The Guide to Getting Comfortable with Discomfort

"How can we ever know what we're truly capable of if we're not trying to do what we don't think we can, every single day? And that means being afraid, and doing it anyway." – Siri Lindley

In the spirit of that idea, let's get you comfortable with being uncomfortable

❯ THE EXISTENTIAL EMBRACE

There's two phases to this idea. The first is the existential embrace. To get there, the first thing we have to do is break ourselves out of the belief system that mainstream society has instilled in us. Although the past few years have been been insane, we still live in the most comfortable time of human existence. We have never had to struggle for our practical needs less. You can order anything you want off the internet, work remotely from home, and binge your favorite movies and shows from your couch. Now this is all amazing. But, something has gotten lost. People are more anxious and depressed than ever. I think we as a society have made a mistake in prioritizing comfort and telling everyone that it's the end game they should be striving for. We've gotten to the point that we actually fear being uncomfortable and that fear has started to control our lives. One of the main ways we can grow and expand ourselves as human beings is by putting ourselves IN discomfort. There's a certain level of accomplishment you can feel as a human being by pushing yourself through discomfort and out the other side. That feeling of accomplishment can create a snowball effect that leads to you achieving things you never thought possible.

This is not about the material world. This is not about money. This is not about sitting on a beach drinking a beer. This is about becoming as comfortable as we can with uncertainty and discomfort. I heard a quote the other day that I loved. "Confidence is being comfortable with uncertainty." And I think that comfort comes with a knowing that we can handle anything thrown our way. But the only way we can actually believe that about ourselves is to put ourselves through experiences that build up that comfort level.

A lot of literature out there talks about the idea of shutting out the fear and discomfort around us. Setting up boundaries and eliminating things that cause us pain. And I understand why because it makes a lot of sense. But, it's made us soft. It's made our nervous systems scared of anything that doesn't feel safe. I found this out the hard way coming out of the pandemic. Even going into fun social hangs with friends would have me choking down an anxiety attack. Which felt insane. I had never experienced anything like that before. I realized that my mind and body had become so accustomed to being alone in my apartment that anything outside of that felt overwhelming. I started to accept the fact that maybe I was meant to become a shut in the rest of my life. But little by little, with every experience, I started to build up the resilience and reservoir to handle those interactions that I hadn't given a second thought to pre pandemic. And that's when I realized that this was a response that started out of habit and just as it happened to me through repetition, I could also get myself out of it through repeatedly changing that habit.

I want you to do the opposite of shutting out the pain and discomfort. I want you to lean into it and let it in. Invite it in and throw your shoulder into it. Embrace it and use it as your fuel. Start to enjoy the fear and the discomfort and the pain. Let the friction of it energize you. Once you start to shift your attitude towards it, you'll find yourself actually gaining momentum and energy off of facing and embracing it. You'll start to seek it out and prove to yourself over and over again that it doesn't control you. You control it. And that will make you start to feel powerful beyond measure. You keep doing that and it won't be long before your life takes off right in front of you. Now, how to take action...

▶ EXECUTING THE ACTIONS

The Key is to start small and build out and up from there. Think of it like building a muscle. Don't start with the weight you want to be at right away. Work your way up to it. So, baby steps. Pick a Goal that you know makes you uncomfortable but that you really want to accomplish. List out all the steps you'll need to take in order to accomplish that goal and start with the easiest step. For example, if the goal were to run 3 miles, just put on your running shoes. That's it. Or take a walk down the block. It's amazing the psychological boost that will give you and before long, you're running down that block and tracking your miles. When I started doing cold showers, I just started with 5 seconds. I told myself I would accomplish my goal for the day if I just did 5 seconds and you know what? I started to get addicted to it. You start to want to beat your time from the day before and I ended up blowing past the incremental numbers I had sent. We are capable of a lot more a lot faster than we realize.

Also, don't compare yourself with others. Everyone is on their own journey. There is no use comparing yourself to someone else, especially if they are doing something you want to be doing. The only person you are competing with is the person you were yesterday. Get incrementally better every day. In James Clear's Atomic Habits, he talks about just focusing on getting ONE percent better every day and concentrating on stacking those days together. Before you know it, you're way further a lot quicker than you ever thought possible. Let "One percent better" be your mantra in executing these actions.

Something else I've found helpful centers around doing versus thinking. Something I started using in conjunction with the Atomic Habit's "one percent mantra" was Mel Robbins "5 Second Rule." Paraphrasing, the 5 second rule is: if you have the idea to take action on something, if you don't do it within 5 seconds, your brain will kill it. I know I have a tendency to overthink and I imagine you, who are reading this, might have that tendency as well. Our brains can be our own worst enemies sometimes, especially when it comes to discomfort. I've found that one of the most important muscles to build is the ability to dive in and take action quickly. Starting later is almost never a good idea because by then our brain will rationalize ourselves out of doing it. Start to train that psychological muscle by honoring that impulse to take action when you get it. Don't think, just do. It might be hard the first few times but I promise it starts to get easier very quickly.

REWRITING YOUR BELIEF BLUEPRINT

When you step our of your comfort zone and do something new, it actually triggers your brain to release "dopamine" which makes you feel good. As you start to build these "Getting comfortable with Discomfort" consciously, you will start to find your inner system getting new feedback as it gets rewarded by this dopamine for your stepping out of your comfort zone. This starts laying the foundation for you to completely rewire your Belief System, which is the most important thing we are after here. Through that rewiring, you will train your mind, body, and soul to align in seeking out that uncertainty, and the vulnerability that triggers, to create massive positive changes in yourself and your life. Because once that new "Belief Blueprint" is created, it will become the mindset with which you filter everything that you experience in your life. And once you start subconsciously targeting discomfort and leaning into it, those uncomfortable situations that used to be obstacles will actually become exciting challenges that fuel you forward. In my personal experience, I've found that to be a much more satisfying way to live my life. I think you'll find that too.

Being uncomfortable is the only way we can grow, be that professionally or personally. Yes, our brains are wired for comfort but they are also wired to crave that growth. Another way I want you to think about it is this: if you want to live an uncommon life, you need to do uncommon things to get there. You can't do what everyone else is doing and expect to get somewhere different. Push yourself to be uncomfortable RIGHT NOW, what yourself tap into the power of your inner potential and skyrocket into the life of your dreams.