

Building the Experimenting Characteristic



This characteristic helps you:

- try new behaviors in unfamiliar situations
- seek out challenges and explore new arenas
- approach the world in an experimenting, exploratory manner
- take action outside of your comfort zone despite the possibility of looking foolish or incurring other costs
- move into action even when things are uncertain

You may want to strengthen this characteristic if you:

- avoid taking risks
- are uncomfortable acting when the possible outcomes are unclear
- stay in undesirable situations because you prefer the comfort of the known to the ambiguity of the unknown
- are unlikely to take on new challenges
- spend energy trying to make familiar solutions fit new conditions



Taking Small Risks

Some people, when faced with the possibility of trying something new, ask “why?” The mantra of the experimenting person is “why not?” The biggest difference between the two is that the first person is focused primarily on the possible *losses* associated with action, while the second person is focused primarily on the possible *gains*.

In seeking to develop this characteristic, your goal should be to move outside your comfort zone a little at a time rather than to take huge leaps into the unknown.

Try It Yourself

1. Think about something you would like to try, either because it sounds like fun or because it could help you achieve a work or personal goal that is important to you. Identify an initial small step you could take. *(For example, if you'd like to run a marathon, try a short run in your neighborhood.)*
2. Make a realistic assessment of the level of risk vs. benefit involved by asking yourself the following questions:
 - What's the best thing that could happen if I do this? *(I might discover that I like it and am good at it!)*
 - What's the worst thing that could happen if I do this? *(I might hurt myself; people might laugh at me.)*
 - How likely is it that the worst-case scenario will happen? *(Possible, but not highly likely.)*
3. Think about what you could do to reduce the likelihood of the worst-case scenario, and/or to prepare yourself to deal with it if it happens. You might also want to discuss your concerns with a friend to put them in perspective. *(I will take it easy to reduce the possibility of injury. If someone laughs at me I will keep in mind that I'm doing something for myself, while they're just sitting there.)*
4. **Prepare:** Set a date to take the step. Mentally rehearse the activity. Relax.
5. **Go:** Take the step. Celebrate! Reflect on your experiment to see if there's something you'd do differently next time.
6. Repeat with a slightly larger step.

Micro-Practice: What can you do “in the moment”?

- ✓ When something new catches your interest, give it a try rather than talking yourself out of it.
- ✓ See if you can transform a feeling of fear into a sense of excitement.
- ✓ Take a very small (even a ridiculously small) step in a new direction.