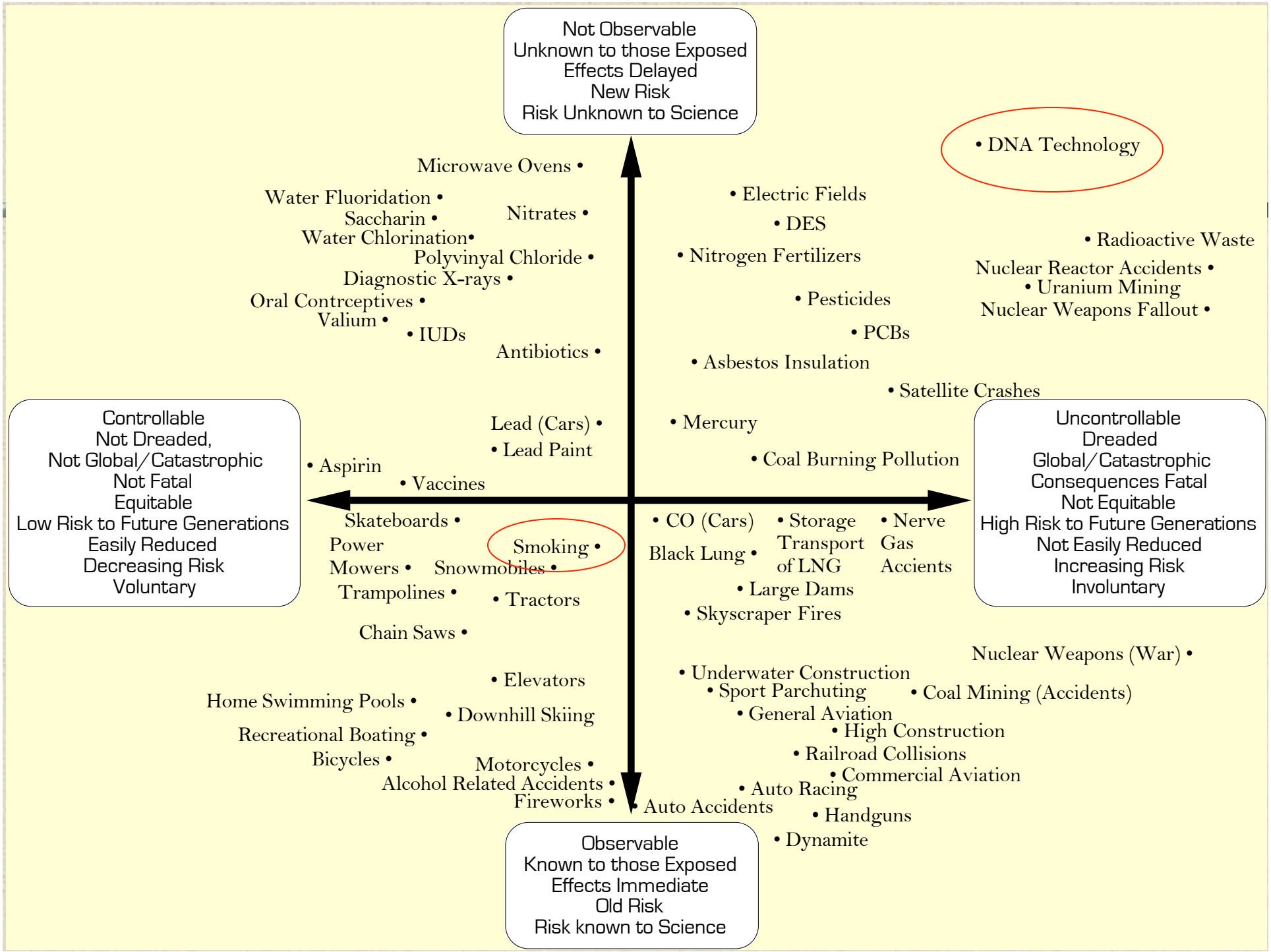
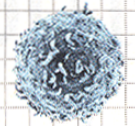

Not Observable
Unknown to those Exposed
Effects Delayed
New Risk
Risk Unknown to Science
Controllable
Not Dreaded,
Not Global/Catastrophic
Not Fatal
Equitable
Low Risk to Future Generations
Easily Reduced
Decreasing Risk
Voluntary
Uncontrollable
Dreaded
Global/Catastrophic
Consequences Fatal
Not Equitable
High Risk to Future Generations
Not Easily Reduced
Increasing Risk
Involuntary
Observable
Known to those Exposed
Effects Immediate
Old Risk
Risk known to Science
• DNA Technology
Microwave Ovens •
Water Fluoridation •
Saccharin •
Nitrates •
Water Chlorination•
Polyvinyal Chloride •
Diagnostic X-rays •
Oral Contrceptives •
Valium •
• IUDs
Antibiotics •
• Electric Fields
• DES
• Nitrogen Fertilizers
• Pesticides
• PCBs
• Asbestos Insulation
• Satellite Crashes
• Radioactive Waste
Nuclear Reactor Accidents •
• Uranium Mining
Nuclear Weapons Fallout •
Lead (Cars) •
• Lead Paint
• Aspirin
• Vaccines
• Mercury
• Coal Burning Pollution
Skateboards •
Power
Mowers •
Smoking •
Snowmobiles •
Trampolines •
• Tractors
Chain Saws •
• CO (Cars)
• Storage
Transport
of LNG
• Nerve
Gas
Accients
Black Lung •
• Large Dams
• Skyscraper Fires
Nuclear Weapons (War) •
• Elevators
Home Swimming Pools •
• Downhill Skiing
Recreational Boating •
Bicycles •
Motorcycles •
Alcohol Related Accidents •
Fireworks •
• Underwater Construction
• Sport Parchuting
• Coal Mining (Accidents)
• General Aviation
• High Construction
• Railroad Collisions
• Commercial Aviation
• Auto Racing
• Auto Accidents
• Handguns
• Dynamite

What We Fear

Flying
You are likelier to die driving to the airport than flying in a jet

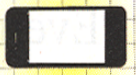
Insects
More creepy than lethal; infant girls are more scared of bugs than baby boys are

Sharks
Stephen Colbert may fear bears, but the data say sharks kill more people—on average, about six a year

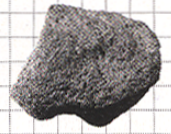


Cancer
We especially fear outcomes that are painful and prolonged

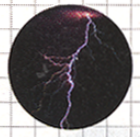
Gluten
A trendy aversion, but only 1 in 133 people is actually intolerant



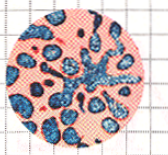
Cell-phone radiation
It may be physically impossible for cell-phone radiation to cause cancer



Asteroids
Astronomers already have a track on everything big enough to destroy civilization



Lightning
Unpredictability is as terror-provoking as actual capacity for harm



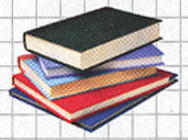
Viruses
The 1918 influenza pandemic killed up to 40 million people; now you can bioengineer one

Smoking
Just because we know something will kill us doesn't mean we'll stop doing it

Not Dangerous

Money
Research shows that touching money helps alleviate pain

Teddy bears
Oversize heads signal that they are infantile and hence harmless



Librarians
In times of stress, we take comfort in trusted authorities

Hugs
Release oxytocin, the "love hormone" that quells anxiety

Dangerous

Raw milk
Our subconscious preference for natural things can lead us to overlook natural dangers

Nuclear war
The Cold War's over, but there's still enough nuclear megatonnage to end civilization

Global warming
A well-funded p.r. blitz can't obscure mounting scientific evidence that it's real

Heart disease
It doesn't provoke the dread of cancer—and it's treatable—yet it kills more people

Obesity
Its prevalence could soon cause U.S. life expectancy to fall for the first time in the modern era

What We Don't Fear