

Who Are We Called To Be Now – Risk-Takers?

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Opening Process:

When I think of risk taking, the following words come to mind: List 3-5.

Recall the last time that you personally took a risk of any kind.

Introduction:

Who are you called to be as followers of Nano today? How to understand what might be getting in the way of your mission and living out the visions that you are called to by your Chapter?.

Attitudes About Risking

- ✓ We see things differently when it comes to risk and risk taking.
- ✓ It is not uncommon to approach this topic with an attitude, or bias about risking taking – it is good or bad – for you personally and for your community.
- ✓ Look at your own words is one way to help you understand how you begin our conversation.
- ✓ How will learning more about risk impact future decisions – especially as they relate to why you exist - your mission, and what you hope to accomplish – your vision, and ultimately your future.

Risk-taking, Decision Making And Gambling

- ✓ Our lived reality is life is full of change and change often comes with taking risks; risks are a part of how we manage a number of everyday challenges
- ✓ We negotiate conditions in everyday life and try to make sense of risk in everyday life. We often live with a **risk paradox**: we want to prevent and minimize risk and know that some advantages are only achievable when taking risks. Risking is part of normal, desired behavior.
- ✓ For many, Risk helps make life interesting and worth living; a reason to get out of bed in the morning when risking is connected to **purpose. It is about being purposeful** about what you care about which helps you be less buffeted by the stressors and better able to manage emotional responses.

- ✓ Decision making and risk taking are not the same. Considering risky choices is often part of the decision making process.
- ✓ Risk taking is a choice that includes a possible negative outcome. It is not about throwing caution to the wind or tossing a coin. It involves careful planning, deliberate investigation and seeking counsel. Risking is not the same as gambling.

Is your goal comfort, or faithfulness? Christopher Cook

What Drives Risking Taking: 4 Important Motivations (Jens. O. Zinn)

1. **Social Motivation:** Risk taking is shaped by the social context, experience and an imagined future.
 - ✓ For some, risk is an end in itself – excitement is dominant (skydiving); offers the ability to explore one's limits, skills and may lead to increased autonomy, self-worth, meaning, confidence, feelings of power and control
 - ✓ Risk as a means to an end – usually driven by purpose -a less self-oriented and more complex motivation; often related to the desire to make a contribution, to improve the well-being of others
 - ✓ Risk due to social conditions – dues to pressures and opportunities or lack of - (e.g., joining the military)
 - ✓ Risk due to vulnerability from an unbearable situation; they do not have the resources to resist or choose a positive alternative. (Refugees)

2. **Control:** risk taking depends on the degree of control or perceived control;
 - ✓ If someone has control; and the ability to make choices for themselves – risk taking is part of developing their identity
 - ✓ When risk-taking involves others – TRUST is crucial – a leap of faith
 - ✓ We can take risks **to protect control/prevent loss of control**
 - ✓ **Risky freedoms** – choosing to take risks to advance into an uncertain future – with at times little control or knowledges of what is next
 - ✓ **Take risks to regain control** – choosing represents hope and not choosing represents despair (coming out as gay or lesbian)
 - ✓ **Suffering** – when resources are limited and only risk-taking is seen as doable way to deal with suffering; suffering can drive one to life-

threatening risks (Ukraine). A history of suffering may lead to a desire for safety and risk aversion.

For Reflection: How have social factors and control been a part of your considering or actual risk-taking?

3. **Consciousness (reflexivity):** to what extent do I/we reflect on the risks we are taking – a key part of risk taking is weighing the pros and cons
- ✓ Risk taking is learned from one's roots and social conditions, learning what is normal or unreasonable; with skills and support, a person can grow in confidence, and feel more in control and choose less risky behaviors
 - ✓ Normalizing risk is not necessarily a quality of the activity but of how one approaches it.

For Reflection: How did your family make decisions? Do you recall any risks taken while you were growing up? What were the outcomes?

4. **Identity Development and Protection:** risk taking is part of developing a valued and healthy identity at every stage of development and is shaped by social conditions
- ✓ **Education plays a significant role** – it is not about filling a bucket but lighting a fire by providing safe opportunities for risk-taking
 - ✓ **Risking and growth** – inner growth and a feeling of independence and maturity when trying something new
 - ✓ **Making life interesting and worth living:** when adults choose to conquer fear, display courage, seek excitement and a sense I can make a difference, it leads to JOY; emotional engagement is key
 - ✓ **Risk-taking** helps one navigate one's position in society and can provide clarity about what is most valuable in your life.

Changing involvement with risk requires an understanding of someone's everyday life and their past experiences

For Reflection: Did your formation encourage risk-taking? How do you help each to other consider risking today?

Mindsets To Understand Risk: Prevention or Promotion OR BOTH

- ✓ **Prevention focused goals/risk aversion:** promoting safety and avoiding danger matter; it is about fulfilling responsibilities, doing what you “should”, minimizing losses and hanging on to what you’ve got; You breathe a sigh of relief. “We dodged a bullet.” You carefully handle all the details, seeing goals as opportunities to maintain the status quo and keep things running smoothly, **A choice when things are running smoothly, “as is” is acceptable and what you know is better than what you do not know.**

You are prevention focused WHEN

- ✓ **Promotion focused goals:** doing something you would ideally like to do; it is about maximizing gains, achieving goals and avoiding missed opportunities. “Yeah, we did this!.” Seeing goals as opportunities to make progress and be better off requires not being averse to risky choices when they have the potential for rich gains. **Choose risk for something better.**

You are promotion focused WHEN:

Note: Either/or thinking rarely acknowledges the complexity of situations or issues. Each perspective has an advantage – depending on what you are trying to accomplish.

For Reflection: Mindsets are learned and encouraged. How and when have you as a group chosen to be promotion or prevention focused or both? Outcomes?

What Else Impacts Risk-Taking; Why Don’t We Take a Leap?

What might get in the way of our being STEWARDS of our lives – faithful to our life call and willing to invest in the life we have.

- ✓ We do not think we are good enough: we listen to our doubts and the doubts of others’ or we focus too much on obstacles and not the goal; we spend too much time judging, evaluating and attempting to control.
- ✓ We do not think we will be loved enough or loved in the same way, that we will lose the approval of those close to us; we can become people pleasers and lose our sense of purpose.

Your life is your message – make it an inspiring one. Gandhi

- ✓ We have learned to conform and put our deepest desires on hold, at times betraying gifts – given to us for the sake of the world.

To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment. Ralph Waldo Emerson

- ✓ We play it safe, often governed by fear and we make excuses. Our fear of failure prevents us from dreaming big and ultimately taking action. Fear erodes hope and encourages inferiority, which creates narrow mindedness, which leads to devastation and the death of dreams. Our fear of criticism cripples the desire/drive to make a difference. You are not here to please others. What if you focused on how you feel not others' reactions?

To combat fear: have FAITH in yourself, one another, others and God who created you and the major purpose assigned to you. Believe! M. Demadema

- ✓ Settling for less than you truly desire which renders you incapable of taking action or prevents you from trying something new. Reconnecting with PASSION – a burning desire and plans to achieve that desire is critical. Exposure to bad news, suffering and grief may lead to a pessimistic outlook and playing it safe – just wanting to survive and get along may lead to losing sight of the burning desire to add lasting value to your life and the life of others.

Each of us has something amazing to offer the world.

Love it. Live it. Give it! Jeff Moore

- ✓ With so much happening in our lives and all around us, you can feel overwhelmed and overloaded. Fatigue can harm or even kill efforts to change. We need to hear from one another via healthy emotional expression. Fear itself can produce its own fatigue. As can unexpressed or unresolved grief.
- ✓ **Regret** is about the outcomes of a decision and to how we relate to the actions – defining a decision as good or bad. Regret indicates that we care about the consequences of a decision. Regrets can be transformed into life lessons (Ted Dunn) and do not have to disempower by reminding us of our failures. Ruminating about the past can haunt us and drag us down.

We can also utilize regret to our advantage by considering the regrets we might feel by a choice = protecting us from extremes and/or regret can lead to irrational or biased decisions. Regret can dissuade or motivate. Not taking risks will likely produce regrets – Thinking about the “what ifs...” and not “we tried.”

Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving in a pretty and well=preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out and loudly proclaiming “wow! What a ride!” Hunter S. Thompson

For reflection: Which of these roadblocks gets in the way of you personally taking a leap? Of your congregation?

Some Additional Considerations: What else are we learning?

Why is it difficult to articulate who we are and a vision for today, sacrifice to make it work or happen, and prioritize and align resources? (adapted from Ted Dunn)

- ✓ Learning when and how to work collaboratively, as you continue to define your role as vowed members – an emerging reality.
- ✓ Your mission and vision need to have a clarity that inspires passion and ownership and in invites all to join you in mission and action.
- ✓ Everyday responsibilities (care of our sisters, property and buildings, meeting planning, sponsored ministries, pastoral attention to members new and older) impact energy and resources of leaders and members.
- ✓ AND...

There will always be too much to do. A viable solution is to make a shift from a life spent trying not to neglect anything, in favor of spent productivity and consciously choosing what to neglect, in favor of what matters most.

Oliver Burkeman

There are years that ask questions – there are years that answer them.

Zora Neale Thurston

For Reflection: What was good for you to hear? Helpful for you personally, and together, as you enter into Chapter? Who are you choosing to be now?