



There's a quote I keep coming back to. I found it the way I find most things that stick, while reading. It's from the writer Anaïs Nin, and it goes like this:

"LIFE SHRINKS OR EXPANDS IN PROPORTION TO ONE'S COURAGE."

I think about that quote a lot. And the more I've built my business, the more it's proven itself true.

This isn't just a life philosophy. It's something that shows up directly in how you run your firm, how you grow as a person, and whether the business you're building is actually expanding or just staying the same.

The way I think about the comfort zone

I think of the comfort zone as a circle. Most people stay inside it almost all the time, and that's understandable. The familiar is easy. The predictable feels safe.

But the circle has a cost.

When you stay inside it long enough, it starts to feel like the whole world. You stop noticing what's just outside the edge. You stop asking whether there's more. And without realizing it, you start optimizing for comfort instead of growth. Those two things are not the same.

Here's what I've found to be true: every time you cross the edge, the circle expands. What was once outside becomes inside. The territory gets larger. And with it, so does your capacity.

That's not just a nice idea. I've lived it. The person I was four years ago and the person I am today are genuinely different. I took a DISC assessment at my old job and took one again recently, and the results were so different that it was almost hard to recognize. What motivates me has changed. What I want has changed. My confidence has changed. And I can trace a lot of that back to the things I chose to do that scared me.

"EVERY TIME YOU CROSS THE EDGE, THE CIRCLE EXPANDS."

Getting uncomfortable is harder than it used to be

Here's something I think about a lot. Getting outside your comfort zone used to happen naturally. Life demanded it. Now it requires intention.

Everything has been engineered for ease. You can get food delivered, skip the commute, avoid most of the friction that used to be part of daily life. And on one level, that's great. But it also means you can go a very long time without ever really being challenged.

The result is that most people only come face-to-face with reality when something forces it. A loss. A health scare. A moment where the routine falls apart and you realize you've been going through the motions without really living.

I go through versions of this myself. I'll work late, skip the gym, order food, watch TV, and then do it again the next day. And at a certain point that pattern stops feeling like living. That's the signal. That's when I know I need to cross the edge somewhere.

The answer isn't to seek out pain for its own sake. It's about being intentional with the edges. To notice where the circle is and to choose, on purpose, to cross it.

What this has to do with your firm

I know what you might be thinking: that's a great life philosophy, but what does it have to do with running an accounting practice?

My answer is: almost everything.

Starting a business is one of the most uncomfortable things you can do. You make decisions without a roadmap. You figure things out in public. You put yourself out there. And then once the business is running, the discomfort doesn't stop. It just changes shape.

For me, some of the biggest growth has come from things I was nervous about. Speaking on stage for the first time. Getting in front of a room and not knowing exactly how it would go. Traveling internationally and getting completely outside my day-to-day. Each of those things pushed the circle outward. And each one made the next thing a little less scary.

I've left the country probably 30 times now. It's so much easier than it was the first time. That's the pattern. The things that once pushed the edge become part of the interior. And then you have to find new edges.

That's not a problem. That's growth working correctly.

For firm owners, the edges tend to show up in a few recognizable places:

→ Posting on LinkedIn or showing up publicly in your area of expertise for the first time

→ Speaking at a conference or in front of a room

→ Raising your prices past the point where it feels comfortable

→ Saying no to a client who no longer fits

→ Hiring someone before you feel completely ready

→ Trying a new service model or pricing structure

None of these are life or death. But they all require crossing the edge. And most people avoid them not because they're illogical, but because they're uncomfortable.

That discomfort is usually pointing toward the thing worth doing.

The pattern that keeps people stuck

Here's how it usually goes. You build your firm by saying yes to what comes in. You find a rhythm. The work becomes familiar. And at some point, without really deciding to, you stop doing things that scare you.

It's not a dramatic choice. It's a slow drift. The circle stops expanding because nothing is pushing it.

The things that would actually move your business forward, the conversations you've been avoiding, the pricing you've been hesitant to change, the visibility you keep putting off, they stay on the list. Month after month.

And the longer you wait, the heavier those things get. The longer you've avoided a hard conversation, the harder it feels to have it. The longer you've held back on raising prices, the more loaded the idea becomes.

"THE ANSWER ISN'T TO WAIT UNTIL YOU'RE READY. GO FIRST AND LET THE READINESS FOLLOW."

You can't know what it feels like until you do it

This is something I come back to a lot.

Before I spoke on stage, I couldn't have told you what it would feel like. Before I started my firm, I couldn't have related to who I would become through that process. Before I traveled internationally for the first time, I had no frame for how much it would change my perspective.

There's no way to have the perspective before you try. You can read about it. You can think about it. But you can't actually know until you're on the other side.

And almost every time I've crossed an edge, two things have been true: it was less terrible than I expected, and there was something on the other side worth having.

That's the feedback loop that builds real confidence. Not from being told you can do something. From doing it and surviving.

Where to start

If this resonates, start simple. You don't need to make a dramatic change. You just need to find one edge and cross it.

Set aside 30 minutes and work through this:

Exercise

SET ASIDE 30 MINUTES THIS WEEK

- 1 Name one thing you've been avoiding.** A conversation, a decision, a platform, a boundary. Write it down specifically.
- 2 Ask whether fear is the reason.** Not logic. Not timing. If the honest answer is fear, that's useful. It means you're at the edge.
- 3 Block 30 minutes to map where your clients spend time offline.** List the events, communities, and spaces they're already in. That list is your starting point.
- 4 Do one small version of it.** Not the whole thing. Just enough to cross the line. Post something. Have the conversation. Show up.

Notice what actually happened. Compare the reality to what you were afraid of. Almost always, the gap is bigger than it needed to be.

You don't need to solve everything at once. You just need to start moving.

The circle expands every time you cross it. And it gets easier, not because things stop being scary, but because you stop letting scary be the reason not to try.

That's what a life worth living looks like to me. And it's what a firm worth building looks like, too.