering has been around for centuries and it's clearly the most extreme of all ... it's hard to beat Peter Potterfield's *In the Zone*. (Men's Journal) A compelling and somewhat troubling look at the dark side of mountaineering. (Jon Krakauer, author, *Into Thin Air*)

It's very frustrating that the author does not go into any analysis of why the accident happened. It was clearly a belay failure, but how did that happen. And it was compounded by the fact they they were off route. I bought this book just before successfully climbing Chimney Rock myself with the same route plan (but staying on it). I could not see how it would be possible to get off route in the area where they did (other places maybe), and I would have liked to see an analysis of this as well.

I am just here to echo a lot of what the others have said. This book was given as a gift so I didn't read the reviews beforehand but am not surprised that my thoughts on it are pretty much the same as others. First, can someone get an editor in here? It's not even that it's poorly written. It's just poorly edited. It reads like a first draft. Certain ideas or situations are repeated. And then repeated again. If you can get past that, it is worth reading. I blew through it in two days. Mostly this was due to the momentum of the first story. Where I disagree with some people is that I feel the second story did have a point. It's just not spelled out and more left to what it meant to you as a reader. It did invoke thoughts based off my own outdoor experiences and I feel that's the point. Just to think what you will. Was it worth it? Was it all just another case of chasing the dragon? The first story is why I gave it three stars. If it were based on the last story - the authors own story - I would give it none. As someone who reads about accidents to learn (both in my outdoor pursuits and profession, it's all in the details. You have to exhaust and explain everything that was going on to get the whole picture of the incident so that there can be a learning experience without having that experience yourself.

Maybe the author wanted to leave it open as in the second story but there is a gap one particular detail that leaves a hole the size of the Grand Canyon. I find this inexcusable. If he didn't want to speak to it, he should have just said so. The story is without lesson or moral and otherwise just a long story about a rescue. A dramatic one, I'll give him that, but with the glaring omission, I just can't get past it. In spite of this, still worth a read if for nothing else, the first story.

Reviews of *In the Zone* *In The Zone* chronicles some of the greatest mountaineering survival stories ever told. Like a great novel, we emerge from our experience transformed, with a new reverence for the limits of human endeavor and will. Potterfield takes us to a place climbers hope never to visit, where the hold on survival is tenuous. --Rock & Ice Magazine Forget the hype about the new "extreme" sports; mountaineering has been around for centuries and is clearly the most extreme of all. It's hard to beat Peter Potterfield's harrowing *In the Zone*, an account of three deadly climbs. --Men's Journal A journalist and able story teller, Potterfield recounts three harrowing tales: Colby Coombs' struggle to live after a deadly avalanche on Alaska's Mount Foraker in 1992, Scott Fischer's near-death experience on K2, and his own fall and nail-biting rescue that followed. Fischer's experience is arguably the most compelling, as Fischer is dead and the climbing world wants to understand why. Poignant, horrifying . . . . --Outside Potterfield's matter-of-fact style gets you right into the climber's head. I loved this story [Colby Coombs'] and could not put it down. Potterfield does a good job of mixing direct quotes with his own insights . . . . [He] captures the dangers of Himalayan climbing, but even more interesting are his insights into the mentality required for such extreme risk. --Climbing Magazine A compelling, troubling look at the dark side of mountaineering. --Jon Krakauer, author of *Into the Wild* Expertise and personal experience meet in these three harrowing tales of close calls in the mountains, from a veteran mountaineering writer. --Seattle Weekly Tense and descriptive. . . a trilogy of true accounts of near-death experiences. --Eugene Register Guard Journalist and climber Potterfield shows Scott Fischer at his courageous and athletic prime. . . that foreshadows this year's Everest deaths. For the reader, it is a mixture of fascination and agony. --Chicago Tribune/Universal Press Syndicate *In the Zone* is riveting reading . . . --Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph A white-knuckle volume of gruesome stories . . . Not for the squeamish, these are harrowing tales of broken survivors dangling beside corpses, of shattered bodies inching along for miles in blinding agony, of confident expeditions from which only one climber returns. --The Santa Fe New Mexican *In the zone* is a masterful account of three extraordinary humans and a fascinating depiction of the struggle for survival . . . a gripping trilogy. --Adventurous Traveler Three contemporary survival stories, one of renowned guide Scott Fischer

who was not denied the summit of K2. Such tenacity in the face of danger typifies Potterfield's prose style, also infusing his other tales of survival. Armchair mountaineers will discover here insights into why mountaineers take such risks. --Booklist The message from these stories of human drama is clear: think and choose before the climb, not at the onset of trouble. --John Roskelley, author of *Stories Off the Wall*

Because I know I will never attempt to climb a high altitude mountain, I find myself browsing the mountaineering section of my favorite bookstore. This time I found a book that hit the nerve in my body which is so wanting of adventure, triumph and heartbreak, but only vicariously. The book, *In The Zone*, tells us about the all consuming desire to reach an almost unreachable goal- the top of the mountain. K2 is the second highest point on earth and the most deadly. The story is told about two men waiting and attempting for weeks to reach the summit. Why? For purely selfish reasons. Perhaps to prove to themselves that they CAN do it (even if one of them did dislocate his shoulder and was seriously compromised), or just to say they were there. In the Denali range, on a mountain called Foraker, three friends start off for what seems to be your basic quickie- 3-4 day mountain climb by 3 strong experienced climbers. It ends in tragedy. There are two other stories in this book. One is about the author himself. The mountains are not sanctuaries, those you carry on your back in the form of a tent and a few other articles of food and clothing. The mountains are a big, challenging death trap, unless one is very lucky. As a surgical RN at a busy Northwest trauma hospital, I'm intimately familiar, and rather callous, to some horribly injured bodies. Having read the stories of these expeditions I find it incredible that people sometimes survive in the face of blinding windstorms, snowstorms, freezing cold, burning sun and on and on. Most of all, these folks are an inspiration to celebrate life. A must read for those who seek adventure

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