

Whose Comfort Zone Are You In?

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The only thing worse than staying in your comfort zone is to stretch yourself out of your comfort zone and jump into someone else's.

An audience member actually crystallized this concept for me, which changed the path of my business. I was presenting a program on goal setting and following your own path. I shared my story about working as a corporate trainer when I had the opportunity to fulfill my life long dream of becoming a professional speaker.

I called my dad, my mentor, to tell him about this great opportunity.

He asked me some questions:

Will you have a long-term contract? *No, it will be a month to month agreement.*

Will you have a guaranteed number of dates each month? *No guarantees, each month will be different.*

Will you have any benefits? *No, I'd be an independent contractor so benefits would have to come out of my own pocket.*

He reminded me that I had a good job, making decent money, so I should stay right where I was. I decided to follow *my* dream, take the leap, and became a full time seminar leader. The following year, the company I used to work for was sold, and my old colleagues had to re-locate or get new jobs.

After telling that story, I asked what I thought was a rhetorical question: "Can you imagine if I stayed because my dad said I had a good job?" An audience member spoke up and answered, "*You would have been living in your dad's comfort zone*".

That night, I re-wrote my program and titled it "Whose Comfort Zone Are You In?" My intention was (and still is) to inspire people to follow their own path and not be influenced out of their dreams ending up in someone else's comfort zone.

Some people ask, "what's wrong with staying in your comfort zone when it's so...*comfortable!*"

Eventually you settle. As a full time keynote speaker, I have three programs that I present. I know when I am *settling* into my comfort zone when I play it safe on stage and deliver the same speech today as I did last week. I actually bore myself. My biggest fear is to be boring so I try to stretch myself each time I deliver a keynote. The comfortable, easy and safe thing to do is to show up and speak. Now, I invest more time before my presentation. Some people use a pre-program questionnaire. I prefer going to an event early and meet as many people as possible. Then I am able to use their stories in my keynote to illustrate my points. Lou Heckler taught me to not be the hero in my own stories, so I make my audience members the heroes. The result is, I deliver a fresh, exciting keynote and it's never the same speech twice.

Comfort Zone Gut Check: When making decisions:

- 1. Are you trying to make the right decision for you or are trying to please/impress someone else?**
- 2. Look at the people you go to when contemplating decisions. Do they reflect back to you questions so your answers show your true intention? Or, do you go to people who just tell you what to do?**
- 3. Are you as excited about your presentation today as you were when you first presented it?**

The answers to these will tell you if you are in your comfort zone, in someone else's or if you are on your way to stretch your own comfort zone.