

## The Quest4Life Podcast Show Notes:

### *Season #3, Episode #23: Jumping Over Your Shadow*

Podcast Host: Dr. Ed Slover

In 1985, the band, Fleetwood Mac, released a song entitled, “Jumping at Shadows.” When listening to the song and homing in on the lyrics, some interpret them that it’s a song about feelings of insignificance and regret of a life not lived to its fullest.

When we jump at shadows, we tend to be afraid of small or inconsequential things that we really shouldn’t be scared by. And when we’re able to jump over our shadow, which is to say we moved beyond worrying about the small stuff, we have a shot at living a life that is fulfilling rather than not. It’s an interesting idea, an interesting visual to consider. What is a shadow but an image cast by something intercepting light, but the idea that we must contend with it to make meaningful, measurable change is worthy of consideration because it’s intensely personal.

It’s worth noting that each of us have different attitudes and tolerances toward risk. Some people avoid risk at all costs. These people view life as being dangerous, which it is, but they look at a disruption to the status quo as a threat. For these people, risk is an intense emotional trigger that should be avoided.

Other people understand that not all risk is equal. For example, driving 70 miles per hour on the freeway with dozens of other cars driving 70 miles per hour is inherently risky, but most people can tolerate the risk to live a functional life. That said, the people willing to tolerate driving on the freeway may view leaving a job with a stable income as riskier, which leads them to maintain the status quo, at least professionally. Pursuing other employment opportunities or starting a business is simply more dangerous than hurling oneself down the road in a 5-ton rectangle where the risk of dying is far greater. In such cases, not all risk is perceived as equal.

Still other people view risk as a necessary component of life. These people are willing to continually jump over their shadow because NOT doing so is riskier than the alternative. They understand that, at minimum, they will learn something from the risk they took. They willingly accept that failure is a possibility, but they also accept that they may be unimaginably successful, whatever either failure or success means to them.

In any of those three scenarios – from being highly risk averse to being able to tolerate a high-level of risk – it is essential to understand the complexities of the risk so that it can be managed effectively.

This is where the term “Calculated Risk” come from, which is a carefully considered decision that exposes a person to a degree of risk where the chance of failure has been reckoned or estimated before engaging in the behavior. This, of course, requires us to reconcile the fact that taking risks is scary BECAUSE it requires you to step into the unknown, to step into the void, but doing so allows you to experience novelty and expands your possibilities.

Said differently, if you want to live a life of safety and comfort, there is nothing wrong with that. But if you want to have a shot of making your dreams a reality, you can't insist on complete safety and comfort but rather you must take new and different action and step into the void.

What follows are 5 Steps that allow you to assess risk before taking the leap. Each are designed to allow you to think critically so you can make informed decisions before acting.

### **#1: Set a Goal**

Identify something that you want to achieve or intend to achieve. Start by answering the following questions: What type of life do I want to pursue? Or What are my greatest desires? Or What dreams do I want to make come true? I encourage you to write them down.

Further, you may make note of your core values and beliefs and assess whether where you are presently in your life aligns with them. This can assist you in setting goals that create a "values and beliefs match." Once you set these meaningful goals, establish a target date for achieving them.

For example, you may want to purchase a home. Write down, "I want to purchase a home by the end of 2023." Perhaps you want to start a business. Write down, "I want to set up my LLC by the end of the month." In effect, setting meaningful goals and target dates serves as your North Star.

### **#2: Perform a Risk Assessment on Each of Your Goals**

Try to determine the risks you might face in the pursuit of your goals. Write down what each of these risks looks like, such as financial risks. The goal here is to understand the various forms risk could take, which allows you to adequately prepare for them and/or allows you to decide whether the risks are worth taking.

### **#3: Consider the Impact of Each Potential Risk**

How would you feel if you encountered each potential risk? To answer this question, you need to, to the best of your ability, try to feel as if the impact of the risk and/or outcome of taking the risk has already occurred. Doing this allows you to determine how risk averse you are based on the potential consequences related to the risk.

From there, answer the question: Where am I putting my energy? Another way of asking this is, "Am I treating each potential risk as equal?" If so, you should consider taking a step back and objectifying each risk for its potential impact, as most risks are not equal. Doing this will allow you to focus your energy and attention on risks of greater consequence while simultaneously de-emphasizing less riskier options.

### **#4: Assign Each Risk a Value**

By assigning a value here is to anticipate the likelihood of each risk resulting in a negative outcome. Ask yourself, "What is the likelihood that this or that action will result in a dumpster

fire?” And, of course, what is meant by dumpster fire is the absolute, worst possible consequence.

So, as you move through your list of meaningful goals established in Step #1, give each of them an associated risk value based on the likelihood taking the risk will end badly. Another way you can do this is to assign a scaled value, such as giving riskier options a “5” and the least risky options a “1” on a Scale of 1-5.

## **#5: Make a Plan**

Figure out which risks you are willing to take to lead a more fulfilled, joyful life. Once you determine what those are, devote your time, energy, and attention to taking the appropriate action to bring about your desired outcomes. This will allow you to ignore or eliminate those risks you deem unnecessary while having a clearer picture of which chances are worth taking.

### ***Benefits of Taking Risks***

- You’ll feel a sense of accomplishment.
- You can erase old stories you keep telling yourself.
- You’ll learn something about yourself.
- You’ll increase your confidence.
- It opens you up to new opportunities.
- You’ll build resilience.
- You’ll live a life with no regrets.

### ***Final Thoughts***

Evaluate how each of the steps mentioned previously can help you assess risk. Hopefully, what you learn will allow you to jump over your shadow and be willing to take more risks in life...if for no other reason than to NOT get to the end of your life and have any regrets.

Pursuing a life of significance without regret is unsettling. It’s scary, but it doesn’t mean you shouldn’t do it.

Each of us has one shot at this thing we call life. What do you say we commit to one another, right here and now, that we will make the most of it.

Are you in?

If so, it’s time to jump over your shadow.

As usual, it’s food for thought, Fellow Questers.