

WHY A SAFE LIFE IS A MEDIocre LIFE

Written by Christopher Cook

Legendary author Steven Pressfield said, "Writing isn't hard. Sitting down to start is hard." And so it is with most other areas of life. That's precisely why you and I must commit to being a finisher; someone who is dedicated to not settle for 80% but one who closes deals and projects and completes personal goals. But what about those of us who just wish we could get going and take the first step? Maybe you're eager to finally step out of the boat and walk upon uncharted water, but taking that first step is all too intimidating, so instead of risking failure, you decide to stay safe and settle for mediocrity.

Apply this to any area of life:

- Personal goals
- Relationship growth
- Financial freedom
- Career advancement
- Parenting skills

Does this sound a lot like your life? Maybe you can relate to this reader's recent email in which he said, "Chris, I feel uninspired and am lacking courage. After a series of disappointments, I'm really timid about taking another risk. So, I've settled to just wait and see what happens."

Believe it or not, those emails arrive in my inbox more than you'd suspect. And I believe that the culprit lurking behind this common intimidation is one thing: fear.

Fear will stunt your growth.
Fear will shut down your potential.

Fear will burn your dreams to the ground.
Fear will jade your relationships.
But most of all...

Fear will keep you from taking the most important step: the first step.

Taking the First Step

There's a lot of risk and mystery in taking the first step. The inherent risk in taking a first step is found in embracing when you'll fall, not if you'll fall. And often, the mystery in taking a first step revolves around how long will it take to develop a stride.

Watch the development of a toddler.

Can you imagine if a parent was so gripped by the fear of their child falling and getting bruised in the process of normal development that they insisted upon carrying the youngster wherever they needed to go? Needless to say, instead of developing their own stride and building muscle, the toddler would never be able to support his own weight, develop motor skills, and would ultimately atrophy an otherwise healthy muscular system.

And that's just what the fear of stepping out into the unknown does to our development in life. The fear of embracing the risk and mystery of the unknown will hamper your ability to take steps forward into your future. But unlike a lot of people today, my hope for you is that your uncommon willingness to risk added to uncommon determination will yield an uncommon result.

So the question begs an answer: Are you going to live your life safe and stuck in cynicism because of past disappointment? Or will you take the first step even with the risk of failing? Point being, you cannot reach your life's potential while putting "safety first."

Step One: Step Out

Really, the first step in learning how to step out into the unknown is taking full responsibility for your life. If you're sick and tired of living a life that's dripping in mediocrity because of the safety of familiarity, here's a step-by-step process to taking... the first step:

1. Take responsibility for your life.

Don't allow your emotions to control you. Learn to discipline and contain your emotions. Don't believe what you feel. Allow your emotions to catch up to your right beliefs and corresponding actions.

2. Seize the opportunity.

There will always be a logical reason and a good intention to justify mediocrity. But overcoming this temptation requires embracing risk and mystery.

3. Dump the excuses and act.

Don't wait until all your ducks are in a row before you start. In the same manner, don't squander your future successes because of past failures. Get up and get going again.

4. Expect to need a recharge.

At some point, you will run out of motivation. The initial excitement will wear off. So, know that going in and then commit before the bell rings.

We were never designed to make choices from a place of fear. And trust me, I get why the temptation to do so is enticing. But I've recently come to a place in my own life in which I would much rather fall flat on my face than look back to this day with tears of regret clouding my vision.

Taking the first step is often the most difficult, but it is the most necessary.

Do you believe it?

Christopher Cook is a leadership coach and business consultant to both Fortune 1000 and nonprofit organizations. Additionally, he is the host of "Win Today with Christopher Cook," a popular weekly podcast, available on Apple Podcasts, Google Play and other outlets. Through his work at WINTODAY.tv and as a contributor for SUCCESS magazine, he serves as a guide to help people design their road map to wholeness from the inside out.