

### 3 Why do we fear snakes?

Fear of snakes – ophidiophobia – is one of the most common fears throughout the world. Over the years, it has led to a variety of fables and fallacies. What makes people afraid of snakes? When confronted by a snake, people react differently, but familiar signs may include faintness, palpitations, sweating, nervousness or anxiety.

Fear is a strong survival instinct and, as part of our instinct for self-preservation, it allows us to train for conflict in our world. Evolution is selective, that is people who are naturally fearful manage to survive and pass their respective survival traits along. So why would a fearful person put their life in jeopardy by taking on a dangerous snake? It seems that what we fear most will happen because we behave in a manner that will cause it!

*This man had never handled a snake till I gave him a 4 m Scrub Python called 'Kairn' to hold. The snake is perfectly happy being handled by people. Would you be happy to handle it?*

