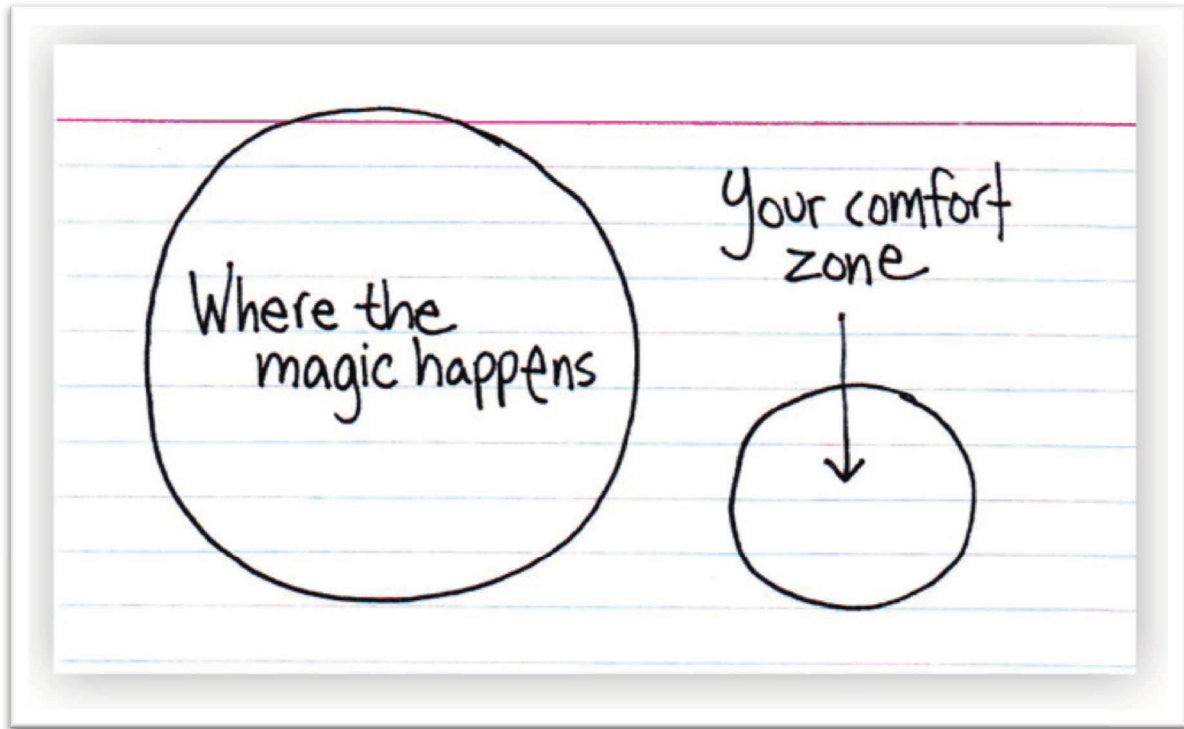




*Expect the Unexpected: How to Challenge Your
Comfort Zone and Stretch Your Skills*

Webinar Handout





What is a comfort zone?

- Everyone's comfort zone is different. What may expand your comfort zone may paralyze another.
- It is a behavioral state which a person operates in **anxiety neutral position**.
- Your routine and pattern are at *minimum stress and risk*.
- It is a state of mental security.
- The benefits of being in your comfort zone are it is low stress and low anxiety.



What Are The Benefits of Leaving Your Comfort Zone?

- Increased productivity
- Increased flexibility
- You become **more apt to challenge yourself**
- Increase your creative ability
- Opportunity presents itself to you
- Maximized performance / overall self-improvement



What Can You Do About It?

- A comfort zone isn't a good or bad thing (it's a natural state)
- As we age our comfort zone can **shrink** or **grow** – depending on how much we challenge it!
- You have a choice to leave your comfort zone to stretch and grow
 - this is a great way to build your own resilience



How Do You Push Past “Cozy” and Willingly Seek Discomfort?

Questions to ask yourself

- How do you make stepping out easier?
- What are some things you should consider before you step out?
- If you aren't expanding outside your own comfort zone or taking advantage of an opportunity, why not? What is preventing you from moving forward and saying yes to a new assignment at work?
- What are some strategies to incorporate when stepping out or expanding your comfort zone?

Things you can start doing now

(Use this space to write in some ideas on how you will start to challenge yourself.)

Ideas to get you started:

- join Toastmasters (a speaking club)
- join a committee at work
- connect with others who inspire you
- volunteer
- travel
- have an adventure
- challenge your body
- ask your executive to have short daily huddles with you
- go somewhere alone (if you never do that)
- go with a friend (if you tend to do everything alone)
- learn a new language
- take classes/learn a new skill
- stand up for yourself
- have a crucial conversation

Use this additional space to jot down more ideas on how you would like to start stretching your own comfort zone.



What Is The Plateau and Why Should I Spend Time There?

- You can't live outside your comfort zone all the time.
- We need this head space (the plateau) where we are least anxious/stressed

What you can do in the plateau

- celebrate the wins
- process the experience
- be mindful of what may come next
- rest up and prepare for that time by putting the right priorities first

Another Danger: too much of a good thing can be a bad thing. if you are always living outside the comfort zone the new and interesting or exciting came become so common that you no longer appreciate it.

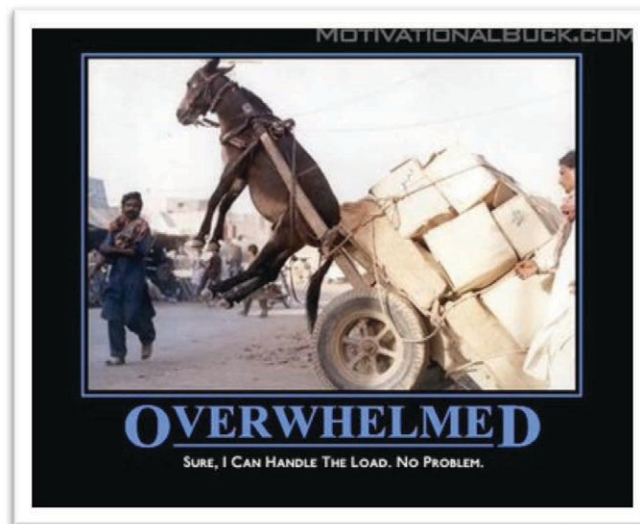
- to fight this try smaller challenges from time to time to keep your interest.



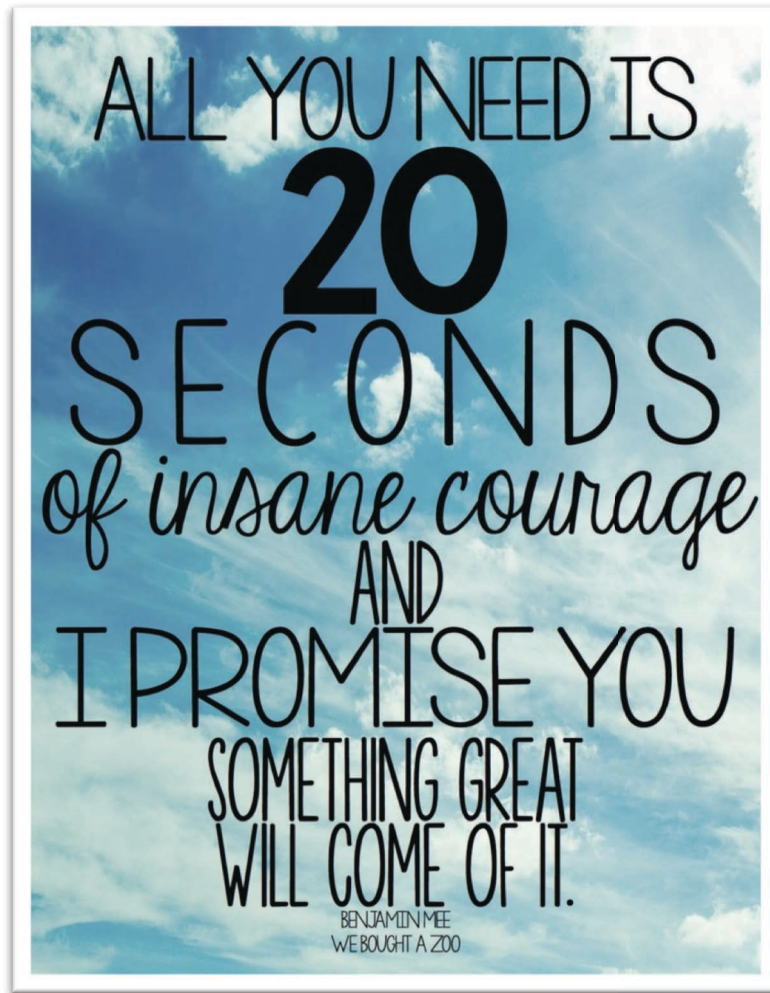
There Are Dangers Stretching Beyond Our Capacity

Pushing too hard can cause a negative result. Stay in-tune to your limits outside the growth zone. Know when it's time to stop before it's too late.

- Don't try and take on too much, too soon.
- Know that failure is a part of life, it's okay to stumble.
- Getting back up again is crucial.



When the optimal anxiety level is passed, and we're under too much stress, performance drastically deteriorates (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908 study)



Growing Your Comfort Zone Takes Action!

- Action is the scary part. Yet, once you get started it gets easier to continue to move forward.
- Assess three types of comfort zones with this tool & then determine where you need to start stretching yourself. <http://www.whatismycomfortzone.com/survey/>
 - **Professional** Comfort Zone
 - **Adrenaline** Comfort Zone
 - **Lifestyle** Comfort Zone
- **If you choose not to step out of your comfort zone you are surrendering all the possibility that exists outside it.**
- Do something courageous

Recommended Comfort Zone Busting Resources:

[Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates us by Daniel H. Pink](#)

[Danger In The Comfort Zone by Judith M. Bardwick](#)

[Daring Greatly by Brene Brown](#)

[Measuring Your Comfort Zone TEDx Talk by Marcus Taylor](#)

Future Science Leaders "[How to Grow Your Comfort Zone](#)" Infographic

Assessment: [Comfort Zone Calculator](#)

[13 Ways Women in Business Can Make a Difference](#) [Article]

[Getting Comfortable with Uncomfortable TEDx](#)

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