

Future-Proof Yourself: 5 Keys to Venturing Boldly Forward in an Ever- Changing World

Carrie Spaulding, PCC

How to Use this Resource

I'm thrilled to offer you this resource to help you practice and deepen what you learned in our time together! Before you jump in, here are a few things to keep in mind as you go:

❖ **Share your experience and stay in touch.**

I love to hear your stories of how you're using this material in your work or in other aspects of your life—and what the impact is! If you have experiences to share or questions to ask me, don't hesitate to reach out.

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❖ **Let me know how I can help you further.**

If you would like my help in going deeper with these ideas, putting them into practice, and developing the competencies and infrastructure to venture boldly forward, I have lots of great options for you! If you want a course/group program, **The Lab** is the perfect way to go deeper. If you prefer a private option, we can set up a **1-on-1 Deep Dive session**. If you want to bring me into your organization for a keynote or workshop, **I'll be delighted to talk to you about that.**

Carrie



Future-Proof Yourself:

5 Keys to Venturing Boldly Forward in an Ever-Changing World

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FUTURE-PROOF FUTURE-READY YOURSELF: To intentionally develop, stretch, and disrupt yourself for continuous growth, so you can evolve and flourish in an ever-changing landscape and unknown future

As leaders in a rapidly evolving world, we operate in an environment of relentless change. How can we develop ourselves (and those we lead) in future-proof ways? How can we become more adaptable, creative, and resilient? How do we prepare to thrive in a landscape we can't yet fully envision?

On January 1, 2018, I set out on what was to be a one-year nomadic adventure living all over the United States. It turned out to be a much longer journey. I'm often asked how and why I started and continue this bold venture. I've spent the last several years translating the insights of that "how" and "why" into experiences and tools for the people I coach, teach, and speak to.

My mission is to help you be who you are, do what you're here for, and venture boldly forward in your work and life.

As an improviser, I want you to benefit from the skills and concepts of **improvisation**, whether or not you ever set foot on a stage.

As a visual artist, I want you to get all the enormous benefits that come from beginning, rekindling, or deepening a **creative practice**.

As a nomad, I want you to launch your own **nomad-inspired experiments** from right where you are, so that you can gain many of the benefits that come from such an adventure without actually hitting the road.

My greatest goal is for you to have greater **access** to the benefits of these insights and methodologies, **permission** (from yourself) to become who you want to be and do what you're here for, and some **tools** to help you to venture boldly forward.

Are you ready? Fasten that metaphorical seatbelt. It's time to hit the road!

VENTURE BOLDLY: To risk a daring undertaking / journey with willingness, courage, and (ever-increasing) confidence

Why do we block ourselves from venturing boldly forward?

If you're feeling daunted by the prospect of the future, it's understandable! We're moving forward even as the ground underneath us is shifting. We can't see what's around the bend, and yet we know we need to be ready for it. We may feel like we're locked in on a ride we didn't choose! We may fear falling or failing.

We exist in a context that includes **external and systemic obstacles and inequities**. We also may be subject to **true constraints**. When venturing boldly forward, it's important to recognize and acknowledge these external obstacles and true constraints that are part of our reality, while doing what we can to remove any **inner obstacles** that we put on *ourselves*.

As humans, there are many understandable and valid reasons we block ourselves:

- We fear the unknown.
- We might fail/fall/be seen/be judged/be exposed.
- We don't want to accept part of reality.
- We fear losing (perceived) control or being stuck.
- We're not sure what we want or what it will look like.
- We know what we want, but don't know how to get there.
- We know venturing boldly forward will entail work, great effort, and/or discomfort.
- We're overwhelmed by the pieces, steps, and/or logistics.
- We're distracted or kicking the can down the road to "someday."
- We are operating in a shifting and uncertain context, dealing with many variables, and/or building on a shaky foundation.

As humans at this time in particular, we are integrating monumental changes. The picture of our careers that we once had in our heads is likely quite different from the new reality. Whether you're enthusiastic or reluctant about embracing these changes, it's natural to go through tremendous growing pains as we grapple with massive shifts in the way we--and our clients and colleagues--work and live.

Why bother?

Given all the reasons NOT to venture boldly forward, why should we bother? It can be easier to conjure up negative what-ifs than it is to imagine what we're *missing* by blocking ourselves.

Blocking ourselves comes at a great cost. When we block ourselves from venturing boldly forward, we risk keeping ourselves stuck and stagnant, not experiencing the growth and fulfillment we want, and not making the contribution we could make. **Whether we venture boldly forward or not, we are taking a risk.** The truth is that we are risking no matter what. The wise, brave, realistic question becomes: *Which risk do I choose?*



THE FIRST STEP

PRE-REQUISITE TO ALL THE OTHER KEYS!

DECIDE to stretch & self-disrupt voluntarily, intentionally, and safely to foster your expansion.

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Sign Up For It

The prerequisite to venturing boldly forward is to **sign up for it**. Signing up for it means that we recognize the risks of getting in the game and taking bold action, and we're willing to "Yes, And" those risks and take action anyway. When challenges happen, they can still be hard to deal with—and, because we signed up for this adventure, we're primed to work with them as expected parts of our experience.

Assessing Right Risks

We can think of the risks we consciously choose as **Right Risks**.

These questions can help you assess possible bold ventures to determine if they are Right Risks:

- Will this help me act into my values? → Which ones?
- Does this align with my authentic self?
- Will this help me grow? → How do I predict I will grow in the doing of this?
- What will doing this require of me? → In my gut, do I sense that putting myself in a position of requiring those things of myself would be good for me?
- Would the growth and potential benefit of doing this outweigh how much it would put on my plate?
- Will this test something or make something real that I've been hearing myself say?
- What do I risk if I *don't* do this?
- What does me in [X #] years from now look back and wish I did?

Double Down on Humaning Better

How will you meet this moment? How will you prepare yourself to meet the next one?

One key is to double down on the very human soft skills that are evergreen and ever-essential. In an AI era and a context of global conflict and change, with hybrid and remote workers collaborating across distances, soft skills are more important than ever.

The great news is that the most vital soft skills you and your organization need to thrive in an AI world can be learned and practiced. Upskilling to “human better” can help you thrive as you meet today’s challenges and prepare for the unknown future.

When you invest in these skills, you’re not only increasing your abilities today; you are also weaving a “safety net” by investing in skills that are essential as the world continues to change.

adaptability	communication	problem solving
flexibility	collaboration	critical thinking
resilience	creativity	learning orientation
resourcefulness	innovation	judgment
empathy	curiosity	decision-making
relationship building	_____	_____

Reflect:

Look at the list of skills above.

1. ★ Put a star next to the skills that you think are already well-developed strengths in you.
2. Underline the skills that you think are least developed in you.
3. On the blank lines, add any skills that are missing that you think should be on the list.
4. Now, circle the 2-4 skills you want to focus on developing this year. (This may include skills that you identified as well-developed and skills that you think are least developed!)
5. For each skill, jot down some ideas for steps you could take to develop them.

Keys to Help Us Venture Boldly Forward



KEY #1

**Practice
making bold
moves in
small,
everyday
ways.**

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When you see someone making big bold moves, what you don't see is that they've built the skills to do that by taking steps out of their comfort zone again and again. Courage is a skill you can practice!

To be sure, our confidence and our sense of resilience increase with experience and success. And yet, taking the leaps that will *lead* to experience and success requires a certain degree of confidence and trust in our resilience!

How do we handle this conundrum? How can we develop confidence and resilience when we haven't yet racked up a lot of experience and successes?

The great news is that there are lots of ways we can do this. Choosing to proactively engage in these practices can help us build our confidence and resilience from right where we are, and make ourselves future-ready.

Reflect:

- In what areas would you like to be more bold?

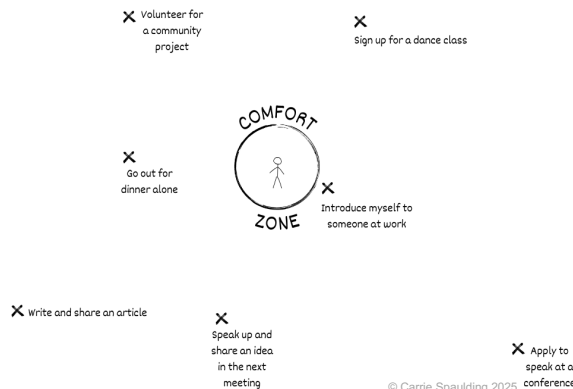
Exercise

1. Get a piece of paper and something to write with. In the middle of the paper, draw yourself inside a circle. This is your comfort zone.



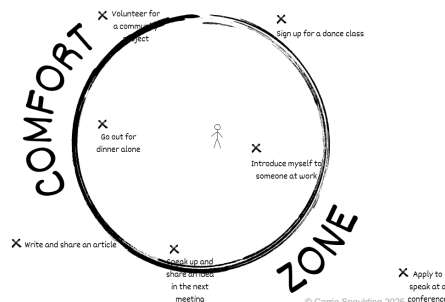
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2. Jot down some ideas for “small” ways you could step outside your comfort zone. (They may seem small, yet feel big to you!) Plot an X and write the step closer to or further from your comfort zone, depending on how far out of your comfort zone it is. You may wish to draw a little doodle to accompany each action item! **Note that these action steps do not need to have anything to do with your work in order to help you build competencies that will pay off in your career!** Bold moves in any area will help you expand in ways that will ripple into other areas of life.



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3. In the coming weeks, work on taking some of these steps! After you've taken some of them (perhaps some more than once), you'll find that your comfort zone has grown!



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KEY #2

Develop your spontaneous responsiveness skills.

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Learning, practicing with, and applying the basic principles and skills of spontaneous responsiveness, which are rooted in improvisation, can help you support yourself in venturing boldly forward. Practicing the skills of improvisation will help you become more confident, courageous, and resilient. The adaptability, creative thinking, collaboration, listening, and embodied presence you'll practice are game-changers!

The first rule of improvisation is to say yes. Saying yes means to **accept** all **offers**. An **offer** is any information that is available to us from any person (including ourselves) or from our environment. Offers may be **verbal**, **physical**, and/or **energetic**. Offers from ourselves come in the form of thoughts, somatic experiences, and intuition.

To **accept** an offer means to take it in and incorporate it as true (not necessarily as the WHOLE truth—rather, as a real and relevant *part* of our whole [and/or shared] reality). Accepting doesn't mean agreeing, or taking an offer as "marching orders," or a lack of boundaries. It simply means taking it in and incorporating it as part of reality.

In improvisation, we practice engaging effectively in the present, building on the current reality as it continuously shifts and emerges. Developing these skills and understanding the core concepts can be major assets in helping you future-proof yourself, as you learn to engage more effectively in the daily improvisation that is your life and work!

Reflect:

- What could be different for you if you were more confident in your spontaneous responsiveness skills? Where could these skills help you?



KEY #3

Invest in the relationships that will help you thrive.

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Connection is essential to wellbeing, growth, career success, and sustainable change.

As you venture boldly forward and look towards future-proofing yourself, it's essential to develop three key relationships:

- your relationship with yourself
- your relationship with other people
- your relationship with the place / your environment and the wider world

Though most of us are accustomed to thinking of relationships mainly in terms of our relationships with other people, investing in and strengthening all three of these types of relationships will pay enormous dividends.

We learn and grow in connection. As you make your plans to future-proof yourself, consider incorporating community and collaboration into your learning and growth plan.

Reflect:

- What is one experiment you could try THIS WEEK to strengthen your relationship with...

Yourself?	Other People?	Your Environment/ Place?



KEY #4

**Start,
rekindle, or
deepen a
creative
practice (of
any kind!).**

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Your creative practice may involve visual art, gardening, cooking, music, writing, or something else. Do not allow time scarcity or a belief that you are not creative lead you to miss out on this superpower, which is for everyone.

Most humans don't tap into all of our resources. A creative practice can help you access more parts of your personal “toolkit” so that you are living and working with more vitality and resourcefulness.

A creative practice...

- helps you tune into and enhance intuition; deepen self-awareness; and increase innovation, creativity, ideation, insight, and authenticity in your career and every part of your life.
- can be the “glue” that helps you process, synthesize, integrate, and ideate about all of the other areas of your life.
- is a place in which you can have total autonomy, learn to hear yourself and your voice, release perfectionism, and deal effectively with your inner critic.
- can help you to deepen all three of the relationship types on the previous page, discover parts of yourself you didn't know existed, and solve problems and innovate in ways you couldn't have predicted.

Critically, a creative practice can help us reduce burnout and increase the joy, play, and fun we have in our lives. This replenishes us and makes us more likely to be fully resourced when we return to our work, families, communities, and other areas. Increasing joy and play in your life will enhance everything else you do!

Reflect:

- ❖ Brainstorm creative practices you could begin, rekindle, or deepen, and first steps you could take.

Select all images with a
human



VERIFY

KEY #5

**Focus on your
contribution.
Get to the core:
values,
experience,
skills, purpose.**

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One of the most powerful steps you can take to future-ready yourself is to get crystal clear on what you're here to contribute. Then, you can orient yourself and upskill accordingly.

Getting to the core of your contribution requires you to look below job titles and responsibilities and consider on a more fundamental level what is *driving* everything you do. Then, you can find ways to pour that purpose into every step you take, and use that clarity of contribution to evaluate and pursue possibilities.

Here's are some things *not* to do: ignore your values; ignore your intuition; react to what it seems like everyone is doing while disregarding your own knowing.

Taking the time to identify what you're here for is one of the best investments you can make. The more clear you are on the point of view and "why" you're bringing to your work, the more you will be able to spot and move forward opportunities to channel them into, the more energy you'll have for them, and the more resilient you'll be through bumps in the road.

This is your time. These are your people. This is your place.

This is it.

Do what matters NOW. Even if you can only carve out tiny pockets of your day to drive forward what you view as your most essential contributions, that counts and it matters.

Reflect:

- ❖ What do you actually, authentically, deeply care about?

- ❖ What core values drive you?

- ❖ Consider the projects you've cared most about, and those achievements, contributions, or insights you've been most recognized for. What are the commonalities and patterns you see among them? What mattered to you about them? What human skills helped you succeed with them?

- ❖ What point of view, experience, and skills do you bring?

- ❖ What problems do you want to help solve, or questions do you want to help answer?

- ❖ What do you stand for?

A Few Final Words of Encouragement



I remember so clearly the moment I set out on my nomadic adventure. I simultaneously had no idea what lay ahead of me—the people I'd meet, the experiences I'd have, the way my relationship with myself would blossom—and at the same time I knew, in my gut, that I was exactly where I was meant to be, on the path I was meant to be traveling. I can't imagine my life without everything that has come about as a result of this adventure.

This is what I want for you. Not to become a nomad—though I will cheer you on so enthusiastically if that's what you decide to do!—rather, to **venture boldly forward on your own path, from right where you are.**

Use the keys I've shared to unlock a deeper level of resourcefulness, confidence, presence, and impact than you've experienced before. Embrace yourself and the context in which you find yourself, identify Right Risks, and future-ready yourself with so much care and intention that your sense of resilience and groundedness grow with each step you take.

If you want a structured, experiential, fun, expertly facilitated course to help you get everything in this handout and much, much more in your bones and in your life, I cannot recommend The Lab highly enough. **[Learn more here.](#)**

I'm here to help if you need me. I'm cheering you on!



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Reflect and Apply

Take a moment to synthesize and crystallize your learning, and set some intentions to move forward!

Reflect:

- ❖ What was the most interesting and/or powerful discovery you made in this program?

Set an intention:

- ❖ How will you apply what you learned and discovered to your career and leadership?
- ❖ How will you apply what you learned and discovered to your other parts of your life?

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YES!

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YEAH!

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IDEAL FOR:

- Individuals looking to improve the aforementioned skills and experiences
- People wanting to start or enrich a creative practice
- Creatives seeking to access greater freedom, loosen up, and approach their work from a new angle
- Professionals aiming to enhance their performance across all aspects of work

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Speaking and Training

**Real-Time, In-Your-Bones
Soft Skills Growth for Humans**

I am a globally acclaimed speaker known for my highly experiential, connective, engaging, inspiring, fun, and instantly impactful presentations and training sessions.

I leverage my background as a coach, improviser, nomad, artist, and educator to provide integrated and truly transformative growth opportunities that empower humans to human better. Through interactive and outside-the-box sessions, participants acquire crucial soft skills through unique, unforgettable, and immediately applicable experiences.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

VENTURE BOLDLY FORWARD INTO THE UNKNOWN: NOMAD INSIGHTS TO TRANSFORM YOUR WORK, LEADERSHIP, AND LIFE
CONNECT: HOW TO BUILD THE THREE KEY RELATIONSHIPS THAT WILL HELP YOU THRIVE
AN INSIDE JOB: HOW TO BREAK THROUGH INTERNAL BLOCKS AND GET OUT OF YOUR OWN WAY
WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON, AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?
I'M NOT A ROBOT: HOW TO LEVEL UP YOUR KEY DIFFERENTIATORS IN AN AI WORLD
HOW TO INCREASE YOUR SPEAKING CONFIDENCE AND IMPACT
CLOSING THE GAPS: IMPROVE WORKPLACE CULTURE IN YOUR HYBRID, MULTIGENERATIONAL, SILOED, OR BOTTLENECKED ORGANIZATION
THE IMPROVISATION EDGE FOR LEADERS IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD
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Private Coaching

In one-on-one coaching, I bring my whole toolbox to our own private "workshop" to help you achieve your goals.

As The Thirtysomething Coach®, I help thirtysomethings break through Thirtysomething Panic and create careers, relationships, and lives they love.

I also work with clients of *all* ages on making big changes, working on bold growth at work and at home, and leveling up "humaning skills" in their personal and professional lives.

I take a holistic approach, welcoming all of you to our work! I have extensive experience with creatives and individuals with ADHD. I am LGBTQ-friendly.



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