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Where's Your Edge

By Helaine Iris

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Where's Your Edge?

Helaine Iris

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"And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom." Anais Nin

The other day my sixteen-year-old daughter came home from school practically in tears. Sensing her distress I gently inquired as to how her day was. With animated emotion, she began to tell me about the project she is working on in science class. She's studying electricity and has to build an electric generator. She made it abundantly clear to me that she's never felt "dumber " in her whole life and she hates the project.

My daughter, a bright young woman, has a fairly healthy sense of self and excels in school. She's well rounded, is a wonderful writer and generally good at math and science. Her true passion, however, lies in the creative art realm.

The challenge of building this electrical generator has pushed her to the edge of her comfort zone and she's not a happy girl.

My friend, a talented and promising business consultant is in the middle of creating a new company for himself. He is full of inspiration and creative energy and has been gestating a very good idea for some months now. I've watched him approach his launch date several times only to see him go back to the drawing board to further tweak and revise his presentation.

The challenge of putting himself "out there" in the world is the edge of his comfort zone.

I am not exempt from this challenge. I'm building a coaching practice. I've made the bold decision to be self-employed, forgo the security of a paycheck and the benefits that go along with employment. I'd

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prefer to follow my dream and carve out a life that fulfills me at the deepest level.

Even though I am pleased with my success, and feel good about taking a courageous stand for my life, there are also financial realities and challenges that I must face having my own business.

When I experience the seasonal fluctuations of my client load, and find myself wondering how I am going to pay the bills for the month, I am at the edge of my comfort zone.

Financial, emotional or physical stress can be a real energy drain and ample motivation to play it safe. I don't like being at my edge, it's scary and unsettling. It calls up my anxiety and my old fears and doubts that I think I've resolved. Despite my resistance, I want to know what continues to push me forward, and creates the ability to withstand and thrive when I am pushed to my edge.

I think the answer for me is simple: it's my passion to grow and evolve. Being at my edge seems to provide this opportunity. I notice that discomfort and dissatisfaction are the impetus for daring to risk new territory. It seems that our shoes have to get a little bit too tight before we are ready to get bigger ones. As Carl Jung stated, " Find out what a person fears most and that is where he will develop next".

Where's your edge? What are you at the brink of and wanting to press forward with in your life? What dreams or passions are you denying because you want to stay safe in your comfort zone?

Here are some perspectives and suggestions to help negotiate the edge.

1. Increase your self-awareness. Remind yourself if you are experiencing discomfort or dissatisfaction that you are at the precipice of growth. This is good news. Often a young child will get grumpy and irritable just prior to mastering a new skill. Your increased awareness can help you tolerate this stage. Be compassionate with yourself.
2. Find your solid ground. Make sure you have one foot firmly planted and grounded in reality before you lift your other foot up to take a giant step. Where do you currently feel safe and confident? What aspects of your life can act as an anchor as you push into new horizons?
3. What is the worst that can happen? Dare to take a look. Assess your risk honestly, have a plan, arrange for a back up or ample reserve to carry you through and minimize the consequences.
4. Support, support, support. And did I say support? Set up the structures and resources that will help you to feel sustained. Is it friends, a network of colleagues, a solid self-care system that will help you weather the stress of growth?
5. Continue to reinforce and focus your strengths. What are the gifts and talents you are seeking to share with the world in your venture? Remind yourself and stay present to the reason you want to grow or step out in the first place.

Learning to welcome and live at your edge is an art form. It takes practice, trust and a willingness to embrace all the parts of you.

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As I find myself at my edge, in the middle of this snowy, cold New England winter, I am energized. I know this opportunity to practice the art of edge walking will propel me forward into the next exciting opportunity of my life.

It's YOUR life...imagine the possibilities!

Helaine Iris is a Certified Life Coach, writer and teacher. She works with individuals, entrepreneurs, and professionals, who want to love their lives, thrive and evolve. Are you ready to take a step that could change your life? For a complimentary session visit her website <http://www.pathofpurpose.com> or call her 603-357-8546 or email her helaine@pathofpurpose.com

Your Growing Edge

By Angie Dixon

You've probably heard the term "leading edge" used to refer to technology or products that are in front of the curve, that are really advanced. You may have even heard the term "bleeding edge" in this context. I want to talk to you about your personal "leading edge," your growing edge.

Your growing edge is that area of your life where there's still a lot of room for improvement but you're pushing ahead and stretching the margins of that area every day. For some this is productivity in business, for others it's personal balance, for still others it's family time and quality of interaction.

How do you find your growing edge and what do you do about it once you've identified it?

First, finding your growing edge. This can be easier than you might expect. It's a simple matter of looking at your life over the last few months or year and seeing what challenges you keep bumping up against. For me, it's eating right. I don't eat breakfast or lunch and I eat too much junk. Over the last year I've struggled with this repeatedly, each time managing to eat "well" for a little longer, but then falling back into my old habits. The point is that I am growing in this area. You may have an area like this, too. You're challenged by it, you make some changes, you retreat from these changes, and you make the changes again.

So what do you do with this "growing edge"? Exactly what you've been doing, only more so. If you've been building a new habit and then letting it go in times of stress, which is what most people do, then you need to develop new stress habits. It's easy to do the right thing during calm, peaceful times in your life, as if any of us really have those. It's harder when the real stress starts. So what you need to do is develop a list of things you can do during a stressful time to keep your new habit going. For me, a real problem when I'm stressed is caffeine. I have a problem staying off of it, and when I'm stressed I guzzle it. My ways to avoid caffeine include not having it in the house, keeping plenty of decaf soda cold, and drinking more milk. I love milk, so this is not a hardship. When I get a caffeine craving I have a glass of milk.

The bottom line on this is that action leads to solutions. Make a list of actions you can take to keep your growing edge growing, even when you don't feel like it, and keep taking those actions. Feel free to

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drop me a line and let me know how you're doing.

Angie Dixon helps small business owners get their acts together. She is a personal development coach specializing in helping people integrate their home and work lives so they feel less stretched and more balanced. Get her FREE EBOOK on balance at

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to discover how coaching can change your life, contact Angie at

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