

Malcolm Gladwell

The Urgency of a Leader

- Dr. Emil Freireich's Social Risk
 - Curing childhood leukemia required operational risk-taking: taking a chance on a bold, new idea.
 - It also required a social risk: overcoming opposition and criticism.
 - The ability to take social risks is as important, if not more important, as the ability to have a breakthrough idea.
 - At the core of social risk-taking is urgency.
 - Others were preoccupied with the potential risks of taking a wrong step, but Freireich was in a hurry and saw the risks and benefits differently.
- Steve Jobs' Social Risk [10:38]
 - What set Jobs apart was not being smarter or wiser than other engineers but a sense of urgency.
 - Having that sense of urgency means losing face, admitting to being wrong, and convincing others to take a different path.
- The Rare Risk-Taker [18:04]
 - If we are going to do something revolutionary, we need people who are willing to take social risks.
 - People who are willing to take social risks are rare, because it is hard for human beings to do things that other people think are crazy.
 - We are programmed for approval.
- The Leader Who Says Yes [21:18]
 - We get more risk-takers if leaders learn to protect and nurture this disruptive spirit.
 - One of the responsibilities of a leader is to make their organizations safe for risk-taking.
 - We need more risk-takers but we will not get them without more leaders who say yes.