

Push back the boundaries of your comfort zone

By Lyndsay Swinton

We all do it. We get cosy in our comfort zone, putting our feet up on life. But as the dust settles and begins to pile up around us, comfort turns sour. We get bored. Bored stiff. Bored, bored, bored! And as my mother says, "a bored person is a boring person".

We all need creativity and stimulation. So while you still have a teeny tiny spark of life left in you, try this...

Comfort Zone Expansion

"A ship in harbour is safe but that is not what ships were built for" – William Shedd,
19th Century author

Take a large piece of paper and a pen. Slap bang in the centre of the page, draw a small picture of yourself. Don't worry if it's a little stick person, just make sure you know it's you.

Now, we are going to assume you want to try something different; push yourself even if it's only a small step. Keep that thought in mind but don't do anything with it yet.

Comfort first

Think through the things you are comfortable and confident about. Draw or write these on the paper around the picture of you in the middle. If you are really, really happy with it, draw it close to you and if you are a little bit less sure about it, then draw it slightly further away. Now draw your comfort zone - a rough circle enclosing those things you find easy.

Discomfort next

Let's go back to the things you want to do or want to get more comfortable with. Draw or write these on the paper, again thinking about the distance between you and each thing.

A map of possibilities

Now you will have a map of possibilities. All those things now within your comfort zone were once unknown quantities, destinations never visited. And now you know them! So what can you do to make those possibilities real?

First off, forget about all the things that are hanging off the edge or don't even make it onto the paper. Leave them until you're ready to think about them again.

Make a start

Okay, now we've agreed on that, let's look at what's left. Pick the first possibility, closest to you in the middle and have a think about what you can do to make that happen. What is the first step that would take you there? What is the second? How will you know you've got there?

Now you've got a choice. Do you want to look at the next possibility or have you started enough for now thanks very much? It's up to you. Being realistic about what you can achieve given everything else that's going on in your life is to be respected. And if you've got energy enough for more, just repeat the process.

Expand your horizons and get comfortable with being uncomfortable. As my mother says "It's good for you!" (and she, of course, is never wrong).

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Owner, Management for the Rest of Us

www.mftrou.com

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