

### **Leap of Faith**

It all began when I was ten years old and my dad took the family to a small mountain in Wisconsin one frigid winter night. The lights were shining down on the loose granular snowy surface, I was freezing, and an instructor was gently letting me know that I needed to start down the mountain if I was to learn how to ski. I made it down the first run but the temperature was dropping and I was uncertain about taking another ski run let alone becoming a skier. The mountain, or actually large hill, was daunting but I mustered enough courage, got on the ski lift and skied down again. This time, a little better than the first.

Flash forward – It is late March 2006 and I am almost forty years of age. I jump on the single chair lift at Mad River Glen, a mountain that uses “Ski It If You Can” as their slogan, and I go to Fall Line, a double black diamond trail in the trees. I enjoy the challenge of the windy, steep trail. While not perfect, I ski it well.

Over the years, skiing has taught me that with perseverance, patience and a dream, you can reach your goals. Many of us want to be the expert skier on day one and avoid the falls, the mistakes and the bruised egos along the way. Without mistakes, we would not learn.

Starting a new business venture is like facing a new mountain. To start, you need to take a leap of faith by sharing your ideas, service or product. The first few steps will be scary, but once you get going, it can be invigorating. Here are some key points to keep in mind:

#### **Step Outside Your Comfort Zone**

To start a new business or add a new service to an existing one, stepping outside the comfort zone is often a necessary first step. When taking this first step, ask yourself the following questions: What is in my professional comfort zone? What is one step outside that area? What is three steps, four steps, etc? What financial and/or emotional support will I need to take this leap of faith? Do not act impulsively. Instead have an action plan and then go for it! You can always retreat to your comfort zone when you need to.

#### **Get Support**

Join a professional coaching group, join the chamber of commerce or tap into an existing professional network for support. You can use these connections to brainstorm ideas, collaborate on services and/or products, help you laugh when things don't go your way or cheer you on when you reach a professional milestone.

**Enjoy the Journey!**

Like most things in life, starting a new professional venture is a process. Enjoy the journey as it will have many twists and turns. Some you will enjoy, some you will fear, but all of them you will learn from. Happy travels!

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