



# PUSHING LIMITS

How To Get Outside Your Comfort Zone

Written By Brian Stone

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# About the Author

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# Chapter 1: Are You Stuck in a Rut

Are you one of those people that often remark how fast time has flown by?

Do you find yourself wishing the time would pass quickly so you can enjoy your upcoming vacation?

Have you ever had a hard time remembering something you did the previous day?

Yes, I do realize that some of these are things that happen as we get older and have more responsibility but have you ever considered that it could be something else?

Maybe you're stuck in a rut.

If you're reading this book, you probably have a goal you'd like to accomplish or plans you'd like to execute. You know you need a push but you may not be sure what kind of push you need. Or you may know what kind of push you need but not how to get it.

I recognize that feeling. I've felt it myself. It can be isolating and frustrating. It can also seem like it's your fault that you need this push.

Yes it is your job to take the steps to fulfill your destiny but sometimes the day to day details of life can become overwhelming. As we get older, we

begin to realize that while pursuing our dreams is important so is becoming a responsible adult.

You may find yourself with a job, family and household to run or take care of and those daily tasks take time. In fact, they can take up all of your time without you realizing it. They're all important. You can't NOT do them. You don't have that option.

What typically ends up happening in these situations is that we put ourselves on the back burner. We sacrifice our need to pursue our dreams in favor of doing what is expected of us. If possible, we honor our need for time to focus on ourselves to those moments when we're not being called upon to handle daily tasks. For some people this time can quickly dwindle down to nothing.

As we age our responsibilities tend to increase. It feels self-indulgent to take time away from what you should be doing to do something you really want to be doing. So rather than being "selfish" you put your head down and take care of your responsibilities. Then when you look back up three years have passed by.

This is one of the prevailing reasons why people don't actively pursue their dreams, even if only occasionally. It feels selfish and it's wrong to be selfish especially if you have other people to take care of. But is it really wrong to be selfish?

Is it really wrong to do something for yourself? Does that actually make you selfish?

Let me be very clear. I'm not saying any of this to encourage you to shirk your daily responsibilities. Your daily responsibilities are important. For many of us they're necessary for proper survival. If you don't work, your family doesn't eat. This counts even if you have a family of one. Your family has some basic needs that you have to maintain like nourishment, shelter and clothing.

I get it. I don't want you to think that I'm writing this book to spout beliefs that are based on me living a life of privilege. I've been where you are and I'm very aware of how challenging it can be to pursue a dream while maintaining responsibilities.

I'm taking the time to mention the obvious and highlight your responsibilities to make a point. I understand your perspective. I'm sharing this information with you based on my own personal experience. Many of the books I've read looking for direction and inspiration tend to provide some great insight but I'm often left feeling let down after I'm done reading.

Sometimes I've had the feeling that the writers of those books have no idea about my reality. They don't have to figure out how to juggle working full time, managing a household and maintaining a social life (if I'm lucky). They have life circumstances that I've never had. They have money, a supportive husband, maid service, a nanny or the overall ability to step away from life and focus on their dreams.

I don't have that. I've never had that. I'm a regular person who had to figure out a way to run my life and push my limits at the same time. I had to take a

moment to figure out what my next steps would be even before I had taken my first step. Then I had to take the first step not knowing if my next steps would work.

I had to take that all too common leap of faith that we keep hearing about. I had to wrestle with being considered “selfish” because I was pursuing my dreams.

I’m saying all of this because I’m more like you than you think. The insights I’m going to share in this book don’t come from a special place of privilege. They come from a special place of determination.

So from that perspective, I am writing this book and giving you these insights. I will also be sharing stories from other people who have found a way to push their limits as well. I realize that my perspective isn’t the only one. We can and should learn from the experiences of others even if their lives don’t look like ours.

Expect to see some variety here and read some different perspectives. I didn’t write this book to sell you on what I think. I’m writing it to show you how to step outside of your comfort zone and be successful.

So back to the title of this chapter, “are you stuck in a rut?”

It’s important to determine whether you need to climb out of a rut or if there’s something else keeping you from where you want to be. Don’t worry, this book won’t focus solely on climbing out of a rut but it’s an important place to start.



Many people automatically assume that they're stuck in a rut when it feels like their lives have stalled. That may or may not be the case. You don't want to take the time trying to get yourself out of a rut if you're not in one.

Here are some questions to ask yourself to determine if you're truly stuck in a rut.

1. Do I often feel like I'm working really hard but not making much progress?

If you've ever seen a hamster or a mouse on a wheel and could relate, you may be stuck in a rut. You know how to put in a strong effort when necessary. In fact, you tend to give everything 100% effort and that usually works. But for some reason you don't feel like your hard work is paying off. It's not pushing you to the place you think you should be.

2. Do I find myself taking unnecessary risks to inject some excitement into my life?

There are people who are real life adrenaline junkies. They enjoy the high that comes from taking a crazy risk and succeeding. So I understand if you're one of those types of people. But there is a huge difference between being an adrenaline junkie and just being bored. Adrenaline junkies tend to work really hard to make sure that they can handle the things they enjoy doing. They tend to be in great shape and have trained extensively. No one who does extreme sports just goes out and decides to do a ski jump off of the side of a mountain without knowing how to ski really well. If you only workout

three times a week and you suddenly decide to buy a motorcycle and start racing, you are more than likely bored. You have to be willing to put the work in to build that skill first. Yes your life will become more exciting but not until you've put a lot of practice in first. You can't just hop on a motorcycle and race it if you don't know how to ride slowly. If you find yourself randomly jumping headfirst into risky situations to make your life more exciting, you may be stuck in a rut.

3. Am I waiting impatiently for the days to go by until I can go on vacation?

If you've found a way to incorporate vacation time into your schedule, that's great. You are definitely on the right track. It's important to make sure that you have down time on a consistent basis. However it's not helpful if you spend all of your time waiting until you are on vacation to enjoy life. Some people spend their days waiting for that time when they can go on vacation or enjoy time off from work. Then their lives begin to revolve around the days off. It can become a pattern. If this has become your pattern then you may be stuck in a rut.

4. Is my mojo gone?

There could come a time when you no longer feel quite like yourself. You may still be rocking and rolling at work and at home but you no longer get the same thrill. You've gotten so accustomed to functioning at your current level that it no longer fuels you. This is what many people experience when they get stuck in a rut. You may not be able to articulate exactly what's not right but you know it's something.

## 5. Do I feel like my life is happening around me?

Have you ever felt like your life was swirling around you like a hurricane of activity? There are situations where it can feel like you're the center of a hurricane but that shouldn't be how you define your life. Your life shouldn't be happening to you. It should be happening with you. When you start to feel as if you don't have control over your daily activities, you may be stuck in a rut.

The thing about being stuck in a rut is that it doesn't mean you aren't working, moving or advancing. You could very well be doing all of those things. You probably are. The problem is that what you've been doing isn't fulfilling you. This can be frustrating, especially if those things once made you feel happy and fulfilled.

When you start experiencing these feelings, you are most likely stuck in a rut. Being stuck in a rut involves taking a step back from your life and assessing why you feel that way.

It's important to figure out why you feel stuck so you can zero in on the area that needs changing. It's virtually impossible to pull yourself out of a rut or give yourself the push you need if you don't know why it's necessary. However, there are some other situations that can keep you tucked safely inside your comfort zone as well. Although they're not to be confused with being stuck in a rut, they must also be considered.

### 1. Fear/Anxiety

Sometimes you may have a goal that you'd like to accomplish but you're afraid to try it. Fear is a compelling reason why many people

don't push themselves further. It can manifest itself in a variety of ways that can be challenging to overcome.

a. Fear of failure

Failing can be uncomfortable, frustrating or downright painful. If you put all of your effort into doing something and it fails, that can stop you from ever trying again. No one likes to fail. It's not a great feeling and no matter how often you experience it, you never get used to it.

b. Fear of success

When you succeed at something, it definitely feels good. It can make you much more confident about trying something new again. It also tends to leave you with extra responsibility. Once you've shown that you can succeed at something, people tend to expect more from you. It's one of the side effects of success that many people aren't prepared to deal with. Heightened expectations can be challenging to accept.

2. Lack of confidence

You may be perfectly qualified to pursue your dreams but you may not see it. There are some people who have all of the tools and skills they need but they are missing the most important element—confidence. You have to believe you can do it or you never will.

3. Discomfort

It's uncomfortable breaking habits even if it's just to insert something new. No one likes to be uncomfortable even if it's for a good reason.

Consider how many people hate going to the doctor or the dentist. Some people will suffer through pain and illness rather than going to the doctor or dentist. True it can be uncomfortable being examined by either (and I am no fan of the dentist myself) but in those cases the discomfort is for a good reason—your health. If people avoid doing something that could positively affect their health because it may be uncomfortable, it makes sense that they may avoid doing something that could positively affect their future for the same reason.

Even if you're not stuck in a rut and are experiencing these other things it's still important that you figure out the cause of it. You have to address the root of anything that's stopping you from pursuing your dream and stepping outside of your comfort zone. When you're able to address the root of a problem, you're much better able to successfully deal with it.

There is, however, one other reason people don't pursue their dreams—their situations. If you notice, I didn't list that as something that prevents you from reaching your goals. If you stop and take note the above reasons I shared are all personal. They're all focused on you.

When it comes to tackling your destiny you can never let something outside of you decide whether you do it or not.

You should never give someone or something else power over your life. This is dangerous and makes it way too easy for you to find an excuse to put your dreams aside. Initially this may seem like a noble thing to do. Many people do it. You may put your dreams to the side for your children,

parents, spouse or sibling. I get it. You want to do what's best for these people and you love them.

Unfortunately putting this amount of responsibility on someone else isn't fair even if they ask you to do it. Your happiness is ultimately YOUR responsibility. You have the power to change or not change your life. If you give this power to someone else, it gives them the ability to determine where your life goes.

Putting this kind of power into the hands of someone else makes you helpless when it comes to making changes when the time comes. This can lead to feelings of frustration that you can't fix. Don't do this.

The only reasons why you aren't pursuing your goals should be reasons you can realistically change. They have to be reasons based only on you, no one else.

Ultimately YOU are the only one who has power over your life. If you aren't pursuing your goals because of someone else, you are essentially using that person as an excuse or a buffer. It's always easier to place responsibility on someone else than yourself.

*Stepping outside of your comfort zone isn't easy.*

You shouldn't expect it to be easy. Be prepared to do some tough personal work. If you have goals to pursue but haven't, it's important that you figure out why and fix it. I've been where you are. In fact, I expect I'll be here again.

The process of stepping outside of your comfort zone and pushing your limits is an ongoing one. It doesn't really get any easier. It just becomes an integral part of personal growth. So buckle up. This is going to be an interesting ride.

## Chapter 2: Defining Success

Once you've established what's holding you back, you're prepared to move forward into pushing yourself beyond your limits.

Well, let me stop here.

I realize I just said that like it just requires the snap of your fingers and you'll be ready to move on. I don't want to trivialize the work you need to do before you get to this point. If you haven't connected with any of the reasons I shared in the previous chapter, take a moment and re-read it.

The purpose of this isn't for you to focus on your challenges but you have to identify them in order to overcome them. So if there isn't one specific reason that's hitting you, look for two. It's entirely possible that there is more than one thing holding you back. You could be stuck in a rut and dealing with fear of success. You could also be facing fear of failure and lack of confidence.

If that's the case, it's perfectly fine. Identify those reasons and keep them in mind. In fact, you should write them down. Put them in a place where you can see them while you work on moving past them. By confronting your challenges head on it's the best way to get past them.

Yes, I know it's not pleasant but it's necessary. I told you this wouldn't be easy.



So now that you've identified your challenges, it's time to identify success.

## **Setting Goals**

Success is marked by the accomplishment of a task or the meeting of a goal. If you don't set a goal, you will find yourself hard pressed to determine whether you've been successful. This is where many people struggle. They don't do a great job of setting goals.

I know you probably have a whole list of goals you've been working towards since you were young. The problem with most goals outside of the standard ones is that they're too vague and ultimately impractical. Here are some of the standard, All American goals:

1. Go to college
2. Get a job
3. Buy a car
4. Buy a house
5. Vacation on a tropical island

These goals are all fairly tangible. You can easily determine what it takes to accomplish each one and then do those things. You're often given a social blueprint to use. Plus everyone around you is often pursuing these same goals. Even if they're not extremely important to you, achieving them can be as easy as following the crowd.

However, if you're reading this book I'm pretty sure that you've either already accomplished all of these goals or are in the process of doing so. I'm also fairly certain that going to a tropical island isn't something you

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