

# OVER THE EDGE

HOW TO BREAK OUT OF THE  
COMFORT ZONE



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# Introduction

“Life begins at the end of the comfort zone.”

This is one of the most famous Neale Donald Walsch quotes and there's a good chance that you heard it before. But what the comfort zone really is and what is this magical place just outside of it? What is its nature and how does it work? What will be different if I dare to take a step out of it? What will happen if I stay where I am? If I make the decision to break out, where do I even start? These are all the questions that this eBook is trying to answer.

It's here to help you understand what the comfort zone is, what the benefits of stepping over its edge are and how to break out of it. This book is for the people who made the decision to better themselves and try new things but always get stuck at some point, maybe during the planning maybe just before the execution.

If you are wondering can you trust the information, the ideas, the methods the tips and tricks presented here, I have good news for you. You are holding the proof right now. This book is the most obvious proof I can show you. Let me explain.

I was a chronic procrastinator. I always had projects in my life, but I never saw them thru. There was always one point when I got stuck and this was often just before the execution or the doing phase. You have no idea how many unfinished ideas and plans are on the pages of the notebooks I wrote in my life. But with time, I realized the reason behind all this. The next step I had to take was always out of my comfort zone. After this, I spend time on reading up on the topic, looking for studies, methods and answers. What I got helped me break out of my comfort zone and these findings are all collected in this eBook.

## **About the comfort zone**

According to Judith Bardwick, the comfort zone is a behavioral state where a person operates in an anxiety-neutral position. To make it simpler the comfort zone is a cluster of things and actions that you do with ease and with low or no anxiety. Things that you feel comfortable doing are in your comfort zone. Things that you are not comfortable doing is outside of your comfort zone. But how does this work, how does this affects your life?

First of all, there are a number of basic actions that you do every day. You do them without hesita-

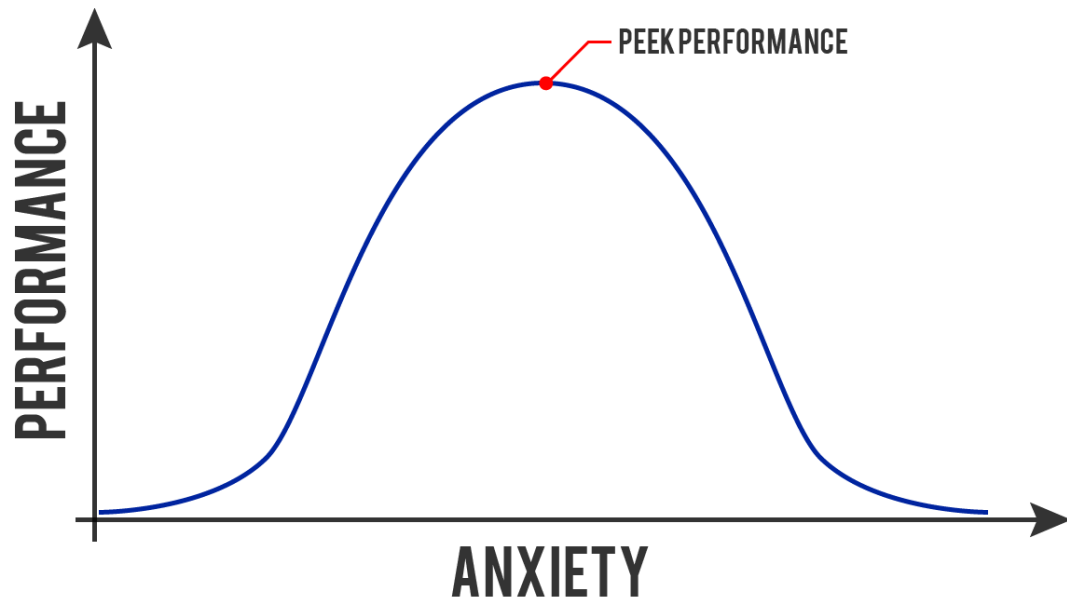
tion or anxiety. Things like waking up in the morning or brushing your teeth. These actions are inside of your comfort zone. But are you anxious talking to a stranger on an interview or founding a company? Do you feel discomfort before doing a bungee-jump or learning to drive? For some people, these actions seem natural and for some, it may seem terrifying because we all have different comfort zones.

Somewhere between the things we do with ease and the things that make us panic, there is a thin layer that we will just call the learning zone for now. What is this layer is all about?



Studies show that to have a small amount of stress is actually beneficial. According to Robert Yerkes and John Dodson performance increas-

es with anxiety up to a point, but from there, performance will plummet. The graph shown here was first published in 1908 and it is often referred to as Yerkes-Dodson bell.



While you are in the state of mind your productivity and learning ability is enhanced. This is the learning zone. Here you are already experiencing something new and you feel a small amount of discomfort. Just remember the first few days of grade school, work or college. You felt uncertainty or maybe even fear. This is completely normal when experiencing something outside of the comfort zone, but the negative feelings will fade as you step out more and more often.

There is another way to interpret the results of the Yerkes-Dodson experiments: a totally stress-free environment has significantly lower productivity compared to one with a constant, small

amount of stress level. This means while you are in your comfort zone, you are underperforming and underachieving. Can you afford to be an underachiever?

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that the comfort zone is bad. I'm saying that spending your entire life there is bad. Returning to the comfort zone to rest and to process the experiences is something you have to do from time to time. Don't think about this as the only options are A or B, but more like a pendulum. A pendulum, that is in constant motion, visiting both the outside and the inside of the comfort zone.

## **The risk of staying inside of the comfort zone for the rest of your life**

Stopping experiencing new stuff is a highly risky thing, if not the riskiest. Not just because you are not giving your 100%, but life will only get harder as well. Life will constantly throw more and more problems, issues and discomfort at you. If you stay in the safe zone you will never learn how to deal with this discomfort and you will have an extremely hard life. You will never know how to deal with hard situations, how to adapt and how to come out on top. Life will bring discomfort from

time to time. The only question is will you be ready when it happens? I urge you to train for those moments with the ideas presented here, in this book.

As life goes by and you are not making an effort to expand your boundaries your comfort zone will shrink. It will shrink to a point where it will become suffocating. Just think about it. We all know an elderly person whose comfort zone shrunk so much over the past few decades, that the edge of their comfort zone is basically their house's threshold. At some point, they stopped experiencing new stuff, as they settled for comfort after retirement. Do you want to be scared to leave your own house in the last chapters of your life? No, because no one does.

## **The benefits of leaving the comfort zone**

Leaving the comfort zone has numerous benefits, but the most significant ones are related to personal development. Growing as a human being and discovering more and more of the world we live has to be the most rewarding experience. At [GoalsInfinite.com](http://GoalsInfinite.com) we focus our efforts to motivate and help you to grow and improve yourself



every day. It is our mission. Now, let's talk about how leaving your comfort zone will help your personal growth.

As you step outside of the comfort zone for the first time and deal with the resistance that it can come with, you come to the realization, that it is not so bad. When you cross the edge the second time it will be even easier. Because every time you get out of your comfort zone you are expanding its boundaries and it will grow. You'll be comfortable doing more things and you'll feel less anxiety, stress and discomfort when facing something new or uncertain. If right now, you have problems dealing with new situations and you just freeze and don't even know where to start this is the way to train yourself. Stepping outside of your comfort zone will help you to adapt to new situations faster.

I honestly believe that one of the most important things we have to do with our lives is breaking the chains of mediocrity and doing extraordinary things. Most of the time we'll have to develop skills and learn to do this. You probably have a list of feats, skills and knowledge, that you always wanted to have. Well, now is the time start working towards them. Personal development is a

key component in our lives and if you think that some skills cannot be developed or talent is more valuable than effort you are wrong.

Carol Dweck in her book “Mindset” presents numerous studies that show the exact opposite. It shows that every skill can be developed no matter what, but it is always about the way you think about yourself and the way you think about your ability to learn.

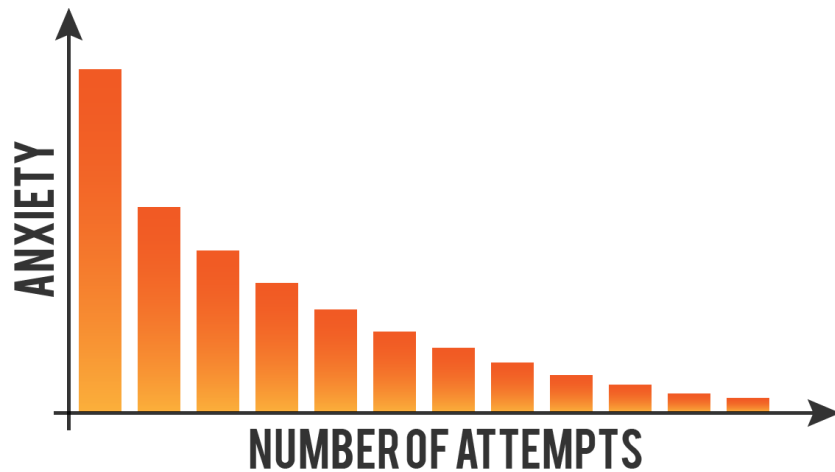
Leaving the comfort zone will increase productivity when you are experiencing the healthy amount of anxiety. We already talked about this, but this is important. If you want to be a high achiever you'll have to start making trips over the edge.

For last, but not least it will help you deal with the dullness of life and the daily grind. Entering the rat race and just doing our jobs every day can become dull very fast. We slip into a routine that only covers our basic needs, but nothing more. Once you leave and start experiencing new things you enjoy, you'll never want to stop. There is probably a bucket list in your head which contains a list of fun activities, that you want to experience once in your life. Probably none of those will ever happen if you just sit in the middle of comfort.

You'll have to make them happen. You have to spend your time well right now, starting today. Experience what you haven't experienced, do what you haven't done before, you have to learn what you don't know yet. Take the first step to becoming the person you always wanted to be. Just because you are afraid to face your limitations that doesn't mean you'll have to spend your life in comfort. Face these limitations on your own terms, and don't let life just push you wherever it wants to.

## **How to break out of the comfort zone?**

As I mentioned earlier, breaking out of your comfort zone for the first time is probably going to be the hardest one. If you are reading this book there's a good chance you already tried and I'm guessing it did not go well. The good news is that with every trip, it'll get easier as shown here on this graph. The recipe you'll find here will help you succeed in crossing the edge, and it only has two components: motivation and an activity.



If the facts and reasons presented earlier in this book are not motivating enough, your desires can be used as sources of motivation. We all wish to have certain traits and characteristics or even a different lifestyle. What would be the most rewarding thing about those changes? How would your life be any better? Will you become a high achiever? Think about the reward and the benefits of those changes. I'd like you to think about these questions for 10-15 minutes, maybe even take notes or do a visualization exercise. I wrote an article on this topic called [Planning your future starts with you](#). Craving those changes will bring you the motivation you need to do the first steps.

Now, let's talk about the first activity you'll do outside of your comfort zone. It will bring a smaller or larger amount of discomfort, but that is nothing compared to the benefits in the long term. The only problem here is that we have limitless op-

tions, but here are a few pointers to help you choose:

- There's probably an experience that you always wished to have. Something on your bucket list or a life goal. The one thing you always wanted, but for some reason you just never did it. Now is the time to bring that idea into reality.
- As motivation is not a static thing I urge you to take action as soon as you can. Pick something you can do within 2 days. Today is the best, tomorrow is okay, and the day after tomorrow is late.
- Analysis paralysis can be a hurdle for many. To avoid getting stuck in the planning phase pick something that requires only a small amount of planning.
- When you finally decided what you will do, don't give it an extra thought. Get to the doing as fast as you can. I wrote a motivational article on this topic called [Doing is the single most important step you'll ever do.](#)
- If you worry too much about what will happen outside of the comfort zone, just remember this: No matter what happens, you'll be fine!

If you still have no idea what activity to pick, here's a list of best ones available:

- Travel somewhere you haven't been before. This is one of the biggest steps you can take. It will not only get you out of the house for a longer period, but you will be forced to meet new people, visit new places and try out new things. It works on different levels. There are a lot of travel addicts out there who tried it, loved it and now can't stop it.
- Talk to someone you always wanted to have a conversation with. It doesn't matter if you talk to your idol, to a stranger on the street or to the prettiest girl at the office, as long as it is out of your comfort zone. Human interaction can be a big step for many of us when social media is the accepted standard for keeping in touch with each other.
- Learn something. Learning a new language, to play an instrument or a new skill can be a fascinating experience. For example, I really enjoy writing computer codes. I find it fascinating to create something useful or fun out of nothing with only the knowledge in my head and a computer. When finally the few lines of code

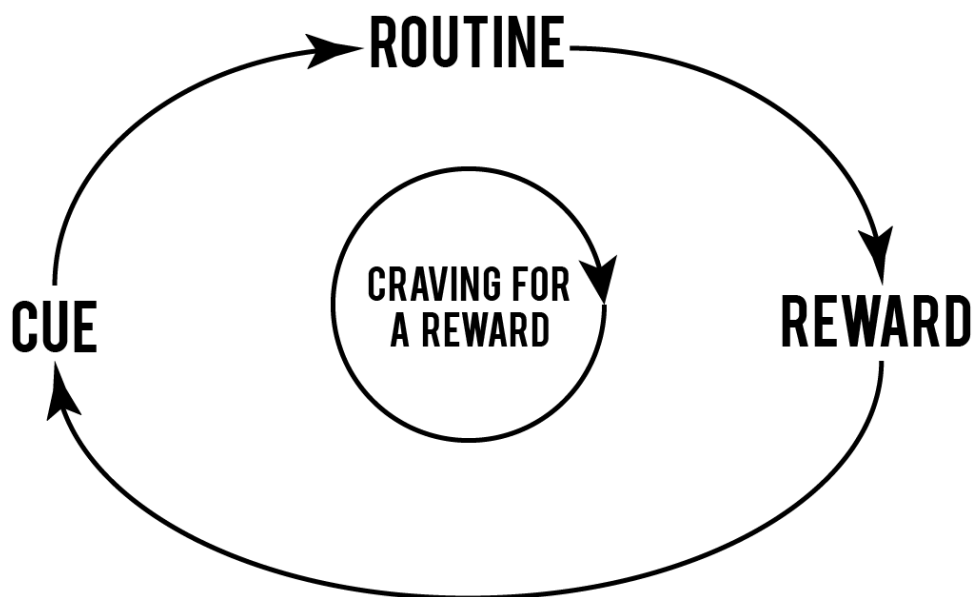
start doing what you want them to do is one of the best feelings ever for me.

- Eat something you always wanted. This is the easiest task on this list. You can do this right now! Go down the street and order a dish in that restaurant you always wanted to try. Even better, adopt a new style of cooking. Creating delicious food with new techniques and spices you never tried before is one of the most rewarding feelings ever.
- Volunteer for something. Nowadays there are endless opportunities to volunteers. No matter what do you believe in or have strong feelings about, there's a group you can join and help. You'll do things you never did before and you'll meet people who have similar interests.
- Do a 30-day challenge. The internet is full of these right now. When it is physical exercise, coding or even napping there's a challenge for it, believe me. You can also come up with your own one. Pick something you always wanted to try and do it for 30 days. At the end of it, you'll know is it really the thing you always wanted to do? Maybe it is, maybe it's not, but at the end of the journey, you'll know. This is one of the

best options the get out of your comfort zone when it comes to consistency.

## **Building the habit of experiencing the new**

We all have habits. Most of the time they form naturally, but you can construct one for yourself as well. In Charles Duhigg's book "The power of habit", he uses a simple model to explain the formation of habits, no matter if they are good or bad ones. This model uses four components: a cue that triggers the process, the routine action we do, the craving feeling of a reward and the reward itself. The picture below explains the connection between them.



Duhigg explains that the craving feeling is the key to building a habit successfully. The desire of



the rewards is what drives both our bad and good routines as well. To get the full picture I recommend reading Duhigg's book as it is both educational and entertaining.

As mentioned above, to increase your boundaries and supercharge your personal development you'll have to take frequent trips outside of your comfort zone. The best way to do this is to make a habit of it. Discovering more and more of the world we live in is highly rewarding and the experience that it will come with will hook you for life. You will have the craving feeling that you need to form this habit and you'll only have to do is to feed this flame.

**I wish you the best of luck with this!**

**Gabor**

# About GoalsInfinite.com



Goals Infinite is a personal development blog that was founded in 2016 with one purpose: to help people who made the decision to better themselves.

Every Friday we post articles on motivation, mindset and more. If you are interested in topics as such, I highly recommend you to become a subscriber to our newsletter, so you can stay updated with our latest content.

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