

# HOW TO GET OUT OF YOUR *Comfort Zone*

**W**e all have comfort zones, in our relationships, careers, businesses and lifestyles. A comfort zone is a situation, thought or feeling that is familiar, predictable and relatively risk-free. Being inside your comfort zone is easy, even if you're bored and unfulfilled being stuck there! It might seem more comfortable to stay in rather than go to the gym or go for a jog, but nobody gets fitter by watching TV! In all life areas, if you do what you're used to, and avoid new, uncertain situations, there's no need to change or grow.

For many of us, stepping out of our comfort zones includes changing job or career, starting a business, networking, making cold calls and public speaking. Yes, avoiding these things means avoiding challenge, stress, risk, exposure and perhaps even failure – but the downside is that it also means avoiding developing confidence, skills, abilities and potential success – because these only come with stepping outside your comfort zone.

If you keep doing what you've always done, you'll keep getting the same results. Is that what you really want?

If it is, great! If not, what's keeping you stuck?

The difference between achievers and people who feel stuck is not that achievers are fearless. It's simply that they recognise fear as a signal that they are stepping into the unknown, instead of feeling paralyzed by it.

So if you have fear, investigate it. What's the worst thing that could happen if you stepped out of the comfort zone? How bad could it really be? Now imagine the opposite – imagine staying in your comfort zone forever – what's the worst thing that could happen in this scenario? You may be surprised to find that this isn't so comfortable after all!

The second, deeper, reason for staying stuck is hidden self-limiting beliefs. These are deep, unchecked and unchallenged negative thoughts we have about ourselves. They are usually variations of the theme 'I'm not good enough'.

What are your self-limiting beliefs? Use the statements on the right to identify your beliefs, then follow this process to overcome them:

**Step 1:** Ask yourself – is your belief really true? Is it completely true, 100% of the time?

**Step 2:** Instead of looking for evidence to support your old limiting belief, look for evidence of its opposite. If you think you're too old to set up your own business, remember the other things you've started as you've got older, or look at people older than you who have successfully changed their life path. If you think you're not confident enough to go networking, ask yourself what you are confident in. Make a list of all the times you've acted or felt confident in the past.

**Step 3:** Every time you hear the old negative voice in your head, counter it with your favourite piece of positive evidence. Eventually, this positive voice will become your new habit.

**Step 4:** Take action! This is the crucial step everyone needs to take when getting out of the comfort zone. The key to success is to take small steps. If networking events seem scary, start talking to people you meet in daily life about what you do, and build your confidence from there. If public speaking is your biggest fear, practise by addressing friends or small groups.

When you start to move forwards, your comfort zone will expand, your confidence will increase, doors will open, and you'll gain real satisfaction as you start to realise what you're truly capable of.

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For many people, the major factor is fear. Our fears often revolve around questions such as:

- What could I lose?
- What will other people think?
- What if I fail?
- What happens if I do succeed, and I no longer fit in?

The second, deeper, reason for staying stuck is hidden self-limiting beliefs. These include:

- I'm not good enough to...
- I don't deserve to...
- I can't / couldn't...
- I'm not clever / confident / knowledgeable / experienced enough to...
- I'm too old / young / shy / stupid to...
- I'm not the kind of person who...