Reading: The Psychology of Risk

The Psychology of Risk – Why We Take Chances

Some people are naturally drawn to danger, while others prefer the safety of routine. Psychologists suggest that risk-taking behavior is influenced by personality, environment, and even brain chemistry. One important factor is the hormone adrenaline, which is released during moments of stress or excitement. For some, the rush of adrenaline can be addictive, pushing them to seek out extreme sports or high-stakes challenges.

Interestingly, risk-taking is not always reckless. Calculated risks — like starting a new business or moving abroad — often require careful thinking and planning. People with high confidence levels and a strong belief in their abilities are more likely to take these types of chances.

On the other hand, those who are risk-averse tend to overthink the possible consequences and avoid uncertainty. However, avoiding risk altogether can limit personal growth. Psychologists argue that stepping outside your comfort zone is essential for building resilience, learning new skills, and achieving goals.

In the end, the key is not to avoid risk but to understand it. What truly matters is how we evaluate danger, prepare ourselves, and learn from the outcomes.

Reading Comprehension: Multiple Choice

1. What does adrenaline do in risk-taking situations?

   A) It prevents people from thinking clearly

   B) It creates a feeling of excitement

   C) It makes people feel afraid

2. What is a *calculated risk*?

   A) A completely safe choice

   B) A decision made without thinking

   C) A risk that involves planning

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3. Why might someone avoid taking risks?

   A) They enjoy stress

   B) They fear the consequences

   C) They want to build resilience

4. What does the article suggest about personal growth?

   A) It only happens in comfortable situations

   B) It is unrelated to risk-taking

   C) It often involves taking risks

5. What is the author's overall message?

   A) Risk should always be avoided

   B) Risk can be useful if managed well

   C) Only experts should take risks

🟢 Reading Comprehension: True or False

Decide if the statements are true or false. Correct the false ones.

1. Everyone enjoys taking risks. → **True/False**
2. Adrenaline helps people feel excited during risky moments. → **True/False**
3. Calculated risks are taken without planning. → **True/False**
4. Avoiding risk completely can prevent growth. → **True/False**
5. The article suggests we should take every risk we find. → **True/False**

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🟣 Vocabulary: Risk-Related Expressions

Match the expressions (1–5) with their correct meanings (A–E):

Expressions:	**Meanings:**
1. Take a leap of faith	A. Be uncomfortable with risk
2. Push the envelope	B. Do something bold, without certainty
3. Risk-averse	C. Go beyond normal limits
4. Play it safe	D. Avoid risks
5. On the edge	E. Be in a risky or exciting situation

Fill in the blanks:

1. He decided to _____ and quit his job.
2. She's always trying to _____ with her designs.
3. I tend to be quite _____, especially with money.
4. Some people prefer to _____ rather than take risks.
5. That experience left me feeling like I was living _____.

🟡 GRAMMAR: Emphasis with "What" Clauses

🔹 Explanation:

In English, we can give emphasis to part of a sentence using **"what" + subject + verb**. This is useful in writing, storytelling, or when we want to be more dramatic or emotional.

💬 **Standard sentence**:
→ *I need a break.*

💬 **Emphasized with a what-clause**:
→ *What I need is a break.*

The structure is:

What + subject + verb + is/was + object/complement

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☑ Why do we use it?

- To **highlight** what's important to us.
- To **sound more natural** in advanced spoken and written English.
- To **clarify** or **correct** something.

🔸 Examples:

Regular sentence	**Emphasized with "What..."**
I enjoy the adrenaline.	What I enjoy is the adrenaline.
They need support.	What they need is support.
She feared the consequences.	What she feared were the consequences.
We want freedom.	What we want is freedom.

Note: When the original object is **plural**, we can also use "**were**" instead of "**was**":

- *What he wanted were answers.* ☑ (also: *What he wanted was answers.* – both are used in real life)

🟣 PRACTICE 1 – Transform the sentences (Rewrite):

➡ Rewrite each sentence using "What..." for emphasis.

1. I need a second chance. _____
2. They love the adrenaline rush. _____
3. She missed the opportunity. _____
4. He expects loyalty. _____
5. We regret the decision. _____
6. You misunderstood the message. _____
7. They want more time. _____
8. I admire her bravery. _____

🟢 PRACTICE 2 – Complete the Sentences Creatively:

➡ Start with the prompt and finish the sentence with your own idea.

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1. What I can't stand is...
2. What surprises me most is...
3. What drives me crazy is...
4. What gives me confidence is...
5. What makes me nervous is...
6. What I try to avoid is...
7. What inspires me is...
8. What I enjoy about risk is...

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