

Create The Best Me

Is burning the boats a common practice for people who have nothing to lose. Or is it something only younger people do?

Today, I'm going to talk about my burning boat moments and stepping out of my comfort zone. Next, I'm going to challenge you to get uncomfortable and begin to take baby steps toward burning your boats.

In my early twenties, I was a single mother of two under the age of three, living with my mother. I had the typical challenges any young mother would have money insecurity, unaffordable daycare, unreliable transportation but most of all I lacked self-confidence.

I knew there was a better life waiting for me and my small family, but I needed to venture out and find it. My solution was to create a different environment and believe that I can provide a better life for my family.

As many women who have found themselves in similar situations, I felt helplessness and stuck. I knew the only person who could get me out of this rut was myself. I needed to create drastic changes.

So, I did the craziest thing any single mother could ever do. I moved my small family, almost 300 miles away from my comfort home.

Have you ever heard anyone say it's time to burn the boats? The concept is traced back to Hernan Cortes in 1519 who led 600 Spaniards by boat to Mexico. The goal was to capture treasures. Upon arrival, Cortez made history by destroying his ships. His actions were clear to his men there was no turning back. They would win or they would die. I know this sounds drastic.

My point here is my burning boat moment was when I secured a job and signed a one-year lease for an apartment 300 miles away from my secure place I called home. Like Cortes I was either going to succeed in my newfound home with my children or I was going to fail and move back with my mother.

Don't get me wrong living at home was great, but I needed a place where I could grow into becoming the woman I was born to be. I knew if I didn't make

myself uncomfortable, I'd remain in my comforts zone and wouldn't have explored my full potential.

At the time, some may have thought that I was running away from my home or my past, but in reality, I was running to my new life. I needed to be in a place where I was forced to believe in myself. I envisioned I had a job that I loved, and we'd be able to purchase a home large enough for my children to have their own room. Our home would have a yard big enough for my kids to play. But most of all, our home would be filled with love.

I stopped dreaming about what I wanted for my family and began believing we could be living that life soon.

I know you've probably heard this said many times. But I feel it's worth repeating. Scientific research has proven you can achieve anything you set your mind to do. It's quite fascinating when you take a moment and process what science has proven to be true.

In other words, you can train your mind to give you the results that you really want. I know what you're thinking right now. And I agree. It's much easier said than done. So let me give you an example. I know there are people. Who live with a fixated mindset. If it's not broken, don't fix it or they believe we were born with all the gifts and talents and cannot develop them later in life. What can be expected from this kind of mindset is they will not try to stretch themselves beyond their comfort. The world around them will continue to evolve, but just like the flip phone, they will become obsolete.

People with a fixated mindset will be forced to embrace their fears, to remain employed or just complete everyday transactions like paying their bills online or scanning their groceries.

I used to work with a man who chose to retire instead of learning a new web-based program my prior employer implemented. I still remember the look on his face and body language when he walked back from his manager's office. He was shaking as he told me that his boss informed him that he would, begin training for the new program within two weeks. He gave his two weeks' notice in the same conversation.

One year into his retirement he joined Facebook because he desired social connections. He's an example of someone who was forced to embrace his fears, fear of technology so that he could maintain the social connections he desired.

If you want to learn more about the power of the mind, I strongly recommend the book *Mindset* by Carol Dweck, PhD, who has done extensive research on mindset.

Her book describes a fixed mindset as a person who believes you are born with the gifts and talents and a person who has a growth mindset believes you can learn and develop any gift and talent you desire. The book breaks down both different mindsets by analyzing well-known athletes, business leaders, educators, and family dynamics.

I've always considered myself as a person with a growth mindset, but after reading *Mindset*, I discovered that there are areas in my life where I have demonstrated a fixed mindset. As I think about these moments, I wonder if perhaps I am too lazy to try, afraid to fail or feared that I wouldn't be able to complete the next task so it's easier to give up before trying.

After learning more about the different mindsets that exist and for my own self-discovery, I understand it's easy to adopt a fixed mindset. Now that I've identified where I've become fixed, I'm going to challenge myself to expand my knowledge by applying a growth mindset. Again, I recommend you read "*Mindset*."

I think we can all agree, the things that make us feel safe are what we can expect, predict, or know to be true. For example, if I pay my mortgage every month, I know the bank won't foreclose my home.

With that said we fear the unknown. We fear failure or rejection. But let's change the narrative here, did you know, you have so much more to gain when you embrace or challenge yourself to face your fears. I believe my failures have reshaped me to become stronger and a better version of myself.

I don't know if you can relate, but sometimes I feel overwhelmed with anxiety when it comes to learning something complicated because I fear failing. Whereas Thomas Edison may have gotten inspiration from his failure.

Did you know, Thomas Edison and his associates worked on at least 3000 different theories to develop an efficient incandescent lamp. Other light bulbs had been discovered. Some were powered by gas, others by electricity. But they would burn out quickly or did not provide enough light. After many failed attempts and within two years, he finally patented the Edison lamp.

I really love this quote by Thomas Edison "Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration."

Here's some quick facts about Thomas Edison. He dropped out of school at the age of 12 and began working at the railroad. He was a poor uneducated rail worker who became one of the most famous men in the world.

He never submitted himself to failure. He documented his research as methods as to why his inventions didn't work.

Another person who I admire is Barbara Corcoran. We all know who we're as the 'Shark Tank', investor, entrepreneur. By the time she was 23 years old, she had worked 20 different jobs.

She rejected 20 jobs that didn't align as the career path she needed to help her meet her long-term goals and dreams. She borrowed one thousand dollars from her ex-boyfriend and co-founded Corcoran Simone Company with him. After seven years, she formed her own firm. The Cochran Firm.

Barbara's net worth is roughly 100 million as per celebrity, net worth at the time of this recording.

Barbara told NBC make it growing up. She was labeled as a dumb kid because she couldn't read or write. She was a straight D student throughout her childhood.

Her inspiration came from her mother who told her. You have a wonderful imagination. You'll learn to fill in the blanks. What a beautiful and powerful message!

As a mother, myself, this is what I hear. Believe in yourself, like I do. Trust that you will find the solution. You will do amazing things. Don't worry about being scared because everything will fall into place if you believe and trust yourself.

Oh, my I'm not sure that's what the message really means, but geez it just gave me goosebumps!

What fascinates me about Barbara is she knew who she wanted to become and was not afraid to walk away from jobs that wouldn't help her reach her full potential.

Perhaps some might say she's always been fearless or maybe she learned to do things scared. I think we can all agree, we need to become fearless and bold when it comes to doing things. That will make us happy at the end.

Think about it for just one second, I bet your greatest accomplishments have come when you forced yourself to do things scared. It could have been applying for the job you didn't feel you were qualified for, asking for a raise, or buying your first home. I bet you were fearless.

Being courageous to face your fears or rejection is something we encourage our kids, peers, our mentees to do. And as something we do less because we feel that we have so much more to lose if we fail. But today we're going to make changes. We are going to become fearless, rejection seekers with a growth mindset.

What do you want to accomplish? Find out what you need to do. Or learn to get those things done. And open your mind to make it happen. I promise the rewards are filled with endless possibilities. If you don't believe me, just think about Thomas Edison and Barbara Corcoran who are pillar examples of what can be accomplished? They were both regular people who knew they could change the world if they faced their fears and believed in themselves.

I don't know what you may be going through right now. Maybe you've never expressed your thoughts or opinions, or perhaps you're just waiting for the right time to move forward.

Well, guess what? The right time is now!

I'll let you in on a little secret. Speaking into a microphone makes me feel uncomfortable. But I know someone needs to hear this message. So, if my acts of getting uncomfortable inspires you to get uncomfortable, face your fears and take action. Then my mission has been accomplished. And we will begin to burn our mini boats together.

I challenge you to believe you can achieve great things. Know that this moment is the right time. Get uncomfortable. Face your fears. Take baby steps so that you can prepare yourself for the big burning boats moments.

So, to wrap things up, my burning boat moment helped me figure out who I was supposed to become. I developed strong relationships, graduated from college, raised two amazing adults. And most of all, I didn't have to move back home.

Now tell me what's going to be your burning boat moment.