

Risky Business

6 Tips Helping Professionals Take Leaps of Faith



T.S. ELIOT FAMOUSLY SAID, "ONLY THOSE WHO WILL RISK GOING TOO FAR CAN POSSIBLY FIND OUT HOW FAR IT IS POSSIBLE TO GO."

THIS COULD NOT RING MORE TRUE IN BUSINESS, WITH RISK PROPELLING PROFESSIONALS AND BUSINESSES TO NEW HEIGHTS. BUT, RISK IS OFTEN OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONE AND MANY ARE RELUCTANT TO TAKE THOSE BARRIER-SHATTERING LEAPS OF FAITH.

As a former Marine, cancer survivor and very successful serial entrepreneur, I've learned a thing or two about risk. If you're happy languishing in a gelatinous pool of indifference and stagnation then, by all means, keep doing what you are doing. If you're ready to take a leap and change things for the better, here's some wisdom to get you started.

REALIZE YOU TAKE RISKS EVERY DAY. Getting up, answering the phone, and heading out the door are risks, albeit minor ones. Each time you do these things you put yourself out there and risk rejection in your professional and personal life, and you survive. You are capable of risk taking. Time to ramp it up. Taking risks is a state of mind. Knowing you can do it on a small scale makes it easier to take risks on a larger one.

FIND COMFORT IN THE UNCOMFORTABLE. Life begins at the end of your comfort zone. You don't have to go sky diving or base jumping — although you can if you want. But, you do have to go beyond what you're used to doing and venture into new territory. Learn where you are most comfortable, most skilled, and most

proficient — then step past that to a place where you feel the most uncomfortable, the most uncertain, the most unsure of yourself. That is where real progress begins. Consider world class athletes, artists, or entrepreneurs. No matter what their area of expertise, they continually push past their limits to achieve beyond what anyone thought possible. You can't break world records or break out of a same-old-same-old rut without making that push.

RISK IT RIGHT NOW. This moment you have everything you need. Sound impossible? It happens to be true, you just may not appreciate it. Do you have food, clothing and shelter? Then, you have everything you need. Once you start to live by this simple philosophy, risk taking becomes far easier. The most important part... most business opportunities don't wait. Take action now. Don't make the mistake of waiting on someone or something to come along to make taking that leap of faith more viable. "Perfect timing" is a fallacy and there are few if any such moments in life. Don't wait so long you can't take a risk even when you want to, then have remorse for what "could have been. Capitalize on opportunities now.

DO YOUR OWN THING AND DO IT YOUR WAY. The concept of going your own way and doing your own thing is not new. But most don't do it because it bucks tradition and scares the s#! out of people. On the other hand, it can provide you with a hell of a lot of freedom and a life-long exemption from following protocol. Mavericks live by their own agendas. Even in the corporate world, there is more latitude to blaze new trails than you think. The key is to look at each task for opportunities. There could be a perfectly fine or traditional way to do something to achieve a good result. But, with a better approach or process in mind that can

achieve an even more desirable result, it may be time to go rogue. In today's cut-throat culture, originality is perhaps your greatest gift. Use it.

FAIL. Don't just give yourself permission to fail. Actually fail. Go out and fall on your face. It's the only way you will learn anything. The lessons you learn from failures will be the ones that propel you to success. Here's an idea: try living life like a two year old. In other words, fall down often, screw up repeatedly and occasionally be defiant. Children are extremely resilient but as adults, we can lose this quality. Throughout our career we proverbially fall down, get bruised, skin our knees and maybe shed a few tears. But, perseverance and tenacity, honed with hindsight-based perspective so as to not repeat the same mistakes, are key to staying the course up the ladder of achievement.

REPEAT. Taking risks is not a "one and done" proposition. It takes tenacity, an ability to forge ahead, try new things, and push past obstacles to achieve results. Tenacity determines how hard we fight for our dreams. A tenacious person never looks back at missed opportunities. Once you take that first dive off the edge of the cliff, subsequent dives become a lot easier. In fact, they become a way of life. After experiencing the exhilaration and ROI of risk taking, you'll wonder how you ever lived without it.

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