

Stretching Out of Your Comfort Zone

Objective

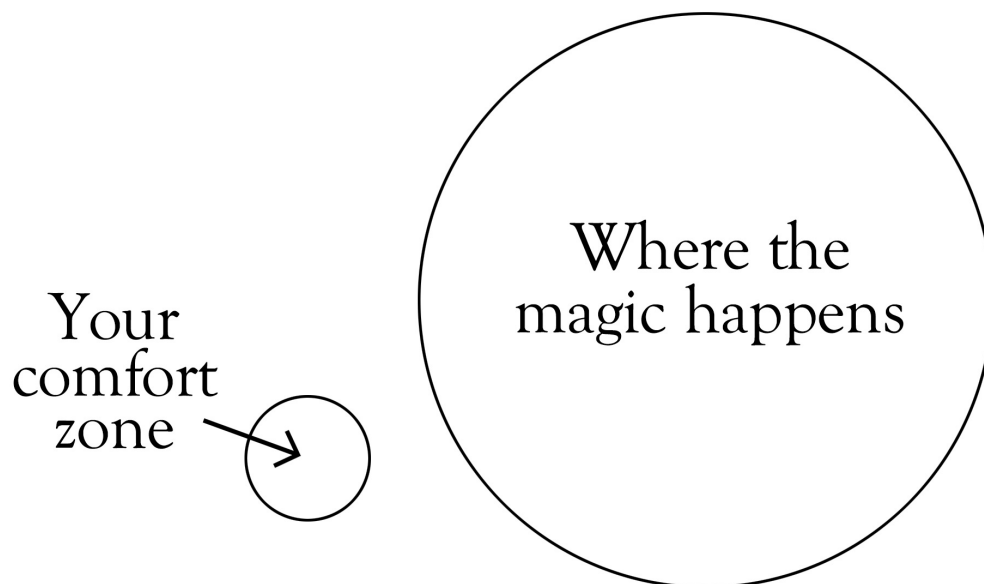
To begin taking safe steps toward new and different life experiences by identifying your comfort zone and thinking about how you can move beyond it.

You Should Know

Sometimes the mere idea of creating a safe network might feel daunting. If you are someone who is shy, feels anxious in social situations, tends to isolate, or otherwise avoids people or unfamiliar situations, it can be especially challenging.

Changing habits is hard. It's not like we, as creatures of habit, go marching forward from one stage to the next in one straight line. For most of us, it's three steps forward, one step back, or even cycling round and round, as we face our natural resistance to—and, often, fear of—change.

We all have a comfort zone—the things and objects, people, activities, and habits that keep us feeling safe. But here's the catch. Changing habits in a big way inevitably involves some discomfort.



Some years back, this image was making the online circuit.

Isn't this a great image? First, the MAGIC circle is a lot bigger than the COMFORT ZONE circle. That's encouraging! But see that empty space between the circles? That space represents the UNKNOWN, which can be both exciting and scary to most people.

To get from one circle to the other, you'll have to navigate some unknown territory. Have you ever heard the saying "Leap, and the net will appear"? It's the same idea. With good planning and good support, you can succeed. But there are no guarantees. As Yoda from the *Star Wars* movies said: "Do or do not. There is no try."

What to Do

In this exercise, you'll identify the components of your personal comfort zone. Next, you'll imagine "where the magic happens" for you. Then, you'll identify some concrete steps to take to guide you along your journey.

What are the components of your comfort zone? What helps you feel safe but might be interfering with your moving forward? Be as detailed as you can.

Things/Objects

People

Activities

Habits

What are your thoughts and feelings about the unknown (that blank space between the circles)? What has helped in the past when you succeeded in moving out of your comfort zone and into the unknown in your life?

What items in your list represent “where the magic happens” for you?

What steps are you willing to take to get closer to “where the magic happens” for you? Be detailed. Be optimistic while still being realistic.

Today

Tomorrow

In the next week

In the next month

In the next year

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

Is there anything in particular you learned from this exercise?
