

When Did You Last Take A Risk?

"The dangers of life are infinite, and among them is safety." (Goethe)

Consider your life so far. What have been the big events and key decisions? Were any of those risky at the time yet you went for it and the rest is history?

- Perhaps you got married after a very brief romance?
- Maybe you changed your job or had a complete change of career?
- Or you decided to move to the opposite end of the country or overseas either for work or personal reasons?
- Did you learn a new skill or put yourself to the test by competing in a race or sitting an exam?
- Did you challenge yourself and apply for a job that you desperately wanted but felt others might ridicule your aspirations?

Mark Twain once said, *"Keep away from people who belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great."*

In other words, seek out people who want you to grow, believe in you, and will help you on your journey. A coach should fall into that category.

How can having a positive attitude towards risk make you a better coach?

1. You encourage people to think bigger and aspire to greater heights.
2. You are more receptive to people's 'wild ideas' about what they want to be, do and have.
3. You are less judgemental about the options that emerge.
4. You challenge people's apparent 'comfort zone' and help them work out if it's really a 'discomfort zone' that they feel helpless and scared to break out of.
5. You are more daring and imaginative with your questioning rather than sticking to a core set of safe tried and tested questions.
6. You welcome rather than fear their responses and don't shy away from difficult or emotional reactions.
7. You inspire them through your own behaviour, rich history and openness to opportunity.

Undoubtedly, some people are very happy leading an ordered life but for others this 'comfort zone' couldn't be further from the truth. Let me give you an example:

Once, having asked a coachee to produce a **Wild Ideas** sheet of everything he would like to be, do and have, he barely managed to fill more than a few lines. What I realised was that he was so stuck in his routine that it had become a straightjacket, preventing him from

experiencing new opportunities, acting differently, exploring the unknown and generally taking a risk.

He was concerned about other people's reactions if he changed, and felt that *"people like me just don't do certain things."*

"Why not?" I asked. *"How come other people can travel, change job, study etc. and not you?"*

Over the course of our work together we explored his values and beliefs and I helped him realise that he could change and that he had the ability and every right to do so. As you can imagine, the results not only impacted on him, but also positively on his family, friends and colleagues.

He took a risk and it paid off.

What risk are you going to take today?

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