



Everything is Risky

Recontextualize Risk to Revolutionize Your Life

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"...man's capacities have never been measured; nor are we to judge of what he can do by any precedents, so little has been tried." -Henry David Thoreau

The vast majority of us barely scratch the surface of our potential.

Here's why: We're scared to death. We're imprisoned by our own fears.

Fear is a product of perception. [Change your perception](#) and you dissolve fear, or at least shift it to different perceived threats.

One of our most devastating perceptions is in regards to risk.

False perceptions of risk squander our potential perhaps more than any other factor.

Specifically, the most deceitful perception is that there is a hierarchy of risk, as in one choice is more or less risky than another.

See how this plays out in real life:

- [Entrepreneurship](#) is riskier than being an employee with a large corporation.
- Mountain climbing and [canyoneering](#) are riskier than staying at home by a warm fire.
- Trusting intuition to [tread new paths](#) is riskier than following the crowd.



- Audaciously approaching that gorgeous girl/guy you're dying to meet is riskier than sticking with the "comfortable" girls/guys who don't make you nervous.

You get the point.

What's ignored in this absurd construct is the biggest, most destructive risk of all: not achieving our potential and dreams and fulfilling our [missions](#).

So we labor under this perception while hating our jobs, watching other people have adventures on TV, seeing our ideas implemented by others while exclaiming from our sofas, "I thought of that first!", wishing we had the courage to pursue our dream relationships—in short, living trivial, vacuous lives.

And we're stuck because all the motivational speakers and gurus and cultural factors tell us this: In order achieve greatness we must increase our risk tolerance.

Don't Push Through Risk—Rethink & Revalue Instead

But there's a much more [accurate and enlightened way to overcome the fear of risk](#), and that is to rethink and revalue it.

And the first step in this process is to recognize that EVERYTHING is risky.

It's not that entrepreneurship is riskier than employeeship; it's that each carry different risks. And our success or failure depend on how we value those respective risks.

In other words, risk perception is a function of personal values, not [perceived results](#) or the true risk inherent to any choice.

You're not an employee in a job you hate because it is actually safer/less risky to have a job than it is to start a [mini-factory](#).

You're there because you value comfort and security more than you value growth and adventure and hard decision-making.

Because the reality is that your job is no less risky—in different ways—than entrepreneurship.

Exercise: What Do You Value?

After the first step of recognizing that everything is risky, step two is to sit down and get crystal clear on your values.

By doing the exercise thoroughly, you'll encounter two things:

1. Accepting the reality that your actions and lifestyle may not align with your chosen values, then fixing that with integrity.
2. You can be more conscious about choosing different, more useful values.

Fear of Loss

Think about this for a minute: The definition of risk is "exposure to the chance of injury or loss; a hazard or dangerous chance."

And, based on that definition, people say with a straight face that entrepreneurship is riskier than employeeship?

C'mon, now, let's be real.

What about the exposure to the chance of losing out on our potential? Why is that not a greater consideration in our risk calculations?

The reason is simple: It's hard to quantify, touch and feel our personal potential, which makes it difficult to be more conscious about our risk calculations.

Know Thyself

Now we're getting to the real heart of the matter.

Our risk calculations are flawed when we don't know who we are and don't believe that we're capable of greatness.



To quote from Thoreau again:

"What a man thinks of himself, that it is which determines, or rather indicates, his fate."

Or as James Allen wrote:

"Man is made or unmade by himself; in the armory of thought he forges the weapons by which he destroys himself; he also fashions the tools with which he builds for himself heavenly mansions of joy and strength and peace."

The most successful individuals, therefore, are those with the brightest, clearest, most compelling vision of themselves and the strongest belief that they can achieve that vision.

Risk is No Longer a Valid Excuse for Mediocrity

Every possible course is rife with its own particular risks—things that will be lost by choosing one action over another.

Drop the nonsense that your choices are about avoiding risk, because they're not; they're about aligning with your values.

Get clear on your values, and align your daily actions with those values.

Create a compelling vision of your best self, from which will flow your goals.

Then, once you've identified those goals, consciously choose the values necessary to achieve those goals.

For example, suppose you currently value safety and security more than growth and adventure, but your goal is to become an entrepreneur and build a mini-factory.

Rather than falsely thinking you have to push through fear and accept the "higher" risk, simply choose different values, while acknowledging the risks of not making that shift.

Do this, and you'll move the world.

Mediocrity will become a laughable dream from a past life. You'll dance and sing and shimmer and shine while others shuffle through life as dull shells.

Most importantly, you'll escape the most awful fate known to man: What might have been.

Essential Reading:

- *As a Man Thinketh* by James Allen
- *Self-Reliance* by Ralph Waldo Emerson
- *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau
- *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years* by Donald Miller
- *Free the Beagle* by Roy H. Williams

About The Center for Social Leadership

The Center for Social Leadership (CSL) is a think tank and action organization dedicated to building [social leaders](#) for the 21st Century.

Humanity is experiencing dramatic changes. Traditional leadership is broken. Conventional human organization based on hierarchies and formal authority is outdated. Human consciousness is evolving. Technology has transformed the way we interact and enhanced our ability to have impact—for good or ill. The Center for Social Leadership was formed to steer these changes to improve the health of society, preserve freedom, and ensure peace and prosperity for humanity. A new vision of leadership is needed. Not the old, hierarchical, positional, authoritative, privileged-elite leadership, but a new democratic, action-determined, service-oriented leadership. Through this social leadership mankind can achieve unprecedented happiness and fulfillment.

Learn more and engage with CSL by [reading our e-book](#) and joining our mailing list at www.TheSocialLeader.com.

“It’s not about someone doing everything. It’s about everyone doing something.”

