

## Control: Risk, Runway & Decision Criteria

Once you start moving, it's surprisingly hard to stop and reassess when momentum takes over.

Before you execute, lock three things in:

### **1) DEFINE YOUR RUNWAY (TIME + MONEY)**

Runway isn't optimism—it's math. How many months can you sustain the transition without forcing bad decisions? What is your monthly burn rate (fixed + variable) costs. What are your financial and emotional buffers?

*Aks: If this takes longer than planned, what gives first—and what won't?*

**Runway buys options. Options buy good judgment.**

### **2) IDENTIFY ACCEPTABLE RISKS – AND NON-NEGOTIABLES**

**Every transition carries risk. The mistake is not naming which risks you will—and will not—accept.**

- What you will **not** do (role, location, hours, ethics, culture)
- What you will **not compromise** (family, health, values)
- What risks you *are* willing to accept (title, pay, learning curve, timing)

**If you don't define these early, pressure will define them for you.**

### **3) SET DECISION CRITERIA BEFORE EMOTIONS ENTERS THE ROOM**

**Momentum feels good—and clouds judgment.**

- Define now what triggers a yes, a pause, or a no.
- Decide in advance when you reassess, pivot, or stop.

This turns a stressful transition into a **managed operation**, not a reaction.

**Define the floor before you reach for the ceiling.**

*Try this with AI:* Write me a prompt that will help me plan for my transition. Ask questions that will help me define my runway in both time and money. Help me identify risks and non-negotiable. And build for me the decision criteria I need and appropriate triggers to decide when to keep going forward, pause, stop, or reassess.

**Lifelines from USNA Alumni Support Services**