



# Stanford eCorner

## Taking Risks

Kim Smith, *New Schools Venture Fund*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/616/Taking-Risks>

John Kennedy said that there is risk and cost to a program of action, but it is far less than the long-range risks and costs that come from comfortable inaction, says Smith. Though it may seem scary to make changes and safe to do nothing, it is not true. A leader's job is to be passionate, figure out what needs to be done, and then be willing to take the necessary risks to make it happen, she notes.



### Transcript

Hybrid thinking, we've already talked about, and related to that, the for-profit and nonprofit and the difference in the culture. We'd like to point to this John Kennedy quote that reminds us there is risk and cost to a program of action but they're far less than long-range risks and costs from comfortable inaction. So it's a quote we use to remind people that it may seem scary to make these changes and they may think it's safe to do nothing but it's not really. You're making a decision about what to do when you do nothing. Generally, particularly in our situation with K-12 education, doing nothing means you're making sure that millions of kids in this country who don't have access to participate successfully in the economy and in our society. Another quote just to keep you entertained because listening to me is probably boring. This is from... We find it interesting, optimism and hope. We know what we're doing is right but we're not sure it's going to work out. The fear that it might not work out is not enough to stop from trying so those two quotes sort of relate to each other and for me, really to leadership because that's sort of our job as leaders.

It's to be passionate, to figure out what needs to be done, to figure out what's right and to then be willing to take the risks to make it happen even though it comes with a lot of risks.