Learning to be Comfortable with Discomfort

_The secret to success lies in the very thing you’re avoiding._

_by Thomas Oppong_

The secret to success lies in the very thing you’re avoiding.

Those things that seem to break you down and humble your spirit.

“Discomfort brings engagement and change. Discomfort means you’re doing something others are unlikely to do, because they’re hiding out in the comfortable zone,” says Seth Godin.

Seek out discomfort. Be deliberate about doing things that push your limits magnificently.

Difficulty helps us to grow.

Dr. Elizabeth Lombardo, Psychologist and author of _Better Than Perfect_, says people who regularly seek out fresh experiences tend to be more creative and emotionally resilient than those who remain stuck in a routine.

“Breaking your own mold can only make you stronger and more confident to reach higher levels in your professional and personal life,” she says.

If you want long-term success, stop avoiding what’s hard, and embrace it now.

If you’re truly pushing yourself to improve — in any capacity whatsoever — you are uncomfortable.

When you are challenged, you are asked to become more than you were.

That means creating new perspectives, acquiring new skills and pushing boundaries.

In other words you have to expand your understanding in order to be able to overcome the obstacles facing you.

_If everything is too good, you’re probably stuck not being awesome._

Learning to be comfortable with discomfort is one of the most important skills you can ever have to live a truly fulfilling life.

If you learn this skill, you can master pretty much anything.

Embracing and staying with discomfort doesn’t come naturally.

If you are a seeker of any kind you will push boundaries.

**Commit to the uncomfortable**

It’s easy to isolate yourself in a comfort zone where no one challenges your ideas, asks tough questions or push you to questions your decisions and improve.

Encourage challenges to your judgment, don’t shirk from them.

You can better manage threats and opportunities if you open up to challenge.
Everyone has blind spots. Diverse thinkers can help you fill the gaps where you fall short, and challenge your assumptions to help you become a better thinker.

You can rely on them to think differently and offer fresh solutions.

Do you keep doing what’s always been done, or challenge old assumptions and try new approaches to problems?

Do you proactively seek new challenges or just manage those you already have?

Willingly seeking out the uncomfortable is hard.

It might shake your confidence but that’s precisely the point.

The more you offer yourself measured doses of unfamiliar, high-pressure experiences, the better your chances of making better and informed decisions, solving problems, and becoming the best version of yourself.

It may feel uncomfortable at first, but by acknowledging biases and misguided judgments, you can significantly reduce the risk of making errors.

**Master discomfort**

Discomfort can be the joyful key that opens up everything for you.

You can beat procrastination, start a new habit, learn a new language, make it through challenges and physically grueling events, explore new things, speak on a stage, and even embrace the minimalist lifestyle.

‘Discomfort is very much part of my master plan.’ — Jonathan Lethem

These tasks may seem more ‘painful’ at first, but you’ll achieve more that can impact your end result. And that will be just the start.

Repetition expands your comfort boundaries.

If you practice your discomforts enough, with different activities, your comfort zone will expand to include discomfort. And then you can master your personal bubble.

Think about it. How many things were once uncomfortable for you which you now accept without difficulty?

Unfortunately, many people avoid discomfort.

They do everything they can to avoid it. They are just too comfortable to be pushed or bothered to make a change or improve their lives.

This is perhaps the biggest limiting factor for most people, and it’s why you can’t change your habits. But the good news is, whatever you are feeling discomfort about, there is someone else out there, feeling exactly the same thing.

You are never really alone in your discomfort. Sometimes just knowing that can make us feel more comfortable in pushing beyond the obvious.

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Discomfort is a catalyst for progress!

Think of the mind as a muscle that naturally tightens up over time unless it is consciously worked upon. Your personal growth significantly depends on new challenges and activities. Tackle the fear that has kept you from living your best life.

Your mind has a way of rising to the occasion.

Challenge it, and it will reward you.

Jerry Dunn says, ‘Don’t limit your challenges; challenge your limits.’

Challenge your mind — even making it a little uncomfortable by pushing yourself to learn tasks that may not come naturally.

Most things seem impossible until they are done. Give yourself permission to think and act beyond the usual.

Great life, work or art, like a healthy financial portfolio, takes time to mature. Your best work and life is ahead of you and will emerge with patient attention, time, and strategic action.

And you are the only one that can push yourself a little bit further.

In an interview with Outside Magazine, Dean Karnazes (The UltramarathonMan and Author of ‘Ultramarathon Man: Confessions of an All Night Runner’), made a profound statement:

“Western culture has things a little backwards right now. We think that if we had every comfort available to us, we’d be happy. We equate comfort with happiness. And now we’re so comfortable we’re miserable. There’s no struggle in our lives. No sense of adventure. We get in a car, we get in an elevator, it all comes easy. What I’ve found is that I’m never more alive than when I’m pushing and I’m in pain, and I’m struggling for high achievement, and in that struggle I think there’s a magic.”

Practice, even when it hurts

“If you’re not growing, you’re dying.” -Anthony Robbins

The simple fact of the matter is that most of the time we are inconsistent.

I can guarantee that if you set a schedule for any task and start sticking to it, there will be days when you feel like quitting.

That never goes away.

But the ultimate goal will keep you sane.

And progress will be your ultimate motivation.

Stepping up when it’s annoying or painful or draining builds character.

Be good at making time for what matters to you — especially when you don’t feel like it.