

If This Is My Comfort Zone...

by Charles Burke

This Special Edition
Was Prepared for
Readers of Catherine Pratt's
LifeWithConfidence.com

If This Is My Comfort Zone...

by
Charles Burke

CONTENTS

If This Is My Comfort Zone, Why'm I so Uncomfortable?	3
Trash Miracles	7
Finding Gold in Your Failures	16
Finding It Within Yourself	23
Iron-Clad Confidence	29
In a Far and Foreign Place	35
Afterword	41

This report is by Charles Burke. All articles appeared first in the weekly Sizzling Edge Report. [Go here](#) to check out what people are saying.

If This Is My Comfort Zone, Why'm I So Uncomfortable?

I'm going to stick up my hand and ask a dumb question here: Why does everybody call it a "comfort zone"?

We're always hearing psychologists, psychiatrists, ministers, teachers, inspirational writers and speakers talking about comfort zones.

We're too comfortable, they say. If we want to make progress, they say, we've got to be willing to move out of our comfort zone.

I'm not quite sure where they get that.

Most of the people I meet are pretty UNcomfortable in that so-called "comfort zone" of theirs. And they're interested in learning how to get MORE comfortable.

Not LESS.

Oh, I know the teachers are just trying to get us to move forward, toward a more beneficial life.

But here's a shocking idea: nobody moves because they're comfortable. And nobody — NOBODY — moves out of a REAL comfort zone.

Just look around you. Isn't it true? Most people only move when they've become so uncomfortable they can't stand the same old spot any longer.

And even the most highly motivated among us has to be at least a little uncomfortable before they'll move.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

The writer W. Clement Stone called it inspirational discontent.

Inspirational, yes, but still discontent... discomfort.

When your “comfort” zone is that uncomfortable, how accurate is the description?

Maybe it'd make more sense to call it a “Familiar Zone.”

That term fits better. Whether we're comfortable or not, it's a zone we're familiar with, which helps make it a little clearer why so many people refuse to move out of a spot they no longer like.

Many people are like the old country boy standing waist deep in swamp water, batting away alligators with an axe handle and wondering what it would be like to live up there on dry land.

So many people are surrounded by problems, spending most of their energy and time wrestling those problems, and wishing they didn't have the problems, but they don't move.

Why? “Well, this swamp is my home. I'm familiar with it.”

That illustrates why I suggest changing the term. However, as interesting as that little change might be, most folks would rather know how to just go ahead and get more comfortable.

So how do we do that?

The short answer? Drag our tails up out of that swamp onto dry land where the alligators can't bite us anymore.

Even from where we stand, down in the water, we can see that there are fewer alligators up there. And it's a lot drier. And we might live longer. But we don't move.

Why don't we?

Pretty simple, really. We just haven't decided to do it.

There are usually only two reasons why we don't make that decision. Either we don't believe we CAN have it, or we don't believe we DESERVE to have it.

Right there is the real core purpose of all self-help, positive thinking, and inspirational teachings.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

That core purpose is to somehow get us to believe we CAN have and we DESERVE to have something better.

All those affirmations and goals and prayers and chants and visualizations and everything else we've been doing for years — all of that is just an aid to help us believe in a possibility. Once we believe, then we can move — if we actually want what we're aiming for.

And that's why if you have chosen goals that don't turn you on at the deepest level, then I know for a fact that you probably haven't attained them. Or if you have reached them, you're not enjoying them.

That's also why, if you're visualizing a house or a car or a mate that doesn't really satisfy your deepest inner wants, you almost certainly won't be getting them.

The people who attain their dreams are the ones who pick real dreams — their own dreams, not somebody else's.

If you've ever slaved away over a lukewarm affirmation for days, weeks or months without ever even getting close to attaining your target, there's a simple explanation.

That goal wasn't yours. It was a goal you heard somebody else suggest. Or it was a goal you thought you OUGHT to want because, well, I guess I SHOULD want a big new house and fast car and high income.

When you find out what you really want, what you want as much as a starving man wants food, or a drowning man wants air, when you find what you really, really want, getting it will be quick, efficient and exciting.

But self-help techniques are not for everybody.

If you already know exactly what you want, you don't really need self-help books or tapes. Just act. The inner fire of your desire will bring what you want into existence in your life.

Alternately, if there's nothing you want badly, hey, just relax. Stop beating yourself up for it. Maybe you are really, truly already in your comfort zone.

So while the people all around you battle to reach their dreams, you can lean back, smile and enjoy your life.

Self-help and self-motivation are for people who are not where they want to be, and they're having trouble making a connection with their desires.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

But if you're already there, and you already know (or possess) exactly what you want, then you can relax and enjoy. You've got what all those other folks are straining so hard to get.

While they're struggling to get out of their familiar zone, you're nice and snug in your comfort zone.

But if you KNOW you're not comfortable, then get your tail out of that swamp now. You already know how. Stop thinking and just make it happen. And yes you CAN do it.

Just start. And don't stop.

Trash Miracles

Are there parts of your life you sometimes hate?

Wish you could cancel those failures? Dump the defeats and sidestep the lousy breaks?

Maybe very little in your life is going right – hasn't been right for a very long time. There's a lot of that going around.

But are you ready to change it? ... change it in a shockingly short time? Well, get ready. By the time you've finished reading this lesson, you'll know exactly how to alter the path of your entire destiny.

And I don't mean starting next week. I'm talking about beginning today. Right this minute.

But you're going to have to accept a couple of shocking truths. Even worse, they're shocking truths about you.

Ready for change?

SHOCK #1: All those failures, defeats and bad breaks, every one of those unhappy events you hate, is a miracle. A miracle you want to throw away like trash.

SHOCK #2: You **caused** every one of those miracles. And you can **change** them any time you decide to. I mean ANY time. No long waits necessary.

Okay, let's get rolling.

First of all, before we do anything else, I'd like you to estimate how many times you've been inspired with hope for the future, but nothing ever came of it. How many books have you read that filled you with visions of a better life?

How many tapes?

Seminars?

Articles?

Lessons like this one?

They didn't work for very long, did they? Every last one of them hyped you up, got you all enthusiastic and feeling good about yourself, but then nothing came of it. The effect just wore off, didn't it?

Somehow, you're still mired in that same clinging, suffocating mud of dissatisfaction and despair.

And of course you've wondered why. Why doesn't that good influence last? Why does it always wear off?

Here's the answer. It's a simple one, but you're not going to like it:

Nothing changes for you because there are things you still refuse to do, things you think you can't change.

And as long as you continue refusing, you'll remain stuck in the badlands of a barren life. In fact, as long as you seek change from an outside source, this drought will continue.

See what I mean? All those self-help gurus – how many of them have the balls to stand up and tell you to your face, it's all your own doing? Well it is.

Same also goes for me, by the way. If I screw up, I'm the guy responsible, nobody else. No excuses; no use whining "see what they made me do." I'm the guy making my life. Period.

So what can we do about that now? How do we use this to our own advantage?

EVERYTHING'S A MIRACLE

First, you need to accept clearly, without any hedging, that life is not something that happens to you. It's just the reverse.

Your life is a printout of the things going on in your head and your heart. What's lodged within you is projected outward, and everybody watching you can see exactly what your soul contains just by observing the condition of your life.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

The truth is, YOU happen to your life, not the other way around. Nobody else is responsible. You make your life. Every single detail of it.

We have heard for years that we need to learn the power of creating better events in our life.

That's a bit of a lie.

We already HAVE that power, and we use that power every day – every moment we're alive.

But we're mostly mis-using it, creating stuff we despise.

How does it feel to suddenly hear that you have the power to perform miracles, and you're using it to create misery and crap for yourself?

Now, it's true that much of what you're creating is done at the unconscious level. We all have seriously clumsy, unhelpful ideas installed in our minds, much of it from our childhood years. So, yes, you and I may have started out with a lousy foundation.

But we're out of childhood now, for goodness sake. We're adults, and it's time to begin acting like it.

Adults take responsibility for their own actions. They take responsibility for EVERYTHING about themselves.

And if there's something about yourself that you don't like, you can either fall down in the floor and throw a kicking tantrum, screaming that things are not the way you want them to be, and it's not fair.

Or you can look for ways to fix them.

One approach is powerless, the other is powerful.

So which is it going to be?

QUICK-CHANGING WHO YOU ARE:

If you're still with me, let's roll up our sleeves and get to work.

I hope you've gotten at least a little stirred up and pissed off about this whole subject.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

You know how the gurus all tell us that we need to rid ourselves of all “negative emotions” such as anger? Well, as with most things in life, that’s only true part of the time. Under other circumstances, it’s a bunch of bull pucky.

Because when you’re sunk in the swamp of despair and helplessness, there’s nothing like a little bit of righteous anger to give you a powerful kickstart. Nothing cuts through hopelessness better than getting fighting mad.

A friend once told me that soon after he married, he was feeling overwhelmed by all the new responsibilities. Their first baby was coming, his job paid next to nothing, they were living with his parents, and his father wanted him and his bride to move out on their own as soon as possible.

My friend had virtually no experience dealing with pressures like that, and he was having a major case of overwhelm. Couldn’t eat or sleep. Slogged through the day feeling utterly exhausted. Couldn’t bring himself to talk to anybody, even when asked a direct question.

He had never been one to open up and discuss problems with anyone. Never asked for help. Finally, after several weeks of this, he worked up the courage to ask his wife, “Please, can you just help me?” he pleaded. “I need help.”

He said she laughed at him: “Aw, there’s nothing wrong with you.”

Of course, he was crushed, and for two or three days, his depression plumbed new depths.

But then he started feeling the faint stirrings of anger. At last, he stood up one day and declared (to an empty room), “Well, I don’t NEED your help. I’ll help myself.”

And he did. He fought his own way up out of that swamp of despair. The anger helped him grab his own bootstraps and pull himself up out of hopelessness.

Later, he admitted, “My wife was basically right. There WASN’T anything wrong with me. But I believed there was. It wasn’t until I got mad enough to take my eyes off my misery that I could see anything else.”

And that broke the spell. Or as they say in NLP, it interrupted the pattern.

So if you’re ready to get rid of all that mess in your life, it’s time to begin acting like it. If you woke up at midnight and found an intruder in your home, you’d want him out of there – and rightly so.

Well, this is exactly the same. There IS an intruder in your home... several in fact... and they came in while you’ve been asleep.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

But now that you're awake, what are you going to do about it? You are fully justified in feeling righteous indignation; justified in using any means to reclaim what's yours, and to ensure that your mental space is never invaded again. A little later, we'll examine how to use this righteous anger to pry yourself loose from old habits.

QUICK-CHANGE SECRETS:

We've all been brain washed to think that change takes long, hard effort. That's a "truth" in our world.

Well, I hope you're sitting down, because that "truth" is another lie. However, that lie often causes self-fulfilling prophecies. We think change is slow, we expect it to be slow, and we look only for evidence of slow change. Any other evidence, we ignore.

But I can prove change is fast. Absent mindedly pick up a hot pan without a pot-holder.

Burns your hand, doesn't it? How many more times will you need to pick up that hot pan and burn your hand before you understand that it's hot? Fifteen times? Forty?

Huh uh, no way... you'll remember to use the pot-holder the very next time. No long, drawn out process of change is involved.

Voila! Instant learning!

Now, we've just shown that your mind CAN learn in a single try. So why doesn't it learn everything like that? The only thing missing most of the time are focus and motivation. If you have both focus and motivation, then you have a shortcut to learning anything.

If you want to sharpen up your focus, go get a pencil and paper. Take 10 minutes to make a list of all the things in your life you don't like.

Got a job you hate? Don't make near enough money? Are you treated like a pushover by everybody you know? Parents you don't get along with?

Put it all down. Every last thing you'd love to have different, if you could.

Got the list?

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

Okay. Now point to each item on your list and say, "I made this happen. I worked a miracle and caused this in my life. I'm the ass who did this to me." Say something like this for every single item you've written down.

Then take that list, rip it to shreds, throw it in the trash, or flush it down the toilet, or bury it in the cat's litter box. Whatever is most meaningful to you.

And as you rip or discard or flush, say, "I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it anymore. I don't know how yet, but I'm going to change everything here."

Now make a second list. Fill this paper with all the things you DO want in your life. Now, as you go down the list, say things like, "I will work miracles and bring every one of these things into existence in my life. I don't know how, but I don't HAVE to know how. My inner mind knows exactly how to make things come to pass, and it is now doing my bidding because I'm the cause of my life."

But this is only the beginning.

DEFINING THE NEW YOU:

This second list defines how you want your life to be. The kind of things you want happening to you and around you.

Get a little crazy with this list. Since everything in your life is caused by what we often call miracles, there's no need to be logical or conservative. Miracles can do ANYTHING. So you can claim anything for your life. The only thing delaying its happening is your acceptance about what's possible.

Now, this is not a nice, gentle, gradual kind of process. It'll jump you from one track to a completely different track.... in an eyeblink, if you want.

The only thing you need to supply is focus and motivation. And lots of it.

The focus begins in your list. The motivation comes from reminding yourself how much you detest all the misery and discomfort you've kept yourself wallowing in. And how much you want what's on your new list.

If you're sick and damn tired of settling for a lousy, boring, poverty-ridden life, then just say so. Say it loudly and emphatically.

You know what'll start happening then? You'll start seeing yourself with new eyes. You'll begin seeing how you've been sabotaging yourself with behavior that's custom-made to keep you in poverty and pain and lack.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

You'll catch yourself anytime you say stupid things like:

- I just don't WANT to learn any new skills in my job.
- I wouldn't want to be like greedy, sneaky rich people.
- My wife just makes me crazy with her goofy ways.
- The system is set up so nobody can get ahead.

These are "power giveaways." And of course, all of these are from your old way of thinking. But they won't be able to sneak past you anymore. And as any thoughts like this come up, you'll immediately begin seeing how you've set up your own mind and beliefs to ensure you stay trapped in feelings of helplessness. You'll start recognizing statements of powerlessness.

Every time you say something that gives the power to somebody else, you've just robbed yourself of the power to shape your own life. And you can immediately begin recognizing and changing these "power giveaway" patterns.

This will change "who you are" more than anything else you can do – just recognizing where the real power lies, and reclaiming it.

GETTING IT TO STAY:

One of the big problems with self-help materials is how the influence fades within a week or two. The excitement wears off, and soon you've settled back into your old patterns again. Happens over and over. To counter this fading, you've fed yourself on a steady stream of new books, new tapes, new teachers. Trying to keep it fresh in your life.

Trouble is, you're only keeping yourself entertained. Not motivated. Entertainment is from **outside**. You need to supply motivation from **inside**.

If you want to get motivated and stay that way, it's going to take more than feel-good emotions. It's going to take some scrapping and scrambling and good old-fashioned stubbornness. Getting your psychological hands dirty. Even getting good and angry, if necessary.

If you want to remodel your house, it takes some rebuilding and some tearing out of the old before you can start building in the new. Standing around wishing won't repaint the bedroom.

Sorry, but that's the reality of it.

We've had so many gurus spinelessly tell us how we only need to feel the good and it'll just show up. Well, in theory, that's absolutely true. But has it happened for you yet?

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

Unfortunately, you and I – and most people – are not blank slates. We're a mish-mash of old history, with existing habits and beliefs that are currently in the process of creating a certain kind of life all around us. We've got our miracle machine already in full swing, and we have some very unfortunate habits already in place.

If you want a new life, with nice, comfortable new conditions, you're going to have to take back control of that miracle machine of yours. You'll need to seize the steering wheel and direct it into a new direction.

Of course, if that all seems like too much work, you can let it keep running just like it's going now. If you do that, you'll keep on getting exactly what you've been getting.

But if you want to change things, you'll have to be the one to change them. And changing things means ruthlessly uprooting old habits and replacing every thought, every belief that is now filling your life with crap.

After all, it's YOUR miracle machine, and you have every right to run it the way you like. You don't have to settle for anything that's less than exactly what you want.

But again I repeat, you'll have to MAKE it happen. You won't just drift into it. And continually reading books for a one-week "feel good" fix has never worked, has it? Well, it's okay to stop depending on stuff that doesn't work and start doing stuff that does produce results.

SELF-CHEERING SECTION:

How does a coach motivate a team before a championship game? First thing he does, he starts working on their attitude way back in training camp, months earlier. He keeps up a steady stream of focused, carefully selected suggestions and instructions, week after week. Everything he says to them is always aimed at just one result. Winning games.

A sales manager does the same with his sales force.

Good teachers teach that way.

Good leaders lead that way.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

And if you want to take control of your own miracle generating power, you'll do the same thing. You'll work at it. You'll keep reminders in front of you constantly. Leave nothing to chance.

You'll keep at it all day, every day, to retake control of what's going on in your mind and heart.

They say it takes about 21 days to create a new habit. But that's only the average. And I hope you no longer want to be just average.

I hope you now recognize the true value of your own power, and how desperately you've been wasting it.

You've been using the power of creation itself to turn out the life you're living now. Is that good enough? Are you satisfied with what you've been doing? Are you ready to take back your own power?

After all, if you don't, you'll live till the end of your days mired in an endless swamp of trash miracles.

Finding Gold in Your Failures

Darby quit only 3 feet from gold.

Back in the late 1800's, thousands of people made their way to the American West in search of riches.

Napoleon Hill, in his classic "Think and Grow Rich," tells how one man, named Darby, joined his uncle in mining for gold. They filed a claim, actually made a strike, and dug out enough of the precious metal to prove the new mine was one of the richest ever found.

They were ecstatic... and then the gold run out.

It appeared that the vein of ore had been very rich but very short.

Desperately, they dug farther. Nothing.

And they dug some more. Still nothing.

Finally, disheartened, they closed up the mine, sold all their mining equipment to a junk man for a few hundred dollars, and slunk back home in the east.

The junk dealer, however, had watched miners for a while, and he knew something Darby and his uncle didn't.

As Napoleon Hill tells it:

"The junk man called in a mining engineer to look at the mine and do a little calculating. The engineer advised that the project had failed because the owners were not familiar with 'fault lines.' His calculations showed that the vein would be found just three feet from where the Darbys had stopped drilling."

And so it was. The junk man made millions from a mine that the Darbys had walked away from. He knew enough to just keep on drilling.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

Years later, Darby told Napoleon Hill that he had learned a priceless lesson from that failure. In fact, it was the main reason that Darby went on to make a fortune in the insurance business.

He said that every time he was in a selling situation and the prospect said “no,” he remembered quitting 3 feet from gold. Then he would press on and try harder to close the sale.

Darby learned the importance of persistence only after seeing how expensive it can be to quit.

He didn't know they were only 3 feet from success. His uncle didn't know. The junk dealer didn't know, either, but he was smart enough to go get expert advice.

And then he went down in the hole and just dug a little farther... far enough to make himself a very rich man.

When I came to Japan in 1985, it was the middle of the “bubble years.” Work was everywhere.

I came as a writer, but most newcomers came because they'd heard they could make good money teaching English. And it was true.

English language schools were opening three-to-a-street-corner, and they were offering some very good salaries for anybody willing to teach English.

Few of the foreigners coming to Japan actually had any training as teachers, but that made no difference. All willing native English speakers (and many who only claimed to be native) were pressed into service.

It was definitely a seller's market, with schools scrambling to find teachers of any kind.

And you'd think, with a market like that, it would be very hard to fail. But it wasn't.

People would come, try it for a short while, become surprised that it took real effort to adjust to a different culture, and they'd quit. Just pack up and go back home.

Some, however, stayed. For example, I'm still here after 17 years.

Why the difference? Was it easier for me?

Nope – if anything, it was probably harder. Being in my forties, I was nearly twice the age of most of my fellow newcomers.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

But I had learned something about the price of giving up.

I'd had failures in my past, times I had quit when I should have kept going, and those experiences were a resource I drew upon when I came to Japan.

Failure is not a disgrace. It doesn't brand you forever as a reject.

Walt Disney is called a business genius, a visionary, a marketing magician.

But did you know he went bankrupt once and several other times he nearly went broke again. In addition, he had several nervous breakdowns before finally breaking into the big-time. Like Darby and his gold mine, Disney learned to just keep on drilling.

And Bill Birdseye, the man who invented frozen foods, discovered the secret of flash freezing (and in the process created an entire industry) after going bankrupt seven times. Usually with money he'd borrowed from friends and family.

He, too, learned to just keep on drilling.

So if you have been less than successful in the past, that can be a very good thing.

There are lessons you can learn from a failure. Or two failures. Or even seven failures.

Thomas Edison was asked if he ever got discouraged when it took him thousands of tries to invent the electric light. His answer is priceless. "No, because then I knew several thousand ways not to make an electric light."

When you know lots of ways that don't work, this frees your mind to explore novel new ways of thinking about the problem you're seeking to solve. But you have to be willing to use what you've learned.

Eileen, a friend of mine, had been married four times, and had decided that she was doomed to spend her life alone or "shackled to a loser."

As she put it, "I'm afraid to get married again. I always attract the same kind of abusive cheater. I guess I'm just a loser at love."

I assured her that she was not "a loser" just because she had made some poor decisions in the past. Then I asked her to describe the man she would really like to marry.

She drew a blank.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

I asked if she preferred someone who was tall, short, dark, fair, an intellectual, a man handy with tools. Should he like to dance? What kind of meals would he like?

She was still blank. "I don't really care. Any of those is okay."

"Well, would you like for him to be a heavy drinker or a compulsive gambler?" I knew her second and third husbands had shared those traits.

"Absolutely not!" Suddenly Eileen was crystal clear about what she DIDN'T want.

"Okay, you know two ways NOT to find a husband," I told her, "That's a start. And you learned them from previous experiments."

Eileen laughed out loud. "Previous experiments – that's a good name for ex-husbands."

Actually, her failures weren't failures at all. They were merely a lack of clear intention. She didn't know what she wanted, so that's what she got.

Most failures are like that.

But not all.

For my ninth birthday I got the book "Treasure Island." I loved that book. As I read, I became inflamed by the vision of digging up buried treasure.

The day I finished the book, I went out and found a shovel in back of the house. Then I paced off ten paces this way and twenty paces that way. I carefully marked a big X on the ground and started digging.

I was sure I'd find buried treasure. I had paced off the distances, and I was digging ferociously. All afternoon I excavated. Soon I had blisters the size of marbles, but I kept on digging.

Next day, after school, I was at it again, blisters and all.

I dug every afternoon for about a week before I finally figured it out – there wasn't going to be any treasure.

You already know where I went wrong don't you?

I had a burning vision, great desire, and lots of effort, but none of that was based on reality. It was just a nine-year-old's fantasy. A daydream.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

Every marketing consultant in existence tells us over and over: before you spend weeks or months writing your book, do a survey and find out if anybody wants it.

Before you launch your brilliant new invention, find out if anybody wants it.

Before you start your new service, find out if anybody wants it.

Tony, a guy I used to know, worked endless hours trying to make a success of an old gasoline station. It was offered to him at a great price, so he bought the thing at a terrific “bargain.”

The station had once been hugely popular. Then the state put in a freeway, and everybody quit using the little road his gas station was on. No traffic, no customers.

But he was convinced that if he just worked hard enough, he could turn things around. He just KNEW he could make that business a success if he tried hard enough and believed hard enough.

But it never worked out. Finally, he shut it down – or rather, his creditors shut it down for him.

And for as long as I knew him after that, Tony was bitter about his failure. He got a job in a shoe store and never even considered starting another business.

The wonderful lessons he could have learned from that experience were totally lost to him. The gas station could have been merely an unsuccessful experiment, one step toward eventual success, but Tony wouldn't let it be an asset. The entire experience was just a failure, nothing more.

A positive attitude is crucially important for success. But so is plain old commonsense. It takes some of both.

Commonsense: find out first if anybody wants what you plan to sell.

So if you have some old “failures” lying around, and you'd like to find the gold buried in them, try this:

Step 1. List your failures – all of them, large and small.

Sure, you'd rather not think about some of them. That's only human. But that's where your richest learning experiences are hiding, so it's important to get 'em out where you can look them over and see them plainly.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

It doesn't matter what they are, or when you made them. You might have divorces and bankruptcies right alongside embarrassing experiences in kindergarten or first grade.

In this first step, your job is not to evaluate. Just put it all on paper.

Step 2. Find the lessons.

For each one of those "failures," look for three things you learned (at least three things). This information will be priceless when you start using it to avoid the same unsuccessful experiments in the future.

The lessons can range from "Never buy high and sell low" to "Never pour beer over the officer who stopped you for speeding."

They're your experiences, and they're your lessons. In fact, there are no wrong answers, as long as they're meaningful to you.

Step 3. List how you'll use those lessons.

Learning a lesson is important, but even more important is knowing exactly how you're going to put it to use in the future.

Write out a few simple scenarios describing how you'll handle such experiences if (when) they happen again. How will you change your actions so that you get the results you want?

You're creating a mini-database of solutions to problems.

A salesman may not have an answer to an objection the first time he hears it, but that night, if he's a good salesman, he'll go home, write out an answer or two and practice them. Then, the next time a prospect raises that objection, the salesman will be ready. He'll never be surprised by the same thing twice.

You're doing the same thing by writing out the lessons you've learned. Being unprepared the first time is no disgrace. But if you're managing your mind properly, that same situation will never find you unprepared again.

Step 4. Go use some of those lessons.

Deliberately go out and look for opportunities to test your solutions.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

It may have been a sales situation. If so, try your new idea. Or maybe the problem had to do with supervising a worker, teaching a student, or trimming a tree. Doesn't matter what it was. Go out and try to duplicate the problem.

You want to check how good your solution is, and the only way to do that is put it into action in the field.

Step 5. Record your results.

Gather data. Write out the results you got when you tried out your new idea.

Maybe it worked perfectly. Maybe it didn't. Either is okay, because you're still experimenting. So just make a record of what happened, and your evaluation.

Was it a total success? On a scale of 1-10, rate it a 9 or a 10. Was it just so-so? Give it a 5 rating. And if it was a complete washout, be honest. Give your idea a rating of 1 (or zero).

Step 6. Sharpen and polish your lessons.

If some of the new solutions you dreamed up didn't work quite as well as you expected, try to improve them. Remember, this is all just an experiment until you get the results you want.

Edison passed electricity through thousands of substances, and nothing worked until he finally tried a carbonized human hair. But when that tiny filament lit up, he knew that all those countless hours were worth it.

Of course, he didn't stop there. He – and many other researchers – kept on trying different materials, always working toward a better result. Eventually they found that tungsten gave excellent results... they didn't quit with the first success. They kept right on going.

Edison was working to make a successful light bulb.

You're working to make a successful life. Keep experimenting, and you'll create light in the most exciting places.

It's easy to spend time reviewing your successes. Anybody can do that.

But when you start reviewing your failures and learning from them, that's when you'll strike real gold.

Finding It Within Yourself

Making decisions can seem like murder.

Go to one restaurant tonight, and there are all those other great eateries you can't enjoy. Deciding FOR one thing means you're deciding AGAINST everything else.

For example, you decide to take one job, and you turn your back on a whole host of other career moves.

Until you choose one thing, everything is possible – everything is yours (at least potentially). In fact, until the moment of decision, you are fabulously rich with all that vast, unclaimed potential.

But the moment you choose one thing, you literally kill the hundreds of others that might be just as good (or better).

Some people hate making decisions, agonize over them, take days and weeks to make the simplest choices. And I'm convinced it's because they unconsciously sense how much they're giving up, while at the same time they're minimizing the value of what they're gaining.

Now, regarding all those wonderful things you choose not to do – are they gone forever, swept away into the past by the rushing swirl of time? Common sense says yes, it's all gone. You can never reclaim yesterday. Everybody knows that.

But common sense has been mistaken before.

Common sense once told us the world was flat. It assured us that humans would never fly, that we'd never talk with someone thousands of miles away, and that once a musician's performance was finished, it was forever gone.

Common sense has told us many things that turned out to be untrue – or true only in special cases:

- What goes up must come down (unless it goes up far enough)
- The shortest distance between two points is a straight line (unless you're on a globe, or in warped space)
- Women have fewer teeth than men (I think it was Plato who said this)

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

And on and on...

So what about the paths we DON'T take? The choices we don't make? Are they REALLY gone forever, useless except as fodder for our fantasies?

Well... everybody SAYS they're gone for good...

But what if they aren't? What if there were a way you could reclaim many of those "lost" experiences (without becoming a babbling schizo)?

Whole libraries of books, of course, tell us what is possible, but the books don't have much to say about reclaiming potential events that never actually happened.

Well, I invite you, for a moment, to join me in thinking outside the books.

Last month I turned sixty. Oh, it wasn't a total shock; it's been a long time coming. But I still feel as though I've passed a significant milestone of sorts. I'm officially an old guy now. A geezer.

And I've noticed that most people, when they reach a certain age, spend increasing amounts of their time looking back, often more wistfully than not.

"Oh, how I wish I'd entered that other career... married that other partner... taken more chances... loved my children more... been more patient with myself..."

This list of regrets stretches past the moon.

One thing you'll notice: people almost never regret the things they've done. But they DO regret the hell out of all those things they didn't do.

"Man, I wish I had learned to water ski... climbed that mountain... started my own business... taken better care of my health... seen more of this dazzling world I live in..."

Every so often we read about some senior citizen who goes back to college in their 70s or 80s to earn a degree. Or others who are still climbing mountains, skydiving or competing in sports at advanced ages. These are news exactly because they are so uncommon. Most old people are... well... old.

The way we know they are old is all the things they don't do anymore. They don't do sports. They don't run and jump and play. They sit a lot.

But by that definition, an awful lot of young people are old. Does that describe you? Think about it. Youth is not age. Youth is active, adventurous, playful.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

Are you?

If not, you might want to spend some time thinking about WHY you're not.

But that's the future. Let's talk a bit more about the past, and all the neat things you can do with it.

Every time you make a decision, it represents a fork in your road. You could go left, or you could go right. You could slow down, speed up, or maintain the same speed. Every one of those alternatives represents a valid, viable path you could have taken through time, but didn't.

And many researchers believe that each one of those paths diverges from our "mainstream" universe to become a new "alternate reality" or what the science fiction movies call a "parallel universe."

Now, this may all sound weird and goofy, but bear with me, because we're about to get even weirder.

Most people, if they think about these alternate events at all, tend to think in terms of lines that split off. In other words, each decision spawns a new alternate universe.

It may not be quite like that, however. It's possible that events are not really strung together like pearls on a chain.

It's plausible, mathematically, that each event, each decision, is a separate, discrete entity. The only thing that strings them together is your consciousness selecting each event, one after another, and drawing them out from the vast universe of possibilities.

In that case, we wouldn't have time lines at all. Rather than running on tracks, we'd be more like a fish making its way through the sea of water molecules. All those events we pass through are the water molecules in our sea of time.

I once heard Deepak Chopra, in an interview with Tony Robbins, refer to this sea of potential events as "quantum soup."

Think of it this way. You take a big bucket full of powdered cement, you pour in water and sand, then you mix it all up. At this point, what you've got is wet concrete – a shapeless, amorphous slurry.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

But once you pour it into a mold, that concrete takes on the form of the mold itself, and as it hardens it becomes a patio, stair steps, or the wall of an apartment building. It can be anything.

This quantum soup does the same thing. And your mind is what gives it form. You take only the things you want from out of that vast soup of possibilities, bring it into reality, and there you have the life you choose – one decision at a time. You've cast it from the quantum slurry – the quantum soup.

I hope you're still with me, because we're just getting to the exciting part.

If there are no "time lines" through the quantum soup, then you could just as easily go from this moment to any other possible moment in this universe. This present moment is not connected ONLY to the moment you think comes next. You COULD go anywhere.

Since this is quantum theory, any possible event could come next, no matter how "unrelated" to your course up till now. There's no far or near. Everything could be next.

You could be connected to any other moment in all of that quantum soup. If you're sick now, the next moment you could be in perfect health. Lonely? In the next moment, you could be loved and secure. Broke? It's only one brief step to riches beyond your wildest imaginings.

Some changes seem less "probable" than others, however, because we've been well trained to think in terms of cause-and-effect. "Logical" sequences of events. Some events seem "harder" so they take more time to come into being.

I think it was Francis Bacon who said, "Everything is possible, but not everything is allowed." What he didn't say, however, is who decides what's allowed.

In fact it is you. And me.

Each person, drawing upon his or her own cultural conditioning, "knows" how time should behave, "knows" what's hard and what's easy.

So lots of things are simply impossible to us. Because we THINK they are. And we think they're impossible because we've been told so. After all, isn't common sense the sum total of all the stuff we've been told, all through our lives?

There are few miracles... common sense tells us that.

But the fact is, if there was ever a miracle anywhere, anytime, there can be miracles right here and right now.

What's the secret of getting your miracles?

You already know the answer. It's faith.

Unquestioning expectation.

Absolute certainty that what you expect to happen WILL happen. But getting your grip on expectation... that's the real trick, isn't it?

Every spiritual teacher who ever walked this earth has told us in plain language how to revolutionize our own personal reality.

We hear the words, then instead of heeding them, we kneel and worship the man who told us. Because he's "different" from us. He's holy. He's anointed. He's God in man. He has all these powers we don't.

Confucius said, "The master points at the moon and the imbecile looks at the pointing finger."

Some sage or other once said, "If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him."

He's not inciting us to commit murder. He's telling us to stop looking for the truth in somebody else. Real meaning – we must kill that urge within ourselves that looks to others for power. We must realize that all power is within ourselves.

In the Christian Bible, Jesus reportedly told the religious leaders of the day that you can't SEE a physical kingdom of God because "the kingdom of God is within." (Luke 17:20-21)

The way to find faith is to look for it exactly where you've always been told you'll find it. Inside yourself.

For years, I'd hear the words "look within" but I didn't know what I was looking for.

I finally realized that it won't feel like you're "finding" what you're looking for. It'll feel like you're creating it with your imagination.

Your imagination (otherwise known as your intuition) is your interface with that vast sea of potential events swimming free in the quantum soup.

You know all those self-help books you've read – all those personal development books – and all those tapes, seminars and courses you've studied to learn how to improve your life?

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

They've all told you one thing. Decide what you want. Hold it firmly in your thoughts. Never waver. KNOW that you'll achieve your aim.

If those techniques haven't worked very dependably for you in the past, here's why: you thought the things you were aiming for were "too far off your track." You knew they were possible, but they weren't allowed for you. And it was you that didn't allow them.

Now you've got a different model, one that is far more fluid and allows far greater jumps because you're not confined to what's possible.

Now you know: ANYTHING is possible.

And whatever you desire, find it – really find it – within yourself, and it's yours.

Period.

Iron-Clad Confidence

“**H**e just oozed confidence.”

That’s the way a long-time friend described Aristotle Onassis when he was just a teenager.

Some people are late bloomers. They don’t gain much real confidence till they are well into adulthood.

But there are also early bloomers – Onassis was one.

During World War Two, his father was arrested by the German occupation forces, and it was 15-year-old Aristotle who went to the German commandant and negotiated a bribe for the release of his father.

But his father, once released, continually criticized his son for paying far too much money. Eventually young Ari got fed up and left home. He didn’t just run across town to hide out in a friend’s basement, however.

No, he went all the way from Greece to Argentina... at age 17. And made good.

So good, in fact, that he eventually became one of the richest, most powerful men on earth.

Now, we all know that money isn’t everything. Life is a complex mix; it takes many different qualities to make up a human being.

But as we know from our studies, we can have far more say about what goes into our own personal mix.

And for most of us, adding another sprinkle or two of confidence would be very welcome.

Let’s take a closer look at how confidence works... with an eye to getting more of it.

FIRST – confidence is usually built on experience

Some few people seem to be born wise – or street smart – but most of us come by our smarts little by little. If we're very clever, we watch other people and learn from their blunders. In most cases, however, we insist on enjoying our own mistakes.

Before learning how to drive, most of us are not very confident we can do it well. Millions of people all over the world drive. Thousands get their licenses every day, so how hard can it be?

And yet, we ignore logic and indulge in self-doubt. Oh wow, that looks hard! I'm not sure I can do that.

But once we have some experience with driving, we find that, well, it's not so bad. And after several years of driving we can't even remember why it ever seemed so difficult.

We treat ourselves this way when we first face most new things in life. If you're married, were you nervous the morning of your wedding? Most people are.

If you're a professional, you probably had the jitters before your certification exams or board interviews. But now, you handle most client or patient problems calmly and confidently. Why? because you've been through it all before and you proved you could survive it.

Experience.

There are, however, a few, like young Aristotle Onassis, who seem to know how to handle things even before they have experience.

Such people often have learned to tap into a higher awareness, even if they're not aware that's what they're doing. But however they do it, they KNOW that they can handle whatever comes their way.

They've found a substitute for experience. This is a concept you might want to spend some quiet time thinking about later.

SECOND – confidence is not bravado.

A facade of fearlessness is often mistaken for confidence, and the strutting peacock thinks he (or she) is fooling everybody. Sometimes they are.

But when bluff and bravado run out, when it's time to put up, many of these peacocks shed their impressive display and stand revealed as just chickens.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

Mark Twain said, “Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear – not absence of fear.”

So real courage, and the confidence that it breeds is the ability to admit to yourself you’re sometimes afraid, but then to go forward anyway.

Here’s a suggestion for building your own deep supply of confidence. Spend some time each day reminding yourself of successes you’ve had. They don’t even need to be big ones, but they should be meaningful to you.

Review your successes regularly. This is the direct opposite of what most of us spend our hours thinking about. We berate ourselves for all the ways we’ve fallen short. We replay criticisms over and over (our own and those we hear from others).

No wonder most of us have so little confidence. When we spend so much time cutting ourselves down, we’re playing for the wrong team.

So be willing to admit when you’re nervous or unsure of yourself (or even terrified). But learn to be your own best cheering section. Replay those successes and revel in them. Enjoy them over and over again. Heck, if YOU can’t enjoy them, who can?

THIRD – confidence may not be flashy or loud.

Closely allied to point two is the fact that real confidence is usually quiet. Not everybody “oozes” confidence like young Onassis did.

Two of the most reassuring, calming people I’ve ever known were quiet and unshakeable. They never tried to MAKE others believe in them. But they believed in themselves so profoundly, without fanfare, that others just KNEW they were capable, solid people.

Think back. The last time you tried to impress somebody, did you go all out, trying harder, expanding your gestures, talking faster, making your voice louder, harder?

Ever try just the opposite?

Wendell, a young man I knew, completely dominated the spiritual study group he attended. He always sat at the back, spoke so softly you had to strain to hear him, and he never pushed his opinions on anybody. Never argued or expounded, and avoided getting up in front.

And yet, everybody gravitated to him. They asked for his opinions and listened carefully to his advice. It was obvious that Wendell had everyone’s deep respect.

He radiated the kind of quiet confidence that cannot be counterfeited. That made him a natural people-magnet.

FOURTH – confidence doesn't fade under pressure.

Confidence – real confidence – stays with you when the going gets tough.

It knows what it is capable of. And what it is capable of is this: It keeps your eyes open and observing when others are hiding their faces in their hands. It keeps you thinking, analyzing and planning when others are getting ready to wave the white flag of surrender. It keeps you calm because it knows there are deep resources within you that you can draw from, if you'll only try.

Confidence is easy when things are going smoothly. Anybody can do that.

But when things start getting a bit scratchy, when our first impulse is to begin with the excuses, to shift blame, or to look for exit doors, confidence reminds us that we've handled tough situations before. It keeps us calm so that we can think clearly and act directly, without holding anything back.

FIFTH – confidence is available to you, too.

Everyone, even you and I, can have a full measure of confidence, if we'll do the little things it takes to gradually install it into our habitual thinking.

Because, after all, confidence is just a skill, like playing a piano or driving a car.

When you hire a piano teacher or attend a driving school, it's fairly easy for the teacher to know whether you're learning the skills. If, for example, you haven't practiced the finger exercises, the teacher knows instantly.

There are also thousands of teachers, coaches and consultants available to help us with our spiritual growth. And people flock to those trainers. They also buy books and tapes and courses by the millions. But few do the "finger exercises."

Sadly, out of every hundred books sold, fewer than 20 are ever read all the way to the end. And if there are exercises involved, that figure drops to around 3-5 percent.

Some time back, I had a customer write that he had bought my book, *Command More Luck*, but that he wanted a refund. That's fine – I offer an unconditional, no-questions-asked refund on everything I sell, so I had no problem returning his money.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

Interestingly, even though I never ask for a reason, he offered one anyway. “The information in your book,” he wrote, “is very similar to other books I’ve already read elsewhere.”

Now, he may have been a professional refunder – somebody who asks for refunds on every book he buys online. This type of person will never know just how impoverished he is.

You can’t take and also receive. Everything balances in this universe, and when you take, you end up losing something. It’s only as you give that you can receive. It’s like priming a pump.

But that’s another subject, and we’ll talk about that another day.

My real concern for this customer is that he may be a “technique collector.” This type of student knows all ABOUT spiritual things. He can sit and talk for hours about the things he understands. He can quote this author and that lecturer. He can do a great comparison of techniques as taught by the various “gurus.”

But somehow, he never quite gets around to the actual doing. His meditations and other inner work are sporadic (at best).

The real secret? It’s not in the techniques. It’s in the internalizing of the techniques till you don’t need them anymore. Till everything becomes so natural that techniques become only the basic exercises you do to keep yourself focused and sharp.

Every great concert musician, every professional singer, every world class athlete will tell you that if they skip practice for a single day, they can see a decline in their level of performance.

Consider this: in all this world, there is only one of you. If that isn’t world class, I don’t know what is. And you owe it to yourself to do the things that will build the skills you need for real confidence.

One reason we often find it hard to build up any confidence in ourselves is the people around us.

If you have somebody causing problems in your life, there IS something you can do. Whether they’re criticizing, nagging, or meddling, whether they’re overbearing, hot-headed or indifferent, whatever they seem to be doing that causes you problems, recognize this: you don’t need to change them – it’s you that you want to change.

And it’s amazingly effective when you do change yourself.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

DO THIS:

In your meditations or affirmation work, start seeing the “problem person” differently. Tune in to a different aspect of them, and that new aspect will gradually become more real in the relationship between the two of you.

Say: “I recognize the God-Power (or higher power) within (name), as I also salute the vast power within myself. This power is one. It is harmony. We are harmony. I lift my arms and rejoice in this enormous flow of power.

“Every day I see deeper mutual respect between us, as our strengths and our wisdom are increasingly clear.”

This will awaken new awarenesses that had been sleeping within both of you.

What if this doesn't work, you ask? It ALWAYS works. Always.

Usually, your problem-person will begin to see a new, more likeable side of you – they may even comment on how much **your** attitude has improved.

However, in very, very rare instances, the other person may be unwilling to let the higher forces flow through them. In that case, they'll simply and painlessly slip out of your life to make way for someone who IS like the person you're describing.

And you will have learned to exercise the power to face difficulty without wavering or cringing in fear.

Imagine having your own unshakeable, dependable-as-the-dawn, self assurance.

And imagine what your life will be like when you're equipped with this kind of iron-clad confidence.

Just imagine.

In a Far and Foreign Place

I never amounted to much in the US.

So in 1985 I left the land of my birth to go and try my hand in Japan.

I had accumulated little in my 42 years, but what little there was, I sold or left behind.

They say the geographical solution – moving away – seldom solves problems, but my case must have been a rare one because almost everything changed for me, although that change was gradual.

And in my story lies a truth.

This truth has opened doors for me, and will, if you use it, unlock the doors you face, as well.

It was the height of the Bubble Years in Japan, and everyone felt rich. Gaijin (foreigners) were flocking to this country by the thousands because they'd heard they could make top money teaching English. It was true.

I came because a friend told me that writing and editing skills were in demand. Not so very different from all those teachers, but different enough to keep me out of the competing crowds.

My second day here I enrolled in Japanese classes, then I set out contacting translation agencies.

When a Japanese translates a document into English, often the result sounds... well... less than graceful.

"I'll make your translations sound like native English," I told my prospective clients. A few decided to give me a chance, and I had my start.

I mention these details for background only, so you can understand my situation. I was very much on my own, a stranger in a strange land, as Heinlein would say.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

At the language school, I soon saw students, who had come the same week I did, fold and go back home.

I stayed.

I heard other gaijin complain about the food, the customs, the tiny apartments, the unbelievably crowded trains. They gave up and went home.

I stayed.

I met guys who had been here a month or two and listened to tales of the great jobs they had left to come here. Soon they returned to those jobs.

Still, I stayed.

The first couple of years were an emotional roller coaster. Being in unfamiliar territory leaves you constantly unsure of yourself and adrift. I never knew when I'd make my next stupid mistake.

Once, I met a nice lady who was open and encouraging, so I asked her to dinner. That went very well, so I asked her out a second time. She appeared for that second date with a boyfriend. Apparently she'd had a change of heart.

Still I stayed.

Indeed, I stayed through all the stress, the strange experiences, the stream of disappointments – through everything.

And one day it dawned on me why I was still here.

I felt there was nothing to go back to... nothing I wanted more than this experience. No wonderful job awaited my return. Instead, my customers here were paying me well for what I did. I enjoyed doing the work, and for the first time in my life I felt special and valuable.

Feeling valuable is priceless.

In my previous life in the US, I had painted houses, repaired cameras, sold door-to-door, worked in factories, and in bakeries, and in photo labs.

I had been self employed or on commission much of my life, but I never felt that my work was special to anybody. It was always just a job. A way to get money.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

But this was different. I was helping giant multi-national corporations sound professional.

I was starting to see myself differently. I was more worthwhile in my own eyes. A professional.

After a few months, and several false starts at dating, I sat down and asked my inner mind to send a wonderful woman who would really love me, and vice-versa.

Three days later I met her, although I didn't realize it for more than a year. Eventually I came to my senses, and we got married. Now, more than 15 years later, we're still together and still very happy.

Back in the States, I had been married before, with both unions ending in divorce. Both fine ladies, but due to my own lacks, I never felt loved, so we parted ways.

Almost everything in my life has changed – the money, the love, the personal satisfaction – because of one thing I altered.

When I came to Japan, I felt there was no other choice on the table. This was it.

I'd burned my ships behind me, and I once told a friend that even if I was utterly failing, had no money, had no sponsor for my visa, and had no place to live – no matter how bad it got – the only way I'd leave Japan, was if they came and dragged me onto a plane kicking and biting and screaming. I was not leaving voluntarily. Not for any reason.

Although I didn't think of it in terms of commitment, that's exactly what it was. I didn't give myself any other choices.

So my mind found ways for me to stay. And to thrive.

Please understand; never before in my life had I been so determined about anything. Never.

And no matter how strange the territory, how jarring the customs, how steep the learning curve, I left myself no other choice. I held myself to the fire.

There was nothing else I wanted.

Before I came, I told a few people about my plans.

“What? Just pick up and move to Japan? Man, I wish I had your courage.”

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

But to me it was not courage at all. It would have taken a greater act of will to stay there.

And that is the secret I mentioned earlier. The secret that will open every door you ever face... if you'll just use it.

FIRST, don't aim for just any old thing.

Dedicate yourself only to things that are really, really special to you. No matter how high, how far, how out-of-reach they may seem, if it's special enough, it's what you were born to do. You'll feel it in your heart, and the base of your throat and your solar plexus. Only your own doubts can keep you from it.

Forget the penny-ante stuff, the logical stepping stones, the "I guess I'll settle for this because it's reasonable" things. Go for the highest score on your board. Anything less is selling yourself out for peanuts. And you deserve better treatment than that.

SECOND, find your own way.

It's natural to watch what others are doing. But don't ever assume that their way is THE way. Hey, they might be the next ones to pack up and quit.

Just know this: if your heart can tell you what it wants and needs, it can also tell you how to bring that desire into reality. Spend some time listening to your heart's desire. That's the highest quality time in existence.

THIRD, it's okay if you don't know what you want... yet.

If you honestly don't know what you want, can't imagine what would fire up your enthusiasm, just say this with me:

"I'm lying to myself."

Oh, you don't know you're lying. It's just a little trick you picked up years ago in your childhood bootcamp survival training. Parents and teachers and other kind persons didn't want you to be disappointed by crushing failures, so they taught you to ignore most of life's options. And that's why your playing field is far tinier than it could be, why your present world seems so uninspiring.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

If all the choices within your current range of possibilities are boring and leave you feeling flat, you'll need to "move into new country," much like I did when I took off for Japan.

At that time, I didn't know how to **mentally** move to new territory, so I did it **physically**. But you can learn from my experiences. You can go directly to a whole new range of choices in your emotional, financial, spiritual and romantic life.

Those choices really are all around you. But you've been tuning them out for so long, you've forgotten how to let them back in.

FOURTH, burn your boats behind you.

Never spend time pining for the things you left "back there." Never look longingly over your shoulder at anything you put into your past. Once you put something down and walk away, its only legitimate use is as a lesson to learn from. Otherwise, it's only a siren song luring you back to an experience you were so dissatisfied with, you wanted to leave it.

You put it into your past. Now let it stay there.

FIFTH, get tough.

If you've always taken the familiar, the comfortable, or the easy way, you cannot imagine the enormous resources at your command. Every human has so much more ability, so many more talents, so vastly wider range of choices – and you'll never know that until you step into unknown territory.

But unknown territory will tax your abilities. It will bring out wonderful new talents in you. And it will present you with choices you never imagined before.

It's adventure.

It's your life.

Your **LIFE!** Will you spend that life watching television where some people pretend to be other people who don't even exist, except in a scriptwriter's imagination?

With a little toughness and persistence, you can invent a whole new life – and it'll be the real thing. Just identify this new territory among your life's options. The dreams and joys where you really want to live.

Then you too will know what it feels like.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

Not one person in a thousand ever even TRIES that. And when you actually DO it, that puts you among the most special people on earth.

But you'll discover an odd fact. Once you're willing to go through any amount of discomfort to reach your dream, the discomfort gradually evaporates. Instead, those new experiences will just feel odd and different. Till you get used to them.

Then they're only wonderful.

So what are you waiting for? Go. Get started. Believe me, it's worth it, here in this far and foreign place.

AFTERWORD

More of Charles

I work with small business owners and new business owners who are struggling to get past the blocks holding them stuck in the slow lane.

Private Coaching – *breaking through*

Contact form: CharlesBurke.com/contact.htm

So you're a small business owner... or want to be... but are you making the profits you expected by now? Or are you working the hours a slave-driver would set?

If so, you may be missing a few simple but essential steps in the journey toward your goals... a few steps, and most of the fun. After all, life should be more than a monster To-Do List.

You have goals, of course... but maybe you're still not getting any closer to the ones that really matter. If you're not, don't despair. And don't get angry with yourself. Maybe all you need is the consistent feedback and encouragement of a friendly coach.

If you're having problems reaching your goals, that's far more common than you may realize. It might sometimes seem like everybody out there is making more headway than you are, but that's just an illusion. Most people are struggling – and hiding it – like you may have been doing.

This is often true of anyone trying to build a small business or professional practice. But it's doubly true if you're working at home in an Internet business. That's because you spend most of your time working in isolation with little live feedback.

And face it, email from customers – even the flattering ones – will only carry you so far.

It's possible you need some objective feedback on a regular basis. Sometimes that's all it takes to keep you reminded of your true potential and to re-ignite the excitement that got you started in the first place. Maybe it's easier than you think to get yourself back on track.

IF THIS IS MY COMFORT ZONE...

Just a regular dose of perspective, objectivity and excitement. You have most of the answers you need already within you, but sometimes it's hard to find those answers when you're floundering alone. So a little outside perspective, some objectivity, and someone to be accountable to could be all you need to raise yourself up out of the crowd.

Drop me an e-mail, and let me know what you want to achieve, what you've already tried, and a couple of things you'd like to have help with.

Tell me what your own personal success will look like when you reach it.

If we decide to work together, we'll agree on a comfortable but very effective method to help you achieve that success.

After all, succeeding is *much more fun* than the alternative.

All the best from sunny Japan,
Charles Burke

Contact form: CharlesBurke.com/contact.htm

This book produced and distributed by
Charles Burke and
Dawnings Publishing, Inc.
2399-651 Katada, Shirahama, Wakayama-ken, Japan 649-2201
[You can contact me here](#)