

# The Power of “What If?”

Building growth out of risk



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The other night, I was on the phone with a friend, and she, point blank, asked me a very personal question about a choice I had made in my life recently. She asked me, “Why did I do it?” I had to take a second and think about what I would say as a response because the topic was sensitive, and the person I was talking to was a well-known author on the subject we were talking about, so I was already a bit nervous that I might look silly if I said the wrong thing. I decided to dig deep, be honest, and give my reaction to it to God. What I came up with was not only the truth, but it applied to many of my life choices. The response was, “What if?”

I’ve been called many things to categorize who I am, both personally and professionally. Words like “serial entrepreneur, solopreneur, fractional, creative, gypsy, over-ambitious, quitter, and someone who is seriously proficient in having acute ADHD. But behind these character descriptions is a wealth of wisdom comprised of lessons learned, heartache, victories, good and poor decisions, and most importantly, passion.

Almost every important decision I’ve made has come from a place of “What if?”. My first Ironman, photoshoot, patent, company, long-term commitment, and many other impactful choices have all stemmed from the fascination of wondering if I was capable of doing whatever it was I had believed could be. “What if” turned into so many ideas, paths, and adventures for me that it took recent reflection to realize it’s a pattern I employ naturally. Out of the victories, failures, and lessons learned, I have zero regrets.

*There are never any guarantees in life, and certainly less when your actions stem from a place of “What if?” But growth is never built on a platform of success; it’s built on failure. And the best resource for failure almost always begins with “What if?”. The victories we get when our curious minds pump out ideas, which then turn into bigger plans, are filled with rich*

*experience and an amount of growth incomparable to being a follower instead of an originator.*

To address the downside to this habit, my “What if?” life has also been the root cause of substantial heartache. When you become dependent on this way of thinking, letting go of something because you wonder, “What if things were different?”, can be detrimental to everything you know. But there’s still growth in this, too. So, while it might seem like an idea turned into an abject failure from all angles, it can empower you to be a different person on the other side.

My “What if?” moments have led me to so many successes in life, and I don’t see a need to change the process. I’ve filed several patents and have created companies I’m proud of, including the one I have now. Based on the risks I chose to take, I’ve been able to help so many people, and that in and of itself is a huge win. My marketing agency was built on “What if?” but is also a collection of my own career history in the field that spans over 30 years of experience. It also has rooted elements of the last two companies I’ve had. To make sense of it, all of the moments that stemmed from my semi-uncalculated risks needed to come together for me and have a purpose, which I think does. However, I recognize that my belief in taking risks based on wild ideas is the catalyst.

Almost 30 years ago, a close friend once told me, “Without great risk, you can never have great reward.” This one proverb has been my energy for so long that I don’t know how to conform to much else. And that’s okay because we’re all motivated by different emotions and goals. Living a life built on “what if” decisions is good enough for me. And “What if”, someone reading this article is sitting on the cusp of an idea that could catalyze a lifetime of adventure? I encourage you to put more passion and thought behind your “What if” ideas and see where they take you.