

## Thriving Outside Your Comfort Zone

By Jeanne Loehnis

Thrive – to flourish or prosper, to grow vigorously, to gain in wealth. Yes, I want to thrive! But “outside” of my comfort zone? Isn’t the whole point of thriving to practice, to develop skills and talents and then use them comfortably and confidently? What’s with “outside your comfort zone”?

Consider these questions:

- What have you done repeatedly, without change, over an extended period of time that has continued to be **fulfilling**?
- What challenges have you accepted and succeeded with lately?
- How does it feel when, having stepped away from the familiar and dipped your toes into unfamiliar waters, you suddenly realize you are swimming confidently here?

Children are the best teachers. Absolutely **everything** is outside of their comfort zone the day they are born. Yet, every healthy child naturally wants to grow and develop. They *put themselves out there* in front of the world and attempt to walk. They fall, pick themselves up, and do it again! They talk in meaningless sounds at first, but they continue. Eventually words and sentences and verbal communication are learned skills confidently exercised. Picture the pride that exudes from the child. Is the child surviving – or – thriving?

Too many of us grew up believing that the goal of childhood was to learn it all, be comfortable, and not need to continue learning and stretching and growing. As adults, we have stopped taking on new challenges; we are *surviving* in the status quo.

Imagine the childlike zest for expansion, eyes filled with wonder, and fearless steps forward despite stumbling and falling as your approach in adulthood.

Does this sound like thriving outside your comfort zone?

How can we reconnect with the child in us and become willing to stretch, to experiment, to be a beginner, perhaps even look silly? What is present for that child that we have lost?

Consider the song, I Choose Love, by Shawn Gallaway (\*). Over and over he sings, “Love or Fear: What do you choose?” The child that is thriving doesn’t know fear and feels unconditionally loved. From this safe emotional place, everything is possible.

In the simplest definition, there are only two emotions: fear and love. From this vantage point, “thriving outside your comfort zone” is the natural result when we act from a place of love rather than react from feelings of fear.

For example, you've been offered the opportunity to speak at your local women's group about your favorite hobby, a topic you know well. Immediately, fear kicks in and you are bombarded with:

- I can't speak in front of people, I'll be nervous!
- They won't be interested. Besides, there are other people in the group so much more talented than I am!

In no time at all, you have closed the door to a stretching opportunity! You have chosen survival and smallness over the discomfort of the new situation and a chance to thrive.

Consider the request from a place of love:

- I find great joy in this hobby and others might as well.
- There is so much I could share. I could even teach this skill!
- If others were interested, I wouldn't be alone in this work. We could get together and enjoy each other's company while doing what we love.
- That woman doesn't have a hobby. Maybe she needs to see how easy this is. I can show her!

Careful! That feeling of learning a new skill, of meeting a challenge, has actually expanded your comfort zone. What used to be forbidden territory has become a place where you thrive. By choosing to release the fear that keeps you in survival mode and seeing challenges from a place of love, you have grown.

You have, indeed, learned to thrive outside your comfort zone!

*(\* To hear Shawn's very moving song and learn more about how I Choose Love is touching our world, see <http://www.ichooselove.org/>*

*Jeanne Loehnis, life coach and spiritual singer/songwriter, completed coach training through the Coach's Training Institute ([www.TheCoaches.com](http://www.TheCoaches.com)). Contact Jeanne at [SongsForYourSpirit@new.rr.com](mailto:SongsForYourSpirit@new.rr.com) and learn what coaching is all about!*

Optional sidebar lyrics:

***Heaven's Heartbeat***

As you go a walkin' down life's long road  
when you need to stop and lighten up your load  
shine the light of Spirit on everyone you meet.  
Then you will feel the steadiness of heaven's heartbeat.

Walk with courage to the drum that you hear.  
With Spirit's guidance you've got nothing to fear!  
Faith and Love will be companions sweet  
'cause you'll be marching to the steadiness of heaven's heartbeat.

Grab a friend to take along with you.  
Ride together and you'll both make it through!  
Sharing love will make your life complete  
'cause Love is following the steadiness of heaven's heartbeat.

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