

a leap of faith

Some of my most cherished experiences and achievements have been the result of entering into a world so uncomfortable and foreign my stomach would turn at the mere thought of having to go there. Have you ever entertained the idea that you'd rather be in the hospital rendered unconscious than get in front of an audience and speak out loud?

Well if you have, could you imagine volunteering yourself to do such a thing in order to push through and see what is on the other side of the dread and fear?

Well I have, and this is the kind of discomfort I am talking about.

Getting Uncomfortable

Six years ago I was 26, recently divorced and in a new and healthy relationship with my now husband. By day I worked in an office for a busy rental company and by night I was glued to my computer determined to complete enough online courses to finish my degree.

As though I wasn't sleep deprived enough I would rise at the crack of dawn and go for my morning run in an attempt to clear my head. Often during my morning runs I would visualize myself giving inspirational speeches and sharing words of wisdom to large audiences. This was always followed by great rounds of applause and awards of recognition for my accomplishments. I think this ritual was my way of making the run, which was usually cold and rainy, go by quicker.

Oddly enough, it still came as a huge surprise when my counselor at Thompson Rivers University called me up one day and said, "I don't know what it is about you Emily but I just keep thinking you would be the

perfect Valedictorian for this year's graduation".

Please know I wanted more than anything to take part in graduation festivities and I secretly yearned to take this role on, but the overwhelming thought that this lady was outrageous enough to think I would actually get in front of a crowd of 500 people with a microphone to say something

I was no longer okay with feeling like I couldn't give the speech or having self-limiting beliefs that I wasn't good enough or didn't truly deserve success and happiness.

intelligent and inspirational had me seriously considering not attending my graduation at all.

I would love to tell you this was one of those times I took the bold leap into ultimate discomfort and gave the speech of my life, felt like a champion, received an award etc. however this is not the case. Instead, I politely declined despite her urging. Then I attended graduation with my head hung and avoided meeting face

to face with my counselor because I felt like a failure.

I should add that while I have regretted not giving the speech ever since, it has giving me a great point of reference and provided me with a valuable life lesson.

On the upside, I married Mr. Wonderful and three years ago we had our first son.

It was then I began my journey into the "uncomfortable zone".

Maybe it was prompted by the discomforts of labour, sleepless nights, bags under my eyes, or some of the other realities motherhood can bring. Perhaps it was just that deep down I knew

it was my time to start pushing through some things.

I was no longer okay with feeling like I couldn't give the speech or having self-limiting beliefs that I wasn't good enough or didn't truly deserve success and happiness. I wouldn't wish this for my son and if I were going to be his role model I knew I needed to muster up the courage to be the kind of role model he deserves.

motivate

dare

I enrolled in some amazing programs through Excellence Seminars International, a company that believes in the importance of stepping out of your comfort zone. I was sick about going because I heard I might have to talk in front of a crowd or something off the wall like that. I went anyway and after the first program I actually joined Toastmasters.

Then an unbelievable thing happened, when I was in front of an audience speaking, I actually felt good and found some enjoyment in the whole experience. What I found even more surreal was that people actually

What I found even more surreal was that people actually wanted me to succeed and win and they were all incredibly supportive.

wanted me to succeed and win and they were all incredibly supportive.

As time marched forward, I took some major courageous steps in all areas of my life because each time I did I learned it wasn't nearly as bad as I had anticipated and the reward on the other side was always a feeling of immense confidence and pride.

Much like a snowball effect, the more I stepped out and got uncomfortable the easier it became and the outcomes were incredible. The best part is I began believing in myself and became crystal clear on my purpose and the gifts I have to share with others.

During the first year and a half of my son's life, I wrote and self-published a series of inspirational children's books intended to empower young people to whole-heartedly believe in themselves. It wasn't a simple or easy undertaking.

It involved many late nights knowing I would be up in a few hours to care for my baby. It required me to ignore the glazed over looks my well-meaning family and friends would give when I'd excitedly tell them of my venture. On more than a few occasions it demanded I slay my personal dragons, aka my self-limiting beliefs: "Who do you think you are?" and "This is never going to amount to anything, you should give up."

Bit by bit I pushed through all that was uncomfortable in order to move forward and reach my goal. My book

launch was a chance to share what I had created with others, but most of all for me it was an overwhelming feeling of pride and disbelief that "I actually did it"; almost as though all along I was proving to myself that I could. The notion of becoming more comfortable with getting uncomfortable has shaped my world into a magical place. The journey of creating my small book business has led me down new paths of possibility and dreams I never knew I had. It has provided me with the balance and self-fulfillment I wouldn't have if I had chosen to stay comfortable and complacent. On top of that, it has given me a forum to continue my practice of getting uncomfortable, strengthening my spirit and maintaining a healthy belief in self.

I feel like I have the best gig going. I also get to be the stay at home mom of two sons now, Joe three years old and Jake who just turned one. My ultimate dream is that all of this will help empower my two young sons to believe they too can achieve any and all of their dreams no matter how uncomfortable the steps may first appear to be.

dream

Emily lives in Nanaimo, BC with her husband and two sons. She has a degree in Business and Psychology and is working on a degree in Education. Emily believes in the importance of teaching children accountability and self-empowerment from a young age. Emily loves to inspire and teach children through writing. Being a mother is her greatest source of joy and creativity.

For more information, visit her website: www.captainjoesteachingresources.com

