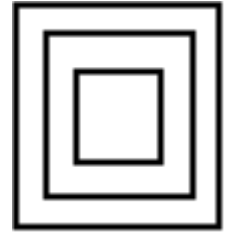


Zones of Comfort, Risk, and Danger



SETUP:

Tape three square zones, one within another, decreasing in size. Invite the participants to arrange themselves around the outside of the three taped zones. Point out that individuals have different reactions when asked to take particular actions. Review the definition of each zone:

- Outside Square - In the Comfort Zone: We feel at ease. If someone asks us to do an activity in our comfort zone, we experience no tension around the request. We believe we have a good understanding of what needs to be done, feel comfortable doing it, and know how to navigate the occasional rough spots easily.
- Middle Square - In the Risk Zone: We feel a certain amount of nervous energy. Requests that put us into the risk zone trigger feelings of slight to moderate stress, but we are still willing to "take the risk." Although there is anxious energy or nervous excitement associated with the risk zone, the overall feeling is one of "I can do this." Once a risk zone task has been successfully completed, many people feel a real sense of accomplishment.
- Inside Square - In the Danger Zone: We feel powerful defensiveness, fear, alarm, and a strong desire to avoid or escape. Even thinking about those requests demands so much mental and emotional energy, that it's impossible to accomplish anything within that zone. When we are in our danger zone, all we can think about is escape.

SITUATIONS:

If you were asked to do these things, step into the zone that matches the feelings that arise:

1. Drive a car
2. Go skydiving
3. Sing at an assembly
4. Dance at a wedding
5. Confront a friend about something they did that bothers you
6. Try a food you've never eaten before and you aren't really sure what it is
7. Spend a night camping in the woods
8. Have a conversation about race with someone who is not your race
9. Give a presentation to your class
10. Add Fractions
11. Graph a linear equation
12. Use rotation, reflection, and translation on a shape
13. Take a single exam that determines your entire grade

REFLECTION:

Why do this activity?

What does this tell us about learning?

What zone do you think is best to be in during the learning process? *Emphasize: We learn/grow the most when we're in the Risk Zone.

Grading for Equity Reflection

Grading on the 4-point scale

Eliminating zeros from grading

Providing detailed feedback on assessments with opportunities to revise/retake/correct

Asking students to determine and defend their own grades

1. Which of the statements above put you in the “Risk Zone?”
2. Why did the statement(s) put you in the “Risk Zone?”
3. In what context/capacity could you envision taking this risk in your grading in the future? What would you need to be able to take this risk?

Resources for further thinking:

Feldmen, Joe. *Grading for Equity: What it is, Why it Matters, and How it can Transform Schools and Classrooms*.

Thousand Oaks, Corwin, 2019. Print

Have You Heard, October 15, 2021, <https://haveyouheardblog.com/have-you-heard/>. Podcast.

Human Restoration Project, October 15, 2021, <https://www.humanrestorationproject.org/>. Podcast. Sackstein, Starr.

Hacking Assessment: 10 Ways to Go Gradeless in a Traditional Grades School. X10 Publications, 2015. Print