

take undue risks—I certainly don’t want to lose—but I don’t let fear of loss stop me from doing something worthwhile.

I survived, and so did the business school. Our associates wanted it to continue, so we formed a partnership of eight people. I remained involved with the school for several more years. It recently celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary.

After my “crash” I rededicated myself to my vision and began thinking about what the next step in its development might be. My own professional success had come from loving my job and the work environment, and feeling as though who I was mattered deeply to the work I did—this was the heart of what we taught at our business school. People’s lives changed when they began living according to who they really were. An associate suggested we try a program for youth patterned after the business school. I began to wonder what life might be like for people if they could get to that transformational experience earlier in life. What if we could help make it happen for kids?

I talked over this idea with two associates. We got excited about the notion that the business success our adult students enjoyed could translate into school success for kids. We could help great kids become even greater!

It wouldn’t just be about learning new skills. It would be a life-changing experience. We wanted kids to discover the vast power within their own identities. If we could do that, they’d never again approach school—or anything else—the same way. Imagine if kids didn’t have to cross that shaky bridge into adulthood with trepidation and frustration. What if they could charge into their teen years full of confidence and enthusiasm? The ennui would vanish, replaced by a passionate thirst for knowledge, experience, and growth. I had seen this happen with adults and wanted it for kids. And I came to see that this was a huge part of my contribution to society and it brought me a sense of fulfillment.