

GETTING PUSHED OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

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“A comfort zone is a beautiful place, but nothing ever grows there.”

~ Anonymous

My theming trend for January has been adventure. It is an exciting thing that we should fill our year with to make the most of it. Adventure takes us further than we would have ever dreamed, and this is not possible without pushing our comfort zones. How uncomfortable do you think it must have been to move—for the first time—halfway across the world alone? I didn't just push my comfort zone—I obliterated it!

There is nothing wrong with the comfort zone. We like it because it's safe and secure. It includes everything we know and all that we believe we can do; but the comfort zone is still a zone. It is a blocked off area separating our current position from one of amazing possibilities. Since we have made ourselves at home in the comfort zone, put on its plush slippers and wrapped ourselves in its thick blankets, it is easy to stay in it. This makes that first step outside the zone incredibly difficult, but once you brave it, you come to discover that there are many things that happen when you step outside that perfectly fluffy comfort zone.

You realize that it's okay

The world didn't end when you stepped outside your comfort zone. In fact, it continued without explosions and actually felt alright. Many times, it is the fear of some unknown consequence, harmful or even beneficial, that stops us from stepping outside our comfort zone. Even more so, it's the things and people holding us back. There is skepticism and doubt. What you have been doing has served you well and you wonder if things will be the same, dread they might get worse, or possibly fear they may get better.

When I moved to Shanghai, I was a ball of anxiety. The first month in, I was certain that I couldn't make it out here; and if I ran back home, I would have never learned that I would be just fine on my own. Sure, the start was rocky, but that makes sense—I had never done it before. There were sure to be learning pains. After I figured the ins and outs, I realized, *I got this*. Since it was okay then, I know that the next time it will be okay too. I wasn't missing out on anything by staying. I was missing out by not going. This can be said for any situation. It'll be okay to push beyond and it's also okay to push and try something else if things should not work out. Either way, it'll be fine.

You recognize that you are more than able

There is comfort in knowing that you can. You can do what you thought you never could and there's a relief in successfully accomplishing it. Sometimes we underestimate our own abilities, psyche ourselves out, or get comfortable in an idle state. Pushing your comfort zone forces you

to recognize that you are more than able because you become increasingly self-aware with each step.

Push your comfort zone to manifest your potential. If you never test yourself, you will never discover your true ability. In your comfort zone, you are certain of what you can do. Outside of it, you aren't—and that can be the scary part, not knowing if you actually can. But the point is **you will never know if you don't try**. Once you have waded those mysterious waters, you'll have learned for yourself what you're capable of and may even chance upon something you never knew about yourself. When you are more than able, you do. Having an awareness of your abilities removes doubt and gives you the needed confidence to press forward in all your endeavors.

The comfort zone becomes uncomfortable

Stop doing something long enough, you lose the desire to go back to it. As you journey further outside your comfort zone, you'll yearn for more with each step. The new experiences give confidence to continue testing limits. In doing so, there's growth, enlightenment, and surety despite the unknown along the way. There comes a point in where going back to the comfort zone is unacceptable—it's undesirable. Think of a game. As you pass each level, you strive to beat the next. If you are on level seven, you're not looking to go back to level two. That would be weird. You've leveled up and you can't go back.

When the comfort zone becomes uncomfortable, a change happens. This change may be internal or external. Your thoughts are different. You take on more challenging tasks. You're fine with trying out new places. You are not satisfied with complacency. The same old same old doesn't cut it anymore, and settling is no longer an option. **Life is not meant to be comfortable. It's meant to be lived.** Stepping outside your comfort zone allows you to do so. You know there's more and it becomes disturbing to not pursue those better things. Abundance is outside that plush little comfort zone.

Emboldened to go beyond your comfort zone, step forward knowing it will be alright no matter the outcome. All that matters is that you did it. Get outside your comfort zone to see what you can do and see how things start to change. After you do, you'll see how life begins.