



SUMMARY UNIT 5 : Chapter 4 : Expanding Your Comfort Zone

Does it help and does it work to stretch your comfort zone? Remember what happens when you are out of your comfort zone? Your mind shuts down, your throat gets tight, you start to sweat, and you can barely breathe, let alone talk! Think job interview, first day on the job, or meeting your in-laws for the first time—you get the picture.

There are those who graduate from school, like a career college, knowing their skills very well. Then, when they go into a job for the first time, they are out of their comfort zone. Anxiety and tension set in, and they may appear as if they don't know a thing. They mess up the interview. What they ought to have done, and what we encourage them to do, is to visualize themselves in the job before they get there. The point is: you could look forward and scare yourself to death, or you could look forward in a constructive manner (relaxed, poised, filled with excitement and anticipation), visualizing yourself succeeding. Which approach do you think is most likely to win the job for you?



This is the way that you stretch. You can force yourself temporarily, but it won't last, and you won't do very well. Many people will be able to tell that you're just "acting." However, when you are really good at visualizing yourself into a new comfort zone, other people will think you were born that way. You really weren't, you just have the technique. This is why they have simulators for pilots and astronauts, and for the elite strike forces. There are all kinds of ways of helping people familiarize themselves with what they will be facing. The degree to which you can visualize yourself at the next level, making the unfamiliar familiar, allows you a greater chance of success.

This visualization process is the necessary tool for accomplishing this. That is why you write your affirmations out and why you visualize forward. As a good leader anticipating changes, whether it be leading your child, or your school, or your sheriff's



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department, whatever it might be, you coach your people to see themselves in the new future. Talk about it safely as an adventure. Now, of course, most of us naturally seek out the familiar. So you must make what is currently unfamiliar, familiar. It may be something as simple as a slide-show, or something bigger. I take people who work in Seattle to Australia, or England. It is very expensive, but they need to see beyond Seattle and to see who we really are. If they can't see, they are not going to succeed.

Here's another way of thinking about the same principle. Yesterday's dreams become today's necessities. Think about that. The fax machine, the computer, the Internet. Yesterday's dreams become today's necessities. You don't want to go back. You can't live without it. It is a necessity, not an extra. Look at the many changes in communications, transportation and technology in the last 50 years. All the things that are available now that your grandparents and your parents didn't have, today you can't live without. Once these things have been assimilated into our image of reality, and become familiar, we don't want to go back.

If what you dreamed about yesterday becomes a necessity today, then today's dreams become tomorrow's realities or opportunities. Your current thoughts do determine your future. So, deliberately decide your next level, plateau, or comfort zone that you want to move yourself to and make it familiar. Better yet, bring along your family, friends, and co-workers in the vision. When you start using this technique, you can outgrow those around you. They may say, "Well, you've changed a lot and it's not for the better." They won't be comfortable around you. But you will be comfortable, because this new environment is familiar to you.

When you change your environmental self-image, you invent the path to your goal. You cause it. The key for you isn't to figure out how to get there. The key for you is to change your image. Your subconscious is powerful. It is a genius. It will create your path to your future.