



INTEGRATE TO LIVE

Restore Resilience. Cultivate Community. Impact your World

Week 46 Transcript: Risk, Failure and Recovery

This week, we continue to build the support we need to cross thresholds into the unknown by exploring risk, failure and recovery.

Here we are, toward the end of the program, and we've gained a lot of skills to help us maintain resilience in the face of risk and failure. Finding the courage to step out and take a risk is obviously the necessary first step in creating change in our lives. But, the most important part of success is knowing how to rebound when we fail.

Dopamine is the neurotransmitter of reward and pleasure and has a very significant relationship to our "comfort zone." Staying within that place of comfort is reinforced by the feel good sensation of familiarity.

All new challenges are difficult. Every choice to risk is unfamiliar. Creating any kind of change is disruptive. We must understand that when we are taking a risk we are working against our survival instincts to stay within the familiar zone of comfort. This will help us be mindful, intentional and resourced as we courageously move into new possibilities in our lives.

Whenever we move toward an edge, gain courage to cross a threshold, try something new, let something old go, we get an uncomfortable feeling that tells us to be careful. Just because something is new doesn't mean it's a "NO". Just because something is unfamiliar doesn't mean it will harm us.

How many times have you been excited about a new relationship, a new job or joining a new group and you suddenly stop in your tracks? They call it cold feet, justification or resistance, but the most neutral way to call it is "alarmed."

That's exactly what is happening in the brain. It sent an alarm to let us know that something outside our known realm of experience is happening or is about to happen. It's the brain's job to alert us to proceed with caution.

But, it's absolutely essential we differentiate the uneasy feeling we experience when our expectations are disrupted versus a true fear response that signals to us that we are in danger.



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If we can distinguish this sensation as just that; alarmed, then we can neutralize some of its power. In order to change, we must be willing to risk. In order to make the choice to risk, we must increase our capacity to return to our window of tolerance.

Inherent in risking is the certainty that we will sometimes fail at the new thing because of our lack of experience. So, think about our brains reward system again from a fresh perspective. We can embrace failure in a way that releases dopamine and reinforces the pleasurable behavior of change.

We have to find the gift in the failure. We must find the reward in the mistake. We need to experience the satisfaction of growth. When we make risk-taking a normal and familiar practice, our brain will signal less danger, and more pleasure, when we step out into new possibilities.

Some of the best advice on this topic came from Eleanor Roosevelt when she said, "Do one thing every day that scares you." It's not about being reckless, it's about being intentional.

Learning from our mistakes significantly increases our ability to rebound. We can find value in the learning because we know it's the only way to increase our bravery and train our brain with new strategies of recovery.

When we find the reward in the mistake, we change the story we are making up about our failure. This is how we re-wire a courageous and resilient brain.

I don't look at failure through the lens of perfection anymore. I know I will make mistakes and it doesn't determine my worthiness. I now see that if I'm not failing regularly, then I'm not living to my fullest potential. Because the only way to be fully alive is to risk vulnerability. And, failure is vulnerable.

When we change the story that failure isn't final, we find fresh courage to "keep calm and carry on." We can trust that, though, moving out of our comfort zone sometimes feels like sudden death, it is the pathway to the fullness of life.



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This week we will be learning new tools to increase our resources of pleasure and safety in the face of risk and failure. Be sure to download the action guide to support this process and share what you are learning on our group page.