

**Step Out of Your Comfort Zone
And
Start Living Your Dream**

“Your comfort zone could be the death of you”

Mthokozisi Nkosi

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Dear God, amidst all the trials and temptations you allow to come into my life, please help me use these as opportunities for growth so that I become strong in character and ready for anything. Thank you for hearing and answering my prayer.

Gratefully, in the name of Jesus

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

COMFORT ZONE FREEDOM

We seldom acknowledge that we are in a comfort zone until an enormous change in our lives pushes us into going out on a limb. Perhaps during the process of growing up we had everything, and never felt the need to pursue our own fantasies. We watched other individuals succeeding before us and felt that they had forged ahead because God favoured them more. We looked at them and called them “lucky people”.

We often fail to understand that in life you make your own chances. They don't simply tumble from the sky. It's about time you realised that you can make the progress you need. If you want it badly enough, all it will take is making the decision to step out of your comfort zone. Yet, how many people in South Africa are willing to show that courage? We are so afraid of change that we fail to recognise opportunities when we are presented with them. We doubt ourselves and we celebrate and praise others when they achieve the dreams we deemed impossible.

I remember the time when I lived in my father's home. It was all great, since he was the one we constantly depended upon. I realised that we were fortunate in having bread on the table each day. He never married and had no living arrangements with anyone. It was just him, my younger brother and I, though every now and then he would come home with a female companion. Life was awesome, until that one day when things changed. Because of that change, I grew up and began to understand that I could then stand up and make my own choices. My father was not impressed and said something I never thought he would say to me. Regardless of how hurt I felt, it made me the person I am today. He disowned me and kicked me out of his house.

Many people are stuck in jobs they hate and are so focused on putting bread on the table, that they overlook their dreams. What if you suddenly got fired from your current job? What would you do then? What if that husband or boyfriend for whom you relinquished all your dreams, suddenly asks for a divorce or breaks up with you? What would you do then? These are some of the questions you need to ask yourself in order to evaluate your current situation. Don't put too much trust in people. They are as human as you and are capable of making mistakes and sometimes turning their backs on you. Focus on pushing your boundaries and facing challenges head-on. Do not get too comfortable with all that is familiar and your daily routines. Learn new and exciting things. Stand up and speak in a room full of strangers. Though it may take a great deal of effort to step out, it is possible to live the life of your dreams. Stepping out of your comfort zone is good for you and when you do it, you feel good about yourself. You find the happiness you have always been searching for, because it all inside of you.

In this book, you will learn how to conquer your fears by stepping out of your comfort zone. You will learn how to take charge of your life and have the courage to make decisions that others are afraid to make. You will learn the reasons why most people are not experiencing progress in their lives and not living to their full potential. They are stuck and feel that

there's no way out. But that's not the truth! You can step out of your comfort zone and live the life you were created for. IT'S POSSIBLE! You too can live the life of your dreams. Who wants to live a miserable life? We all want the same thing, and that is to be happy. The author of *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari* Robin Sharma, wrote that the secret of happiness is this, "Find out what you truly love to do and then direct all of your energy towards doing it and figure out what turns you on, then do it". This is your "number one key" to total comfort zone freedom.

Early one morning a friend of mine, Tjaka Segooa, was queuing for a taxi to work. She made an interesting observation and shared it with me. She saw some pigeons which frequent the city and eat trash food such as scraps and leftovers from the street, often tangled in plastic and other junk. She thought to herself, "Okay, this is a bird which doesn't have the brains but it has wings and can fly". This is a feature that human beings don't have. If it really knew what was out there, it could use its potential, its wings, to fly to a better and more suitable source of food for its wellbeing.

Now I want you to look at it from a human perspective. We have the brains although we don't have the wings. We have a lot of potential and are capable of achieving a great deal. So why do we confine ourselves to certain areas which are not beneficial to us? We are often like the bird that eats from trash cans even though it has wings and can fly off to a better environment for more nourishing food. I hope you will find meaning in this. Don't be like that bird which is only confined to one place, eating food that is detrimental to its wellbeing even though it has wings to fly. Spread those wings my friend. Your comfort zone could be the death of you.

CHAPTER 1

MY STORY

“If you really want to know yourself, start writing a book.”

Theodore Roosevelt

When I joined Toastmasters International, I became aware of my passion for writing and delivered ten inspirational speeches. On the other hand, like most people, I had a fear of public speaking and my aim for becoming a member was to overcome that fear. I realised that the only way I could conquer it was to stand up in front of an audience and deliver my icebreaker, a speech about myself. I needed to get up and speak before an audience. It was uncomfortable at first but the more I wrote and spoke, the easier it became. My reason for joining was that everything I wanted to do in life involved speaking and writing in some form. This is the reason you have this publication in your hands today.

It occurred to me that most of us want to do great things with our lives, but we do not want to take the necessary steps. We are too comfortable in our present positions and become satisfied with whatever life throws at us. We cannot even answer simple questions about who we are and what we want to do. We are inclined to live our lives based on other people's opinions of us. We enjoy having it easy in life and are quite happy to compliment other people's achievements and neglect our own dreams. This is all through concluding that life is not fair and achievement relies upon how fortunate you are as a man or woman and whether you have support from your family or not. Well, your comfort zone is not your destiny. I've been there, got the T-shirt and outgrew it. This is my story.

In the year 2009, I had an argument with my father about the past. He was never there for us and I grew up with a lot of resentment towards him. I was one of the smartest students in primary school, yet I spent most of my time involved in fights and being reprimanded by my schoolteachers. At the time of the argument, he resorted to calling my mother names. I responded by saying, “If my mother was that, then what are you?” He retaliated by disowning me and kicking me out of the house - the place he often called our home.

I stayed and never moved out. However, I was still angry with my father, especially for what he had said to me. At one stage he even asked me to hop into his car so we could do some shopping together - something I dreaded. Over the years he was never there for us, so I became adept at bottling things up inside, meanwhile displaying a pretentious smile. All this came to a head on a Saturday afternoon in September, 2009. This fateful day is still so clearly imprinted on my mind.

Although everyone at home thought the bad blood between my father and I was over, I pondered over the matter with deep concern. I was overwhelmed by my doubts and fear, afraid of what would happen if I moved out. A little voice whispered in my ears and said, “Mthokozisi, the man kicked you out of his place and said you are no longer his son, so why are you still around?” The voice continued to whisper, “Move, move, get out and find your own place”. I started feeling as though I was the prodigal son. And that's when I

remembered the words I once read in a poem. They spoke to me and said, “If you are in a comfort zone, afraid to venture, remember that all winners were at one time filled with doubt, a step or two and words of praise can make your dreams come true”.

One Saturday morning my father had to work. He did not know that I had already rented a room and had my new keys. My younger brother was the only one who knew my intentions and didn't tell anyone because I asked him not to tell a single soul. I left my father's house lugging my bag full of clothes and entered an empty room with a heart full of hope.

I had just been accepted into a learnership programme and my allowance at that time was R1 800. I had nothing! All I knew was that I had to spend that money very wisely, which I did, and was only left with R200. I still had to buy my monthly train ticket which was R99 back then and I was left with R101. I had no food and life soon forced me out of my comfort zone. I found myself on the other side of the bridge, having to take a leap of faith and jump into the unknown.

I remember walking into my empty room and leaning against the door, wondering how I was going to make it work. I remember friends leaving me and going to bed on an empty stomach. There were many days I felt like giving up. Sometimes I cried and wished I had never been born. But I loved reading books and came across a quote by Lou Piniella which read, “You have to learn how to get comfortable with being uncomfortable”. Suddenly I was glad my father had kicked me out of his house and disowned me. Firstly, I had to learn to depend on myself and then I had to forgive. I first forgave myself and realised why I was in that position. Then I let go of what was holding me back and forgave him.

A comfort zone is a place or position in which a person feels secure, comfortable or in control. There are many reasons why people stay in comfort zones and they differ with each person. It all depends on where they are in their lives. In the following chapters we shall explore some of those aspects. Then, I will attempt to give you a few tips on how you can overcome problems and venture out of your own comfort zone.

Your comfort zone could be the cause of your downfall. If you stay in it for too long, you will become bored and lazy.

You will be a “dead man walking” and lose the ability to create meaning in your life. I want you to know that you can achieve anything you want and you can learn any skill you lack. Walt Disney once said, “All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them”. You also need to develop the courage to step up and step out. Nothing is stopping you. Other people have done it before, and that should be proof enough to you that it is all possible. If I could do it, then you can do it too. All you have to do is decide.

End of this sample.
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