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Think Outside The Box

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Goal Setting

Liya Panayotova, Psychologist, [liyap.com](#) 6.7K reads

Leave Your Comfort Zone

It's easy in this day and age to live through social networks, controlling what we post, who we interact with and what they see about us. We can stay well and truly within our comfort zones.

There are advantages to staying in those comfort zones, the places where we feel safe and able to predict what will happen. However, getting out of these zones and challenging ourselves can have great effects on our levels of courage, resilience and – you guessed it – self-esteem.

The banner features the Explorable logo at the top center. Below it are three quiz cards, each with a different image and title:

- Card 1: Image of red roller skates on a wooden deck. Title: Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2
- Card 2: Image of a fan of colorful pens. Title: Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2
- Card 3: Image of a Ferris wheel at sunset. Title: Quiz: Flags in Europe

At the bottom right of the banner is a link: [See all quizzes =>](#)

Comfort Zone

Take the case of Burt. He works in telemarketing. Every day he goes to the same office at the same time and does the same thing. Every month he takes home the same basic wage plus a good amount of commission. As a teenager, he was really interested in environmental causes and sustainable tourism.

However, after he finished his studies, he needed money and didn't want to move away from his small town. Burt likes the security and regularity of his job. At the same time, he can't help but resent himself a bit for not investigating his passions. One of his old classmates went on to travel and teach, which Burt envies.

What would you say to Burt to encourage him out of his comfort zone, and maybe even work towards changing a career? Luckily, there are a few tricks we can use to help us grow.

Where Do You Stand Now?

The first thing you need to do is analyze your current levels of comfort. You can use this ^[1] tool for a quick assessment. Then, you need to start planning some challenges that will help you get outside of your comfort zone.

Make it your first challenge to ask ten strangers the time or directions every day for a week.

This activity forces you to take a social risk. The first time you ask someone, it's natural to feel a little apprehensive. By the end of the week, you may find that you don't even think twice about it. Within a week you have adjusted your comfort zone and are ready for another small task.

Why Are Goals Important?

If you don't know your destination, it's almost impossible to get there. Goal setting has the potential to strengthen our self-esteem by giving ourselves measurable targets. When setting goals, there are a few rules to bear in mind.

How to Set a Goal

A goal needs to be:

Specific. This means you have to be clear about what it is you want to achieve. Instead of saying, "I want to be fitter", it is more helpful to say, "I aim to walk 5km three times a week".

Measurable. If you can measure your goals, it will be easier to know if you have achieved them. If you specify that you plan to walk 5km three times a week, it's easy to know whether you met your target.

Attainable. Are you being sensible about your goals? If you work six days a week for twelve hours, would walking three times a week be achievable?

Realistic. Given your current status, is your goal relevant? If you live in a very cold or hot climate, would walking outside be realistic? If not, how could you make it more realistic?

Time-based. Setting time frames for your goals is important, as it will help you clarify what you are trying to achieve. Once you've established time frames for your goals, measuring progress becomes a lot easier.

Think back to times when you have tried setting goals but for some reason were not able to

reach them. What happened?

Key Points

- Comfort zones may seem like safe places, but can lead to us feeling stuck and frustrated
- Moving outside of our comfort zones has a host of benefits, including improving our self-esteem and courage
- There are several strategies for maneuvering outside of our comfort zones and setting goals

Source URL: <https://explorable.com/e/goal-setting>

Links

[1] <http://www.whatismycomfortzone.com/survey/><http://www.whatismycomfortzone.com/survey/>