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a MESSAGE from SYLVIA

There's Value in Taking Reasonable Risks

Over and over throughout my career I've realized that opportunities to take risks abound. We just need to look for them. Professional risks, planned and unplanned, come in various buckets: conversations, strategy, behaviors, process and procedures, new initiatives, path, and style. Risk-taking is part of all credible leadership. The sooner we accept this and consciously choose it, the more effective we are in our work-related roles.

One of the biggest risks I ever took was starting my coaching business in 2008. To put it bluntly, I was scared. I didn't have an MBA, and I'd no idea how soon I'd land a paying client. With a failure rate of 90% for women-owned small businesses in America, I wondered if I'd succeed.

Seven years later I'm pleased to tell you that Launching Lives not only is thriving but growing in some fascinating directions. My expansion allows me to influence and impact more people—a deep desire of mine. In 2014 I stepped out of my comfort zone to take yet another significant risk: investing nine precious months in writing a very personal book that can benefit YOU.

Next month I promise I'll tell you more about my book slated for Amazon and Kindle release later in March. But in the meantime, you can read an excerpt from one of the chapters in Part II. Oh—by the way, guess what the topic is. See below

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My dog, Pierce,
enjoys his winters.



FEATURE ARTICLE

7 Big Benefits to Risk-taking at Work

1. It invites you to see opportunity.

Reframe the risk with which you grapple as a chance to advance yourself and/or your organization. By terminating that stagnant or problem staffer you create space for someone ideal. By delegating more responsibility to a trusted team member you free up time to focus on your priorities. Trashing a familiar, cumbersome process that slows work flow paves the way to develop something that's truly efficient.

2. It boosts your self confidence.

The more often you take risks and succeed, the more confident you feel. Once on the other side, you realize you survived. Further, sometimes you discern without a shadow of a doubt that you must do what is necessary for the health and wellbeing of your organization. Initiating difficult, critical conversations with an employee, volunteer, or Board member may not be easy. You risk altering the relationship or prompting the person to quit. But you take the risk because you know it's right.

3. It helps you to learn and grow.

When you take risks, you don't stay stagnant. Often you expand your skill set.

Saying yes to something you've never tried before takes you into a new domain. Sign up for an advanced computer class where everybody is ten or twenty years younger than you. Agree to write a public service announcement for your agency's latest offering. Accept the challenge of preparing and delivering a twenty minute speech for your company's annual meeting.

4. It allows you to shine as a leader.

Very few people like to take risks. Consider the folks in your professional circle. How do they really feel about risk-taking? You can set yourself apart from others by making a conscious decision to say or do something they wouldn't. For example, many people aren't willing to take a stand for an idea or an action when the stakes are high. Develop a habit of doing this with issues that count. True leaders don't hide.

5. It opens up possibilities.

Today, most professionals spend countless hours in meetings during a typical work week. What exactly are you contributing while you sit there? Stop accepting everything you hear at face value. Take a risk and ask essential questions that probe the layers of complex problems and dilemmas. Dare to make bold observations about team function, product development, or work culture. Inspiring people to think more deeply empowers them to identify and connect with a host of possibilities they may never have considered.

6. It encourages you to become more proactive.

Taking small risks that have minor consequences attached to them is one of the best ways you can move from a predominantly reactive mode into a more deliberate proactive approach to your job responsibilities. Tired of all the petty interruptions each day? Close your office door for one hour. Train your staff to honor this signal that you are absorbed in tasks and projects that require your undivided attention. Such a strategy helps you reclaim some focused time without damaging key relationships.

7. It supports your efforts to overcome the fear of failure.

Every time you take a risk and succeed, your fear of failure loses power. You disregard the stigma often associated with defeat, collapse, deficiencies, missteps, and botch. Willingly you shed childhood assumptions like: Only losers fail; one failure leads to another; all failure is bad. You realize that occasionally smart, educated people do fail, that trying new ideas can be good, and that the negative impact of most failures is only temporary. You learn to put failure into healthy perspective.

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What Clients Say

I hired Sylvia a couple of years ago to teach me how to delegate certain pieces of work to my employees. When the coaching engagement began, I was drowning. Throughout my career I'd held the belief that I needed to "do it all" so things got done on time and got done right. But eventually my responsibilities increased to the point where I couldn't balance fifty balls in the air anymore. I sensed that I was breaking down. Over a period of three months Sylvia and I dissected what was really going on inside of me. She helped me to identify tasks and projects that others could handle well, and she gave me strategies for making the delegation assignments as well as for holding folks accountable. Finally, I took the risk of trusting capable staff. It wasn't long until I started to feel like a new person—and a much more effective manager.

- Jennifer K, Social Services, Southeastern PA

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Offers and Opportunities

Riding the Waves of Risk?

Are you in a risky situation at work right now? Do you anticipate one developing soon? Whether it's real or perceived risk, if you answered *yes* to either or both of these questions, you probably feel worried, frustrated, and alone. Well, relief is on its way should you choose to take advantage of my **FREE offer**. What can you possibly lose by scheduling a 20 minute telephone "pick my brain" conversation between now and February 28th? Simply send an email at sylvia@launchinglives.biz to request your session. I promise that you will walk away with something you a) never considered before, b) a viable strategy to implement and/or c) a basic plan of action. Remember: it's risky to play around with risk.

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RESOURCES

Your Risk-taking History: A Self Assessment

Just how willing are you to take certain kinds of risks at work? Get a quick overview of your comfort with risk by completing the following mini self assessment using this simple scale:

- 5 - Almost daily
- 4 - About twice a week
- 3 -Perhaps once or twice a month
- 2- A few times a year
- 1- Rarely if ever
- NA -Not applicable

- _____ I initiate necessary, difficult conversations with colleagues.
- _____ I initiate necessary, difficult conversations with my boss.
- _____ I initiate necessary, difficult conversations with employees.
- _____ I offer my opinions in meetings, even if they are not popular.
- _____ I try different approaches to similar tasks or projects.
- _____ I respectfully question authority figures if I believe they are wrong.
- _____ I express my interest in a job promotion that seems right for me.
- _____ I invest company dollars in a new product or service.
- _____ I ask staff persons to do something they've never done before.
- _____ I show my strong feelings about work related problems, dilemmas, decisions, and circumstances.

Because there is no ideal score, you do not need to add your numbers to get a total. The main purpose of this little assessment is to give you a sense of your willingness to take certain types of risks in the work environment.

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TIP

Take a sheet of paper and divide it into four quadrants. In the upper left quadrant identify the large and small risks you've taken in your leadership role over the last three months. In the upper right quadrant list your reasons for taking those particular risks as well as the results you've observed thus far. In the lower left quadrant write two risks you know you must take within the next thirty days to mend a key relationship, improve a process, and/or boost work outcomes. In the lower right quadrant clarify what you need to take those risks, the dates by which you plan to act, and the results you anticipate. This exercise helps you to clarify your thinking about risk-taking at work.

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Where in the World is SYLVIA?

On February 24, 2015 Sylvia will present a workshop entitled "Confidence: The Secret Sauce in Exceptional Job Performance" for the Commonwealth of PA's Leadership Development Institute (Alumnae Association) at the Rachel Carson Building in Harrisburg, PA.

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About This Ezine

The purpose of this Ezine is to: 1) Provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to personal and professional growth as well as overall career development; and 2) Invite readers to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

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the monthly emailed issues.

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About SYLVIA

Sylvia Hepler, Owner and President of Launching Lives, LLC, specializes in career development for both corporate and nonprofit executives and managers. Based in South Central PA, she specifically supports clients as they upgrade their current job performance, seek a promotion, or plan/navigate a career transition. What makes her services unique is that Sylvia helps people to cope with change, loss, and grief as they work on developing their careers. Her professional background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, nonprofit community health program start-up, program evaluation, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A certified executive coach through The Rescue Institute in Golden, Colorado and Quantum Endeavors in Chicago, Illinois (plus a participant in extensive continuing education opportunities with several coaches of national notoriety), Sylvia offers individual and group coaching, assessments, teleseminars, workshops, keynote speeches, and retreats. She also has created tangible and downloadable products that augment her coaching and speaking services.

For more information and to connect with Sylvia try:

[Launching Lives Website](#)

[Click to contact Sylvia by Email](#)

Reach Sylvia by phone at **717-761-5457**

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Launching Lives SERVICES

Launching Lives, LLC is a full service career development company for managers and executives located in South Central PA. Utilizing a holistic approach to service provision, Launching Lives focuses on supporting clients as they create the platinum level career they desire by upgrading their job

performance, seeking a promotion, or planning/navigating a career transition

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching may be the SOLUTION to any of these issues.

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