

**A sample activity from
the Trainer's Activity Pack:**

Using Emotional Intelligence at Work

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Thank you for downloading this sample activity.
You are welcome to use this material in your training
programs. This sample activity is just one of 17 contained
in *Using Emotional Intelligence at Work*, published by
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their own lives. This is then linked to the concept of comfort zones and the experience of loss.

Finally, the participants do an exercise to look at the motivational balance between the fears of change and the benefits of the status quo (comfort zone); and the risks of the status quo and the benefits of change (the risk zone).

TIME

Overall time required: 2 hours.

- Butterfly Joke: 10 minutes
- Risk: 45 minutes
- Comfort Zones: 15 minutes
- The Motivational Balance: 45 minutes
- Summary: 5 minutes

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- 3 Overhead/PowerPoint Masters:
 - 4.1: The Butterfly Joke
 - 4.2: Comfort Zones
 - 4.3: The Motivational Balance
- 4 Handout Masters:
 - 4.4: Risk
 - 4.5: Risk, Change and Choice
 - 4.6: The Self-Defeating Spiral of Risk Avoidance
 - 4.7: Blockers and Drivers
- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint® compatible laptop computer and screen.
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard.
- Markers for trainer.
- Paper and pens for participants.
- Space for small group work.

Courage is about accepting fear as part of the process. It doesn't mean ignoring danger signs, or pretending not to be scared. That's recklessness.

Courage means taking into account emotional and practical considerations, then deciding and following the decision through. That process may or may not dissolve the fear. If it doesn't, you have to 'feel the fear, and do it anyway'. Go on to draw out personal experiences of the six fears that are listed in the handout.

Divide the group into groups of three or four. Give them the task of discussing significant changes in their lives, and ask them to answer the following questions:

- What were the risks you perceived at the time?
- What did you lose?
- What did you gain?
- What did you learn about your ability to let go and take risks?

Allow 15 minutes for discussion. Then bring the groups together and draw out the key themes, in particular that we all have choices when faced with significant change. We can stay where we are – doing nothing is a choice – or we can plan to move forward. Whatever we choose will involve losses and gains, fears and uncertainties. However, we can avoid becoming immobilized by our fears of change by imagining how we are going to deal with difficulties, thinking of obstacles as opportunities and choices, recognizing our emotions as normal reactions to difficult events, and expecting to succeed. Handout 4.5: Risk, Change and Choice, and Handout 4.6: The Self-Defeating Spiral of Risk Avoidance, summarize and illustrate these points.



Distribute Handout 4.5

Risk, Change and Choice and

Handout 4.6

The Self-Defeating Spiral of Risk Avoidance

Write the words *self-efficacy*, *self-esteem*, and *self-awareness* on a sheet of flipchart paper and ask the group what these terms mean to them. Define them as follows:

- **Self-esteem** is valuing yourself and your abilities.
- **Self-efficacy** is believing you can influence your own situation.
- **Self-awareness** is knowing your strengths and weaknesses.

Make the point that we are likely to move out of the comfort zone when we perceive the value of the status quo as significantly less than that of the proposed change. Value, in this context, means an assessment of the positives and negatives of 'change and no change', or the 'blockers and drivers'. Overhead 4.3: The Motivational Balance, will help to explain this.

The Motivational Balance



Show Overhead/PowerPoint 4.3
The Motivational Balance

Describe the motivational balance as weighing the blockers and drivers to change. This will take about five minutes.

When the blockers feel stronger than the drivers.

People resist change and stay in the comfort zone.

When the drivers feel stronger than the blockers.

People are more likely to leave the comfort zone and make the change.

When the weights are equal or uncertain.

People feel ambivalent. This leads to procrastination about change or the feeling of going around in circles.

Ask the group to form pairs.

The Butterfly Joke



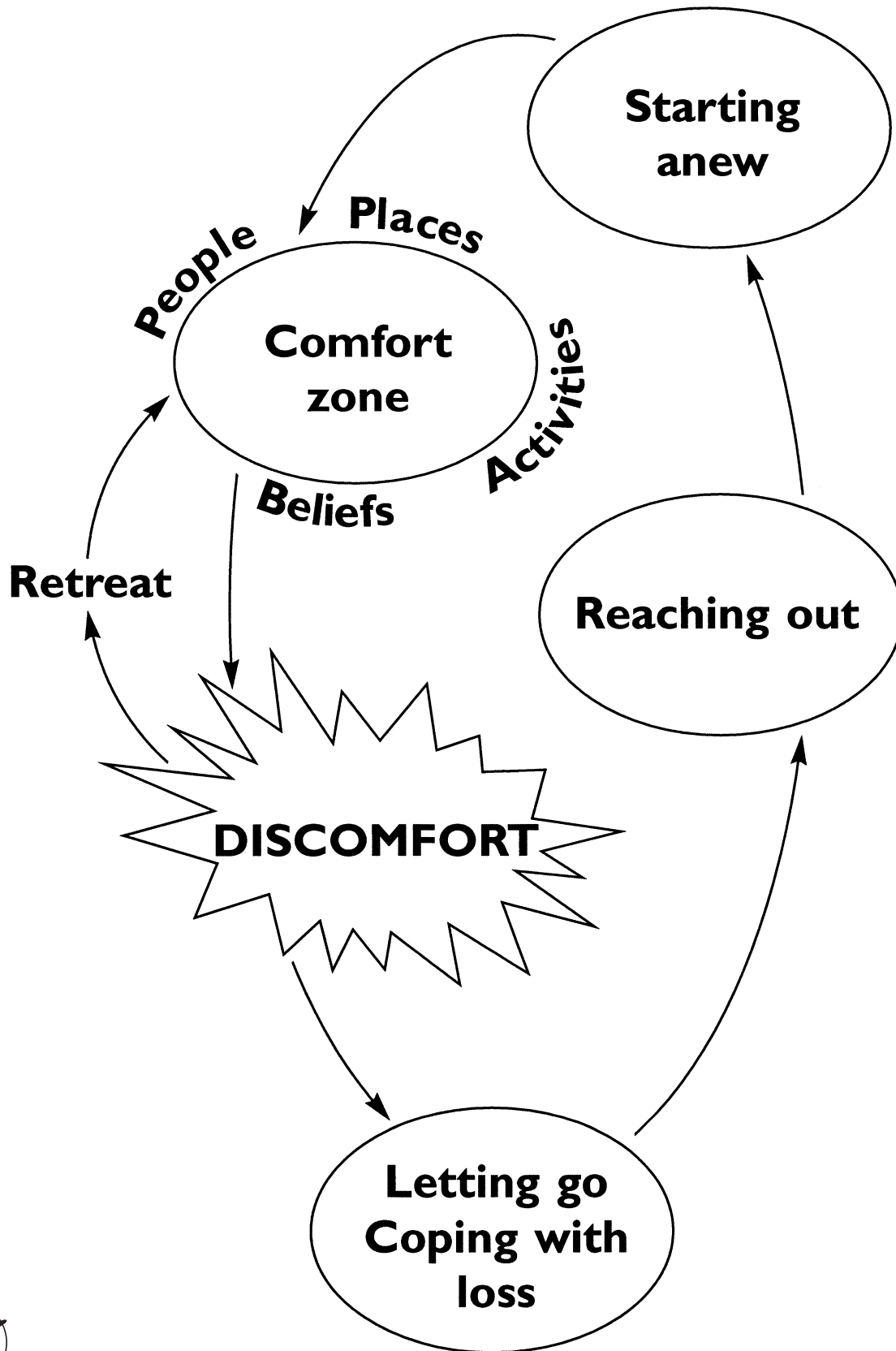
4.1

*A beautiful butterfly flies
over the garden.*



*A caterpillar looks up and says:
'You'll never get me up in one of those.'*

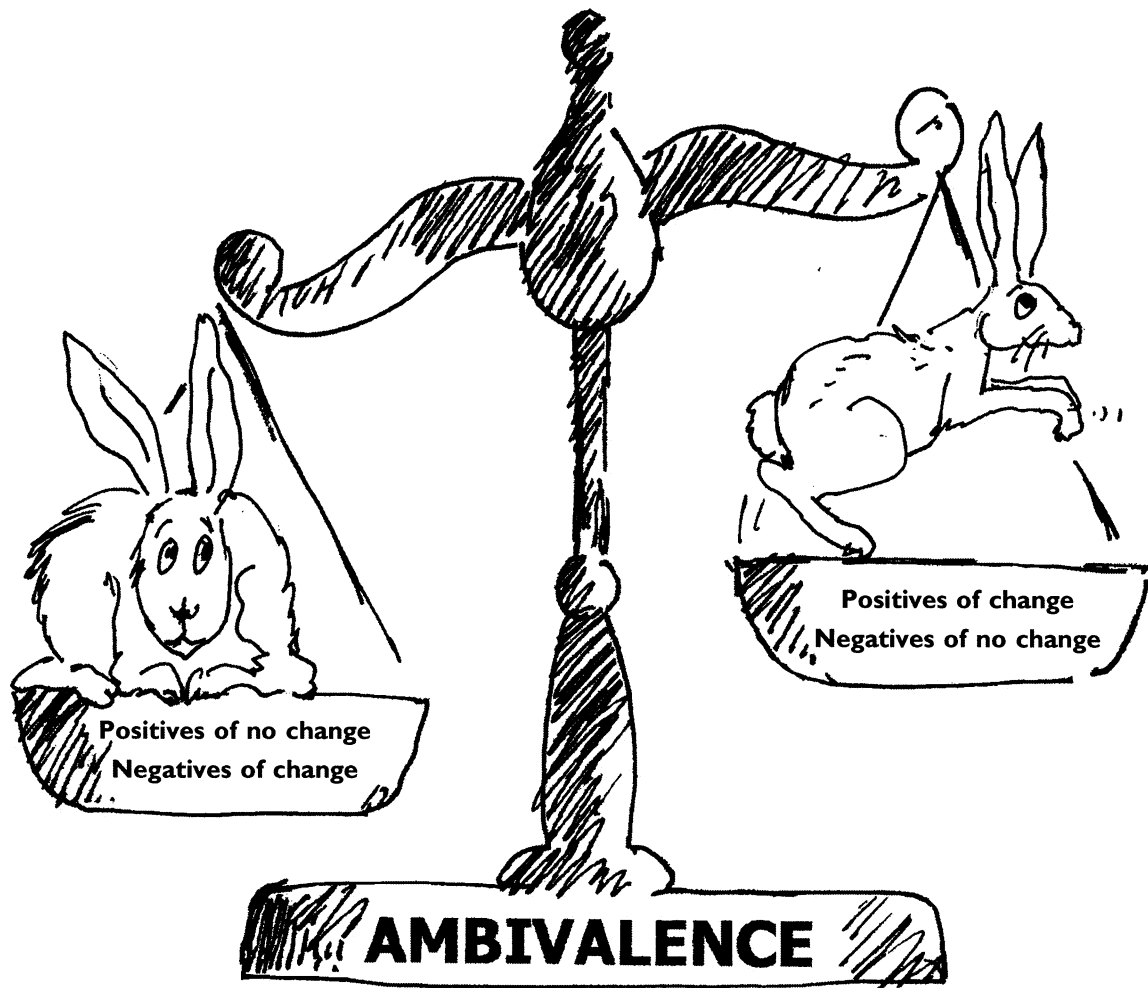




The Motivational Balance

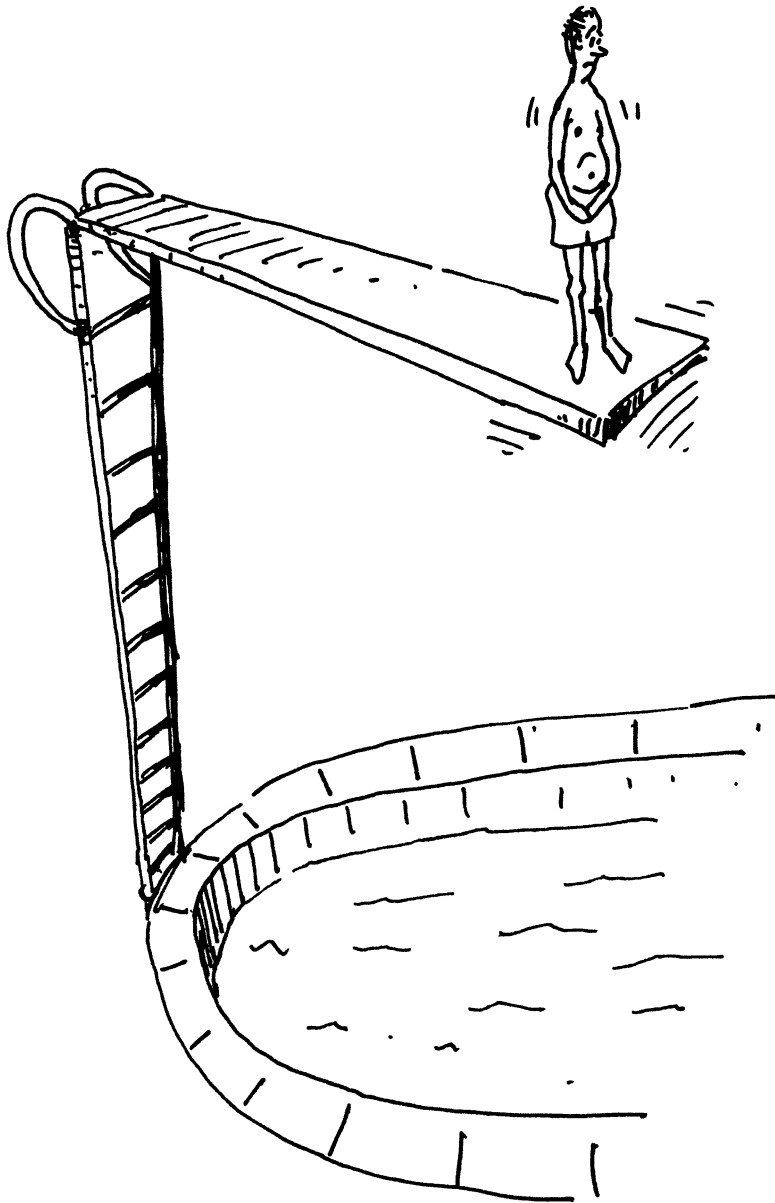


4.3





You are on a diving board, much higher than any diving board you've been on before. You're going to dive, or jump, or not.



'What if I do, what if I don't?'
How do you decide? How do you feel?



continued ...



What are you afraid of?

Typically, there are six main fears:

1. **Failure** – we might not get what we’re hoping for; but we haven’t got it now, so why should we fear failure? If we don’t try, we can’t succeed.
2. **Exposure** – if it doesn’t work out, it might reflect on our abilities. We get confused between the failure of something we try to do, and being a failure ourselves. One certain way to fail is not to try.
3. **Embarrassment** – if we try something, and it doesn’t work, we might feel others are judging us. An emotionally unintelligent way to solve this is to keep things the same, but feel sorry for ourselves.
4. **Conflict** – if others don’t share our opinion on something, it may feel as though they are hostile toward us. The emotionally unintelligent give hostility in return. They waste valuable opportunities to share views.
5. **Rejection** – if risks go haywire, could you lose friendships or even your job? People often think this is likely to happen, without thinking about the actual people involved. It’s better to talk things through than to assume the worst.
6. **Loss** – any change means loss. The familiar may have disadvantages, but being with what you know creates a comfort zone. To progress, we have to be willing to walk out of these comfort zones.



Risk, Change and Choice



4.5

When you are faced with change and uncertainty, remember:

You usually have several choices, one of which is to leave things exactly as they are. This might mean taking a risk; for example, not going to the doctor about something that's worrying you. Doing nothing is a decision to do nothing.

Other choices involve making plans, including finding out what's needed, taking steps to fulfil those needs, and moving towards the decided goal. There will be other choices before the goal is achieved, which will bring new discoveries and new ideas. Other people may be involved and be part of the goal-seeking process.

Remember, any personal change you make will usually involve:

- LOSS** - changing in any way involves losing something of the self. It's almost as if you periodically have to attend your own funeral, to say goodbye to certain aspects of yourself.
- FEAR** - that comes from the supposed negative effects of the change.
- DILEMMA** - the ambivalence of not knowing whether the pros or the cons are more important.
- GAIN** - the benefit from going forward with the change.

It isn't healthy to stay stuck on the diving board.

You can prepare yourself for change by:

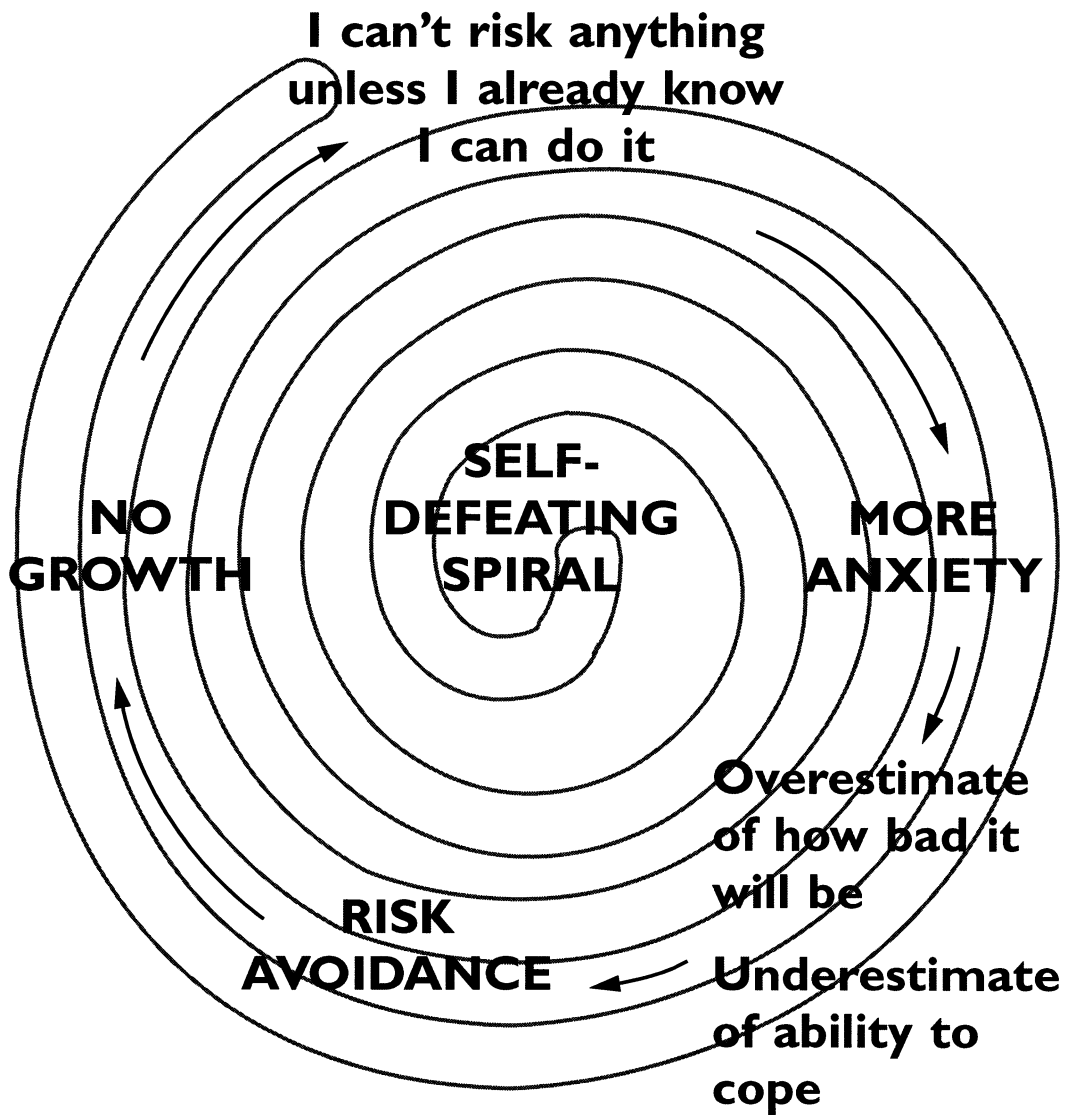
- Thinking about the worst possible result. How would you deal with that?
- Talking to people who've done something similar
- Thinking of dilemmas as choices rather than problems
- Running a pilot, if you can, before you do the real thing
- Recognizing your emotional reactions – don't pretend you're a purely logical being
- Expecting to succeed; optimistic people succeed more often, because they don't see setbacks as decisive and keep trying
- Remembering that no risk = no change = stagnation. See Handout 4.6: The Self-Defeating Spiral of Risk Avoidance, for a diagram illustrating the spiral of risk avoidance.



The Self-Defeating Spiral of Risk Avoidance



4.6



Blockers and Drivers



4.7

1. Choose an important life and career change that you have considered or are considering but that feels a little risky.
2. First, discuss the blockers with your partner for about five minutes.
The blockers consist of:
 - a) What I would be sorry to lose if I changed.
 - b) My fears about change.
3. Now discuss the drivers with your partner for about five minutes.
The drivers consist of:
 - c) The benefits I would gain if I changed.
 - d) The things I would be glad to leave behind if I changed.
4. Now rate how strong the blockers and drivers feel by putting a line on each of the scales.

| Blockers | | Drivers | |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Very strong | Very weak | Very strong | Very weak |
| A | <input type="text"/> | C | <input type="text"/> |
| B | <input type="text"/> | D | <input type="text"/> |

What are your thoughts and feelings now about the change?





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