

Tips For Navigating Discomfort to Make Better Decisions



Business Concepts and Reflections for
Curious Professionals

Dina Venezky, PhD

TAKE AWAYS

REFRAME
DISCOMFORT
AS INFORMATION



FIND TECHNIQUES
THAT WORK FOR YOU



PRACTICE
RECOVERING



ZOOM IN & OUT
LABEL
REFRAME
ADJUST GOALS
FOCUS ON PROGRESS

shyly 4/2023

Tips for Navigating Discomfort to Make Better Decisions

There are many ways in which feeling stressed or overwhelmed can impact our decisions and how we communicate them. This booklet was created to provide professional development for managing different forms of discomfort. Content is presented in graphical form with reflection questions to help implement the ideas.

In addition to the techniques mentioned here, getting enough sleep, eating well, exercising, and setting realistic expectations are paramount to navigating our personal and professional lives. You've got this!

HOW DO YOU TYPICALLY FRAME SITUATIONS?



by Ugly 3/2023

What is an example from your career when you framed a challenge as an opportunity? What was the outcome?

What is an example from your career when you were more focused on a challenge as a threat? What was the outcome?

MATCH YOUR GOALS TO YOUR ABILITIES

FINDS RUNNING
RELAXING AND HAS TIME



I'M GOING TO
RUN A MARATHON!

RUNS HALF
MARATHONS

HAS TIME TO
TRAIN WITH
FRIENDS



I'M GOING
TO RUN A 5K!

HAS NEVER
RUN A RACE

JUST STARTED
A NEW JOB



I'M GOING TO
FOCUS ON MY
CURRENT ROUTINE

RUNS
WEEKLY

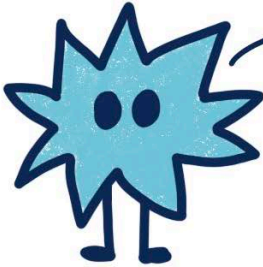
clayton 3/2023

When have your goals not matched your abilities? Did the misalignment affect your motivation?

Do you have any goals that need to be adjusted?

What is your long-term dream?

AIM FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT FOCUS ON YOUR AVERAGE



**BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT**

**I'M GOING TO
AVERAGE MORE CLIENT
CALLS THIS QUARTER**

**SETS GOALS BASED
ON CURRENT
CAPABILITIES**

**CAN TAKE RISKS AND
STILL MAINTAIN A STANDARD**

by 4/23/2023

While we want to match our short-term goals to our abilities, we also want to move towards our longer-term dream goals. By setting small incremental goals, such as following the Kaizen approach¹, we can accomplish more over time.

List at least three things you are working on in your professional or personal life where you could aim to make a small improvement to your average instead of going for a personal best.

1. Masaaki Imai, *Kaizen: The Key to Japan's Competitive Success*, 1986

DISCOMFORT IS INFORMATION



**TRAIN YOUR BODY AND MIND TO INTERPRET
SIGNALS AND FEELINGS TO BETTER MANAGE STRESS**

GO FROM  **THE ALARM
OF
UNCERTAINTY**

TO THE  **CLARITY OF
A DECISION**

BASED ON *DO HARD THINGS* BY STEVE MAGNESS

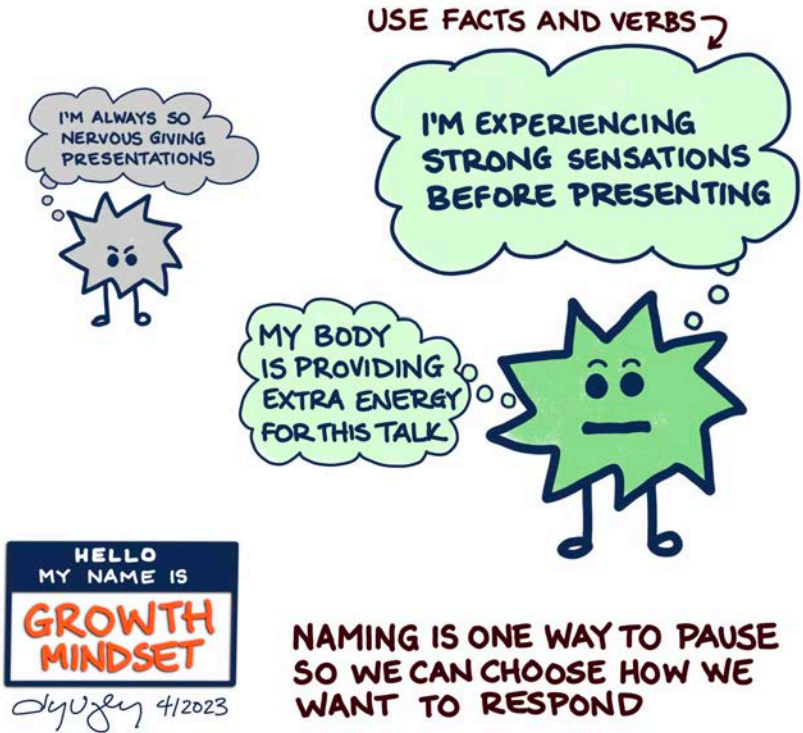
July 4/2023

Uncertainty can be uncomfortable. Our brains like certainty and can jump to finding solutions in order to avoid the discomfort. If we can sit with the discomfort, we can evaluate the situation to make a more informed decision. This goes for offering advice to others too.

What uncertainties have you encountered in the past week?

Did you react quickly or did you pause? What types of decisions did you make?

NOTICING AND LABELING CAN RE-WIRE OUR BRAIN AND IMPROVE PERFORMANCE



Name It to Tame It

How we label what we are doing and thinking impacts our performance. Do you ever catch yourself using rigid language such as always or never?

Think of a time when you phrased something about yourself in a less than positive way. Can you rephrase it as a fact, like something you might read in scientific literature?

Try adopting a scientific inner dialogue. Question if your immediate reactions to mistakes are true and look for the facts.

LEARN TO PAUSE



PRACTICE IN ADVANCE

SPEND TIME ALONE WITH YOUR THOUGHTS



**TURN OFF
ALL DEVICES**



**PRACTICE
BEING BORED**



5 MIN

**START SMALL
AND BUILD UP**

**EXAMPLE
TIMES**

WHILE:
CLEANING
EATING
BEFORE SLEEPING
EXERCISING
DURING BREAKS

July 4/2023

Spending time alone with your thoughts can increase your ability to pause before reacting. It's also a great tool for improving innovation skills.

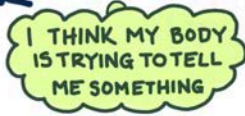
Do you allow yourself to be bored?

What do you typically do when you are bored (asks the person who tries to hide checking email at events)?

Are there times in your day when you can turn off devices and spend time with your thoughts?

PAUSE, THEN DECIDE ON A RESPONSE

1. CHECK IN



2. LABEL WHAT YOU FEEL



3. DECIDE ON A RESPONSE



LET IT GO



PUSH THROUGH



MAKE A CHANGE

USE IT FOR MOTIVATION



July 4/2023

The more we can interpret our body's signals, the better we will be at managing discomfort and stress. Check in, label what you feel, and then make decision about a response.

Do you have an example from the past month for each of the following types of decisions? Are there any you would like to have handled differently?

Let it go _____

Make a change _____

Push through _____

Use it for motivation _____

FIND STRATEGIES THAT WORK FOR YOU

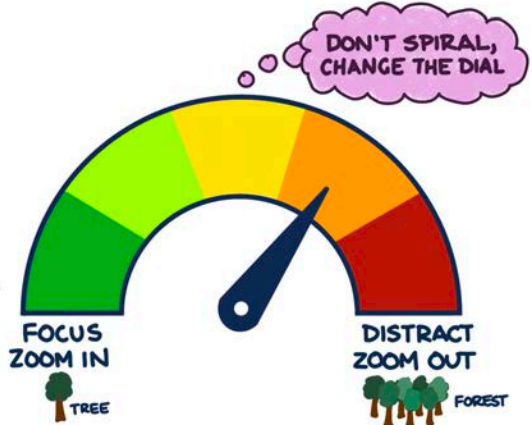
OLD WAY:
SINGLE STRATEGY

PUSH HARDER



NEW WAY:
FIGURE OUT WHICH STRATEGIES WORK FOR YOU

ADAPT STRATEGY TO SITUATION



BASED ON *DO HARD THINGS* BY STEVE MAGNESS

shyly 3/2023

You may find it helpful in some situations to focus intently and then distract yourself until you are ready to focus again. One way to focus on discomfort is to think, "what can I learn from this?" Practicing on past discomfort is also beneficial. Think about a recent discomfort of any size. How did you react to it? How would you have liked to react?

What are some of your favorite distractions?

REFRAME ^{>>}STRESS^{<<} AS A CHALLENGE

NORMALIZE

STRESS IS A NATURAL RESPONSE TO CHANGE
IT'S A CHALLENGE AND GROWTH OPPORTUNITY

BREAK IT DOWN
INTO MORE MANAGEABLE CHUNKS

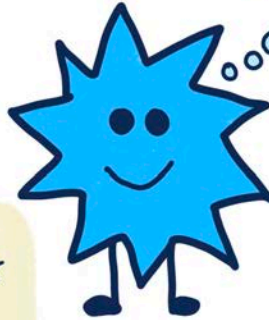
RECOGNIZE

FEELINGS AS EXCITEMENT AND YOUR BODY PREPARING WITH EXTRA ENERGY

POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

DISRUPT NEGATIVE RUMINATIONS

THINK ABOUT YOUR STRENGTHS & PAST WINS



I'VE GOT THIS!

REFOCUS

TRY A PUZZLE, SIMPLE MATH PROBLEM, OR CREATE SOMETHING

FOCUS ON

YOUR RESOURCES
YOUR PROGRESS
THE POSITIVES AND GROWTH OPPORTUNITY

MOVE!

STRETCH
BREATHE
BODY SCAN -
NOTICE TENSION &
LET IT GO

IN ADVANCE

REDUCE OVERCOMMITMENTS
INCLUDE SELF-CARE AND FUN EVERY DAY
SET REALISTIC GOALS

SMALL WINS

CLEAN SOMETHING
REPLY TO SOMETHING

ASK FOR HELP

YOU DON'T NEED TO DO EVERYTHING BY YOURSELF

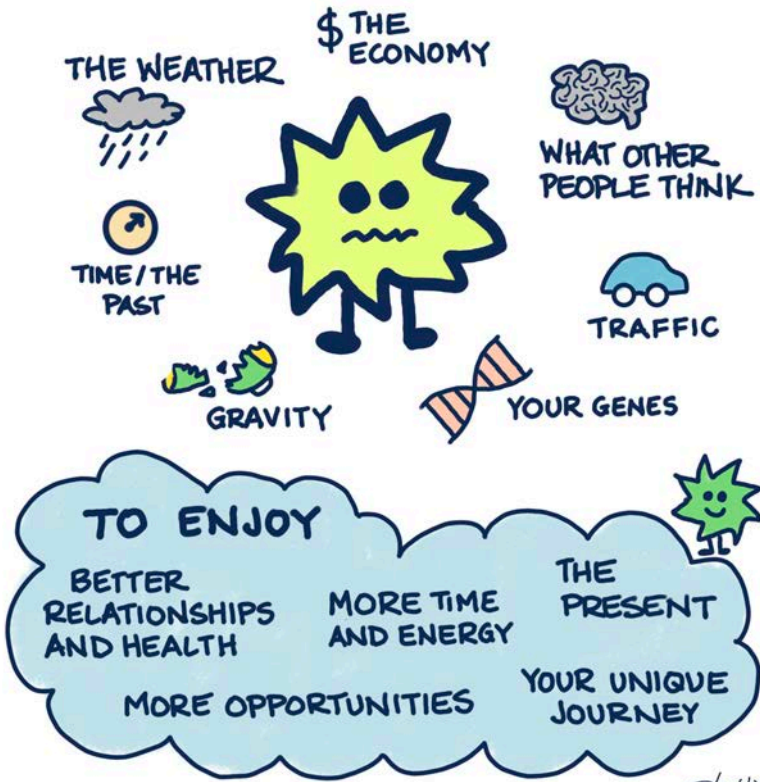
chugy 4/2023

Which techniques are you already using?

What could you try in the next week or two?

Is there anything holding you back?

LET GO OF WHAT YOU CAN'T CONTROL

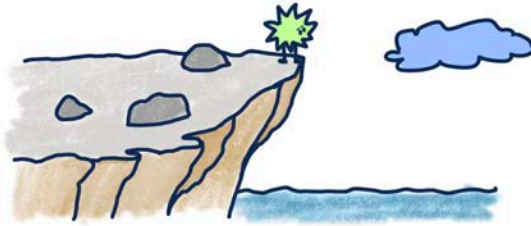


Are there times or days when you feel more flexible? What do you do when you feel more flexible?

Are there times when you want more control? What do you do when you want more control?

It's commonly said that we can control our reactions. While true, it's still challenging. To reinforce techniques for learning to controlling reactions, do the 30-day challenge at the end of this booklet.

PRACTICE MANAGING DISCOMFORT



1. 
IMAGINE HOW YOU
WOULD LIKE TO REACT

2. 
LET YOUR MIND
SPIRAL
PRACTICE RECOVERY
TECHNIQUES →

ZOOM IN & OUT
LABEL
REFRAME
ADJUST GOALS
FOCUS ON PROGRESS

3. 
PRACTICE IN
NON THREATENING
SITUATIONS

4. 
PRACTICE IN HIGHER
STAKES SITUATIONS

**REFLECT ON AND CELEBRATE
YOUR PROGRESS**

July 4/2023

Imagine an uncomfortable situation.

How would you like to react? What would you like the outcome to be?

Let your mind spiral to a worst case scenario for your situation. Now practice recovering using different recovery techniques.

Next time you are doing something that causes a minor annoyance, practice recovery techniques.

Notice how the practice helps in higher stakes situations.

CHOOSE GRATITUDE OVER SELF-PITY



BASED ON *13 THINGS MENTALLY STRONG PEOPLE DON'T DO* BY AMY MORIN

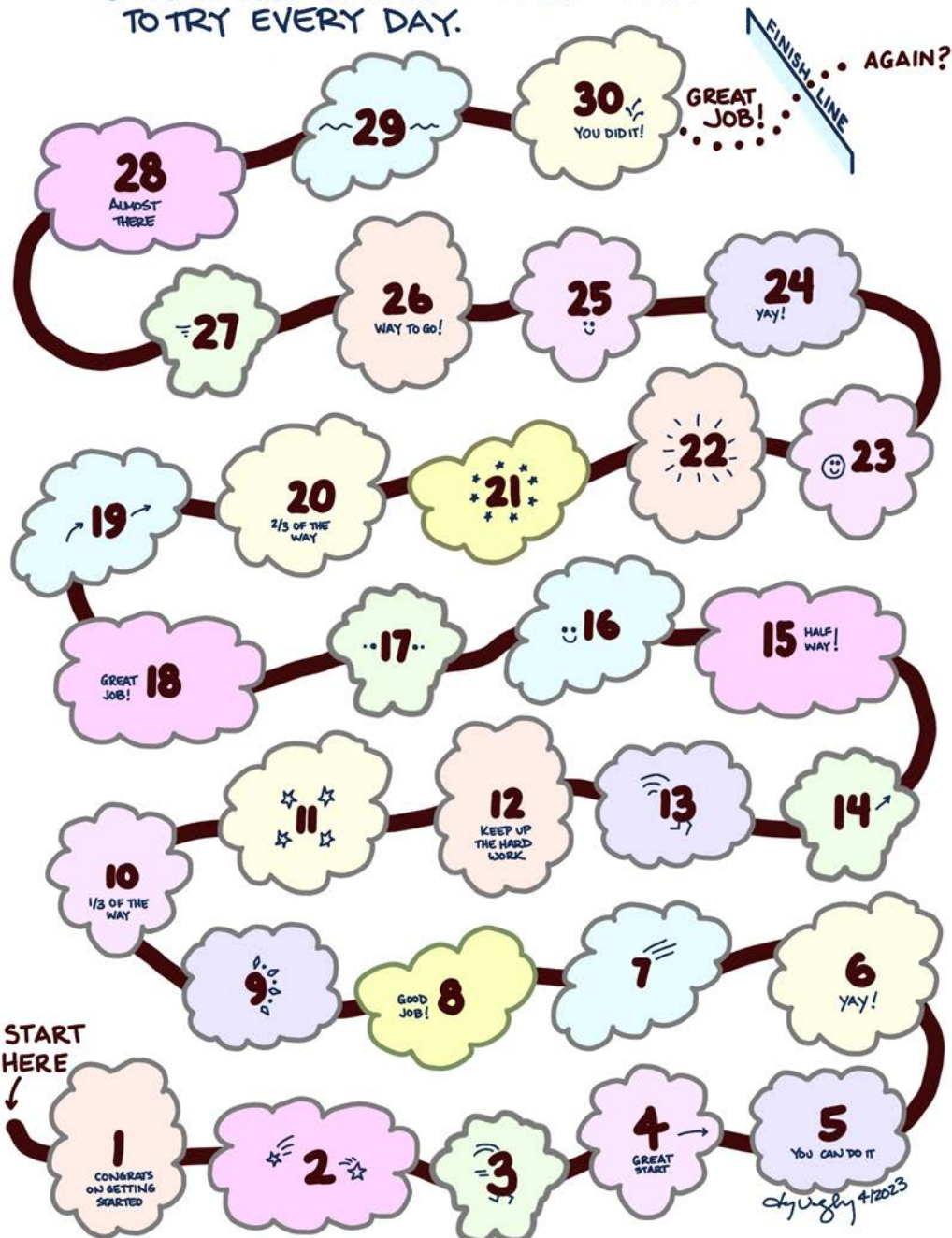
When things are tough, gratitude can help.

What are ten things you are grateful for? Be specific.

THE SPARKLING LEADERS 30-DAY NAVIGATING DISCOMFORT CHALLENGE



CHOOSE ONE OR MORE TECHNIQUES TO TRY EVERY DAY.



CHECK OFF EACH DAY AS YOU PRACTICE.



Sparkling Leaders provides visual business content and networking opportunities for professionals who want tools, frameworks, and support to thrive in all areas of their lives.

Sparkling Leaders



NEXT MONTHLY SESSION!

GIFT YOURSELF AN HOUR OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BUSINESS GRAPHICS AND DISCUSSIONS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

UNDERSTAND POWER AND BUILD CONFIDENCE

FOR CURIOUS PROFESSIONALS

Sparkling Leaders
TUES
MAY 2
11amPT/2pmET

CONTENT BASED ON

7 RULES OF POWER

DATA FROM WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE 2022

2023 SESSION DATES: 5/2, 6/6, 7/11, 8/1, 9/11, 10/3, 11/14, 12/5

SPARKLING LEADERS

PROVIDING CONTENT TO HELP YOU THRIVE AND MAKE CHANGE

TOOLS FOR PROMOTION FOR EVERY

AND TOOLS FOR THOSE IN STEM

2.5x MORE MEN THAN WOMEN IN TECHNICAL ROLES IN 2022

100 MEN PROMOTED TO MANAGER

87 WOMEN WERE PROMOTED

82 WOMEN OF COLOR

19% MEN 2018

25% MEN 2022

19% WOMEN 2018

25% WOMEN 2022

DATA FROM WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE 2022. LinkedIn and McKinsey & Company Report. ©2023 Sparkling Leaders

©2023 Sparkling Leaders



Want to share content from this booklet, join us, learn more, or provide feedback? Scan the QR code or reach out at sparklingleaders.com/contact

DINAVENEZKY, PhD



@SparklingLeaders | sparklingleaders.com