

[00:00:00] Well, hello there. Today we're gonna talk about being uncomfortable and getting uncomfortable without pain. All the pleasure is totally meaningless. So today let's talk about breaking through your comfort zone and getting to the other side.

Welcome to the short of it with Amanda. When I was in middle school and high school, I was in drama class. I wasn't the best actress, but I loved it and I had so much fun. Then we moved from my hometown after middle school to a new town with a completely different culture, full of people I didn't know, not a friend, insight, and I still signed up for drama class in high school because it's what I knew and I loved.

But when I started, I noticed a huge difference. I was all of a sudden terrified to get up on stage. I'm not [00:01:00] talking nervous, I mean terrified. So I noticed that I had been in multiple plays over the prior three years in middle school, and for whatever reason, I was now struggling to participate in. But here's the kicker.

Had I actively tried to participate, that terrifying feeling probably would've gone away. I do have anxiety, and this was about the time that I started noticing that I had anxiety in my life. When I look back, I notice it more than what I did in that moment. But what I was feeling was normal. It was just being super uncomfortable because I was in a place full of people I didn't know, hadn't grown up with.

And my prior experience with drama, I had been with a group of people that I was comfortable with, and even though we had new people here and there, it was still familiar and now I'm in this completely different space with people I don't know, people I'm not comfortable [00:02:00] with in doing something that's already a little bit out of most people's comfort zones.

But that thread of getting kicked out of class was mortifying, and it definitely forced me to jump in with fear by my side. And guess what? I went on after that to three more years of drama in high school, performing in plays and participating in the improv. So I was able to get through it. But even with that experience of overcoming fear behind me, I still get uncomfortable and I still struggle.

But with Covid and working from home, I feel like I have gotten a little bit too comfortable. And maybe you relate to that too, being at home, working from home has really helped me stay within my comfort zone a little bit more than usual. So let's talk about getting out of that comfort zone today. I don't have all

the answers, and this podcast is not gonna contain all those answers, but it's gonna be sort of like a therapy [00:03:00] session with you and I.

I'll share my plan, what works with me, what I've learned so far. And you can share with me what has worked for you and what maybe you're gonna take away from today's episode. So why does it even matter? Why can't we just hunker down and live in our comfort zones? Well, if the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that we need people and we need to get out of our shell more than we probably thought.

At least I have realized that I need to get out a lot more than I thought I needed, and I need to interact with other people even though I am massive introvert. Really, I'm an extroverted introvert, so I'm extroverted about some things, but I need my me time and I, I do resist going out and doing things that, you know, involve being in public and among other people.

But overall, I am an introvert. I love working from home, but getting uncomfortable helps you grow and learn, and I know that. I know that as long as I'm staying in my shell [00:04:00] at home, I'm not growing and learning, and I'm not interacting with other people to grow and learn if I'm staying home all the time.

So if you wanna become stronger, you have to challenge your muscles, which is what getting out of your comfort zone does for our brain. It challenges our brain, it helps us break through those lulls when you're feeling not so great. Sometimes you just need to get out of the house. And I don't always identify that being an introvert.

I think staying in the house sometimes is what I need when I really just need to get out of the. So we need to train our brains to tolerate being uncomfortable. And really the only way to do that is by being uncomfortable. So it changes our mindset on being uncomfortable so that when we do feel awkward, sad, or scared.

We know it's our innate nature just trying to protect us and not that we're in any actual real danger. So getting uncomfortable is key to breaking through where you are now, to where you want to [00:05:00] be, and it keeps our brains young too. Now we all struggle with this because pain avoidance is built into us.

It's facing a new, difficult situation, is painful. And we innately just want to stay away from pain. That's what evolution has taught us to do. But most of the time, instead of trying to take tiny steps, we're trying to dive head first in, it makes it

harder when we are trying to do something. So when you're trying something new for the first time and you're trying to go all in, you're gonna feel more pain than had you tried to maybe just dip your toes in the pool before you tried to do it all at once and go all or nothing.

You know, that whole like hustle and all or nothing mentality doesn't always serve us and we have to think of it from a pain avoidance stand. If you try to go all in and do everything and it's excruciating, you are not gonna wanna do it another time. Use your habits. [00:06:00] That's where I like to start, is thinking about, you know, what habits that I have that I can leverage to maybe add in and practice getting outta my comfort zone a little bit more.

And if you start with a habit, you tend to not try to do too much or go too fast so that you don't fall back on what you know and go into what I like to call my comfort hole. Especially if you have anxiety like me. And if you do, you might sometimes equate being uncomfortable with fear, but there's a difference and we have to remind ourselves of that.

Fear is usually about something dangerous that's actually or about to happen to yourself or others. And we might sometimes mistake that feeling for being uncomfortable, which triggers or fight response. And it messes us all up when we are just simply feeling discomfort, not actual fear. So it just takes practice to acknowledge when you're in a situation and you feel what maybe you call fear, [00:07:00] ask yourself, am I in danger?

Somebody else in danger, or am I just uncomfortable? And I think reframing, being comfortable and being fearful is a. Important designation to make. For me, fear is a little bit more dramatic, whereas being uncomfortable is something I feel is easier I can get over. Maybe the mindset change might help you, but growth and discomfort, they walk the same path.

And if you want success, it requires you to get comfortable with discomfort. Now, comfort is complacency with our current situation, which does not encourage growth, and it's also where you have a sense of. But being uncomfortable can equal growth and change risk. Fun. And it can be challenging. Here is where you have little sense of control.

So no wonder we, it's hard for us, right? But after doing a deep dive into being comfortable with discomfort, I have decided I'm gonna try a few things. So some of these things I've been trying, some of [00:08:00] them, I'm going to continue. To try or add in. So first of all, I think like the number one step for anything, self-growth to be able to grow, whether it's dealing with your comfort

zone or just becoming a better person, I think we all need to really identify our limiting beliefs.

I just reread the big leaps, so that helps me identify my limiting beliefs. And I read this book once a year at least, and sometimes I've noticed that my limiting beliefs change. So once I maybe overcome something, or after years of practicing overcoming that limiting belief, there's something else that pops up sometimes.

So, or maybe circumstances in our lives change too, when things happen in our. We tend to pick up other living in beliefs as well. But when you're aware of them, I think just making sure that you know what yours are, writing 'em down, identifying them. It helps you get through a lot of the other things that we're going through in life.

So be aware when you're feeling [00:09:00] uncomfortable. This is making sure you're not in actual real danger, but just identifying the situation as, oh, I'm not afraid, like I'm not in danger. I'm safe. It's. But I'm uncomfortable and I don't wanna do what I have to do, or I don't wanna do this thing, or this is feeling really hard to me.

But identify that. What is that situation? Is there something in that situation that ties to a limiting belief of yours? You'll find that situations that make you comfortable are often tied to your limiting beliefs. So take note of that. I like to just make sure I'm either taking a mental note, writing it down in a journal.

Something to help me identify and connect. The two things. Then I try to change my thoughts about the situation and any negative talk, and that is, in that situation, I try to just, you know, set aside and say, okay, thanks for being their negative thought, but if I do this, this really great thing is about to happen on the other side.

So if I push through [00:10:00] and I connect with somebody at this event, because that's one of my struggles, Then this really great thing could happen on the other end. Maybe I connect with this person and they become a client, or they refer somebody to me who is a client, or I just make a really great friend. So sometimes.

I have to push through and it's something that you have to learn to do because even though we don't wanna do something, it might be good for us. And I love to use Mel Robbins's. 5, 4, 3, 2, go do that. Try that, see if it works for you. You are gonna have to convince yourself over and over, but eventually it does work

and it is something that will help get you to do something when you don't wanna.

Now identifying these experiences that you're having. When you're uncomfortable, knowing the situations that make you uncomfortable. Dig into what they are, make a list of them, and then start small. Take something from that list that makes you uncomfortable. And one thing I always do is I attend this really big conference [00:11:00] every year.

I love it. I get so excited for it. It's in one of my favorite cities and it actually provides me sort of a break from my day-to-day life cuz I get to get out of my town and it really amps me up. I learn so much. But the one thing that I always. Is networking with other people because it's a little scary.

Now this event is not set up so that you're at these round tables and you're forced to talk to other people. It makes it a little bit harder, but there are some opportunities that I realized I've been skirting because it's a situation I'm uncomfortable with, so I avoid it. So this year I am challenging myself to make a connection because anytime I attend an event, I have a complex about networking and avoid it.

And it's so dumb because these are my people, they understand me and I avoid them because I'm uncomfortable starting a conversation. Not because I'm afraid that gives it [00:12:00] a much different connotation to me. I am uncomfortable, so I don't do it. So this year my challenge is going to be making one connection, and I'm gonna put myself in a couple places that I know might actually help that a little bit more.

I'm creating a plan and a thought through all of this in my mind so that when I go, I'm mentally prepared to do some of the steps that will help me achieve this. Now, gimme a Facebook group and a keyboard. I'll make friends all day, but put me in public and I just hide. I could go sit and listen to people talk all day long, but I remember even as a child, I didn't like to approach new potential friends.

I remember one time being at the pool and my stepmom was trying to encourage me to make a new friend and go talk to this little girl who was playing by herself all alone, and I had massive resistance to. I don't really know why, but I remember it has been prominent in my life my whole entire life. And so this is something that [00:13:00] even though it's a challenge for me, I'm still working through it and I am much older now and still struggling with the energy that it takes to strike up a conversation with people.

So sometimes things do get easier. You can make a plan for so. But the more practice that you do, the better that you get at it. You know, just like anything else. Another thing that I have come across, and I haven't quite figured out how I wanna add this one in, but it makes sense to me because if you know me, I love habits and I love habits stacking, and I think that's all like very strong tools that we can use to help change things in our lives.

So I'm sure that there's some place in here to use. And tie them to other already established habits that will help get you outta your comfort zone. Now, I can think of some little things, but none that really apply to the situation that I'm in yet. And I'm probably just blind to it because it's my own situation.

But one example I can think of relates to fitness. [00:14:00] So if fitness is outside your comfort zone and you are afraid to go to the gym, Or maybe you go to the gym, but you're afraid to try the new class because you watch it and you admire everybody from afar and you just keep doing your own thing. But you never get that, the courage to take that class.

Thinking about habits and habit stacking, you're already at the gym, so maybe you challenge yourself to go stand at the door. Maybe you challenge yourself to go talk to the coach. Maybe you just use these little things when you're already at the gym to help encourage you and maybe inch your way into taking that class.

That's maybe the only thing I can think of right now, but we can leverage habits for so many things, so I definitely think there's something there. And if you come up with an idea, please share with me because for whatever reason, my brain is blanking on a. But journaling is another thing that I have been doing since last year.

So I started a reading journal, which [00:15:00] is I read and then I journal about what I read, and I've realized that that has made me routine much more of the information that I've been reading, and it actually helped me put into place a lot of the things I've been learning in my reading. So of course I think that can help me with my comfort zone challenges because now I can start journaling about the process before I even do anything.

This event's coming up in a few months that I talked about, and I can actually start writing about what I'm gonna do. I can, you know, writing helps us process those feelings and thoughts and ideas. It gives us a chance to work through some of this, you know, worry and the struggles that we're having. And so I can

do that ahead of time, pick and process all the good stuff that happens along the way.

It'll help me really solidify the plan in my head to help me get a little bit more comfortable. So I'm not just going and saying the day before this event, okay, go talk to one person. I have like this whole, you know, buildup that I'm doing. I'm talking myself into it. [00:16:00] I'm helping myself decide this is what you're gonna do and it's gonna put you in a position that's gonna make it easier for you to chat with somebody and make a connection.

So then my plan is clear in my head, and because I've processed some of these emotions over the next few months. By the time I get there, remove some of that uncomfortableness. Now it's not all gonna be gone, but I'm working on training my mindset here, and when I'm done, I've journaled about the whole process.

So now I can go back and look at the whole process and go, oh look, this is where I started. This is where I ended, and how great is that? And then I can celebrate that, which helps me build more confidence for the next time that I'm uncomfortable about something. I know I can do it. I know I can break through it.

I know it's doable for. There's gonna be ups and downs. It's not gonna go perfectly as planned. It's still gonna be uncomfortable, but when you keep at it and you leave your ego at the door when something doesn't work, as long as you're staying curious, you're asking the questions, you're being a student of the world, good things are [00:17:00] going to come your way.

And you are going to break through your comfort zone little by little. It's not a magic switch that you turn on and one day all of a sudden you're just good at getting outta your comfort zone. It takes work. It takes encouraging yourself day in, day out. It takes convincing yourself and you know you'll get there.

I'm not there yet, and I don't have all the answers. I just have my plan that I wanted to share with you. I'd love your advice if you have it and if you're happy to share it with. Let me know over on your favorite social media platforms. I'm on LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter and TikTok, so any of those, you can DM me what your advice is, and I'd love to have your encouragement along the way as well.

All right. I will talk to you soon, friend. Join me each week for a new episode of the Short of IT with Amanda Long Business and Productivity Podcast. Please

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