



“The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers.”

M. Scott Peck – “The Road Less Traveled”

My mom likes to say one of the greatest gifts she gave my sister and me was the gift of boredom. She believes every child has within themselves an incredible level of creativity and being bored allows that to emerge. When we stop trying to entertain our children every moment, they find ways to entertain themselves with some pretty incredible results. My sister used to put on what we called “funny shows”, a goofy kind of sketch comedy with no real beginning (or plot, for that matter). Some of my best memories are of the two of us as little kids, laughing until we cried and couldn’t breathe at some crazy, comedy routine Allison came up with.

As the parent of a teenager, I realized some years ago that my mom gave me another gift, concomitant with boredom: she let us be uncomfortable.

I want to make everything in my daughter’s life peaceful and happy and perfect. I’m a fixer at heart, and when she’s curled up in a corner of the couch, angry or sad or confused, I want to fix it. But I’ve learned that not only does she need to work it through, she deserves to. She deserves to know she can. When I’m willing to sit with her and allow her to be in that space, however uncomfortable it is, she discovers her own strength. Her own resilience. Not mine.

Change is terrifying sometimes and very definitely uncomfortable. But when we allow those around us to **be** uncomfortable, we allow change to happen. We get out of the way and allow growth and development, and yes, resilience.

When I get a panicky email from a colleague who needs help “right now”, I remember to take a breath or two or three. And then I ask myself if she might be OK, being uncomfortable for a little while. What does that look like, exactly? I’ll often send a quick note back to say I got her email but that it will be later that day, or the next, before I can tackle the issue. (Provided it’s not an actual emergency). Perhaps she can start working on it, and I’ll touch base later. It’s pretty amazing to see what happens. That panicked colleague will almost always find a way through the uncomfortableness to a solution, even just a temporary one.

My daughter knows I’ll hold her hand and catch her if she falls. She also knows I believe she can find her way out of that uncomfortable place to somewhere new.