



BOLDLY



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STAR TREK'S CHRIS PINE WAS LOOKING FOR A CHALLENGE. THEN TWO OF THEM ARRIVED. MAKING THE DECISION HELPED HIM CLARIFY HIS GOALS— AND CHANGED HIS CAREER

*By Jason Feifer
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BE YOUR OWN CAPTAIN

Chris Pine took on a big job this year. Here's how he faced it head-on

RESPECT THE PAST, BUT DON'T MIMIC IT

To prepare for the role of James T. Kirk, Pine spent hours studying footage of William Shatner. But he found that instead of learning the role, he was hurting his ability to innovate it. So he stopped watching Shatner and began to focus on himself.

No matter what your job, there are always ways to do something better than your predecessor. That's why you were hired.

BE READY AND WILLING TO FAIL

It's easy to become intimidated in a big job, so Pine thinks back to the last time he thought he'd failed at something.

"You realize your failures weren't even failures. You just weren't as good as you thought you'd be," he says. That gives him the strength to try again—knowing that even if he thinks he's failing, he's probably not.

PERSPECTIVE IS EVERYTHING

All eyes are on Pine this summer, so here's what he thinks to calm himself: "I play a make-believe captain of a make-believe spaceship. **Responsibility is only what you place on yourself.**" It's true. Care about your work, but remember that it's only one part of you.

imagining what it'll feel like to look backward, wondering what you should have done instead.

"I think the most dangerous word in the English language is *should*," Pine says. "*I should* have done this. Or *I should* do that. *Should* implies responsibility. It connotes demand. Which is just not the case. Life ebbs and flows." But he has still spent his life fighting the word. He can't always forget it. So when the two jobs were offered, he talked it over with everyone he could, and spent a lot of time by himself, wondering what he should do.

CHRIS PINE'S GIRLFRIEND WAKES UP

every morning at 7 a.m. and is, as he tells it, the very definition of sunshine. She is ready. Yesterday's gone; today is better. This attitude is something he's trying to emulate, although it hasn't happened yet. He needs 2½ more hours and some strong coffee. "I'm so envious of that genetic wiring that immediately puts a smile on your face," he says. "My genetic wiring just puts creases in my eyebrows."

If he doesn't stop himself, the rest of the day will feel the same. He obsesses over past mistakes. He's low on patience. He's a natural cynic, a grump, a perfectionist. And that's held him back. He knows it. Imagine what a guy like Pine, classically good-looking with a rich, deep voice, could have done in college. The girls! He could have killed at parties. He could have owned the place. His for the taking.

Here's what happened instead: "I spent a lot of my time obsessing over schoolwork," he says. "That's what I was programmed to do." So, those parties? Other guys owned them. Guys who looked forward.

Since then, Pine has been focused on changing. It starts by taking cues from others, he says. He follows his girlfriend's lead, and studies how George Clooney makes fun of himself, and reads dreary but ultimately insightful books like *Man's Search for Meaning* by Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl. And through this, Pine has learned to refocus. "The only thing you sometimes have control over is perspective," he says. "You don't have control over your situation. But you have a choice about how you view it."

Y "FEAR RUNS OUR LIVES A LOT OF THE TIME. YOU CAN FACE IT HEAD-ON, OR YOU CAN HIDE IN YOUR BUNKER."

You've been great in ungreat things. Your career has had hitches, and few opportunities. And then you're offered two big jobs. Two different jobs. One is suited to your talents and ambitions; it is your vision of yourself. The other will make you gobs of money.

How can a man choose between self-satisfaction and well-being? Between two different versions of success? Two jobs, two women, two investments: It's always like this. The two elements you most desire, split down different paths.

Chris Pine had a week to decide between the two jobs. And the 28-year-old actor agonized, because, well, the pinnacle of his career to that point had been *The Princess Diaries 2*. Not even the original! But now two movie studios wanted him: He could take a role as a disgusting, chemically imbalanced detective in the kind of gritty, actor-driven gig he'd dreamed of. Or he could play James T. Kirk in a *Star Trek* prequel. The character is uncomplicated. William Shatner already claimed it. Pine would be wearing spandex. But man, it's a big movie. Big and career changing.

And he was afraid of choosing. He often is. We all are, with decisions like this. You look at each choice and weigh the regret of not going for it. Catch yourself the next time you do this: You aren't looking forward because you're too busy

Every day, it's a little easier. He stops running through the *shoulds*—regretting something he said, something he did—because the simple truth is he can't change what happened. And it wasn't that bad now that he really thinks about it. Our failures are often biggest in our minds. To everyone else, they are unremarkable.

Pine is a work in progress. We all are. And that's fine, so long as we learn from our mistakes and missteps instead of obsessing over them. That's progress right there.

DAMN, HE REALLY WANTED THAT GIG as the strung-out detective. It was so right for him. It was everything he'd prepared for. He was freaking out. But then Pine's sister said to him, "Instead of looking at *Star Trek* as a sacrifice of your artistic principles, is there any way to look at it as a larger challenge?" And he thought about that and realized she was right. The strung-out detective role was easy. He wanted to play it because he felt prepared for it. *Star Trek* was hard. How do you play a James T. Kirk that William Shatner already dominated? Pine didn't know.

So he took the job. He might not have taken it if it had been offered years ago. He'd have been too nervous. He'd have been paralyzed by *shoulds*.

That's the change in perspective we're talking about. Look at things differently, and downsides become opportunities. Those choices from the beginning of this story—self-satisfaction versus well-being? That's garbage. The best parts of life aren't polar opposites. A choice is just two different ways to make the most of opportunities. It's a good problem to have, once you're not afraid of looking back. Which, in this case, Pine no longer is.

"When I started *Trek*," he says, "I looked at it, and then I was climbing it, and I didn't have time for anything else but climbing the thing and getting to the top. And that's an incredible space to exist in, because there's tremendous responsibility. There's tremendous pressure. But all those just clarify your vision." ■

"YOU DON'T HAVE CONTROL OVER YOUR SITUATION. BUT YOU DO HAVE A CHOICE ABOUT HOW YOU VIEW IT."

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