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Awkward and Upward!: Your surprising secret weapon for taking more professional risks

Advances in technology have made it easy to avoid real human interaction. While texting, online ordering, and “swiping right” is convenient, we’re losing the skills of relating to others, building trust and connection, and enduring the critical friction and messiness we get from being in proximity to each other. This weakening of our social muscles is slowly destroying our ability to take smart risks at work - like collaborating with colleagues, initiating tough conversations, speaking up, and sharing new ideas.

Risk-taking sounds good in theory, but most of us have a hard time moving from wishful thinking to execution. Why? Because when we have a chance to take a risk in the moment, we feel awkward – and that awkwardness bumps up against our deep desire for others to approve of us and what we do. As it turns out, it’s what we improve in the face of taking risks – often despite others’ judgment – that leads to the greatest growth. After all, the fastest path to major improvement comes from strengthening what’s weak, rather than what’s strong.

Join 2x TEDx Speaker, Executive Coach, and Workplace Performance Expert, Henna Pryor, to learn how embracing the Good Awkward is your secret weapon for skyrocketing teamwork, speaking up boldly, and strengthening your risk-taking muscle.

After this keynote, you’ll be able to:

- Pinpoint the exact reason it’s been difficult to take risks - and how to move past it
- Use deliberate discomfort and strategic microstressors to rebuild our social and risk-taking muscles
- Create a custom plan for speaking up, sharing ideas, and being courageous and risk-ready whenever the chance arises
- EASY AI: How to be a Human Seller with a Robot Helper

The Changing Psychology of Influence in the Modern Era: How to overcome resistance to move your ideas forward

In the modern era, the new psychology for creating new actions, influence, inspiration, and navigating through uncertainty has changed. We need to take a new approach to create new actions in our teammates and in ourselves, to persuade prospects, to have difficult conversations, and to maximize opportunities for partnership.

If you’ve ever found yourself facing resistance to your ideas - you’re not alone. Even when we have a great idea that will affect enormous change, we don’t always get the reaction – or action – we’re hoping for.

That’s because we spend the majority of our energy making our ideas and changes more compelling, more interesting, more attractive -- pouring on the fuel -- that we rarely discover the frictions that are working against us, and all humans have them.

In this interactive session, join 2x TEDx and Global Keynote Speaker, Author, and Workplace Performance Expert, Henna Pryor, to uncover and explore the 4 specific reasons why people resist change, and more importantly, concrete strategies to overcome them so we can move our ideas, initiatives, team members, prospects, and mission forward.

After this keynote, you’ll be able to:

- Shift away from problem-solving to a more valuable strategy
- Understand how being the "expert" is hurting your influence instead of helping
- Position your idea from several new angles that increase trust and get the green light you need for people to say yes

Pushing Limits, Igniting Excellence: Unlocking the New Mindset of Success

With changing landscapes, tough competition, and information overload, winning market share is harder than ever. We may have high levels of excellence, but that excellence comes at a surprising cost – it keeps us stagnant and quietly discourages taking the risks we need to grow today. Why?

The dark side of success is we often focus on what we already excel at instead of leaning into the discomfort of what excelling today requires: more innovation, creative collaboration, and thinking outside of the box. But fear not – we already know the fastest path to major improvement comes from strengthening what's weak, rather than what's strong. Today, that means we need to become excellent at being uncomfortable.

In this keynote, author and 2x TEDx and Keynote Speaker, Henna Pryor will share the modern mental skills for skyrocketing your team's performance, frontloading discomfort, and unlocking the innovation needed to tap into new sources of success.

After this keynote, you'll be able to:

- Pinpoint the exact reason it's been difficult to take risks - and how to move past it
- Use the tools of neutral thinking and deliberate discomfort to expand mental muscle
- Formulate a personalized game plan to be risk-ready whenever the chance arises

Not only will you feel more empowered to stretch into new spaces, but you'll walk away with specific mindset tactics and strategies to be more resilient, less stressed, and more inspired by change in your own life.

SOCIAL FITNESS and why we need it right now.

As a society, our social fitness is down. Way down.

- 31% of [survey respondents](#) have pushed an elevator's close door button just to avoid a short lift with someone.
- 52% of [consumers born after 1996](#) prefer self-checkout so strongly that they would literally switch grocery stores if they had to check-out in a line with a live cashier.

When we think about how our social skills have atrophied over the last decade - especially in the hybrid world - we're in trouble. For some people, this hammering of the "close doors" may have always been the tendency. For others, what we previously didn't mind (a little small talk on the elevator? why not!) -- now feels uncomfortable and disorienting. In a virtual world, it's too easy to stay in our silos when collaboration feels like "bothering people" and counterfeit-connection at work comes with real costs.

We didn't become jerks. We're just out of practice.

Having social friction on your team at work has serious costs: [36% of employees](#) said political talk can lead them to avoid talking to or working with a co-worker entirely. With social muscles that are already weakening by the day - will teamwork fall apart entirely?

We need to embrace the Good Awkward and work on intentionally increasing our social fitness.