

VIDEO SUMMARY

Taking Initiatives

Resource person: Dr. Aparna Rajagopal, with Dr. Aruna Bhargava | Dr. Aparna Rajagopal is Director, Course Development at CMI; Dr. Aruna Bhargava is an Advisor to CMI and a former psychologist and sociology professor.
Taking Initiatives | Career Progression | careers

Name the fear and test the risk

Why do people withhold useful ideas? Dr. Aparna Rajagopal and Dr. Aruna Bhargava use proposals such as a different grading system or project-based learning to show how fear of failure can stop an idea before anyone tests it.

They separate subjective fear from objective constraint. Subjective fears concern judgement, embarrassment, cultural acceptance or what failure might say about us. “Peel the onion”: name the exact fear, the outcome you imagine and the cost of staying silent. Objective constraints include documented limits on training time, resources, policy or organisational readiness. A manager’s anticipated objection should be checked through consultation. Consult colleagues, revise the proposal, pilot it in two courses or pause until the institution is ready. Initiative includes revising the plan and judging the timing.

The speakers adapt Tim Ferriss’s fear-setting, linked to the Stoic practice *premeditatio malorum*. Define the worst plausible outcome. List how you could prevent it. Then decide how you would repair the damage if it happened. In the curriculum-audit example, careful language and a small scope matter: present the work as collaboration to reduce student confusion, run a limited trial and gather evidence.

Use Stop–Start–Continue–Change to finish with a specific commitment. You might stop reading silence as disapproval, start with small experiments, continue mentoring colleagues, or change how mistakes are discussed. Action can begin while fear is present. Make a reversible, informed move after weighing its likely risks and the consequences of further delay.