



# Leadership Living

*the MasterPoint™ Series for the ascendant professional*

by Tim Herd

## The instrumental role of risk in success



From way out here on the precarious end of this sagging limb, I'm going to declare that there's never been a successful venture that has not included an element of risk. And furthermore, from this quivering, cracking twig, I tell you that in most cases, that risk has not only been beneficial, but instrumental to the triumph!

We live in a world endemic with hazards, perils, dangers and insecurities. Not only is that the way it comes naturally, but it's also the way we have crafted it culturally, despite all our attempts to the contrary.

And although we aim to eliminate as many liabilities as possible, we will never attain a risk-free existence.

Given that reality, therefore, means that people who are successful devise a way to recognize the risks associated in any endeavor, minimize what they can, and capitalize on what's left. The young couple who chooses to raise a child, the entrepreneur who invests in a new concept, the blogger who bares his soul to the world, the politician who runs for office, the adventurer who dives with sharks, the failure who tries again: all know the risks yet still strive for success.

Successfully managing risk is to take purposeful action in spite of fear, discomfort, history or hardship to exercise your faith in the worth of the end result. How? Here are three intentional actions to not just practice but profit from the risk in your life:

**Manage fear.** The most paralyzing response to risk is fear. And there's certainly no shortage of them: fear of harm, loss, rejection, embarrassment, failure, the unknown, or what-have-you! Yet most fear thrives on unsubstantiated feelings rather than facts, and concerns things that never materialize. A study by the University of Michigan frames our fears in proper perspective:

- 60 percent are completely unwarranted because what we fear never even happens.
- 20 percent are based in the past and are therefore out of our control.
- 10 percent are so trivial that they make no difference at all.
- 5-6 percent are justifiable but can be resolved by action.

The fear-less bottom line: a full 95 percent of our usual fears are a waste of time, energy and distress!

**Choose resilience.** Remember those wobbly moments, crashes and spills when you first learned to ride a bike? My daughter's first solo ride crashed memorably into the bushes and inserted an embarrassing

and uncomfortable twig up her nose. But she got back on the bike. A friend of mine, a professional mountain biker who knows intimately what wipe-outs can be like proclaims, “Fall down seven, get up eight!” Resiliency is the ability to cope with disappointment and setbacks. Avoid viewing problems as unbearable. Decide to try again, applying the most recent lessons learned from your encounters. Resiliency builds strength to overcome the risks to reach the reward.

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**Speak and act in faith.** If you do not have faith in the legitimacy and value of your dream, who will? If your reach is to be extended, and your goal is to be attained, who will be its champion? If followers are to be enlisted and led to victory, who will motivate them? The obvious answer is you! You must choose to speak and act in faith, seeing and believing the end result with more certainty than its ill-defined route. Your faith will then become contagious, infecting first yourself, then your associates, and ultimately your entire domain.

### **MasterPoint 75**

*Rise to the risks to reach the rewards.*

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