

## FIGURE 8.1 What Happens When You See a Snake in the Woods?

The LeDoux fear response is made up of two pathways for the processing of fear. One pathway is fast and outside of awareness, while the other is slower and has a conscious component. Visual stimuli are first processed by the thalamus, which passes rough, almost archetypal information directly to the amygdala (red). This quick transmission allows the brain to respond to the possible danger (green). Meanwhile the visual cortex also receives information from the thalamus and, with more perceptual sophistication and more time, determines that there is a snake on the path (blue). This information is relayed to the amygdala, causing heart rate and blood pressure to increase and muscles to contract. If, however, the cortex had determined that the object was not a snake, the message to the amygdala would quell the fear response.

Source: LeDoux (1994).

