Low risks yield low happiness vorce, people often destroy their marriage by not talking to their partners about its flaws. Sometimes, only a severe personal crisis will jar people loose from the low-risk, low-happiness life pattern. How often have you heard of men or women who finally make a drastic change in their lives after a heart attack or a divorce and are now really happy. Too frequently, it takes a trauma to force people to risk real changes. A heart attack reminds the victim of how short life is and how important it is to be happy now, not just later.

Timerafter time, I hear stories of copie who are unhappy in their pass or their marriages. They can't tand their boss. Their wife does to give them enough affection. To noutsider, the solution to their Timerafter time, I hear stories of people who are unhappy in their jubs or their marriages. They can't stand their boss. Their wife does not give them enough affection. To an outsider, the solution to their problem seems painfully obvious. "Why don't you just tonfront your boss." I feel like saying or "Why don't you just talk to your wife." Of course, to the person with the problem, it doesn't seem so simple. They are afraid such a direct approach will make their boss angry.

Ву BOB TRENZ.





ONE OF the most insidious aspects of this low-risk approach to life is that it perpetrates itself. The fewer risks you take, the less you learn how well you can cope with consequences. The loss of a job or a big marital fight is rarrely as devastating as people anticipate; but you cannot find that out if you never take the chance. Furthermore, fewer jobs and marriages are lost by people honestly trying to be happy than by those who run from problems and thus allow them to grow so large, that constructive reconcilation is just too difficult.

This self-perpetuating characteristic of the low-risk approach was demonstrated by a classic psychological experiment with dogs: Large boxes were used which had a partition across the middle. On one side of the partition, the floor could be electrified, this delivering a mild but frightening shock. Twenty dogs learned quickly that within 30 seconds after a buzzer was turned on, the floor would electrify and they would be shocked. Without exception, each dog learned quickly to jump the partition when the huzzer sounded and thus to avoid impending shock.

Soon, however, the electric shock was turned off. But the dogs continued to leap over the barrier to safety hundrels of times, everytime the huzzer sounded, even though the shock no longer existed.

By some definitions these dogs could be considered to be neurotic. Their compulsive response to the huzzer no longer had a basis in reality. Their avoidance of the imagined shock kept them from finding out that it was no longer there. Their compulsive response to the huzzer no longer had a basis in reality. Their avoidance of the imagined shock kept them from finding out that it was no longer to the reality. Their avoidance of the imagined shock kept them from finding out that it was no longer to survival equipment. The problem comes when people over-use avoidance as a cepting mechanism. This is the low-risk approach.

THE CURE for the low-risk approach is to build a higher risk-tolerance level. Like building mustes or callouses, this involves repitition and exertion. For the person who is not motivated by the intensity of a crisis such as a divorce, this can be a gradual process. Most simply, it involves taking more and more risks. Developing a risk-taking habit, forced at first, can eventually become a natural inclination.

One specific exercise people have found helpful is "creative blurt-

consequences of trying to improve their lives, people too often choose a life of low risk and minimal happiness.

Because they're afraid of being temporarily jobless, people shrink from making changes in their jobs

that might make them happier. Because they're terrified of a di-

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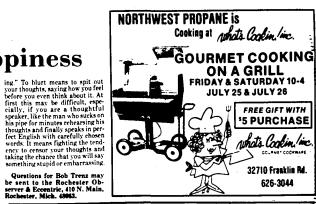
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