

Do It Scared

A practical guide to acting before the fear goes away



There's a lesson I keep coming back to, in my business and outside of it:

You're going to be scared either way. So do it scared.

It sounds simple. But most people treat fear as a stop sign instead of something you just have to move through.

Fear isn't optional, so stop waiting for it to leave

Big goals scare us. Big changes scare us. That part is normal, and I don't think it ever fully goes away.

Here's what took me longer to see: not going after what you want is scary too. Not achieving your potential, not making what you need, not building the thing you actually want, that's its own kind of fear. It's just quieter, and it shows up later.

So the real choice was never fear versus no fear. It's choosing which fear you're willing to live with.

Where this started for me

My dad came to this country on a raft. He was scared, and he did it anyway. It worked out for him.

I think about that story a lot, because it's the clearest example I have of someone doing something enormous while still being afraid. He didn't wait to stop being scared. He just went.

I started my business 12 years ago carrying the same kind of fear, just at a much smaller scale. I did it anyway.

Letting go of fear as a business owner

The first time I really had to practice this in my business was hiring. When I brought on my first employees and started training people, I had to let go of the fear that they'd do a bad job, or make a mistake, or somehow hurt the reputation I'd built.

That fear is reasonable. Handing off work you've always done yourself feels risky. But holding onto it too tightly is its own limit on growth.

The decision I'm sitting with right now

I'm in the middle of a version of this same decision today. I found two great candidates and only have one open role. Based on where my growth trends are heading, I probably wouldn't technically need a second hire for another six to eight months.

But I'm leaning toward bringing both on now instead of waiting for the "safe" moment when the need is undeniable.

"DO IT NOW. DO IT SCARED."

Why comfort can quietly kill growth

When your back is a little against the wall, you show up differently. You focus more. You put in more energy, because something is actually on the line.

When I first started my business, all I had was a runway of cash from leaving my previous job. It had to work, or I had to go get a job. That pressure moved me.

Comfort is the opposite of that pressure. It feels good in the moment, but if you stay in it too long, you stop getting over the next hump of fear. You just stay where you are.

Do the scary things while the risk is still yours to take

There are things I would have done ten years ago that I won't do now that I have kids. I'll never bungee jump or skydive again. The risk doesn't match the reward anymore, because if something happened, my kids wouldn't have a mom.

That's part of why I believe you have to do the things that scare you while you still can. If I'd started my business later in life, I would have had more responsibility and less runway to take the risk. I was young. I didn't have a husband to answer to or kids to support. I could just wing it.

The risk you're able to take changes as your life does. That's not a reason to avoid risk altogether. It's a reason to take the ones available to you now, before the window closes.

Betting on yourself is a good bet

I'll say this as an accountant too: a lot of us are trained to put math on risk, to manage it, to mitigate it. In my experience, that makes accountants less likely to take risks, not more.

But there's a difference between risk in general and betting on yourself specifically. When you're betting on your own effort, your own ability, your own knowledge, that's a pretty good bet, because you control a lot of the outcome.

With the hire I'm weighing right now, I'm not just adding an expense. I'm betting that I can bring in the business to cover it sooner, through marketing, through networking, through asking for the business and coming up with new ideas. That's not the same as gambling on something outside my control.

"SOMETIMES WE TAKE TOO LITTLE RISK PRECISELY WHEN WE'RE THE ONES WE SHOULD BE BETTING ON."

Confidence comes after, not before

"EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE HARD. YOU HAVE TO PICK WHICH HARD YOU'RE OKAY WITH."

We tend to wait until we feel more confident to make a move. The problem is that confidence often doesn't show up on its own. You get it from doing the hard thing and seeing that you can do it. Not the other way around.

I didn't learn "do it scared" from a book or a mentor sitting me down. It came from watching my dad and the courage he showed, and from watching other people who stopped focusing on everything that could go wrong and focused on what could go right instead.

Pitfalls to avoid

Waiting for the fear to pass before you act

It usually doesn't pass. It just gets more familiar the more you move through it.

Treating comfort as safety

Comfort can feel like the responsible choice. Often it's just the path that asks the least of you, and it can quietly stall your growth.

Letting inaction be the default

Not deciding is still a decision. If you don't choose your fear on purpose, you'll end up with whichever one shows up by accident.

Ignoring how much of the outcome you actually control

Not all risk is equal. Betting on your own skill and effort is a different category than betting on circumstances outside your control. Know which one you're actually taking on.

Assuming the window stays open forever

The risks available to you now may not be available later, whether because of responsibilities, timing, or resources. If something matters to you, that's a reason to move, not to wait for a more convenient version of yourself.

How to apply this in the next 7 days

Exercise

- DAY 1** Name one decision you've been putting off because you're waiting to feel more ready.
- DAY 2** Ask what you're risking by not acting, not just what you're risking by acting.
- DAY 3** Look at how much of the outcome is actually in your control. Betting on your own skill and effort is different from betting on someone else.
- DAY 4** Write down two or three times you did something scary in the past and came through it. Keep that list visible.
- DAY 5** Identify where comfort might be holding you in place rather than protecting you.
- DAY 6** Take one concrete step on the decision from Day 1, even a small one.
- DAY 7** Reflect on how it felt to move before the fear was gone. Notice whether any confidence showed up after, not before.

Summary - At a glance

- *You're going to be scared either way. Choose which fear you're willing to live with.*
- *Comfort can quietly kill growth if you stay in it too long.*
- *The risk available to you changes over time. Take it while it's yours to take.*
- *Betting on your own effort and ability is a good bet, because you control a lot of the outcome.*
- *Confidence comes from doing the hard thing, not before it.*
- *Track record is evidence. Use it to talk yourself into the next scary decision.*