

The Comfort Stretch Panic model



The Model

Like all good models this is very simple. It takes into account how we are continually changing – how we are dynamic systems so what is ‘in’ a zone today might be in a different one tomorrow or in a month’s time.

The Comfort Zone: your Comfort Zone is just that – comfortable – and includes everyday activities such as doing the same things and mixing with the same people. When most of your activities are in this zone life is, of course, ‘comfortable’ but you do not learn very much nor develop yourself – it’s simply more of the same and it can lead to the zone shrinking.

The Stretch Zone: your Stretch Zone is the area of novelty, exploration and adventure. Here are the things that are a little or a lot out of the ordinary – the things you haven’t done for a long time or have never done before. This zone is not really a comfortable place – but it is a stimulating one. It is where we stretch and challenge ourselves mentally, emotionally or physically.

The Panic Zone: the Panic Zone is the area of things-to-be-avoided either because they are unacceptable to you or because they are currently a ‘stretch’ too far! This could range from things like public speaking at work, through to thinking about extreme sports on holiday. You may have activities in the Panic Zone which you wish were not there and would like to incorporate but feel too frightening.

The key is to be in rapport with yourself – allow your feelings to guide you and avoid forcing things. It may be good to move a little into stretch periodically. If an activity currently falls into the Panic Zone, and you would like to change this, your goal is to get it into Stretch. Use this self-rapport to know when you have had enough and then return to comfort to rest and to integrate the learning.

Areas to self assess

Area	Comfort	Stretch	Panic	Reflections
<p>Work</p> <p><i>Stimulating/rewarding? Frightening/dull?</i></p>				
<p>Relationships</p> <p><i>Core relationships/friends Happy/unhappy?</i></p>				
<p>Social activities</p> <p><i>Do you have a life outside of work? Do you enjoy the things you do?</i></p>				
<p>Physical fitness</p> <p>Are you doing regular exercise?</p>				
<p>Mental fitness</p> <p><i>Are you looking after your mental wellbeing whatever your age? (e.g. time out, meditation)</i></p>				
<p>Other areas?</p>				

Conclusions

*What is your overall conclusion across the entirety, the "broad canvas" of the areas?
How much are you in the comfort, panic or stretch zones in your life?*

What changes might you like to make to change things if the balance currently isn't great?

