

PUSH YOUR LIMITS

**How To Push Outside Your Comfort Zone
So You Can Achieve Success**



Disclaimer

This e-book has been written for information purposes only. Every effort has been made to make this ebook as complete and accurate as possible. However, there may be mistakes in typography or content. Also, this e-book provides information only up to the publishing date. Therefore, this ebook should be used as a guide - not as the ultimate source.

The purpose of this ebook is to educate. The author and the publisher does not warrant that the information contained in this e-book is fully complete and shall not be responsible for any errors or omissions. The author and publisher shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by this e-book.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Are You Stuck in a Rut	4
Chapter 2: Defining Success	15
Chapter 3: Changing Perspective.....	33
Chapter 4: Get Comfortable being Uncomfortable	51
Personal growth happens outside of your comfort zone.	52

Chapter 1: Are You Stuck in a Rut

Are you one of those people that often remark how fast time has flown by?

Do you find yourself wishing the time would pass quickly so you can enjoy your upcoming vacation?

Have you ever had a hard time remembering something you did the previous day?

Yes, I do realize that some of these are things that happen as we get older and have more responsibility but have you ever considered that it could be something else?

Maybe you're stuck in a rut.

If you're reading this book, you probably have a goal you'd like to accomplish or plans you'd like to execute. You know you need a push but you may not be sure what kind of push you need. Or you may know what kind of push you need but not how to get it.

I recognize that feeling. I've felt it myself. It can be isolating and frustrating. It can also seem like it's your fault that you need this push.

Yes it is your job to take the steps to fulfill your destiny but sometimes the day to day details of life can become overwhelming. As we get older, we begin to realize that while pursuing our dreams is important so is becoming a responsible adult.

You may find yourself with a job, family and household to run or take care of and those daily tasks take time. In fact, they can take up all of your time without you realizing it. They're all important. You can't NOT do them. You don't have that option.

What typically ends up happening in these situations is that we put ourselves on the back burner. We sacrifice our need to pursue our dreams in favor of doing what is expected of us. If possible, we honor our need for time to focus on ourselves to those moments when we're not being called upon to handle daily tasks. For some people this time can quickly dwindle down to nothing.

As we age our responsibilities tend to increase. It feels self-indulgent to take time away from what you should be doing to do something you really want to be doing. So rather than being "selfish" you put your head down and take care of your responsibilities. Then when you look back up three years have passed by.

This is one of the prevailing reasons why people don't actively pursue their dreams, even if only occasionally. It feels selfish and it's wrong to be selfish especially if you have other people to take care of. But is it really wrong to be selfish?

Is it really wrong to do something for yourself? Does that actually make you selfish?

Let me be very clear. I'm not saying any of this to encourage you to shirk your daily responsibilities. Your daily responsibilities are important. For many of us they're necessary for proper survival. If you don't work, your family doesn't eat. This counts even if you have a family of one. Your family has some basic needs that you have to maintain like nourishment, shelter and clothing.

I get it. I don't want you to think that I'm writing this book to spout beliefs that are based on me living a life of privilege. I've been where you are and I'm very aware of how challenging it can be to pursue a dream while maintaining responsibilities.

I'm taking the time to mention the obvious and highlight your responsibilities to make a point. I understand your perspective. I'm sharing this information with you based on my own personal experience. Many of the books I've read looking for direction and inspiration tend to provide some great insight but I'm often left feeling let down after I'm done reading.

Sometimes I've had the feeling that the writers of those books have no idea about my reality. They don't have to figure out how to juggle working full time, managing a household and maintaining a social life (if I'm lucky). They have life circumstances that I've never had. They have money, a

supportive husband, maid service, a nanny or the overall ability to step away from life and focus on their dreams.

I don't have that. I've never had that. I'm a regular person who had to figure out a way to run my life and push my limits at the same time. I had to take a moment to figure out what my next steps would be even before I had taken my first step. Then I had to take the first step not knowing if my next steps would work.

I had to take that all too common leap of faith that we keep hearing about. I had to wrestle with being considered "selfish" because I was pursuing my dreams.

I'm saying all of this because I'm more like you than you think. The insights I'm going to share in this book don't come from a special place of privilege. They come from a special place of determination.

So from that perspective, I am writing this book and giving you these insights. I will also be sharing stories from other people who have found a way to push their limits as well. I realize that my perspective isn't the only one. We can and should learn from the experiences of others even if their lives don't look like ours.

Expect to see some variety here and read some different perspectives. I didn't write this book to sell you on what I think. I'm writing it to show you how to step outside of your comfort zone and be successful.

So back to the title of this chapter, “are you stuck in a rut?”

It’s important to determine whether you need to climb out of a rut or if there’s something else keeping you from where you want to be. Don’t worry, this book won’t focus solely on climbing out of a rut but it’s an important place to start.

Many people automatically assume that they’re stuck in a rut when it feels like their lives have stalled. That may or may not be the case. You don’t want to take the time trying to get yourself out of a rut if you’re not in one.

Here are some questions to ask yourself to determine if you’re truly stuck in a rut.

1. Do I often feel like I’m working really hard but not making much progress?

If you’ve ever seen a hamster or a mouse on a wheel and could relate, you may be stuck in a rut. You know how to put in a strong effort when necessary. In fact, you tend to give everything 100% effort and that usually works. But for some reason you don’t feel like your hard work is paying off. It’s not pushing you to the place you think you should be.

2. Do I find myself taking unnecessary risks to inject some excitement into my life?

There are people who are real life adrenaline junkies. They enjoy the high that comes from taking a crazy risk and succeeding. So I

understand if you're one of those types of people. But there is a huge difference between being an adrenaline junkie and just being bored. Adrenaline junkies tend to work really hard to make sure that they can handle the things they enjoy doing. They tend to be in great shape and have trained extensively. No one who does extreme sports just goes out and decides to do a ski jump off of the side of a mountain without knowing how to ski really well. If you only workout three times a week and you suddenly decide to buy a motorcycle and start racing, you are more than likely bored. You have to be willing to put the work in to build that skill first. Yes your life will become more exciting but not until you've put a lot of practice in first. You can't just hop on a motorcycle and race it if you don't know how to ride slowly. If you find yourself randomly jumping headfirst into risky situations to make your life more exciting, you may be stuck in a rut.

3. Am I waiting impatiently for the days to go by until I can go on vacation?

If you've found a way to incorporate vacation time into your schedule, that's great. You are definitely on the right track. It's important to make sure that you have down time on a consistent basis. However it's not helpful if you spend all of your time waiting until you are on vacation to enjoy life. Some people spend their days waiting for that time when they can go on vacation or enjoy time off from work. Then their lives begin to revolve around the days off. It can become a pattern. If this has become your pattern then you may be stuck in a rut.

4. Is my mojo gone?

There could come a time when you no longer feel quite like yourself. You may still be rocking and rolling at work and at home but you no longer get the same thrill. You've gotten so accustomed to functioning at your current level that it no longer fuels you. This is what many people experience when they get stuck in a rut. You may not be able to articulate exactly what's not right but you know it's something.

5. Do I feel like my life is happening around me?

Have you ever felt like your life was swirling around you like a hurricane of activity? There are situations where it can feel like you're the center of a hurricane but that shouldn't be how you define your life. Your life shouldn't be happening to you. It should be happening with you. When you start to feel as if you don't have control over your daily activities, you may be stuck in a rut.

The thing about being stuck in a rut is that it doesn't mean you aren't working, moving or advancing. You could very well be doing all of those things. You probably are. The problem is that what you've been doing isn't fulfilling you. This can be frustrating, especially if those things once made you feel happy and fulfilled.

When you start experiencing these feelings, you are most likely stuck in a rut. Being stuck in a rut involves taking a step back from your life and assessing why you feel that way.

It's important to figure out why you feel stuck so you can zero in on the area that needs changing. It's virtually impossible to pull yourself out of a rut or give yourself the push you need if you don't know why it's necessary. However, there are some other situations that can keep you tucked safely inside your comfort zone as well. Although they're not to be confused with being stuck in a rut, they must also be considered.

1. Fear/Anxiety

Sometimes you may have a goal that you'd like to accomplish but you're afraid to try it. Fear is a compelling reason why many people don't push themselves further. It can manifest itself in a variety of ways that can be challenging to overcome.

a. Fear of failure

Failing can be uncomfortable, frustrating or downright painful. If you put all of your effort into doing something and it fails, that can stop you from ever trying again. No one likes to fail. It's not a great feeling and no matter how often you experience it, you never get used to it.

b. Fear of success

When you succeed at something, it definitely feels good. It can make you much more confident about trying something new again. It also tends to leave you with extra responsibility. Once you've shown that you can succeed at something, people tend to expect more from you. It's one of the side effects of success that many people aren't prepared to deal with. Heightened expectations can be challenging to accept.

2. Lack of confidence

You may be perfectly qualified to pursue your dreams but you may not see it. There are some people who have all of the tools and skills they need but they are missing the most important element—confidence. You have to believe you can do it or you never will.

3. Discomfort

It's uncomfortable breaking habits even if it's just to insert something new. No one likes to be uncomfortable even if it's for a good reason. Consider how many people hate going to the doctor or the dentist. Some people will suffer through pain and illness rather than going to the doctor or dentist. True it can be uncomfortable being examined by either (and I am no fan of the dentist myself) but in those cases the discomfort is for a good reason—your health. If people avoid doing something that could positively affect their health because it may be uncomfortable, it makes sense that they may avoid doing something that could positively affect their future for the same reason.

Even if you're not stuck in a rut and are experiencing these other things it's still important that you figure out the cause of it. You have to address the root of anything that's stopping you from pursuing your dream and stepping outside of your comfort zone. When you're able to address the root of a problem, you're much better able to successfully deal with it.

There is, however, one other reason people don't pursue their dreams—their situations. If you notice, I didn't list that as something that prevents

you from reaching your goals. If you stop and take note the above reasons I shared are all personal. They're all focused on you.

When it comes to tackling your destiny you can never let something outside of you decide whether you do it or not.

You should never give someone or something else power over your life. This is dangerous and makes it way too easy for you to find an excuse to put your dreams aside. Initially this may seem like a noble thing to do. Many people do it. You may put your dreams to the side for your children, parents, spouse or sibling. I get it. You want to do what's best for these people and you love them.

Unfortunately putting this amount of responsibility on someone else isn't fair even if they ask you to do it. Your happiness is ultimately YOUR responsibility. You have the power to change or not change your life. If you give this power to someone else, it gives them the ability to determine where your life goes.

Putting this kind of power into the hands of someone else makes you helpless when it comes to making changes when the time comes. This can lead to feelings of frustration that you can't fix. Don't do this.

The only reasons why you aren't pursuing your goals should be reasons you can realistically change. They have to be reasons based only on you, no one else.

Ultimately YOU are the only one who has power over your life. If you aren't pursuing your goals because of someone else, you are essentially using that person as an excuse or a buffer. It's always easier to place responsibility on someone else than yourself.

Stepping outside of your comfort zone isn't easy.

You shouldn't expect it to be easy. Be prepared to do some tough personal work. If you have goals to pursue but haven't, it's important that you figure out why and fix it. I've been where you are. In fact, I expect I'll be here again.

The process of stepping outside of your comfort zone and pushing your limits is an ongoing one. It doesn't really get any easier. It just becomes an integral part of personal growth. So buckle up. This is going to be an interesting ride.

Chapter 2: Defining Success

Once you've established what's holding you back, you're prepared to move forward into pushing yourself beyond your limits.

Well, let me stop here.

I realize I just said that like it just requires the snap of your fingers and you'll be ready to move on. I don't want to trivialize the work you need to do before you get to this point. If you haven't connected with any of the reasons I shared in the previous chapter, take a moment and re-read it.

The purpose of this isn't for you to focus on your challenges but you have to identify them in order to overcome them. So if there isn't one specific reason that's hitting you, look for two. It's entirely possible that there is more than one thing holding you back. You could be stuck in a rut and dealing with fear of success. You could also be facing fear of failure and lack of confidence.

If that's the case, it's perfectly fine. Identify those reasons and keep them in mind. In fact, you should write them down. Put them in a place where you can see them while you work on moving past them. By confronting your challenges head on it's the best way to get past them.

Yes, I know it's not pleasant but it's necessary. I told you this wouldn't be easy.

So now that you've identified your challenges, it's time to identify success.

Setting Goals

Success is marked by the accomplishment of a task or the meeting of a goal. If you don't set a goal, you will find yourself hard pressed to determine whether you've been successful. This is where many people struggle. They don't do a great job of setting goals.

I know you probably have a whole list of goals you've been working towards since you were young. The problem with most goals outside of the standard ones is that they're too vague and ultimately impractical. Here are some of the standard, All American goals:

1. Go to college
2. Get a job
3. Buy a car
4. Buy a house
5. Vacation on a tropical island

These goals are all fairly tangible. You can easily determine what it takes to accomplish each one and then do those things. You're often given a social blueprint to use. Plus everyone around you is often pursuing these same

goals. Even if they're not extremely important to you, achieving them can be as easy as following the crowd.

However, if you're reading this book I'm pretty sure that you've either already accomplished all of these goals or are in the process of doing so. I'm also fairly certain that going to a tropical island isn't something you consider outside of your comfort zone. Unless that tropical island has a nude beach you want to visit.

So I feel very comfortable saying that the goals that inspired you to read this book are probably too vague, broad or ultimately impractical. Proper goal setting is necessary for achieving success.

Don't worry. This doesn't mean I'm going to tell you to completely scrap the list of goals you've created. It just means that you have to apply the tips I'm about to share to make those goals more reachable.

I know you didn't set those goals just for the sake of doing so. We all set goals with the intention of meeting them. I'm here to help you do that.

1. Your goal is too broad.

If your goal is to become the Vice President of your department at work, that's a great long term goal to have. However, it will probably take some time before that goal is realistically attainable. This doesn't mean you shouldn't make this a goal but you have to break it up into smaller goals. When you decide that you want to be the Vice President, you should make a map. It can be a visual map or a written one but you need to figure out the path to that particular goal.

Once you've outlined the path, set a series of small goals that will lead you towards the larger one.

2. Your goal is too vague.

If your goal is really vague it's virtually impossible to know when you've accomplished it. Many people have the long term goal of being financially stable. That's an awesome goal to have but it's very vague. What does it mean to be financially stable? Does that mean you can pay all of your bills every month? There are many people who can pay their bills and nothing else. They have no savings. That wouldn't necessarily mean you were financially stable since you would essentially be living check to check. Maybe you being financially stable means you have six months of living expenses in savings. But what if you lose your job and are out of work for 18 months? Is that enough to truly be financially stable?

If being financially stable is your goal, it's important that you identify exactly what that means to you. For example:

- a. I want to always have six months of living expenses in my saving account.
- b. I want to be able to take two vacations a year.
- c. I want to be able to afford to put my kids in private school and afford to go to the spa once a month.

These are goals that could signify that you are financially stable. They're very specific and you have a clear indicator of success. If a

few years go by where you are only able to take one vacation then you didn't reach your goal. If you find yourself able to take three vacations a year, you've surpassed your goal. The term "financially stable" has multiple definitions that can vary from person to person. You have to narrow it down to make it reachable.

3. You don't know what you really want.

Many people don't reach their goals because they're not entirely clear what they want. If you can't clearly state what you hope to accomplish to the point where someone can quickly understand, you need to revisit it. It's important that you take the time to sit with your wants and desires to see how they can be shaped into an actual goal. There is a level of clarity of purpose that comes from having a clear goal. On the flip side, there is a level of confusion and frustration that comes from pursuing an unclear goal.

4. Your goal is unrealistic.

If your goal requires you to win the lottery or get randomly discovered by a famous model scout in a mall, it is probably unrealistic. Yes you should follow your dreams but in order for you to reach your goals they must be actually reachable. If you've always dreamed of playing in the NBA but you're only 5'9 and 25 years old, that goal is unrealistic. However you could take that goal and make it more realistic by pursuing a career as a NBA sports announcer or a coach or referee. Just because your goal is unrealistic doesn't mean you have to give up on it entirely. It means you should be willing to consider other options.

5. Your goal is someone else's.

Many people have goals that have been given to them by someone else. This is largely done by parents or other older family members who have a vested interest in how you live your life. This can happen if that person didn't realize their own dreams and want to see you do it. Never take someone else's dream as your own! Pursuing your dreams takes focus, discipline and extended effort. If you don't believe in the goal and are doing it for someone else, you won't have that internal fire to reach it. I said, in Chapter 1, that you shouldn't allow outside sources to affect how you choose to live your life. That goes for setting goals, not setting goals and anything else you decide to do or not do. It's important that your goals are indeed your own.

6. You have too many goals.

Having multiple goals is fine. Attempting to actively pursue multiple goals at the same time can lead to stagnation. It's important that you focus on one goal at a time. If you have a long range goal, its fine to have smaller goals that you work towards while pursuing that one but having multiple long range goals isn't a good idea.

7. You're easily distracted.

Some goals take longer to reach than you may have initially thought it would. This can sometimes lead to you becoming a goal chaser. You move from goal to goal without ever really putting your focus on one goal until completion. This is something that many entrepreneurs deal with. They want their business to be financially successful so they

spend a lot of time chasing the latest, greatest money making opportunity. After a while, they have spent a lot of time starting things and no time actually seeing them through. You have to choose a goal and give it the attention it deserves.

8. You don't have the knowledge or skills.

Some goals require specialized knowledge and skills. If you don't take the time to pursue that extra knowledge or attain those skills, you won't be able to reach your goal. If you don't want to take the extra effort to gain these skills and knowledge, you should amend your goals. However if you want to reach then surpass those goals, you will need to do the extra work to do so.

Before you can begin to work towards success, you must set some goals but they must be used to help. Goals are tools that you use to make your dreams come true. You have to create them to be stepping stones on your personal path to success. Sometimes having goals can help you maintain a link to your dreams when life throws curveballs your way. JK Rowling is an excellent example of someone who had to dodge a fair share of curveballs on her path to success.

JK Rowling

The creator of the Harry Potter series, JK Rowling is known as one of the most successful authors. She was always a writer but she wasn't always a successful author. It took her acting on a spark of creative

inspiration and being focused on seeing it through to get her to the success she ultimately experienced.

Although she'd been writing since she was a child, JK never actively pursued it in any meaningful way. So it wasn't odd that she conceived the initial idea of Harry Potter while on a train one day in 1990. As a writer at heart, she'd been creating stories ever since she was a child but none of them were as vivid as the story of Harry Potter.

She was struck with the idea of a kid that went to wizard school and during a four hour train delay she mapped the story out in her head. She didn't have a pen on her in the moment but that didn't stop her imagination from wandering. When she finally made it home, she wrote the first version of the story of Harry Potter. She also mapped out the plots for all of the other books in the series during the seven years it took to complete the first book.

She didn't have a publishing deal when she started writing and planning the Harry Potter series. All she had was an idea and a goal. Being published was a long term goal that was fairly far off. But before she could pursue a publishing deal she had to write the first book. During those seven years, she experienced the loss of her mother, birth of her daughter, end of her marriage and living in poverty.

She persevered through all of those life challenges and went on to finish the first Harry Potter book which was then rejected by many

different publishers. It was finally picked up by a publisher and released. Once it was published she had to use the name JK Rowling because the publisher didn't think her book would appeal to young boys under a woman's name.

JK Rowling had to put a lot of work and effort into her book before it was even published. She had no way of knowing that it would become the huge success that it did. She just knew that she had a book idea that she wanted to write and have published.

Not only did she have to set a series of goals, she also had to be flexible in what that goal ultimately looked like. I'm sure she didn't visualize having to publish her work under a male sounding moniker but she made the adjustment to realize her dream.

Since that day in 1990 when she first got the idea for Harry Potter, JK Rowling has gone on to author 12 books and is currently working on her first screen play which is sure to be made into a film based on her previous success. So not only is she a multi-millionaire, she's also a filmmaker and an overall business woman.

Some goals, while attainable, may take several years to reach. It can feel overwhelming if you focus on the long range goal. But it's important that you create the path to get to that long range goal. By mapping it out, you can focus on the smaller goals you need to accomplish along the way. It can make the process much less overwhelming.

Plus those smaller goals can give you a much needed sense of accomplishment and boost to keep you pushing towards the larger goal. Imagine how much harder it would have been for JK Rowling if she'd only focused on getting her book series published? She may not have been able to keep writing through all of her life changes and challenges.

By focusing on writing the first book then getting it published and so on, she allowed herself to enjoy many smaller successes along the way. But it was very helpful that she had a clear idea of her long term goal. Not only did she want the first book published, she had an idea for a complete series.

Her clear definition of success made it possible for her to take full advantage of the publishing deal once she got one. If she hadn't taken the initiative to create the outlines for the other books in the series, she wouldn't have been prepared to build on the success of the first book. Her long term definition of success was integral in her actually reaching it.

Defining Success

Many people sit down and set some life goals then go about accomplishing them with diligence. As they begin to accomplish those goals, they may find themselves running out of steam and becoming unmotivated. It is great to set life goals but you need to take it a step further. Setting goals isn't enough. You have to come up with a definition of success.

I know this may sound confusing. Success comes after you've reached a goal, right?

Yes it does but as I said previously goals are tools you use to become successful. Once you've reached a goal, you must set another one then another one and so on. But those goals should involve an ultimate end game—your own version of success.

I say your own version of success but it's ultimately a personal thing. This is how you will determine whether your life has gone down the path that you are most happy with.

This is where things get a little challenging and involves some serious big picture thinking. Rather than just considering life goals, you are going to be considering what you deem a successful life.

Many people deem a successful life one where they find a career, get married and raise a family.

But let's stop here.

What happens after you find that career and your kids move out?

What will you do once you've retired from your career and your family is all grown up raising their own families?

Will you travel? Will you move to Florida and spend your golden years on the beach? Will you buy a plot of land and live the life of a farmer? Will you move to a cabin in the woods and live in the forest?

Have you ever thought about what you will do after you find your career, get married and raise your family?

I'm not just talking about your 401k or IRA. I'm talking about your life. Yes financial planning is important and if you haven't already started, you should. But this book isn't about setting up a retirement plan financially. It's about stepping outside of your comfort zone to achieve the success of your dreams.

Success shouldn't stop once you've mapped out your career path and had some children.

Now don't get me wrong, those are important goals to have but how do they support your vision of a successful life overall?

This vision is what will sustain you through all of the goals and challenges you encounter along the way. Once you've crafted your definition of success, it can act as your life inspiration.

How do you define success?

It's not as simple as sitting down and crafting a life success statement. If you do that you will only end up with more goals. Most of you are more than capable of setting goals. We've gone past setting goals. It was discussed in the previous section. Now it's about tapping into what will offer you a sense of personal accomplishment in your life.

Personal success is most often linked with your own sense of purpose. It's what many may refer to as your calling.

We all have a calling. It's just a matter of finding it.

I realize I just said that like you can just run to your local drugstore and pick up your calling from the pharmacist. If only it were that easy.

I recognize it's not that easy but that doesn't make it any less necessary. I can't tell you exactly what your calling is but I do have some things you can do that will help you tap into your inner voice.

Your inner voice is often what will help you recognize your calling. We all have that small voice in our heads that often speaks to use from the heart. You may even feel it in your gut on occasion. The challenge we tend to encounter when we're working to tap into our inner voice is that it's not very loud.

It tends to be overshadowed by the often loud expectations of our families, bosses, society and everything else we encounter on a daily basis. It's a small inkling you get when you least expect it. It's not often a big, dramatic thing. Your inner voice is most easily heard when your world is quiet.

Often we're most tapped into our calling as kids. Since we're not burdened with the responsibilities and expectations of life we have the luxury of doing the things we enjoy most. As we age, life intervenes and we no longer have the luxury to only do the things we enjoy most.

Over time, we give up on our calling especially if it's not considered realistic. Some people's calling can be turned into a career with relative ease. If your calling is to care for others you may go into the medical field. If your calling is to fight for the rights of others, you may go into the legal field or become a police officer. If your calling is to educate people, you may become a teacher or professor.

But what if your calling is to build furniture? What if your calling is to entertain or tell stories?

Those callings aren't necessarily very practical. It can be tough to figure out how to make a living doing these things. Yes there are people that do make a living at them but they're considered the exception, not the rule. However they're often people who had a calling that they chose to pursue in spite of the world's objections.

You don't have any insight into the personal challenges they may have encountered following their calling. It's pretty safe to presume that they had to find a way to do what they loved most as well.

If you don't nurture your calling, even if it's part time, it could sink into the recesses of your mind and be virtually forgotten. Since it's your calling and a reflection of your innermost desires, it will never be completely lost. Here are some things you can do to bring it to the forefront.

1. Meditate

Sitting in stillness with just you and your thoughts is a great way to hear that small, quiet voice inside of you. People meditate for a variety of reasons—to find peace, to be spiritually centered and to tap into your innermost thoughts among other things.

2. Hike or walk outside

Being outdoors in nature can be very calming and centering. It can allow you time to be alone with your thoughts in a natural environment. You don't have to live in the country or the mountains to benefit from nature. If you live near a park or green space, go for a walk in the park. You can still get the benefits of nature even if you live in an urban area.

3. Controlled, repetitive movement

Practices like yoga, tai chi and Pilates can be done for exercise as well as mental centering. The movements involved in these practices and ones like them allow you to focus on your breathing and motion. It frees your mind up to explore itself or become fully relaxed. The repetition of movement can be mentally soothing and allow that small voice to come through.

4. Write in a journal

Journaling is a great way to express your thoughts openly without judgment. You can write exactly what you're feeling in the moment. Many people keep their feelings to themselves because they're unsure how others will receive them. Writing those things in a journal helps you get them out of your head without the fear of negative

consequences or reactions. Journaling can also help you tap into your deepest thoughts. Even if you don't realize it in the moment, when you write something you have a record of it. You can go back and gain some insight into yourself and what's most important to you.

5. Talk to someone

Sometimes it helps to talk through things. If you have a confidant that you can have frank conversations with as it relates to your life and where it's going, do it. It has to be a judgment free conversation though. You can't be hesitant to speak freely. It's important that you can openly share what's in your heart. You should also be able to have more than one conversation like this. In fact, it may require a series of conversations before you truly tap into your calling. Your confidant should be open to these conversations but they don't have to be one sided conversations. You both can help each other. If you don't have a confidant, a therapist is a great option. You can let the therapist know that you are seeking insight into your calling or purpose and your sessions can focus on that. Just be prepared for these conversations to delve into different areas of your life in the process.

Ultimately it's important to define what would mean success for you. You need to know what your big picture life goal is. This is an intensely personal journey that you will take alone. Even if you have a confidant or therapist, that person will not be taking the journey with you. Their role will be to help you discover your path but it is yours to take.

But you must be prepared to be patient. If you haven't been honoring your calling all this time, it won't just come charging to the surface because you want it to. You may have to peel back some personal layers before you get to the meat of it all.

This process won't be easy. There are some moments where things will come easily and feel amazing. There are going to be other moments where it will be hard and painful. You will be forced to face things you've tucked away over the years.

This is necessary and should be experienced. I know I said it wouldn't be easy and I'm going to keep repeating it. You have to be prepared for this process to unfold over time. Use any of the tools I just shared. One may be sufficient but you may need to use more than one. That's fine. These are here to help you discover your calling.

If you have to use all of them, do it. There is no specific way you should take advantage of these tools. Use them in the way that you see fit.

The point of everything I just discussed in this chapter is that in order for you to aim for success, you have to be clear about what it is. That requires you to take personal stock in what means the most to you.

This process requires you to be selfish. You can't approach it with others in mind. Like I said, this is YOUR journey. You have to take it alone. But rest assured that once you've defined your version of success you will be able to share that feeling of accomplishment with others.

When you are confidently following your own path you inspire others to do the same. In this case being selfish is ultimately the best thing you can do for the other people in your life.

Chapter 3: Changing Perspective

Before we discuss perspective, let's take a moment to consider the effects of tapping into your calling.

You may discover that following your calling may mean completely changing your life.

You have to be prepared for that. Discovering your calling may be hard but pursuing it may be even harder. If you find that your calling is creating quilts, you can do that on the weekends and in your free time. You can even set up a part time business and sell your creations.

However, if your calling is sustainable farming, it can be tough to effectively do that part time and on the weekends. You may have to leave your full time sales job and become a sustainable farmer. It may be tough to tell your family that you want to move them from the city to a plot of farmland in the country. But if that's your calling, you have to do it.

You should take some time and sit with that.

I'm not just talking about deciding you want to apply for a new role at the company where you work. I'm talking about discovering your purpose and being prepared to move on that discovery. You should let that marinate in

your brain and recognize what that really means. You should also recognize how important it is that you do this.

While you're letting the thought of completely changing your life swish around in your brain, let's discuss perspective. I realize that I may have introduced some ideas you'd never seriously considered before. I'm asking you to be open to a change of perspective as it relates to your life overall.

Yes I realize that I'm asking a lot but this book is about stepping outside of your comfort zone and pushing your limits. That means considering that your current way of thinking should be changed. I want to tell you a story about a woman who embraced a change in perspective and altered her life at a time when most people are preparing to relax and enjoy their golden years.

Anna Mary Robertson

Unless you're a fan of folk art, you may not be familiar with Anna Mary Robertson more popularly known as Grandma Moses. She was a renowned American folk artist whose paintings became immensely popular and well regarded. She was featured on the cover of *LIFE* magazine September 19, 1960 in honor of her 100th birthday. All of this happened after she'd lived a full life and was settling into retirement.

Born September 7, 1860 in Greenwich in upstate New York, Anna was the daughter of a farming family. She was one of 10 children and

worked on her family farm until she married her husband at the age of 27. She and her husband moved to Virginia and established a farm there. She gave birth to 10 children, five of which died in infancy and lived her life as a farming wife for the next twenty years. In 1905 she and her husband moved back to Eagle Bridge, New York not far from her birthplace. Her husband died in 1927 but she continued to run the farm with her son until her advanced age caused her to retire from farming in 1936. She moved in with one of her daughters and finally had the luxury of relaxing and pursuing her artistic interests.

Always creative, Anna would use her talents to spruce up her home. She was a practical woman and found ways to channel her creativity into more practical uses. She would decorate the house injecting her creativity where it was most appropriate.

Initially she did embroidery, creating basic rural scenes on worsted wool cloth. Her embroidered pictures were always admired by family and friends. But when she was in her 70's she started painting. Some stories say that she started painting because arthritis made it tough for her to wield a needle. Other stories say she switched to painting because the fabrics used in embroidery could be eaten by moths. Either way, she switched from something she'd done all her life to something new.

Her early paintings were given as gifts and sold in local shops for \$3-\$5. Initially they were of the same rural scenes she used in her embroidery pieces. An art collector discovered her pieces on a visit to

Eagle Bridge, bought them all and ultimately featured some of them in an exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The 1938 exhibit was called “Contemporary Unknown American Painters”.

She was soon officially discovered and featured in her first solo exhibit called “What a Farm Wife Painted” in 1940. That exhibit went well and she started having more. In fact in the 1950’s her exhibits were so popular they broke attendance records all over the world.

She was a source of inspiration to women all over the world. Not only was she a farmer’s wife who changed her life once she stopped farming she followed her creative dreams in the process. She showed women of that time it was possible to be successful doing something outside of being a wife and mother.

When she died in 1961, Grandma Moses was a cultural icon. She inspired many women to pursue their dreams no matter their age. She’s a great example of being open to changing perspective and not giving up on your calling.

Grandma Moses is an excellent example of being open to changing perspective. She did it multiple times over the course of a long, rich life. She was born in a time when women didn’t have a lot of life choices. As children they followed the lead of their mothers often taking care of the home and/or family farm. Once they got older, they were married off to become the caretaker of their husband and children. Oftentimes they didn’t

attend school or if they did, it only lasted until they were needed to work at home.

But Grandma Moses had a creative calling. She found functional ways to express her creativity while living her life as a farmer's wife and mother. Then when she couldn't do embroidery any more, she fed her creativity through painting. She could have stopped there and continued to only give her art as gifts but she took it a step further and began to sell her work.

Not only was she open to expanding her mode of creative expression, she was open to selling it to others. She essentially became a "sell out" as some artists might say because she began to make money from her craft. Granted her pieces weren't initially going for much money but they're what helped her get the attention of the New York arts scene and ultimately the world.

There are a lot of great lessons to be taken from the life of Grandma Moses. Here are some of them:

1. Never stop following your calling.

How many times have you heard someone say they "gave up their dream" because it was unrealistic or impractical? You should never simply give up on a dream. Yes you may need to alter it but don't give it up entirely. Our dreams are what make us whole and what fulfills us. Grandma Moses was always creative and she found ways to feed that spirit. That doesn't mean she ran away from her responsibilities

to become an artist. It means she found ways to work it into her reality.

2. You're never too old to make a change.

Grandma Moses was in her 70's before she began painting in earnest. When she came to a crossroads about embroidery, whether it was due to arthritis or the breakdown of materials, she didn't stop creating art. She simply moved to another form of expression. It's hard to say whether it was an easy change to make or if she wrestled with it but she didn't wrestle long. She made the shift and continued to follow her calling.

3. You can use your calling to make money.

There's absolutely nothing wrong with you following your calling and making money in the process. That doesn't mean you're exploiting it. It just means you're making money. We all need an income to survive. Using what you enjoy most to create that income allows you to actively follow your calling full time. What could possibly be wrong with that?

Those are the prevailing lessons that jumped out at me when I discovered the story of Grandma Moses. Her life was definitely one to be admired but you don't have to wait until you've retired to do what she did. It took courage for her to step outside of her comfort zone and pursue her artistic career. She could have refused to be publicly featured in exhibits. She could have stayed at her daughter's home and lived out the rest of her years in upstate New York.

I'm sure she enjoyed being with her family. It was well known that she took great pride in her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. She could have easily settled into her role as the family matriarch and enjoyed that.

But she didn't. She continued to create paintings and feature them in different exhibits. She is a great example of stepping outside of your comfort zone.

Not only did she step outside of her comfort zone as a farmer's wife and mother, she stepped outside of the comfort of her age. If a 70-year-old farmer's wife can step outside of her comfort zone, you can too.

Stepping Outside of Your Comfort Zone

Don't worry I'm not to just tell you to do something completely different from what you've grown accustomed to doing. I'm going to give you some strategies on how to do it.

1. Do some research.

One of the reasons stepping outside of your comfort zone is a challenge is because of the unknown. When you have no idea what you're getting into or what will happen when you do, that can cause fear and anxiety. It's perfectly natural to be afraid of the unknown but rather than shrinking away from it, you can work to make it less of an unknown. Thanks to the power of the internet, it's possible to gain

knowledge about a topic from the comfort of your own home. Once you've identified your calling, do some web searches on it. Read some magazine articles or books about it. If possible, talk to some people who do it. Do your best to familiarize yourself with it.

2. Take a class.

Taking a class is a great way to not only learn more about your area of interest, you can also meet other people like you. Deciding to step outside of your comfort zone can be an isolating situation. It's tough to take people with you when you decide to try something new. You will most likely end up doing it alone. But if you take a class you will meet other people that share your interest. It gives you an opportunity to expand your circle while allowing you to actively explore your interest.

3. Join an organization.

There are organizations and groups out there for virtually any area of interest. Find an organization dedicated to your calling and join it. This has a similar effect to taking a class. You find other people with a similar interest while joining a community dedicated to that interest. Not only will you have a space where you can openly explore, you will also learn how different people do the same. It definitely helps you gain perspective on how to follow your calling when you can talk with other people that are doing it too.

4. Create something.

Now that you've tapped into what interests you most put that knowledge to practical use. Find a way to do a project. If you're in an organization or a class, you will most likely have a project that way but if not, you should find one. You need some time to work within your interest in a focused way and a project is a great way to do that. Plus it gives you a viable reason to allocate time in your life to this interest. You can also use the project as a way to incorporate other people in your life as you embark on your journey.

Stepping out of your comfort zone is never easy. People appreciate routines and stability whether they're self-imposed or not. It's helpful to know what to expect on a day to day basis so when you shake up the status quo, it shakes up that feeling of stability.

Depending on the type of comfort zone that you are living in will affect the challenges you will encounter stepping outside of it. There are three different types of comfort zones and each one offers a different amount of stability.

1. Societal comfort zone

We all deal with societal expectations as we go through life. Many of us fall in line and work to meet those expectations without ever realizing that they're not our own. An example of a societal expectation is that we are expected to get married and start a family. Depending on culture and family structure that expectation may take on slightly different connotations but it's a prevailing one. If you live your whole life and never get married or start a family, you become a

societal outlier. Many people will wonder why you chose that path. You may even get questions from total strangers about it. But by not sticking with that societal expectation, you are stepping outside of a comfort zone. It's so much easier to find a life partner, get married and start a family than it is not to. Now don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that it's easy to do those things. What I'm saying is that society has a clearly defined comfort zone that makes that the path of least resistance overall. If you choose to do something different, you encounter a different type of resistance that can be uncomfortable.

2. Family comfort zone

Our parents, grandparents and relatives often have an idea of where they see our lives going. If you have a large extended family that is very intertwined, you will most likely have more family members with a vested interest in your future. Their thoughts about your life path are often developed before you're even born and will be used to create the initial blueprint of your life. As we grow up and have life experiences that fall outside of our family members, we may decide to alter that initial blueprint. This can cause a level of discomfort in your life. Often that discomfort will come from your family not responding well to your decision but its discomfort nonetheless.

3. Self-imposed comfort zone

This is the comfort zone we tend to create for ourselves. Like I said, people appreciate stability and familiarity. Because of this we create habits. Sometimes these habits are an extension of our family comfort zone but even if your family life wasn't stable, you will still

create your own habits. This comfort zone can be the toughest to step outside of because it means going against yourself in a sense. We all create comfort zones because they make us feel safe and stable. When you step outside of a self-imposed comfort zone, you are changing something you created for your own safety and stability. You are essentially working against yourself in a way. Not only can that be uncomfortable, it can be painful depending on why you created the comfort zone in the first place.

I want to focus on the self-imposed comfort zone because it's the toughest one to change. However, I don't want to gloss over the other two because they're very important as well. So here are some tips you can use to address the first two.

1. Societal comfort zone

- a. Make peace with it

Once you realize that you don't want to stay within the comfort zone that society has created for you, it's important that you make peace with that decision. If you decide you don't want to go to college and would rather pursue a career as a cruise ship performer, do it in peace. You may be asked to explain yourself and it's up to you whether you will or not. But regardless of how you choose to handle it, make sure you are comfortable with the decision.

- b. Don't be afraid to change your mind

Sometimes it's not the expectations of society that bother us it's the timelines that come with those expectations. If you step

outside of that comfort zone and follow a different path but decide you want to return to the socially accepted route later, that's fine. There's nothing to say you can't do things out of order. You have to ultimately do what works best for you.

2. Family comfort zone

a. Be prepared to explain yourself

Even if you don't feel like you should have to, be prepared to explain your decision and choices. Family is important and you should do everything in your power to maintain those relationships. When you decide to step outside of the family comfort zone, they will demand an explanation. This is usually because they will take your decision personally. You're not trying to make them agree with your choice. The purpose of the explanation is to back your choice up with a reason. You may or may not convince them that what you're doing is best but that's not the point. You are just honoring your respect and love for family with a reason why you're shaking things up. By stepping outside of your comfort zone, you are also shaking up their feeling of stability. Keep that in mind.

b. Be prepared to do it alone

You may not receive support from your family even if they do accept your explanation. When you decide to take an uncharted path, the people close to you may not know how to support you. You may not know how to ask for support either. It's going to take some time as you figure everything out. This is why it's

important to seek out a community. You can even ask those people how they handled their families.

You can take those tips and use them to deal with the society and family comfort zones. But like I said, the self-imposed comfort zone can be much more tricky to navigate. It often involves changing personal thought patterns and beliefs that have gotten you through life so far. Let's dive into that area because it's integral to truly pushing your limits for success.

Self-Imposed Comfort Zone

We all have personal beliefs, values and life systems that we've created over the course of our lives. We've made decisions about who we are and what those decisions mean for our life goals. There are experiences we've had that have educated us about our preferences and what we will and won't accept. Some of our self-imposed comfort zone is based on our family comfort zone but that's not always the case.

Regardless, when it comes to stepping outside of our self-imposed comfort zones, it takes a lot of internal and external work. The tips I've shared previously about stepping outside of your comfort zone definitely apply here but there is often an added layer that must be addressed.

Let me tell you a little secret.

All comfort zones are ultimately self-imposed.

I know I just went through this whole explanation of the three different types of comfort zones and how to address them. This isn't to say that I made that stuff up. I didn't. You do have to deal with both familial and societal expectations. Those expectations can create comfort zones that have to be dealt with when you do something different. But when you experience societal and familial comfort zones you essentially agree to fall in line with them.

I know you may tell me you don't have a choice and you have to do what society and/or your family expect of you. But you do realize you are choosing the path of least resistance, right?

Regardless of what you think should happen or how much pressure you're getting from outside sources, it's your life and ultimately your choice.

With that being said, those tips I just shared are definitely valid because you still have to live in society and your family relationships are important. But those comfort zones can sometimes be easier to step outside of because it involves a sense of rebellion. When you do something outside of what is expected of you it makes you a bit of a rebel.

It's not so easy to rebel against yourself which is what you will be doing when you step outside of your self-imposed comfort zone. It

sounds kind of odd, right? How the heck do you rebel against yourself?

It's fairly simple and complicated at the same time. By doing something that is different from what you would typically do, you are rebelling against yourself. It's uncomfortable and your psyche will likely show up to challenge you.

This often happens in the form of your inner critic. This is that small voice that asks you things like:

Who do you think you are?

Will you be good at this?

Will you do/say something stupid?

What if you mess everything up?

Do you really know what you're doing?

These are just a few examples of the things our inner critic comes up with to create self-doubt. It's possible to tune out the external voices of others but it can be virtually impossible to tune out your internal voice. That's why I wanted to pay special attention to this type of comfort zone. It requires more work and effort than the other two because you're dealing with yourself and limiting beliefs you have.

Before I offer some tips and suggestions for addressing your self-imposed comfort zone, I think it's important that you incorporate a professional into the mix. I'm not an expert in psychology. I'm someone like you who has had to deal with my own comfort zone and

how it held me back from following my dreams. Having a professional to talk to will give you a space to address those limiting beliefs. However, the tips I'm going to share will allow you to create space outside of the time you spend with a professional.

1. Give yourself permission to be afraid.

Fear is a normal, natural response to the unknown. Your inner critic tends to rear its head when you are doing something new that you're not familiar with. If you recognize it as fear and give yourself permission to feel the fear, you will find it easier to address. We all have to overcome our fears as we go through life. Many of us try to stifle our feelings of fear because they can be uncomfortable. Some emotions must be experienced to be overcome. Don't push your fear away. Let it happen just don't let it stop you from moving forward.

2. Focus on the positive rather than the negative.

When your inner critic starts to present the negative side of any situation, you should practice focusing on the positive side. It's not always going to be an easy thing to do which is why it takes practice. Consider that your inner critic has been showing up the majority of your life in some way. You have years of experience dealing with your inner critic but creating your inner cheerleader will take time. You have to do it intentionally until it becomes automatic. This takes patience but is necessary as you go through this process.

3. Don't try to be perfect.

Trying to do everything perfectly will only add to your frustration. Rather than trying to do everything perfect, focus on getting things done. When you are actively stepping outside of your comfort zone and doing something different, it's going to take time for you to become an expert at it. You're going to make mistakes. But the more you do it, the better you will become at it. If you put the pressure of doing it perfectly on top of the pressure of pursuing your dreams, you compound the pressure. Don't compound the pressure by trying to be perfect.

4. Take time and smell the roses.

Don't be so focused on reaching your goal that you miss out on the journey to get there. By reading this book you are already taking an important step towards reaching your goal. You should stop and appreciate this and other small moments. Many people become so super focused on reaching the finish line that they miss the sights along the way. The journey is just as important as the destination. Stop and appreciate it.

5. Applaud your small successes.

Don't gloss over your small successes. Take the time to enjoy them as they happen. When you reach small goals, you should appreciate them as they happen. This will help you recognize your progress and keep you optimistic along the way. You will need this optimism when you encounter challenges. It will help keep you on

your chosen path. It's important to recognize all progress even if it's small steps.

You have to create a life where you make room for your expanding comfort zone. This isn't something you can compartmentalize. It applies to all aspects of your life and should be incorporated accordingly.

When you are working to change your perspective and step outside of your comfort zone it involves making personal adjustments. These adjustments will affect the way you perceive the world at large. You need to be prepared to embrace the changes across the board.

Chapter 4: Get Comfortable being Uncomfortable

I know I've spent a lot of time discussing changing things about your life that you've grown comfortable with. When you decide to actively pursue your dreams you have to do something many of us struggle with. You have to get comfortable being uncomfortable.

What does that mean?

It means that being uncomfortable will become a fact of life as you continue to follow your dreams and push your limits. Once you reach a place where you are comfortable with the changes you'll be making, you will need to step outside of your comfort zone again.

The thing about pushing your limits and following your dreams is that it is an ongoing process. Human beings are adaptable. When we try something new, it is uncomfortable initially but as time passes it becomes more comfortable. This often happens before we've truly reached our goals. If you want to follow your dreams and actively pursue your calling, you must be prepared to keep expanding your comfort zone.

Personal growth happens outside of your comfort zone.

So in order to continue to pursue your dreams, you must make the decision to be comfortable with discomfort. As soon as you decide that you are ok with discomfort, you will be able to step outside of your comfort zone much easier.

This doesn't mean you won't feel discomfort. It just means that you won't react negatively to it every time. You'll be prepared for it and better able to handle it.

I can speak from experience. This isn't an easy thing to do but it's extremely necessary. Pursuing your calling or life's purpose is a long term endeavor. The journey to a successful life is a marathon, not a sprint. You need to be in it for the long haul. This means that you should be prepared to set goals, reach those goals and push past your comfort zone lots of times over the course of your life.

The best way to get comfortable being uncomfortable is to do it in stages. While there are some people who can jump into the freezing cold pool and adjust to the temperature in one fell swoop, others prefer to dip their feet in slowly. I'm going to give you the slow approach but if you're the type to jump right in, I encourage you to do that as well.

You ultimately have to do what's best for you.

1. Create a vision board of the goal you'd like to accomplish.

You can create an entire board or just post a picture of the goal you'd like to accomplish in a visible location. You want to be able to see it regularly. Putting up a picture that you see often will help make the goal more real in your mind. Often goals can seem like far off things that we aspire to accomplish someday. The vision board or picture makes it less far off.

2. Do something you've never done before.

Find something you've never tried and give it a go. You can start small and try a type of food you've never eaten or you can try a dish you've never tried. As you become more comfortable with the smaller things, look for other things you can try then try them.

3. Play the "what if" game.

Do this with someone close to you who doesn't mind asking the hard questions. Ask each other a series of "what if" questions as it relates to your life and be prepared to honestly answer them. If necessary, record the questions and your answers. It's helpful to keep a record of these questions for review later. You should speak the answers rather than write them. We tend to edit the words that we write much more than we edit the words we say.

We all create comfort zones as a form of personal safety. It allows us to be comfortable in our skin and go about our daily lives with relative ease. It

takes work to step outside of your comfort zone but it must happen if you want to pursue your dreams.

Your comfort zone is a mental creation which means that in order to step outside of it, you must change your thoughts. It's not easy to change the way you think. I just shared some things that will help you begin that process.

Opening your mind to other possibilities makes it easier to accept that you can reach goals that may seem far off and impractical. It makes it possible to believe that you have the ability to change your life.

Remember, personal growth happens outside of your comfort zone.