

What Kind of Risk-Taker Are You?

EVERYONE TAKES RISKS—but some people leap more eagerly than others. University of Wisconsin psychologist Frank Farley has identified two personality types: the thrill-seeking, or Big T, person; and the thrill-avoiding, or Little t, type. If you like high intensity, unpredictability, novelty, and risk, you're probably a Big T. If you

favor the predictable, the low-key, and the familiar, you're probably a Little t. Along these same lines, researcher Ralph Keyes has designed a quiz to help people sort out their attitudes toward risk. There are no wrong answers, Keyes says, nor is one score better than another.

Circle only one score per question. If no answer feels right, pick the one that feels closest.

Total the circled points for all 18 questions.

1. How much television do you watch in an average week?

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|--------------------------|---------------|
| | <i>points</i> |
| MORE THAN 20 HOURS | 1 |
| 11 TO 20 HOURS | 2 |
| 6 TO 10 HOURS | 3 |
| 0 TO 5 HOURS | 4 |

2. Imagine that you're beginning to feel hungry in an unfamiliar city. Nearby are some comparably priced restaurants. Where would you eat?

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| WENDY'S | 1 |
| THE COUNTRY KITCHEN | 2 |
| PEDRO'S | 3 |
| THE INDONESIAN ISLE | 4 |

3. How would you most enjoy spending an afternoon at a resort?

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| READING A GOOD BOOK | 1 |
| TALKING WITH A FELLOW GUEST | 2 |
| CANOEING ON A RIVER | 3 |
| LEARNING TO HANG GLIDE | 4 |

4. You're planning a drive on a twisty coastal highway. Driving south means you'll have spectacular coastline views but more danger of going off cliff edges. Driving north limits both your view of the coastline and your risk of going off a cliff. Which direction would you go?

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| NORTH | 1 |
| SOUTH | 2 |

5. How often do you drive faster than 65 miles an hour?

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| ALMOST NEVER | 1 |
| SELDOM | 2 |
| OFTEN | 3 |
| REGULARLY | 4 |

6. Motorcycle riding strikes you as an activity that's primarily

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| CRAZY | 1 |
| DANGEROUS | 2 |
| ROMANTIC | 3 |
| EXHILARATING | 4 |

For questions 7 through 10, assume you're equally capable of every activity. For each set, pick the one you'd most enjoy. If neither seems appealing, pick the one that's least unappealing.

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| 7. ROLLER SKATING | 1 |
| IN-LINE SKATING | 2 |
| 8. HOT AIR BALLOONING | 1 |
| PARA-SAILING | 2 |
| 9. CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING | 1 |
| SNOWBOARDING | 2 |
| 10. SNORKELING | 1 |
| SCUBA DIVING | 2 |

For questions 11 through 14, circle the number after the word that best describes your reaction to the activity.

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|--------------------------------|---|
| 11. Bungee jumping | |
| SCARY | 1 |
| EXCITING | 2 |
| 12. Writing a book | |
| SATISFYING | 1 |
| TEDIOUS | 2 |
| 13. Playing combat video games | |
| JARRING | 1 |
| AROUSING | 2 |

14. Leading a task force on health benefits at work

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| CHALLENGING | 1 |
| BORING | 2 |

15. If you had been living on the East Coast a century ago, do you think you would have joined a wagon train headed west?

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| DEFINITELY NOT | 1 |
| PROBABLY NOT | 2 |
| PROBABLY | 3 |
| DEFINITELY | 4 |

16. You are responsible for supervising an employee whose work is not meeting standards. You would be most likely to

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| ASSUME THAT THE EMPLOYEE WILL EVENTUALLY STRAIGHTEN OUT | 1 |
| BRING THE EMPLOYEE UP FOR PEER REVIEW | 2 |
| SEND THE EMPLOYEE A WRITTEN PERFORMANCE EVALUATION | 3 |
| HAVE A CANDID, FACE-TO-FACE DISCUSSION WITH THE EMPLOYEE | 4 |

17. Picture yourself climbing to the top of a very high diving board at a public swimming pool. Behind you is a line of people waiting their turn. Looking down from the the board, you become quite frightened. You would

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| TURN AROUND AND CLIMB BACK DOWN | 1 |
| JUMP IN, FEET FIRST | 2 |
| DIVE ANYWAY, HEAD FIRST | 3 |

18. Which term best describes your behavior before age 12?

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|------------------------------|---|
| VERY WELL BEHAVED | 1 |
| BASICALLY WELL BEHAVED | 2 |
| MISCHIEVOUS | 3 |
| HYPERACTIVE | 4 |

YOUR TOTAL SCORE _____

WHAT YOUR SCORE MEANS

Any score above 30 suggests you're a High-Thrills seeker. You're more at ease with choices that could involve real danger—taking up hang gliding, perhaps, or playing the stock market.

A score of 30 or below suggests you're a Low-Thrills seeker more comfortable with long-term risks such as deciding to start a family or changing careers in midlife.

For a richer life, says Keyes, High-Thrills folks might consider taking some emotional leaps—having a heart-to-heart with a family member, for instance. Low-Thrills people could try out a new physical challenge.

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