

Why Are SUVs So Popular?

Lee Iacocca was an American automobile executive best known for the development of Ford Mustang and Pinto cars while at the Ford Motor Company in the 1960s, and for reviving the Chrysler Corporation as its CEO during the 1980s. Iacocca, who died in 2019, was one of the few executives to preside over operations of two of the Big Three automakers.

In his book, *Where Have All the Leaders Gone*, he asked why the SUV has been such a success. What is its purpose? Very few people go off road, so it's not because they need a rugged all-terrain vehicle. The SUV doesn't have the passenger or storage capacity of a minivan, or the good ride and handling of a car. So what is the motivation for buying the SUV? Why are people lugging around all that extra weight?



Iacocca attributed it to fear. He wrote: "I think the SUV feeds a strong desire for security and control on the road. In this day and age, people want to put as much steel and iron around themselves as they can. They equate weight with safety. It's a factor, but in no way compares to solid structural design and the use of multiple air bags ... With thousands of other SUVs speeding past them, not to mention 18-wheelers and cement mixers, drivers just feel more secure."

It's a perception and Detroit promoted it, he said. One SUV brand advertised itself with the headline, "Look upon it as a 4,000-pound security blanket."

Which caused Iacocca to exclaim: "If you want guaranteed safety on the road, why not drive a tank?"

USA Weekend, in a cover story published a while back entitled *What Americans Are Afraid of Today*, uncovered in a scientific poll the things Americans fear most:

With fears ranked from 54 percent to 32 percent in descending order, Americans said they were "afraid" or "very afraid" of being in a car crash, of having cancer, of inadequate Social Security, of not having enough money for retirement, of getting Alzheimer's, of being a victim of individual violence, of being unable to pay current debts.

In the book of Matthew in the Bible, after Jesus had fed 5,000 men, their wives and children with just five small loaves of bread and two fish, He needed some time alone, so He sent the disciples in a boat while He went to a mountain to pray. The boat was on the Sea of Galilee, a considerable distance from the shore, when a storm came up, buffeting the boat.

(more)

Shortly before dawn, Jesus went out to the boat, walking on water, the wind whipping the surface and large waves forming. Already frightened by the storm, the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water and were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

In addition to all those fears listed by *USA Weekend*, COVID-19 has brought another very significant one. And it is understandable – it is highly contagious, infecting friends and family, and we are desperately seeking to learn more about it and to find a vaccine.

But in the midst of this storm created by the coronavirus, be assured that faith overcomes fear. The presence of Jesus assures it. He is saying to us, as He did to the disciples: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid" (Matthew 14:27 NIV).

– Beecher Hunter