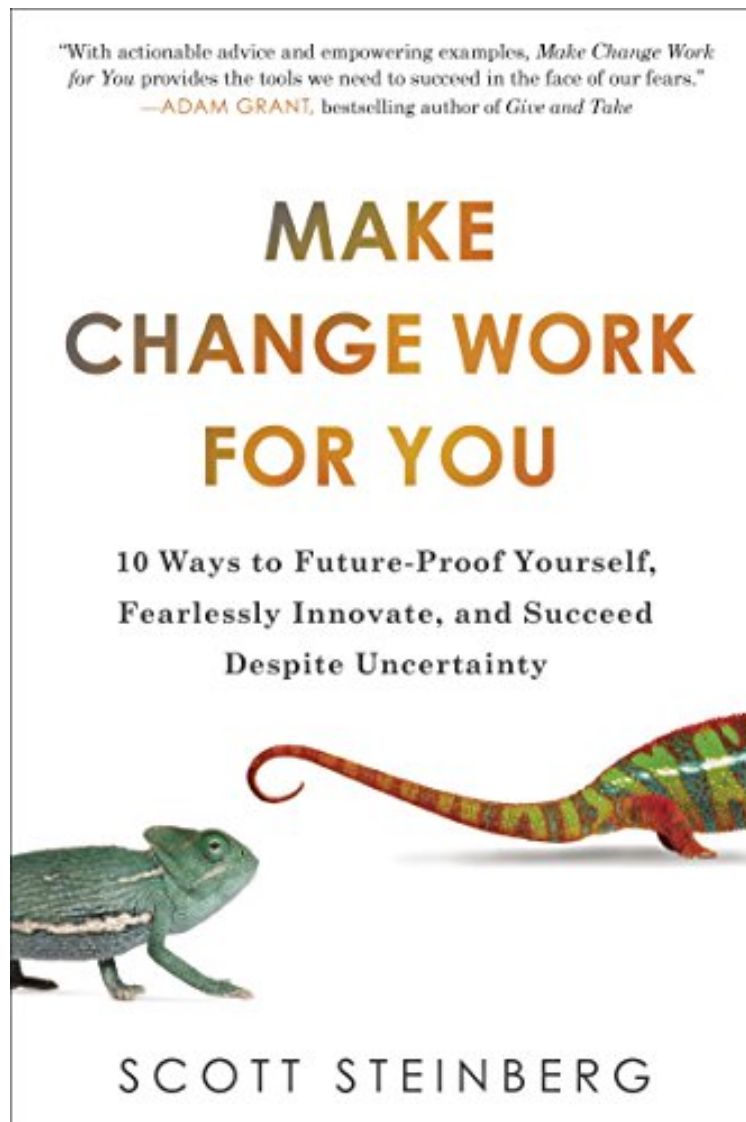


[Download] Make Change Work for You: 10 Ways to Future-Proof Yourself, Fearlessly Innovate, and Succeed Despite Uncertainty

# Make Change Work for You: 10 Ways to Future-Proof Yourself, Fearlessly Innovate, and Succeed Despite Uncertainty

Scott Steinberg

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**Scott Steinberg : Make Change Work for You: 10 Ways to Future-Proof Yourself, Fearlessly Innovate, and Succeed Despite Uncertainty** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Make Change Work for You: 10 Ways to Future-Proof Yourself, Fearlessly Innovate, and Succeed Despite Uncertainty*:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Topgochange my life 0 of 5 people found the following

review helpful. Five StarsBy CHARLES M MBUGUAThe book is in a very good condition.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Too generalized and not sure if the rigor is thereBy SirReadsAlotAlthough the book has some decent stories and examples, it's really too basic and lacks any specific details on change and the change process. It's really a book about overcoming fear, hence the FEAR acronym used throughout the book. Of course, fear is a major part of change, but even so, these are pretty shallow tools that don't truly examine the psychological underpinnings of fear. I hate giving books poor reviews, but this one is really for newbies - even so, stick with *Transitions and Managing Transitions* by William Bridges - there are classics and for a very good reason.

Finding the courage to embrace change and take chances is the only way to succeed. Business, culture, and competitive landscapes have fundamentally changed, but basic principles and best practices for succeeding and future-proofing both yourself and your organization haven't. With a mix of compelling stories, research from the social sciences and psychology, and real-world insights, *Make Change Work for You* shows readers how to reignite their career, rekindle their creativity, and fearlessly innovate their way to success by providing the tools needed to master uncertainty and conquer every challenge they'll face in life or business. *Make Change Work for You* opens with an overview of the most common factors that lead to self-defeating behaviors, including fear of failure, embarrassment, underperformance, rejection, confrontation, isolation, and change itself. Using a simple four-part model, Steinberg guides readers to understand and better respond to the challenges that change can bring: Focus: Define the problem and come to understand it objectively. Engage: Interact with the challenge and try a range of solutions. Assess: Review the response(s) generated by your tactics. React: Adjust your strategy accordingly. And, finally, the book shows readers how to develop the vital personal and professional skills required to triumph in the "new normal" by understanding and engaging in the 10 new habits that highly successful people share: 1. Play the Odds 2. Embrace Tomorrow Today 3. Seek Constant Motion 4. Lead, Don't Follow 5. Never Stop Learning 6. Create Competitive Advantage 7. Connect the Dots 8. Pick Your Battles 9. Set and Align Your Priorities 10. Always Create Value

"One of the greatest barriers to progress is fear—of failure, rejection, embarrassment, uncertainty, and confrontation. With actionable advice and empowering examples, *Make Change Work for You* provides the tools we need to succeed in the face of our fears." —Adam Grant, Wharton professor and bestselling author of *Give and Take*; "Practical, hands-on and powerful, Scott isn't afraid to talk about being afraid and how it keeps us down." —Seth Godin; "This powerful, practical book is loaded with proven strategies to build your self-confidence, become more innovative, and unlock your creativity." —Brian Tracy, bestselling author, *The Power of Self-Confidence*; "A must-read for any working professional - provides the new formula for finding lasting success in your career." —Dan Schawbel, New York Times Bestselling author of *Promote Yourself*; "Provides a more personal and practical formula for innovation that's just the prescription for executives looking to break through to the next level". —Marty Yudkovitz, retired Head of Strategic Innovation, The Walt Disney Company; "Steinberg provides a one of a kind formula for evolution and growth in an age of constant change. His paradoxical findings, from numerous interviews and research: we deal best with change when we use the tools of both change and constancy, changing ourselves, and yet remaining constant in our application of what he calls the F.E.A.R. model—focus, engage, assess, react. It's an eye-opening read." —Richard Bolles, author of *What Color Is Your Parachute*; About the Author Scott Steinberg is among today's leading business strategists and strategic innovation consultants, as seen in 600+ outlets from CNN to Time and The Wall St. Journal. The CEO of management consulting and market research firm TechSavvy Global, he helps clients create value and cultivate competitive advantage on the back of emerging trends. A top-rated keynote speaker, popular author and futurist, he provides presentations and training workshops at events, meetings and conferences. Among today's most-quoted industry experts, as seen by over one billion people worldwide, Scott's 10+ year track record for accurately predicting business and consumer trends has made him a fixture in mainstream media. He has been a featured guest or contributor to programs on ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, ESPN, and MTV, and columnist on change and innovation for Fast Company, Rolling Stone and The Huffington Post. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Introduction Everything Changes Market-leading energy provider Royal Dutch Shell supplies dozens of countries with more than 3 million barrels of oil and 20 million tons of natural gas each year. It isn't the first place you'd expect to find leaders starting a fire—let alone purposefully. But Mandar Apte, head of the company's Empower training program, isn't just tasked with sparking positive change worldwide. He's specifically charged with setting executives' creativity and capacity to innovate ablaze. Empower classes aren't grounded in traditional business processes and procedures, though. Instead, they revolve around a simple principle: To succeed in increasingly unpredictable and uncertain environments, we can't simply remain static. Rather, we must constantly change, adapt, and strive to fan the sparks of innovation. But doing this is much easier said than done. In fact, while preparing hundreds of executives to face tomorrow's challenges, Apte's team has made some surprising discoveries about the common problems modern professionals face. Rather than a lack

of time, money, or manpower, many stem from two unlikely sources, he says. Specifically: a lack of risk tolerance and a resistance to change. Going into Empower training sessions, Apte just assumes everyone is capable of being an innovator. In today's hyperkinetic and hypercompetitive world, he argues, we're all forced to constantly adapt and readapt. So he always begins classes by asking a simple question, "What's keeping you from being more innovative?" Often, he finds, the biggest stumbling block is simply our own sense of perspective. When we reexamine the difficulties that we confront more closely, we often find several obstacles that prevent us from successfully adapting to and overcoming unforeseen hurdles. These barriers to success include fear, anxiety, insecurity, and others' opinions. If you've ever run up against these barriers in your own life and business, you're not alone; we all have at one time or another. We all want to reduce stress, be more productive, and better serve our organizations and customers. But to achieve these goals, we must confront the very same issues that Apte outlines, any one or all of which routinely prevent us from realizing our objectives. Whether we're speaking about individuals or organizations, our perceptions impact our ability to make sound decisions, our willingness to take risks, and ultimately our performance. And all of these factors have a direct effect on our ability to succeed. But as Shell's Empower program teaches, we all hold the keys to effectively adapt with changing times and get ahead more frequently in life and business as well. Change your outlook, and you can change your future. Rather than look outside at shifting times and trends to do so, as we would in traditional problem-solving scenarios, this transformation process starts by taking a deeper look within.

It's no secret that change is all around us, and in business especially it seems that the scope, breadth, and speed of changes taking place today are boundless. This means that throughout your life and organization, the scope, breadth, and speed of changes you should be making to keep up, let alone get ahead, should be equally limitless. Change in business can take the form of: Unstable economic conditions, Unpredictable operating environments, Shifting competitive landscapes, Changing customer needs and expectations, New tools, trends, and techniques, Emerging technologies (especially information technologies), New communications systems, Evolving best practices, Unexpected opportunities and challenges. And that's just to name a few common varieties. In effect, this rapidly accelerating rate of change (driven by continued advances in IT and personal communications) has greatly compounded the challenges we face. We now cross paths with a rapidly ballooning number of individuals and engage in numerous interactions and cross-reactions as a result of every action we take. The result is an unprecedented and truly radical degree of uncertainty in professional environments. We're quickly discovering that the present is growing more unstable and the future is increasingly difficult to predict. In short, the world of business is a risky place to be, and looking these risks squarely in the eye and then pushing them out of the way can seem intimidating. But that's exactly what we must do, even if it means routinely stepping outside the comfort zones we operate in. It's the only way to continually thrive on both an individual and an organizational level. Hesitate to change or take smart risks, and no matter how pragmatic we believe ourselves to be, we're often unwittingly working at cross purposes. When we allow fears and anxieties to color our decisions and doubts to govern our actions, we often tie our own hands and directly inhibit our ability to grow and innovate. Happily, because all of these shackles are self-imposed, we all have the power to unlock them the moment we elect to do so. Choose to remove emotion from the equation and put fear in the backseat, and you'll take the first, most powerful step toward future-proofing yourself or your enterprise and begin to tear down the stumbling blocks that stand between you and your ultimate success. Embrace change by taking calculated risks and meaningful action, and you'll put yourself on the path to regular reinvention—the essence of remaining relevant—and create positive, lasting effects on every level. Nonetheless, many enterprises and professionals still struggle to cope with change, even as others seem to thrive in turbulent markets. As you'll soon discover, the secret to leaders' ongoing success has little to do with individual ability or business environments. Rather, the source of their continued achievements frequently lies in their own willingness to change, grow, and embrace fresh perspectives. Are you looking to dive headfirst into tomorrow, spark lasting change, and set yourself on the fast-track to becoming future-proof? Step back and calmly study the challenges before you, then take smart action. When you remove worry and doubt from the decision-making process, you may be surprised just how easy it is to sidestep the obstacles. This book provides a new approach for making things work—in your personal life, your career, and your business. Apply its principles, and you can consistently find success with just a few simple shifts in thinking, even in the most fast-changing and unpredictable environments. As will become evident throughout this book: Everyone is an innovator. Change is your secret weapon. Disruption drives learning, growth, and success. Relevancy is reinvention. Flexibility makes you future-proof. Put simply, innovation isn't hard. In fact, small changes (evolutions) can be every bit as powerful as huge breakthroughs (revolutions). Moreover, the same strategic principles that today's most-acclaimed strategic innovators use to produce game-changing advancements can be leveraged to help you positively transform your life, business, and career on every level. When the average working professionals you'll meet in this book found their careers stalling out or were struggling to make ends meet, they took simple, practical steps that drove them closer to achieving their goals—then repeated them time and again. And when the many businesses of all sizes profiled in the following pages found that their industry had become more challenging or that competitors were nipping at their heels, they asserted their leadership

position by doing the same as well. Case in point: When Target wanted to boost its profits, it didn't build more big-box retail outlets. It launched half-size stores in fast-growing urban markets selling half-size packs of paper towels and locally branded merchandise. When the Danish supermarket SuperBrugsen wanted to differentiate itself and stay competitive in increasingly demanding markets, it simply asked customers what locally branded food products they wanted it to stock. When medical device manufacturer Medtronic wanted to create growth opportunities, it didn't double down on more cutting-edge defibrillators. Instead, it partnered with hospitals to open on-site laboratories, then—building on the trust it had gained—grew its new business lines even further by providing these partners with IT, support, and management services. None of these innovations is outside your reach. None of these companies reinvented the wheel either: As we periodically do with our cars' tires to achieve better performance, they simply gave themselves a purposeful realignment. Slight changes in strategy or perspective can often make a big difference. Throughout this book, you'll learn why courageously embracing change and adapting to shifting environments isn't just crucial but the only proven recipe for lasting success for individuals (whether your career is skyrocketing or stalling) and businesses (whether your market is booming or becoming increasingly risky) alike. All of us possess the capacity to change, grow, and exert more positive control over our future and do so by practicing small acts of bravery. It all starts with greater awareness, greater flexibility, and greater ability to take action in the face of doubt or indecision. In later chapters, you'll learn several of life's little secrets: Change isn't as difficult as it seems. The status quo is no longer a safe bet. Cleverness creates competitive advantage. Different isn't just good—it's essential. But most important, you'll discover that courage is a characteristic that we can actively cultivate in ourselves, nurture through repeated application, and consistently put to work to help us more frequently and successfully change and innovate. Take it from master magician Harry Houdini, who, decades ago, mastered the art of bravery by making dozens of daring escapes from sealed tanks of water or submerged coffins. "My chief task has been to conquer fear," the illusionist once explained. "The public sees only the thrill of the accomplished trick. They have no conception of the tortuous preliminary self-training that was necessary to conquer fear . . . no one except myself can appreciate how I have to work at this job every single day, never letting up for a moment. I always have on my mind the thought that next year I must do something greater, something more wonderful." The abilities and opportunities you'll unlock when you find the courage to innovate and make positive changes will appear nothing short of magical as well. Over the course of this book, you'll discover just how easy it is to tap into these abilities, and that so-called daredevils and mavericks are secretly neither, being far more risk averse than they are risk-takers. Troubled by growing uncertainty? Dubious about the future? Deeply concerned with rising levels of competition? Prepare to put these problems behind you. In the pages that follow, you'll show you how to rethink risk, reconsider change, and redefine what it means to be fearless . . . and how to future-proof yourself and your enterprise in the process.

### Chapter One: What's Your Holding You Back?

Twenty-six-year-old Vermonter Melissa Kirmayer Eamer was sick of serving customers clam chowder. After spending five years slinging chow in the restaurant she co-owned with her former husband, she wanted a bigger bite out of life. Every day, Eamer longed for something better. Every day, she felt more stuck. "I really hit a point where the restaurant business was challenging, but not intellectually challenging," she says. "It was exhausting, but I felt like I was missing something." In retrospect, she discovered that the absent pieces were simply courage and self-confidence. She was afraid of change. What if she ruined her life? Her career? Her finances? Eamer felt trapped. She convinced herself that there were too many challenges and the stakes were too high in charting a new professional course. Without relevant contacts and work experience, how could she ever make the shift to a new career? But one day, fed up, she told herself it was now or never: Something had to give. She took a long, hard look in the mirror and asked herself, "What's the worst that can happen?" and "What step can I take today to get me started on my path?" Then she took that step. Eamer had long been interested in the publishing business. So she sent her resume to several local firms. None responded. Undeterred by this silence, she changed course, offering to work free for six months. This time, two companies agreed. She picked her favorite and signed up. Working at the restaurant by day and the publishing company by night, she tried not to think too far ahead. "I might have been overwhelmed by the challenges if I let myself think about it too much," she explains. "Instead, I took this incremental step." By the end of the internship, she was hired to a paying position working directly with the CEO, an MBA with impressive business acumen. Inspired, she began studying for the GMAT on top of her two jobs and successfully applied to the University of Michigan's MBA program. Just one catch: Taking the opportunity meant having to leave the restaurant, the publishing company, the husband, and everything she knew behind. Faced with a host of common fears—change, insecurity, rejection, and so on—she was understandably troubled. ("It was scary. When my sisters showed up to pack the U-Haul to move . . . I said, 'Holy crap, what have I done?'" But that didn't stop her from moving forward. As Eamer explained, she found calm by focusing on the potential opportunity at hand—what lay ahead, not behind her. "I set up all these little tests," says Eamer. "If I passed these hurdles, I'd go on to the next. That reinforced my confidence to see if I could take on bigger challenges." Up through graduation, and several times since, Eamer has faced challenges that demanded great change and risk. Each time, she had to

conquer her fears, expand her comfort zone, and jump with both feet into each challenge. Today, she's a technical adviser to consumer business at a large online retailer and has headed up some of its most wildly successful programs; she is also being groomed for senior management. Describing the great leaps of faith she took, Eamer says, "They have made all the difference." If you want to make a similar difference in your life and business, you too will have to confront common sources of fear, transform uncertainty into opportunity, and take control of your future. And if you happen to lead a team or organization, to consistently effect positive change, you'll also need to find ways to help others break down the barriers that inhibit their success as well. As you'll soon see, getting ahead isn't about being risk free. Instead, it's about being risk averse. The dirty secret that many successful organizations and individuals don't share is that relevance is found in ongoing reinvention: To win, you can't avoid but rather must make constant gambles. But as with any successful gambling strategy, winning isn't simply a function of playing the game, given the odds we often face. Instead, you've got to be careful and methodical about where you place your bets. The more open you are to change, the more informed you are about challenges faced, and the more relentlessly practical you are about facing them, the closer you'll steadily come to success. Push yourself to change, innovate, and disrupt yourself more often, and respond intelligently and consistently to the results your actions produce, and you'll win far more frequently, with more pronounced impact. It's a principle that working professionals or businesses of any size can put to work to create positive change on every level. Just ask Starbucks. The world's largest chain of coffeehouses, famously "in the people business serving coffee, not the coffee business serving people;" Customer service comes first. But the company's consistently willing to put its Arabica beans on the line by routinely rolling out new products and strategies to the public, even before they're error-free or finished. Why? Because it would rather be first than flawless, make mistakes than miss opportunities, and fall flat than fail to establish market beachheads before its rivals. The company constantly finds new ways to succeed, from successful new store concepts and products to mobile payment solutions and online apps. And via online platforms such as MyStarbucksIdea.com, where shoppers can suggest new innovations, it's also consistently finding ways to slash costs, remove risks, and get customers involved in reinventing the brand. Whether you're an individual or organization, the lesson Starbucks teaches us is simple. No matter how successful you are, you still face two key choices every day in rapidly evolving business environments: You can look to the future, plan ahead, and prepare yourself to surf the waves of change, or you can pretend they aren't coming and idly float along with the current, treading water until they crash over you. As you'll soon see, the best way to succeed and keep succeeding over a long-term horizon is to learn to start hanging ten. Look around you. Change is everywhere. Uncertainty is growing. Risk is rampant. If you want to get ahead, like Eamer and Starbucks, you too must find the courage to keep pushing forward and evolving. But you can't just change once: To successfully adapt to a changing world on a regular basis, you must continue taking positive action and making consistent changes until the rhythm of change becomes as familiar and comforting as your morning jog. Change isn't a problem. It's an opportunity and a blessing. With changing environments and expectations come new opportunities. Every time we change, we learn. And every time we learn, we grow, discovering new, more effective ways to get ahead and succeed. Innovation ranks among the most-quoted business buzzwords today. But you may be surprised by its definition, which is far less well known: "The introduction of something new." Fundamentally, innovation is change, and change is innovation. Master one and you've mastered the other. And if you haven't taken a hard look at either your schedule or your priorities lately, pause and do so now. Chances are, you're successfully changing and innovating every day already. So if we're all fundamentally innovators at heart and capable of achieving success by making small, simple, everyday changes, what's holding us back? The answer: our own fears and misconceptions. But just because these challenges are easily spotted doesn't mean that finding the courage we need to address them is easy; for individuals and organizations alike, the truth is often quite the opposite. Before we outline key strategies for breaking down the barriers that stand between us and success, let's explore fear and anxiety in greater detail. And how by courageously and constantly confronting them we can successfully change, adapt, and future-proof both ourselves and our enterprises in the process.

### What Is Fear?

Technically, fear is a negative emotional state—one characterized by a heightened sense of agitation, tension, and alarm—that many animals (including those animals called humans) feel in the presence of danger. This danger doesn't necessarily have to be the fear of physical harm. For example, it can be the fear of making a mistake and losing your job. Alternately, it can be the fear of being embarrassed when asking an executive a "stupid" question or fear that a new product will not connect with customers. However you define it, this emotion can cause you to avoid taking certain actions that have the potential to benefit you or your company. But as you'll see in the next section, finding the courage to overcome fear can help you overcome the roadblocks that keep your business or career prospects from soaring.

### How Fear Affects Us in the Workplace

In a professional context, most jobs don't expose people to imminent or immediate physical danger. But this doesn't mean that the majority of organizations and working professionals don't experience fear; in fact, most feel it all too keenly. Moreover, there's another brand of fear commonly felt and experienced in the workplace as well: anxiety. Anxiety is a negative emotional state

in which the threat is not physically present but instead is anticipated or expected.<sup>2</sup> It's an equally frightening reaction, only to an unreal or imagined danger. Professionals may feel either source of alarm in several common workplace scenarios. Just a few examples: Being assigned unfamiliar or challenging tasks Assuming new roles or responsibilities Pitching prospective clients Speaking in front of large groups Confronting supervisors, customers, or colleagues Organizations may experience similar levels of discomfort, especially when facing changing markets, expectations, and competitive environments. This fear can be particularly acute in the wake of shifting trends and innovations. Sample scenarios that may produce corporate anxiety include the following: Pursuing new areas or avenues of business Facing powerful or emerging rivals Addressing changing trends and markets Watching sales or market share decline Undergoing intense media or public scrutiny Unfortunately, the fear and anxiety that we experience in the workplace can produce long-lasting, negative consequences. At their basest level, fear and anxiety can be direct causes of workplace-related stress and discomfort. Each can stymie strategic thinking, hinder our ability to communicate, and decrease overall performance. At their peak, they dangerously impair our judgment, inhibit growth, and stunt development. They may even cause us to overlook or become indifferent to potential opportunities for advancement. When we let fear and anxiety dominate us, we are negatively affected in a variety of ways: We avoid difficult or uncomfortable situations. But if we can never confront and overcome these challenges, we can never move past them. We refuse to change as the world changes all around us. But if we don't greet change forewarned and forearmed, we're often caught flat-footed. We inhibit learning and growth. But each is crucial to evolution and advancement. We fall back on familiar choices and patterns. But in a changing world, what worked today won't always work tomorrow. We react instinctively, not out of consideration. But analyzing challenges and acting objectively as we address them is the surest way to solve problems. We try to change the world instead of changing ourselves. But our own actions, not those of others, are the only ones we can control. We fixate on the past. But the present and future are all we can change or affect. Fear is a tangible and persistent threat. But why does it remain so? Fear Comes in Seven Flavors Fear is an extremely complex emotion. This should come as no surprise because humans, like organizations, are extremely complex entities. But one thing that's especially interesting about fear in the workplace is that it often comes in several shades. Despite appearing to be a single feeling on the surface, workplace-related fears often combine multiple sources of emotional turmoil into a more potent cocktail of confidence-sapping sensations. For example, a professional preparing to present a paper at an industry conference may be anxious that he will fail at the task, misspeak, and become flustered. These potential stumbles could lead to loss of control and embarrassment, followed by rejection or isolation by the assembled crowd—just some of many underlying sources of his initial worries. Through research and scores of interviews with leading experts, I uncovered seven sources of fear that frequently mix, match, and combine to create powerful inhibitors to success in the workplace. Let's consider each one in detail.

1. Fear of failure. The possibility of being unable to successfully achieve a goal or complete a task set by yourself or others. Cameras start to flash as the limo door opens and a tall, dapper young man confidently steps out and strides toward his workplace. Smiling at bystanders and nodding to colleagues, we hear a somber voice intone: "I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six times, I've been trusted to take the winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed." Just seconds into the Nike commercial, basketball legend Michael Jordan has summarized a crucial life lesson: "There's no such thing as failure, only the price of an education. Making mistakes is among the most important ways that we learn. If you're not succeeding at present, you're probably not failing enough. And yet, making mistakes is the single most common workplace fear today. What could be worse than to fail in a high-pressure business environment? Doubly so knowing that one false step could send us into freefall and potentially drag our careers, accomplishments, and good reputations down with us? So, instead of stretching and taking risks in your career or learning, growing, and expanding your capabilities and horizons, you (or your organization) don't fully apply yourself. Fear of failure keeps you from taking risks, so you withdraw and play it safe. This is not how people get ahead in organizations and this is not how organizations develop a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Worse, fear often tricks us into thinking we're playing it smart by sitting still, even as the world changes around us—the greatest risk of all. With so many complex decisions being made faster and amid growing uncertainty, understand that mistakes are unavoidable. Failure is a routine cost of doing business. In fact, embracing it is the single most commonly recommended piece of professional advice given by dozens of leading authorities I interviewed. As you'll see in later chapters, successful individuals and organizations don't get ahead in life and business by avoiding failure. Instead, they make a point to fail fast, often, and strategically.
2. Fear of embarrassment. The shame and self-consciousness felt when one feels humiliated, unable to live up to expectations, or socially conform. For mattress industry executive Mark Quinn, newly hired vice president of marketing for Leggett Platt's \$1.7 billion residential home furnishing business, the visit to Furniture Today's Bedding Conference was shaping up well. Beaming with pride, he basked in the triumphant atmosphere of the company's cocktail party. At the red carpet gala, Leggett Platt (LP) had just unveiled the first episode of The Virgin Mattress, Quinn's edgy new online video series, to rave reviews. The clips, which follow fictional couples' efforts to replace mattresses shared by ex-relationships—painted as soiled and

creepymdash;werenrsquo;t just designed to convince shoppers to replace old mattresses more frequently. For LP, a 130-year-old manufacturer of bed frames, cushions, and coils, the campaign was also an ambitious attempt to reinvent the companyrsquo;s buttoned-down image. Backed by extensive advertising and social media promotions, the series was well received by bedding industry insiders; LP even expected it to go viral. Enthused, Quinn emailed the first episode to the companyrsquo;s 19,000 employees, encouraging all to share the video. It made a splash, but not in the way he intended. Still at the Bedding Conference, Quinnrsquo;s phone began to ring off the hook: Colleagues were morally offended by its risqueacute; overtones. Back home in Carthage, Missouri, coworkers were storming around and phoning the CEO, calling for his head. But it wasnrsquo;t his marketing instincts that were wrong, Quinn thought, or his belief that LP needed to radically redefine its image. It was his lack of familiarity with the firmrsquo;s more conservative corporate culture. So when confronted by the executive team, instead of kowtowing, Quinn stood up for his convictions. With his head on the chopping block, he stood up, stuck his neck out again, and dared colleagues to let the ax fall. Rather than beg his bosses not to can him, Quinn accepted responsibility for the scandal, demanded a second chance, and actually sweet-talked them into giving him another \$100,000. Then he spent the funds remaking The Virgin Mattress series and hiring improvisational comedy troupe the Second City for an equally audacious but less racy skit creating a fake rap video promoting LPrsquo;s new ldquo;hybridrdquo; (part memory foam, part coil) mattresses. Not only did this latter campaign help drive category sales growth by 35 percent, it introduced the term hybrid into industry vernacular. To those who have felt like Quinnmdash;disheartened, alone, even trappedmdash;donrsquo;t be afraid to stick to your guns, he says. Fear of embarrassment and lack of self-confidence can prevent us from making crucial decisions or taking necessary risks. Rather than back down, speak up. Instead of doubting, trust yourself. And when others donrsquo;t believe or care, make them. LP couldrsquo;ve played it safe, and couldrsquo;ve wound up becoming another faceless and ailing manufacturer. Quinn couldrsquo;ve accepted humiliation, backed down, and let his work become another footnote in a long line of troubled marketing efforts. Instead, both learned from mistakes and bounced back smarter and sharper. At the time of this writing, years later, both LPrsquo;s business and Quinnrsquo;s career within it are still going strong.<sup>3</sup>

**3. Fear of losing control.** Believing that situations and events have spiraled beyond our ability to command or adapt to them. This is itmdash;the moment is finally here. Staring at the splashy lookbooks shersquo;d painstakingly assembled, Kyle Smitley couldnrsquo;t manage to bite back an infectious grin. After a year of sleepless nights scrimping to build a business while attending law school by day, the bubbly twenty-three-year-old was finally ready to explode into the world of high fashion. Lovingly preparing the mailers, addressed to more than 500 clothing boutiques nationwide, she couldnrsquo;t wait to introduce the world to Barley Birch, her organic kids clothing brand. ldquo;Customers will be knocking down our door,rdquo; she thought. ldquo;Success, here we come.rdquo;<sup>4</sup> But despite her best efforts, buyers responded with deafening silence. When a few days passed without calls or emails, Smitley began to worry. When a month had gone by, and shersquo;d received just two orders, she started to sweatmdash;her best-laid plans were spinning out of control, and she wasnrsquo;t sure what to do about it. Disappointed, broke, and facing increasing stress from juggling a double life as a student and small-business owner, she made the only sane choice she felt she had left. Sitting in class, ignoring her professors, she sent hundreds of emails to parenting bloggers and online journalists, offering free samples. Within six months, buoyed by a tidal wave of positive press, hundreds of stores around the country were calling, begging to stock Barley Birch products. Whatsquo;s more, celebrities from Warren Buffett to Sheryl Crow and Jessica Alba were lining up to show their support. All it took was a simple change in strategy and shift in perspective to help steer Smitleyrsquo;s business away from the brink of disaster and back toward successmdash;choices that were well within her ability to execute. Have you ever felt as if your workday was spinning out of control, and there was nothing you could do to put it back on track? Maybe a vendor calls to inform you that the chemical your factory needs to produce your bestselling product is out of stock and wonrsquo;t be available again for two more weeks, necessitating an emergency scramble by your purchasing department to scare up a new supplier. Or perhaps your boss tells you on Friday to dump that presentation yoursquo;ve been working on all week and get an entirely different one ready to present to the board on Monday. Or yoursquo;re on a business trip 3,000 miles away from home to cement a crucial sales agreement when your spouse calls to tell you that your son was involved in a car accident and you need to get to the hospital immediately. In all cases, the fear of losing control over ensuing events can exert a palpable and highly discomfiting influence on us. We all lose control of our work, our careers, and our lives from time to time, and experiencing the fear of doing so can prove highly unsettling, threatening to trip us up or even paralyze us as we go. Instead of acting, we react. Rather than taking calculated action, we freeze up and sit still. As a result, we often play it safe and avoid situations that could potentially spin out of control. But when we stop reacting on an instinctual level and start doing so more practically and resourcefully, we benefit. While we canrsquo;t always control events entirely, we can still help steer them toward more productive outcomes. As we know, surprises are common in life and business, and disaster can frequently strike, often due to reasons that are not under your direct influence or control. When they do, the experience can prove highly unsettling; itrsquo;s hard to captain any ship when a storm of uncertainty is raging. And if you canrsquo;t turn that ship around quickly, self-confidence and self-awareness can shrink rapidly. Anyone whorsquo;s ever sailed through this kind of tempest is bound to remember itmdash;and the very thought of

experiencing one again can become a powerful barrier that impacts your day-to-day productivity and performance. To be more productive, we can't ignore these facts: You can't control everything, and there will be days when chaos reigns and there's nothing you can do to stop it. But we can always do something to manage it. When those days occur, you need to step back, take a deep breath, and focus your efforts on the things that you can control. By taking decisive action, and making more measured responses, you can slowly but surely help steer your ship back on course.

4. Fear of rejection. When you, your company, or the products or services you represent are refused, turned away, or avoided by others. At the age of eighteen, I wanted nothing more than to work in the videogame industry. Unfortunately, that's not what the videogame industry wanted. I called hundreds of publishers, from large corporations to garage shops, happily offering to test their software for free. Of the handful that responded over the years, only three opportunities materialized, and only one is even vaguely memorable. (Infogrames's *Alone in the Dark 3*—naturally, the worst game in the series.) But it was enough to keep me going. Fast-forward to 1998: I was desperately seeking a summer internship and called several businesses. I asked for no salary, just a chance to prove myself. Alas, being an East Coaster was a great disadvantage in a field dominated by California companies. With local teens falling over themselves to do the deed for \$5 an hour, it wasn't even worth these organizations' time to import a willingly abused understudy. As luck would have it, though, the industry tradeshow Electronic Entertainment Expo (known as E3) was happening in my town that summer. Visiting it, I discovered, nestled deep in the lowest levels of the smallest convention hall, a little French maker of computer games named Microïm, whose software my grade-school buddies used to download illegally. Minutes into the random encounter, I had my first internship—and a free three-month stay at their headquarters outside Paris, France. The third week on the job, I'd become the company's head of international public relations. And by the time I returned to school that fall, I was the vice president of product acquisitions, having brought the company three top-rated products from a then-unknown developer (Monolith Productions), later sold to Warner Bros. for millions.

Lesson learned: In business, no never means no, only "no for now." You're selling yourself short if you're willing to take either no or dead silence for an answer. When a supervisor declines our request for a promotion, we naturally question our abilities. When customers don't buy our products, we suddenly find ourselves reconsidering their value. But the reasons behind any given rejection may be due to completely unrelated factors (the organization's budget can't support higher salaries) or even external circumstances (no one can find our kick-ass app in a sea of look-alikes). Rather than let rejection undermine your confidence, remember: The simple truth is that you're going to hear no far more often in life than you're going to hear yes. So you (1) might as well get used to it and (2) understand that the more no responses you get, the closer you are statistically to getting to yes.

5. Fear of confrontation. Experiencing a negative event or having a hostile personal or professional interaction with others. In many ways, business is all about confrontation. You may be confronting a colleague, a boss, a competitor, a tired company process, or an outdated way of doing business. But the fear of confrontation can be debilitating, and it can throttle new ideas and innovation. It takes courage to confront others, but it is essential for any organization to move forward and progress.

Case in point: As kids' favorite pasta sauce, Unilever's popular Ragu brand enjoyed a special place in children's hearts. But when sales began to stall and rival Prego started outperforming it in taste tests, one ad agency exec had to screw up his courage and tell the firm it needed to cook up a newer, more appealing marketing strategy fast. Gerry Graf's idea for putting spice back into the sauce's secret recipe was certainly unique: to rebrand childhood as a heart-wrenching, not heart-warming, experience and cast Ragu as kids' must-have comfort food of choice. But his plan for executing it was equally unlikely: Produce a series of TV commercials featuring tots happily chowing down on the sauce after watching household pets die or accidentally walking in on their parents having sex. Graf argued with Unilever execs, who were reticent to potentially offend viewers, to follow through. He insisted putting the brand on the line with parents, among today's most demanding audiences, over naysayers' objections. And ultimately, he put both his and his firm's reputation at risk to push through an unproven campaign whose results few could hope to predict. Amazingly, Unilever was eventually won over. It signed off on making eight TV commercials, backed them with a massive social media push, and aired high-profile spots during the Olympics. This campaign, titled *The Long Day of Childhood*, went on to win awards, and thirty minutes after debuting, it had actually become one of Twitter's trending topics, alongside the Olympics and a Mars landing by NASA. As Graf's experiences illustrate, another common obstacle in the workplace is the fear of confrontation. This is the unsettling emotion that you feel when you know that you must overcome resistance or deal with others who are unhappy with you, your work, or a decision you've made. It is also the source of the anxiety you feel when you know you're going up against an intimidating competitor. At the very least, a fear of work-related confrontations may cause us to not fight for our beliefs, give in too easily, or be anxious about facing situations and individuals by which we are intimidated. At its worst, the fear of confrontation can cause us to freeze up, try to avoid the confronter, or (at the other end of the spectrum) lash out irrationally. None of these choices promotes the advancement of our views, positive decision making, or good outcomes in the workplace. If you want to overcome obstacles, you have to confront them. Instead of avoiding confrontation, shying away from resistance, or striking out thoughtlessly, a smarter strategy is to step back,

take a deep breath, and impartially consider how to best address the problem. If you're staring down a ticking time bomb, defuse the damn thing or be prepared for the blast.<sup>6</sup> Fear of isolation. The feeling of being alone or left to operate on your own without others' support. As director of innovation for the \$42.7 billion high-speed courier service FedEx, which single-handedly invented its industry and employs more than 330,000 people worldwide, Michelle Proctor is tasked with challenging the status quo. Her team's mandate is to discover and exploit game-changing opportunities. The question she finds herself asking every day: "How do you get people to take a risk, let alone a really big risk, and think about our business in different ways?" "I don't want to say corporations can get comfortable or complacent," she says. "But even in a culture of innovators and entrepreneurship . . . sometimes you need a shock to the system to really make you think differently about how you're approaching things." Her biggest challenge as a leader is to get others to speak up and take action without fear of reproach or reprisal. The solution: Create a safe environment in which employees could feel comfortable failing and feel empowered to speak up, take chances, and pursue original ideas. "If you're doing your job every day and doing it well, sometimes it may be uncomfortable for you to take that risk and do something differently, because we're all creatures of habit," Proctor explains. "Showing the organization that it has a team that's dedicated to taking risks, that doing so will be rewarded, and that there is a payoff for taking these risks is important. We're not just looking for quality improvements. We want to hear all [employees'] crazy ideas no matter how crazy they sound, including ways that we can continue to delight our customers and deliver on our brand promise." Instead of cordoning off innovative individuals or consigning them to toil in solitude, she and her forty-strong team work to unite them. Similarly, they work to swell their ranks by transforming everyday employees into bold, forward-thinking visionaries. Why? As she and her colleagues discovered, the sixth source of fear is isolation, or how you feel when you are afraid that you will be ignored and shunned by your peers as a result of choices, appearances, and actions or inaction. When organizations and teams are functioning properly and support is provided to all professionals involved, we all act more courageously and effectively. Why? Because we know that others are ready to provide assistance when needed or help prop us up when we fall. When support is withdrawn or withdrawal appears imminent, however, the fear of isolation can cause us to act more timidly, less decisively, and less productively. As a result, our willingness to take chances, take action, and ultimately be accountable for our choices plummets. Luckily, many modern employers are coming to prize diversity, originality, and self-direction and embrace those individuals who might have at one time been merely tolerated, or shunned. Conquer the fear of isolation and challenge yourself to think differently, like FedEx and its employees, and you can turn yourself and your organization into powerhouses of creativity, innovation, and success too.<sup>7</sup> Fear of change and uncertainty. The process of acting or reacting differently—and the discomfort that accompanies these shifts or surrounding risks and uncertainties. For employees of Seattle-based video game maker Valve, every day is, almost literally, an adventure. Imagine, as a new hire, showing up to work with no clue what you'll be working on, with whom, or even how to go about getting started. Now picture discovering that you have no manager to report to, no team you're expected to join, and no immediate goals. If you've read the sci-fi classic *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, you may recall the phrase "Don't panic." Valve's staff receives much the same advice, only in the form of an employee handbook stamped "A fearless adventure in knowing what to do when no one's telling you what to do." It describes how not to freak out—and with good reason. The company has no corporate hierarchy: Its organizational chart is a flat line. At Valve, there are no managers, no formal job titles, and no officially assigned tasks. Anyone can start and ship projects. Teams are formed by simply wheeling desks alongside one another. And workers report to only one boss: the customer. At Valve, 100 percent of employees' time is autonomously controlled, and no one has ever been fired for making mistakes. The result should be total chaos. Instead, the company continues to produce hit after hit, including the bestselling software franchises *Half-Life*, *Counter-Strike*, and *Portal*. A staggering 65 million enthusiasts swear by its Steam online storefront, the gaming industry's answer to iTunes. Though Valve may be an extreme example, it illustrates a simple point. Most of us prefer our lives to be calmer and more predictable. But we all have the ability to change more frequently and successfully when we embrace constant reinvention. Change itself often isn't the challenge we face. Rather, it's the uncertainty that comes along with it. Just when you think you've got everything figured out—bam! Everything's changed, and you or your organization has to figure it out all over again. While change can be an uncomfortable thing to experience, especially on a prolonged basis, it also has a flipside, one rife with opportunity. Not every unknown is bad. As change occurs, opportunities are also forming, including those that are ripe for the taking. As competitive landscapes and customer expectations change, new needs and gaps emerge in the marketplace, both of which you can readily fill.