

THE YES EXPERIMENT

Opening yourself up to risks will help you shift from viewing them as something to be avoided to something that's key to creating the life you want. In this Exercise, you'll devise your own version of the experiment Jessica did and commit to one month of saying yes to small risks that help you work toward a better self.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. *Select four hard things to try in the next month.* Pick two hard things that relate to your personal life outside of work and two that relate to your professional life. The things you pick should require minimal preparation and resources, but should feel like a stretch from how you currently behave day-to-day. Keep these risks simple and straightforward.
2. *Schedule them.* Limit yourself to one hard thing per week for the next month. Be wise about timing and as smart as you can be about scheduling hard things for times when your emotional/mental bandwidth is high. Don't force yourself to go to a grueling fitness class after a long, busy day where you have to work late, for example.
3. *Shift into action.* Use the tips from the "Get Unstuck" section of this chapter to work through any fear and resistance that arises in the moment.
4. *Reflect on the process.* After you complete each task, explore:
 - **How did you feel before the experience?** Focus on specific emotions, thoughts, or sensations in your body.
 - **How did you feel during the experience?** Make note of anything that shifted in your physical, mental, or emotional state.
 - **What did you learn as a result of the experience?** Include observations about your decision-making process or information about moments you shined and areas for growth.
 - **How will you carry it forward?** Even if it was difficult, what positive meaning and lessons might you draw from the experience that can influence your professional life for the better, or vice versa?

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Jessica

	WHAT I'M SAYING YES TO . . .	HOW I FELT BEFOREHAND . . .	HOW I FELT DURING . . .	
WEEK 1	<i>Attending the wine and paint night</i>	Petrified! I procrastinated getting in my car and driving there. Then, once I sat down at my easel, I nearly bolted for the door to make an escape.	At first, my mind was swirling with concerns that my friends would laugh at my painting skills. After about fifteen minutes (and a little bit of wine), I became less focused on myself and more focused on chatting with my friends and enjoying a night out.	
WEEK 2	<i>Riding a roller coaster at the theme park</i>	A mix of unsettled and happy. My kids were so excited to go to the park and have me ride with them for once, but it was unsettling to think about being flipped upside down at 60 mph.	It happened so fast that I almost didn't have time to think, which was a good thing. And actually, the experience was exhilarating. Afterwards I felt a bit queasy, but was still glad I did it. Plus, nothing can beat the smile on the kids' faces! We went on another roller coaster later in the day once my stomach settled, and I wasn't nearly as afraid as I was before the first one.	
WEEK 3	<i>Doing a podcast interview about my career</i>	One word: ugh. I don't like talking about myself. I had to get approval from HR, so as I looked over the questions the interviewer sent, I was worried that I wouldn't represent myself or the company well.	I felt like I was bragging when I spoke about what I had accomplished, but after talking about leading the brick-and-mortar expansion, I got a surge of confidence. On the flip side, it's always difficult to talk about mistakes, but telling someone else about them made me realize I had overcome a lot.	
WEEK 4	<i>Trying the Coffee Challenge at the café across the street from the office</i>	When Melody first told me about this, I cringed and had a deep reaction of disgust ("You want me to try <i>what?</i> ").	When I asked the cashier for 10% off my latte, she looked at me sideways and then went to get her manager. I felt my entire body sweat.	

	WHAT I LEARNED . . .	HOW I'LL CARRY THIS FORWARD . . .
	<p>1. I can find enjoyment in an activity even if I'm not the best at it. I typically place a high value on achievement, but the wine and paint night reinforced the value of connection and simply being present with people I care about.</p> <p>2. Everyone is more focused on themselves than they are on me. Being my own worst critic is wasted energy.</p>	<p>1. This has prompted me to think about taking my boundary and values work even deeper by looking for ways I can optimize for presence and connection in my life, especially at home.</p> <p>2. Typically, when I speak at leadership meetings, I am so concerned that the CEO and other execs are analyzing my every word. In reality, they are in their own heads, and there's not as much risk to putting my ideas forth as I may perceive.</p>
	<p>I can face my fears. I walked away with a sense of pride. I also learned that sometimes situations are beyond my control and happen quickly, but I can still handle it and appreciate the ride.</p>	<p>At work right now, there are many situations that are beyond my control, so it's good practice functioning with things happening at light speed around me. It's clear to me now that conquering my fears gets easier with repetition, which is a principle I'll need to call on as I put together the operational plan at work.</p>
	<p>I'm thrilled to be an example to young professionals, and I didn't realize that that mattered to me. Just because I haven't done everything perfectly doesn't mean I'm not a role model.</p>	<p>I've always worked behind the scenes at my company, but maybe I should consider increasing my visibility industry wide. Company executives speak on business podcasts all the time, so next time the opportunity arises I'm going to volunteer.</p>
	<p>The manager said giving discounts was against store policy, but you know what? I didn't care, because I DID IT! And I didn't undermine myself by dismissing my request. I stood strong, smiled, and said, "Thanks, anyway!" That was a huge moment of strength and a demonstration of how far I've come in valuing myself.</p>	<p>Asking for more! Throughout my career, I've simply accepted what's been given to me and asked for <i>just enough</i>. This has shown me that there's no harm in trying because the worst I may hear is <i>no</i>, and I can bounce back.</p>

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WEEK 2				
WEEK 3				
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