**Risk - Stories & Illustrations**

**Nolan Bushnell took a chance and $500 and started a little company in 1972. He believed there was a future in electronic games that could be played on a television set. He patented a game called Pong and the next year his company sold $11 million worth of games. A few years later Bushnell liquidated his assets in the San Francisco company for $28 million. But the company is still rolling along today. Its name: Atari. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 94)***

**A director took a chance on a slim young actor and made him into one of the film world’s great tough guys. Humphrey Bogart was always considered too small for gangster roles and was cast as a society man in his early films. When he finally got a sinister part, Bogart (his real name) electrified filmgoers everywhere. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 6)***

**When comedienne Carol Burnett is asked which of her accomplishments she's most proud of, she answers, “Having survived.” Burnett was raised on welfare by her grandmother. “Luckily I was ignorant that there were any odds against my doing anything,” she says. “I didn't know I couldn't get out of being poor when I was a kid. Who would have thought I could be in show business? Nobody but me. I think it's important to take risks, to risk defeat. And to find out you can live through one or two or three -- or many.” *(Eric Sherman, in Ladies' Home Journal)***

**A new jewelry store is 25 times more likely to stay in business a full year than is a new restaurant. So say the statisticians. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Researchers asked more than a score of experts to name the 10 riskiest (i.e.: most likely to fail) small businesses in the United States. Their list: local laundries and dry cleaners, used car dealerships, gas stations, local trucking firms, restaurants, infants' clothing stores, bakeries, machine shops, grocery and meat stores, car washes. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Pastor Steve Breazier of Monterey, California, offered these safety tips in his weekly church bulletin: 1. Do not ride in autos -- they cause 20 percent of all fatal accidents. 2. Do not stay at home -- 17 percent of all accidents happen there.  3. Do not travel by air, rail, or water -- 16 percent of all accidents result from these activities. 4. Do not walk in the street -- 15 percent of all accidents occur to pedestrians. 5. Only .001 percent of all fatal accidents happen in church!**

**William Gordon, president of SES, stresses that such creativity cannot happen without “the emotional willingness to risk failure.” In other words, even the craziest of ideas should be considered, since every truly original idea may look a little crazy at first. Thomas Edison, a man with 1093 American patents in his name, once confessed: “I’ll try anything – even Limburger cheese!” *(Dudley Lynch, in Reader’s Digest)***

**The great enemy of creativity is fear. When we're fearful, we freeze up -- like a nine-year-old who won't draw pictures, for fear everybody will laugh. Creativity has a lot to do with a willingness to take risks. Think about how children play. They run around the playground, they trip, they fall, they get up and run some more. They believe everything will be all right. They feel capable; they let go. Good businesspeople behave in a similar way: they lose $15 million, gain $20 million, lose $30 million and earn it back. If that isn't playing, I don't know what is! *(Faith Ringgold, in Fast Company)***

**The riskiest of credit risks are said to be political candidates in the heat of campaigns. If they win, they know they can settle up. If they lose, who cares? So says an experienced lender. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**“It’s a dangerous business, Frodo, going out of your door,” he used to say. “You step into the Road, and if you don’t keep your feet, there is no knowing where you might be swept off to.” *(J. R. R. Tolkien)***

**Walt Disney’s dream of the ultimate amusement park moved a step closer to reality when the McNeil Construction Company began clearing more than 100 acres of orange orchards in Anaheim, California, in August 1954. Disney mortgaged most of his belongings to finance the project, and less than a year later, Disneyland opened its gates to the pubic for the first time. *(Audrey Cunningham, in Tidbits)***

**Male drivers have a 77 percent higher risk of dying in a car accident than female drivers, according to a comprehensive new report by the American Automobile Association. Researchers say men take more risks, speed more, and are more likely than women to drink and drive. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 2, 2007)***

**You play your hand. And, of course, all your money. You can do everything right, but there are so many factors you can't control. The question is, “Will you hit pay dirt?” Gardening is really just gambling outdoors. *(Hilary B. Price, in Rhymes With Orange comic strip)***

**Bill Gates, who regularly tempts failure at Microsoft, likes to hire people who have made mistakes. “It shows that they take risks,” he says. “The way people deal with things that go wrong is an indicator of how they deal with change.” *(Patricia Sellers, in Reader's Digest)***

**Weber is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the kettle grill this year. It was invented by George Stephen, who fashioned his dome-shaped grill at the Weber Brothers Metal Works and changed backyard barbecuing forever. Original price of the kettle: $50 -- at a time when the more popular brazier was $7. *(Rocky Mountain News, 2002)***

**People who take more risks are more satisfied with their lives, a new study found. Researchers at the Institute for the Study of Labor in Germany had 450 people participate in an investment game in which they could divvy up a sum of 100,000 euros (around $120,000) as they saw fit, including putting some or all of it in a bank or in a risky investment scheme. Their choices were then analyzed according to how much risk they were willing to take. It turned out that the people who followed the riskiest investment strategies were also more likely to consider themselves optimistic and well-adjusted. Professor Armin Falk, who ran the study, tells Science Daily he can’t yet explain the connection between risk-taking and happiness. “Are people more optimistic because they are satisfied and thus more ready to take risks?” he asks. Or, are they satisfied because they’ve taken risks and gotten what they hoped for? “It’s a classic chicken and egg problem.” *(The Week magazine, October 7, 2005)***

**David Hartman, the former host of ABC-TVs “Good Morning America,” graduated from college with a degree in economics. Many attractive business opportunities beckoned, but Hartman -- who had worked part-time in college as a radio and TV announcer -- made a tough decision. He turned his back on years of academic training and, forgoing financial security, began a career in the highly uncertain entertainment/communications field. *(Robert & Jeanette Lauer, in Reader's Digest)***

**A small company in Virginia that made driving aids for handicapped people went out of business because it couldn't afford the liability insurance. Too risky. Hardly anyone makes gymnastics or hockey equipment anymore. Too risky. We've virtually stopped making light aircraft in this country; the biggest cost is the product liability. Too risky. One day, we're going to wake up and say, “The hell with it -- competing is just too risky!” Why even try to build a better mousetrap? Let somebody else do it -- and then sue him. *(Lee Iococca, from a speech)***

**Stephen King had a good steady job in a laundry, but gave it up because he got some notion about writing books. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**It's been a long time since I wrote Roxanne a love letter. This was a lot easier before she knew so much about me. *(Ted Dawson, in Spooner comic strip)***

**Talk about taking risks. After five Emmy nods (one win) and rave reviews for her eight seasons on Will & Grace, actress Debra Messing has turned away from network TV to concentrate on movies – a gamble that seems to be working out splendidly. *(James Brady, in Parade magazine, May 27, 2007)***

**Early shopkeepers were convinced the first department stores would fail because the stores came up with such a crazy offer -- the money-back guarantee. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Interest-only mortgages, where nothing is being paid on the principal for the first few years, enable many people to get started on buying a home with lower mortgage payments at the outset. But of course it is only a matter of time before the mortgage payments go up and, unless their income has gone up enough in the meantime for them to be able to afford the new and higher payments, such borrowers can end up losing their homes. Such risky mortgage loans were rare just a few years ago. As of 2002, fewer than 10 percent of the new mortgages in the United States were of this type. But, by 2006, 31 percent of all new mortgages were of this “creative” or risky type. In the San Francisco Bay area, 66 percent of the new mortgages were of this type. *(Thomas Sowell, in Rocky Mountain News, August 8, 2007)***

**Parents Magazine first came out in 1925. A 30-year-old New York bachelor named George Joseph Hecht started it. In the belief the country could use some instruction on how to bring up children. He quit his family's prosperous skin and hide business, borrowed $50,000 from personal lenders, and made it work*. (L. M. Boyd)***

**When Luciano Pavarotti was a boy, his grandmother put him on her lap and said, “You're going to be great, you'll see.” His mother dreamed he'd be a baker. “Instead,” Pavarotti explains, “I ended up teaching elementary school and sang only infrequently. But my father constantly goaded me, said I was singing below my potential.” Finally, at age 22, Pavarotti dumped teaching for selling insurance, to give him enough time to develop his vocal talent. “Studying voice was the turning point of my life,” says the opera star. “It's a mistake to take the safe path in life. If I hadn't listened to my father and dropped teaching, I would never be here. And yes, my teacher groomed me. But no teacher ever told me I would become famous. Just my grandmother.” *(Glenn Plaskin, in Turning Point)***

**Wild rumors had spread through London about the play, a lollapalooza of five sets, actors playing a dog, a crocodile, pirates and Indians and a slew of other characters, some of whom flew in and out of windows by means of an unreliable mechanical contraption. Spectators, including many professional critics, packed the Duke of York's Theatre on opening night. The theater's lights dimmed. Behind the last row of seats, a small figure paced nervously. At first glance, he appeared to be a boy in an oversized great coat. But the face was that of a man -- J. M. Barrie, the 44-year-old Scottish playwright whose “Peter Pan” was being performed for the first time. Although one of London's most celebrated playwrights, Barrie was sick with worry. The improbable story of a boy who refused to grow up was a risky and expensive theatrical venture. Barrie had rewritten the script a dozen times and was aware of talk that he had gone mad. But now the playwright knew that one element he could neither rehearse nor control would determine whether the criticism was founded. As all the world now knows, the playwright need not have worried. Since that December night 90 years ago, “Peter Pan” has been in continual production (save for two years during World War II), seen by millions of people every year. *(Patricia S. McCormick, in Reader's Digest, November, 1994)***

**Gloria: “Would it kill you to pick up the check once in a while, Lance?” Lance: “I’m far too mature to risk my life on a dare, Gloria.” *(J. C. Duffy, in The Fusco Brothers comic strip)***

**A naval aviator told me that many pilots have died because they stayed with disabled aircraft. They preferred the familiarity of the cockpit to the unfamiliarity of the parachute, even though the cockpit was a deathtrap. Many people have seen their careers crash because they preferred the familiar but deadly old ways to the risky but rewarding new ways. *(Nido R. Qubein, in Stairway to Success)***

**William Smithburg, chairman of Quaker Oats, took responsibility for two “mistakes” – the acquisition of a video-game business he has since closed down, and a pet-accessory business he bought and then wrote off. Later he told his employees: “I want you to take risks. There isn’t one senior manager in this company who hasn’t been associated with a product that flopped. That includes me. It’s like learning to ski. If you’re not falling down, you’re not learning.” *(Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, in Reader’s Digest)***

**We are all pilgrims, beings in process. Each one of us must march bravely to a personal drummer, climb our personal mountains, struggle for a destiny that is ours alone. Sometimes it seems much safer just to follow the good old beaten path. The “road less traveled” always seems so risky. But there is not “one road for all.” We are each gifted with an enormous but unique potential. However, in our rendezvous with destiny, we have to take chances, run risks, get rejected and be hurt, be knocked down and get back up on our feet. We must learn to survive defeats. It is all so wild, so terrifying, so adventuresome. *(Father John Powell, in Happiness Is an Inside Job)***

**It’s important to realize that rockets are rockets, and rockets are still risky technology and that’s true of every type of rocket that we or any other country have ever built. *(Sally Ride, former astronaut)***

**In 1935, Andy Nelsen of Omaha, Nebraska, gambled on a new industry by franchising the 1935 Indian line of trailers, which started at $345 for the Papoose model. A. C. Nelson RV World is America’s oldest recreational vehicle dealer. *(American Profile magazine)***

**A top executive at the American Broadcasting Company took a chance and tried acting. Telly Savalas decided to play a judge in a TV show when no one could be found with the right magisterial qualities. He went on to many movies, including The Dirty Dozen, and scored his big hit with TV’s Kojak. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 8)***

**After the tragic 1986 Challenger accident that took the lives of Christa McAuliffe and her crewmates, Barbara Morgan -- McAuliffe's backup -- became NASA's designated Teacher in Space. Morgan visits schools nationwide to talk about her commitment to the space program. “We've become afraid to take risks,” says the third-grade teacher from McCall, Idaho. “Kids don't see adults crossing the continent in covered wagons or sailing the Atlantic in leaky boats. Most of the risk-taking they're exposed to is on TV -- bluff and bluster: “I volunteered because I felt we needed to show kids what you do in terrible situations. You don't quit. You don't back up. You go on. As dangerous as space exploration can be -- as much of a new frontier as it is -- it belongs to everyone. A teacher in space would be, like Christa McAuliffe, a leader who shows all of us the way, by literally reaching for the stars.” *(Christopher Phillips, in Parade magazine)***

**Centuries ago, when mapmakers ran out of the known world before they ran out of parchment, they would sketch a dragon at the edge of the scroll. This was a sign to the explorer that he would be entering unknown territory at his own risk. Unfortunately, some explorers took this symbol literally and were afraid to push on to new worlds. Other more adventurous explorers saw the dragons as a sign of opportunity, a door to virgin territory. Each of us has a mental map of the world in our heads that contains the information we use to guide ourselves to our day-to-day encounters. Like the maps of long ago, our mental maps also have dragons on them. These represent things that, for whatever reason, we don't want to do or push beyond. It could be a fear of public speaking. It could be a fear of going to a party where we don't know any of the people. It could be a reluctance to participate in a particular sport. Sometimes these dragons are valid. Sometimes, however, they prevent us from discovering something new. *(Roger von Oech, in A Kick in the Seat of the Pants)***

**Barbara Walters has interviewed many of the people who have changed the world in her lifetime. And she says, surprisingly, Cher is one “who says things that make me think, I must remember that.” Walters elaborates: I asked Cher what her greatest fear was, and she answered, “Professionally, not being wanted. I’ve gone through that, and it didn’t feel good. Personally, that I won’t live my life as well as I know it could be lived, that I’ll be stupid, and not have guts and integrity. That I’ll make choices that are safe.” I often think of those words because I get afraid sometimes that I will do something because it is safe. *(Chris Chase, in Cosmopolitan)***

**In 1783, George Washington had returned to his beloved Potomac River plantation after the exhausting years of war, looking forward to a tranquil old age in a prosperous, independent nation. Soon, however, he became aware that the Congress established by the Articles of Confederation, adopted in 1781 near war's end, was “little more than the shadow without substance.” Now a rebellion in Massachusetts, led by a former captain in the Revolutionary Army, Daniel Shays, had fully revealed the deplorable weakness of the federal government. Should Washington go to the Constitutional Convention of 1787? As historian Clinton Rossiter pointed out, “The greatest man in America -- and, in the opinion of most Americans, the greatest in the world -- Washington enjoyed a personal prestige in 1787 that has never been matched in all our history.” He was acutely aware that he could risk this prestige in such a venture only once. What if most of the states ignored Congress? What if the delegates who showed up failed to agree? It could make a bad situation worse if people decided not even Washington could rescue the floundering ship of state. Some of his most trusted advisors urged him to stay home. For weeks Washington brooded and pondered. Finally, something deep within him said yes. “To see this country happy is so much the wish of my soul,” he told Henry Knox, “that nothing on this side of Elysium can be placed in competition with it.” On May 9, he began his coach journey to Philadelphia. *(Thomas Fleming, in Reader's Digest)***

**Listen, he was our leader in the Revolution, to which he pledged his life, his fortune, and his honor. Those were not idle pledges. What do you think would have happened to him had he been captured by the British Army? I’ll tell you. He would have been brought to London, tried, found guilty of treason, ordered executed, and then drawn and quartered. Do you know what that means? He would have had one arm tied to one horse, the other arm to another horse, one leg to yet another, and the other leg to a fourth. Then the four horses would have been simultaneously whipped and started off at a gallop, one going north, another south, another east and the fourth to the west. That is what George Washington risked to establish your freedom and mine. *(Stephen E. Ambrose, in Smithsonian magazine)***

**After slumping a bit in September 1941, Ted Williams came to the season's final day, a double-header against Philadelphia. His average was at .39955, which would have rounded out to .400. Manager Joe Cronin gave Williams the option of sitting out both baseball games. Williams declined, and on a cold, awful day, he went 6-for-8 to finish with a historic .406 batting average. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**Chester Carlson worked diligently for years to interest various companies in his invention. Kodak turned it down. Twice the IBM Corporation studied the invention and twice rejected it, once on the advice of the Arthur D. Little Market Analysis Company. The Haloid Corporation, a nearly bankrupt company, finally decided to risk putting money into the invention to see if it could reverse company prospects. It did. Carlson is the inventor of xerography, and the Haloid Corporation is today the Xerox Corporation. IBM, although doing very nicely with computers, has never been able to equal Xerox's dominance of the office copier field. *(M. Hirsh Goldberg, in The Blunder Book, p. 151)***

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