

March 2009-Moving On...Taking Risks by Barbara Ashcroft

"The greatest risk is the risk of riskless living." Stephen Covey

People who truly feel alive and passionate about life are those who have taken risks, those who have gone for it. These folks are willing to move out of their comfort zone, and take a chance on a new opportunity or passion. Instead of remaining in their safe familiar rut, they take a leap, not always knowing the clear path or the measurable outcome. What they do know, however, is that if they don't venture forth, their spirit will remain stifled, and their true potential will never be realized.

Is there something you would really like to try? Is there a recurring idea or thought that keeps popping up in your head? Do you look at others who have moved forward and done well thinking that that could never happen to you? Do you think successful people have some type of magic or special secret that you just don't know? It really is not all that complicated. Their success has more to do with their confidence in themselves, their willingness to let go and their ability to overcome their fears.

What Kind of Thinking Do Risk Takers Embrace?

- They have a burning desire to move forward and attempt something new.
- They trust that this 'knowing' is right for them.
- They believe in themselves and have a good self image.
- They know that real security comes from within, not from outside sources.
- They may be frightened, but they overcome their fears by reflecting on a successful risk they took in the past.
- They develop a plan of action, but are prepared to follow intuitive leads as they appear.
- They keep the big picture in mind.
- They ask others to mentor them and surround themselves with people who will inspire them to continue.
- They are willing to change course and follow detours as they run into them.
- They don't expect immediate perfection. They know they will make some mistakes, but they regard these setbacks as learning experiences.
- They are prepared to 'mess about' as they proceed with their plan. They know that there will be surprises along the way. They are not glued to their timetables and agendas.
- They take action and learn as they go.
- They are inquisitive, problem solvers and lifelong learners.
- They are not swayed by negative comments from others about their idea or project.

If there is something you have always been wanting to do in your life, what is holding you back?

We all have our limiting beliefs. Wayne Dyer tells us that, "there is one grand lie-that we are limited. The only limits we have are the limits we believe." They go something like this:

- I'm not smart enough.
- I'm too old to try that.
- My family would think I'm crazy.
- I can't afford to take the risk.
- I hate what I do, but at least I'm familiar with the routine.
- I don't like change.
- There are too many unknown factors.
- I want to go for it, but I don't want the responsibility.
- I'll feel guilty.
- I don't want to be rejected.
- I might fail.

Now think about this. We take chances every day, driving or taking the train to work. We take a risk any time we go on a vacation to new places. We take a risk when we meet a new friend and place our trust in them. You would not be where you are now unless you had taken risks. We are constantly taking risks that we don't even think about. Risk taking is absolutely crucial for our own personal growth. Those who think that life will always stay the same are in for a rude awakening. The only constant in life is change. The more we prepare ourselves for change, the happier we will be. How often have you thought that you finally had your life in order only to discover that that there was a hole in your security blanket? Life will always throw us unexpected curves. It is in these times we may have to take a forced risk to deal with the situation.

Risk taking takes us from where we are to where we want to be. In every risk there is some unavoidable loss, something that has to be given up to move ahead. When we choose not to risk, however, we are still making a choice. You are not stuck where you are unless you decide to be. Many people are living unproductive and miserable lives because they are afraid to take the first step to improve their situation. They are convinced that their life will improve if they just wait long enough, if they work harder or if they just love someone more. In the meantime, years of unfulfilled happiness go by. The question that we all need to ask ourselves is, "Do I want to go on living like this?" You may be surprised at your answer. There is only one person who can improve your life, and that's you. Action is the next step.

"People who refuse to take risks live with a feeling of dread that is far more severe than what they would feel if they took the risks necessary to make them less helpless...only they don't know it." Susan Jeffers

Jack Canfield suggests we ask ourselves the following questions when thinking about making a change:

- What's the payoff for my keeping things the way they are?
- What am I afraid of with respect to the change?
- What's the cost I'm paying for keeping things the way they are?
- What benefits might there be in this change?
- What's the next step I could take to cooperate with this change?
- When will I take it?

Nearly every significant risk you will ever take is bound to offend someone. Others tend to be upset when we change our behavior. This should tell you that you are on the right track for you. We all experience fear when we are about to embark on something new. Fear will always be around. We must remember the past times that we conquered it and trust that we will do it again. The only way to lessen the fear is to go out and do it. When you face the things that scare you, you open the door to freedom. Susan Jeffers suggests that we take a small risk each day until we build up our confidence. It takes some time to move from the old comfort zone into a new one. The point is to just begin. David Viscott reminds us, "that any risk that is important for growth will reappear until it is settled." Your inner longing will gnaw at you until you acknowledge it. Remember, time moves on faster than you think. On your deathbed you probably won't regret your mistakes, but you'll most likely regret the person you failed to become and the opportunities you let pass by.

"You always miss 100% of the shots you don't take." Wayne Gretsky

References:

Canfield, J., *The Success Principles* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005)

Jeffers, S., *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2007)

Viscott, D., *Risking* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977)

Barb Ashcroft has spent 35 years motivating and inspiring others. She believes that joy resides within every one of us. Barb offers JOURNEY TO JOY SEMINARS to help those who want to think more positively, discover their true passions, and feel fully alive. She holds a Master's Degree in Education and is a certified Passion Test Facilitator.