



:ABILITY
BUSINESS GROUP

**WE WANT YOU
TO WIN!**



**What would you do if you
knew you couldn't fail?**



Coach:ABILITY

Well, I can honestly say, 2020 is a year I will always remember.

I don't know about you but it's probably one of the strangest years I can recall, a year where we have been almost forced to find ways to cope with the unknown and the unexpected. As the end of the year approaches, we continue to deal with life and everything that comes our way, the best way we know how. I am looking forward to sharing some of my approaches with you.

I am JJ, and winning is what I do, and I do it well. I'm a 'planner', I live my life by a set of well-considered and intentional actions. Yes, somethings you cannot plan for and yes sometimes you just have to go with the flow, but the things which are within my control, the things which impact the direction of my future are what I control. I've been doing this so long and under so many different circumstances that I am exceptional at it; but COVID came out of the blue for me and it put my planning skills to the test.

For the first few months I believed nothing much would change for me, I could take it in my stride; yet after speaking to my friend, a therapist who quickly brought to my attention that whilst I was still operating very much in my stretch zone, growing and learning, a part of me had retreated to my comfort zone and because of the situation we were in, I hadn't noticed.

I spent a moment reflecting and reminded myself that if you are alive, then life happens! You don't just overcome stress or anxiety once and that's the end, you have to keep nailing it, overcoming it over and over again. It doesn't make you a victim and it doesn't make you weak -it's the opposite. It keeps you strong, its testament to the commitment you make to yourself. I guess I wrote this challenge because I wanted to share this with you all and give you the tools so you can continue to nail the things in your life which affect you or make you retreat to your comfort zone. Also, I wanted to let you know, you can be in multiple zones at the same time, but you have the power within you to keep the stretch zone in charge of your decision making, which means you can remain in control.

There are a range of tools use; I handpicked a selection to use in this Challenge. I encourage you to use this wisely and store a blank copy to re-use, because this is something you can do over and over again. Each time you accomplish your desire and create a new goal, this workbook will come in handy.

I can't wait to see you at the winning line!



CEO, Consultant & Coach
Ability Business Group



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2. The Comfort Zone - What does it really mean?
3. The Stretch Zone - It's time to take a small step forward.
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What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail?



In the midst of COVID-19 we have all been challenged and may have experienced some form of fear, maybe we are still feeling fearful since our immediate future is currently unknown. Our careers, jobs, personal life and family life may have been impacted, perhaps causing us to worry. How have we responded to these fears? Once we understand what fear is we can see how it can have crippling effects on the way we make decisions, particularly if fear prevents us from taking action. A popular fear a lot of us go through is fear of failure. This is very real and can be detrimental to our personal development and career advancement.

For the most part we all have dreams and desires we want for our lives. Some we are able to attain with limited struggle and sacrifice but, other dreams we have, require us to take risks and step out into the unknown. The unknown is often the place where our dreams sit, waiting to be fulfilled, but it can also be a scary concept so some may decide to stay stuck in the point of our life so fear can be avoided. But fear plays an important role in our life!

If we do everything we can to avoid fear and fail to step out of our comfort zone, how will we ever know what we can achieve?

Psychologists Andy Ryan and Dawn Markova developed a theory which identified three zones of existence;

1. Comfort Zone.
2. Stretch Zone
3. Panic Zone

The theory outlines the place where we experience the least learning or development, the least fear or threat and the least challenge or failure as the comfort zone.

Let's take a look at what the Comfort Zone is.

The Comfort Zone – What does it really mean?

- It's a behavioural state we create, which allows us to feel safe and be functional
- We surround ourselves with things we know, and operate within familiar mental boundaries
- Our thought patterns, feelings and the choices we make, fit perfectly into this zone
- It allows us to ignore the things which we are afraid of or uncomfortable with

The Comfort Zone sounds like a nice place to stay right?

When we stay in our comfort zone our thoughts begin to establish a pattern which intensifies the need for security and safety. We tell ourselves, we are not ready or brave enough to do the things we most desire. Our minds begin to set our behaviours and it becomes a vicious circle because our behaviours then begin to set your mind, and so on.

We keep our thoughts and desires small. We want, only what we think we can achieve. Our reality splits into areas that are acceptable and unacceptable.

The safe place we create can quickly keep us 'stuck' which easily leads to dissatisfaction and self-doubt. Our capacity for enthusiasm is limited and our desire to imagine and create is restricted.



Do you recognise any of these feelings in your current situation? or caused by COVID?

What are your reasons for not doing the things you want to do?

What is it that stops you?

Have you discovered what your dream is? Are you living it?

Can you think of any other benefits of staying in the Comfort Zone?

Exercise 1: List your answers and comments to the above.



It's time to take a small step forward.

The Comfort Zone has benefits of safety and security, but the drawbacks can be difficult to manage on a long-term basis.

If you've read this far you are probably ready to step out of your comfort zone but are afraid to do so or don't know how. But by now you realise, if you continue to think small, your results will stay limited. You will never reach your full potential in the comfort zone, and your true potential is what will lead you to your ultimate goal, whatever it is.

Edging your way out of the Comfort Zone is certainly not easy, so, is it worthwhile?

Once you make a commitment to this journey, you begin to enter the stretch zone, which is often referred to as the learning zone as this is where your growth takes you to higher and further knowledge as you establish and utilise your strengths and recognise your weaknesses.

Two benefits the Stretch Zone will offer

Your Productivity increases. The Comfort Zone kills productivity! When you are comfortable you lose the drive to push past your own limit to do more or know more or even to be more. There is little which will push you to exceed expectations needed to elevate personal growth. The Stretch Zone is the opposite. You are always looking to push boundaries to be the best version of yourself. You will be inspired to work smarter in order to get more done.

Increased Resilience. The Stretch Zone leads to challenge. Each challenge you are faced with leads to change. You will be willing to accept change because you are pushing for growth and striving for success. In the search for these results, you will need to step into the unknown as try new things, some will work out and others may not but your desire to meet your goals will push you to keep going. Resilience lives in the midst of change and uncertainty.

Stretch Zone

Growth

Increased Performance

Joy

Adrenaline

Increased Effort

Here are just some of the feelings you will start to experience when you enter the Stretch Zone.

Would you like to start experiencing these feelings instead of what you are currently feeling?

Are you already experiencing these feelings but not seeing the progress you want?

Exercise 2: List your answers and comments to the above.



Here are 6 tips to help you start your journey to the Stretch Zone

1. Make a verbal commitment to yourself – out loud!

While these tips are not in any certain order, this should be the first action. Making a promise to yourself and keeping it is a sign of personal integrity and shows a quality of self-leadership. Make a physical note, writing it down also commits it to memory. There is a book which can help to 'back up' your self commitment, by [Mel Robbins - 5 Second Rule](#). I listened to the book using the Audible app. I encourage you to try it.

2. Stay present!

Being present allows you to acknowledge each moment and make conscious decisions. Being present also allows you to be grateful that the future is going to happen whether you worry about it or not. And since worry has never accomplished anything positive for anyone, your purpose is better served focused on your mental energy - in the present.

3. Get an accountability partner – better still, get a coach!

It isn't uncommon for people to feel vulnerable about revealing fear or discomfort to other people within their circle and this is when a coach is the perfect accountability partner. Your coach is your personal tool who will remind you of your bigger picture and your goal with your best interest at heart. Contact us at [Ability BG](#) for a [Free Discovery Call](#) and get the clarity you need to help you begin your journey

4. Say YES! What's the worst that can happen?

Say yes to some of the things which may challenge you. This could be applying for that dream job or enrolling yourself onto a course to level up your skill set. It could be socialising with your friends on a weeknight or stopping your current action to play a game with your kids. Taking small steps is the beginning of progress and can lead to your happiness. Challenge yourself!

5. Feel the fear and do it anyway!

This is a big one. Recognise the excuses you use for staying stuck. We don't always equate these excuses to fear but when analysing the depth of the excuses you will see the connection it has to fear. Here is a link to an inspiring TED Talk which I encourage you to watch [Amy Cuddy](#) TED Talk

6. Visualisation

Visualisation is where you create a mental picture of your success overcoming a challenge or fear. This is a powerful tool as it allows you to see yourself in the place where you thought you would or could never be and can ultimately increase your confidence. Author, Napolen Hill, has a famous quote "Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve". This supports the effectiveness of visualisation. If you cannot imagine yourself or your success how will you know if you achieve it? What will drive you to even try?

The other side of the stretch zone

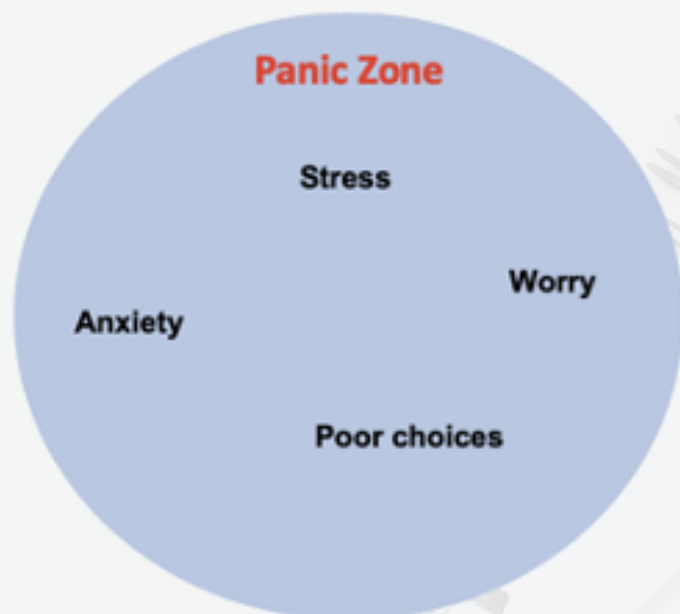
The stretch zone is where we aim to be. The above tips will help us to get there but it's our sheer desire and determination which will help us to stay there. It is the optimum place where we can find a higher level of self-confidence and satisfaction and begin to feel in control of our life again. The stretch zone is where we feel our lives having the purpose and meaning we were hoping to achieve.

It is important when in the Stretch Zone, to set clear SMART goals. We still need to keep sight of our goals and our wellness while we take on new challenges as sometimes our desires for results push us to the point where burnout can occur. Also, the things that we were previously afraid of, or intimidated by, do not stay in the Stretch Zone with us. Once we have conquered the fear the, they begin to slip into the comfort zone.

For example, imagine if you start your journey with a fear of public speaking, you push through the fear and the result is multiple public speaking engagements. The idea of public speaking no longer makes you feel afraid because you have . But the idea of live television presenting may terrify you or cause anxiety.

When feelings of anxiety, stress or worry begin to emerge it is likely the challenges in our life have caused us to enter the panic zone. Consider the thoughts you had after hearing about COVID-19?

These feelings can be so overwhelming we begin to make poor choices which can lead to regrettable results and impact our state of wellbeing.



Have you experienced these feelings before?

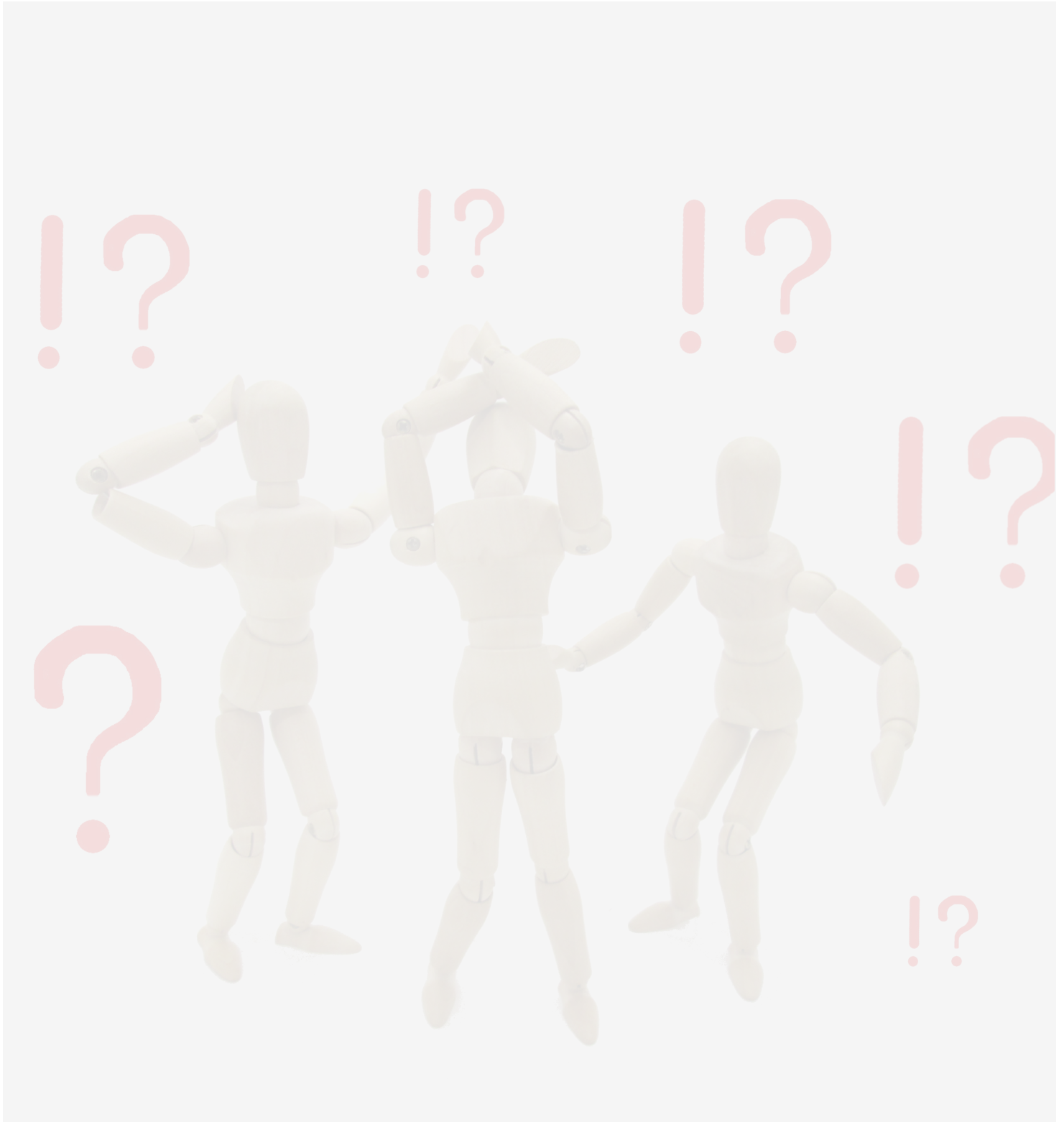
Are you experiencing them now?

Do you recall what brought you to the Panic Zone?

Have you identified any poor choices you've made whilst in this Zone?

Do you know how to find your way back to safety?

Exercise 3: List your answers and comments to the above.



No Stay Zone

The thing about the panic zone is, the level of anxiety creates a feeling of loss of control. The loss of control then causes heightened fear and anxiety. Another vicious circle so we don't want to stay in the Panic Zone for too long. It's important to learn recognise the signs before you get there and then when you find yourself there, make a decision and take the actions needed to leave - retreat to safety and work your way back into the stretch zone.

Here are some tips to help you find your way back to the stretch zone:

- **Acknowledge and adapt**

It is important to recognise that you are in the panic zone in order for you to slow down and regroup. The quicker you recognise this, the faster you can begin finding your route to self-control and normalcy. Remind yourself that you will survive this, other people do and so will you. Accept the need to slow down and sit in the moment and start to see it as it is.

- **Hit re-set your goals**

In the midst of anxiety, when you feel out of control you will realise at some point you have veered off track. Re-setting your goals allows you to put some order and control back into your life, reducing levels of anxiety. It often helps to prioritise your hardest or more time-consuming goals as it can allow you to wind down toward the end of the week. Creating headspace is an effective way to increase clarity and reduce stress. Your goals will help to direct you back on target.

- **Learn from the zone**

Once you have slowed down your pace and reset your goals you are perfectly positioned to start taking learnings from your current situation. Ask yourself the following questions; what brought you to the place of panic? How long have you been in this place? What actions and decisions have you taken? What adjustments or changes do you need to make? When were you last thriving in the stretch zone? What choices could you make differently?

And remember, you're still here, you survived!



So, what have we learned?

Each of the zones serve a purpose in your life and each provides opportunities of learning which lead to growth and self-development.

By entering each of the zones at different stages in your life, you get an understanding of how to navigate yourself to the point where you found the most meaning.

If you can recognise the signs of being in the different zones you will know when you need to pivot.

Now ask yourself; What would YOU do if you knew you couldn't fail?

Nelson Mandela had a saying which was, "I never lose, I either win or learn". Regardless of the zone you may find yourself in, there is something to learn!

To live your dream is to find passion in your daily life. Earlier we asked two important questions;

1. Have you discovered what your dream is?
2. Are you living it?

This passion could be through your work, having a job you love, securing the promotion you deserve or finally getting around to setting up that business you keep thinking about. Or it could be more personal, like, managing your work-life balance to spend more time with your family or creating a more meaningful lifestyle.

Each of the Zone's require different strategies in order to make the progress you need to strive toward your dream and avoid overwhelm and anxiety whilst you do it.

Our Ability Coaches have the knowledge and experience which can help you to navigate the Zones to get the results you want.

Coaching through the **Comfort Zone** require a range of strategies which will create an interruption to your 'safe' routine and cause you to think bigger, challenge yourself and build your confidence.

In the **Panic Zone**, your needs are different therefore the coaching tools we offer differs also. We work with you to put structure back into your life to reduce the anxiety. We support you through the Panic Zone to give you the clarity you need to guide you to safety while helping you to see the signs for future panic zone avoidance.

Those who require coaching while in the **Stretch Zone** need a different level of support using coaching methods and tools that helps to keep them on the track which is aligned with their goals. To be the accountability partner which encourages and motivates enthusiasm and focus.

You may be at the beginning of your journey and unsure what your passion or dream is, but you believe there is more to life and you just having found it yet. If this is where you are then we offer tailored support, with introspective methods and tools to bring your passion to the surface in order for you to start walking towards it.

At Ability, we have the right approach for you, wherever you are in your journey. Contact us for your free Discovery Call and get the support you need to begin living your dream.

We want YOU to Win!