**Finding Your Un-Comfort Zone**

 Dr. Roger Landry

"If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten," says the popular Tony Robbins. Is where you are right now exactly where you want to be, or is there more for you in this life? What do you want for yourself? That's not a rhetorical question. What do you want for yourself? The answer is a noun, a state of being, and it probably goes something like, "I want to feel (fulfilled/calm/needed)," or "I want to be (stronger/present/compassionate)." You may have long ago written off the notion of having a goal, but honestly, your answer to that question is a goal. And it's a good one because it's all yours. It is worthy of taking small steps to achieve it. What will it take to move incrementally toward that goal? In what ways will you feel accountable along the way? If it's a recurring goal in your life, what barriers have prevented your reaching it in the past? What can be different this time?

If you have a pulse, you are capable of growth, regardless of who you are, where you live or the curve balls life has thrown at you. Growth means change. Change happens to us all, for better or worse. Growth, on the other hand, is our choice. Growth is painful and change is painful, but they are less painful than being stuck in a place where you don't belong; settling for less than you deserve in this life. Is your current comfort zone really that comfortable, or does it prevent you from achieving your potential? What is standing in your way? Henri Ford famously said, "Whether you think you can or you think you can't – you're right."

It's time to step into your un-comfort zone – the only place where growth happens – and believe that you can.

Ernestine Shepherd had never seen the inside of a gym at age 56, and yet today at age 75 she is a nationally known competitive body builder, model and personal trainer. At 81, ABHOW's Piedmont Gardens resident Marilyn had endured her share of life's curve balls, and yet she had the courage to pick up a paintbrush. She had been creative in her past, but never considered herself a painter. To date, Marilyn has had multiple art showings and her incredible paintings line the walls at Piedmont Gardens. Both Ernestine and Marilyn excelled in their newfound passions, but at the outset, neither probably cared whether they would eventually be great. Each had to muster the beginner's courage necessary to take the first step. ​​

New endeavors are likely to be messy. So what? Let's not worry about making mistakes. Let's not let fear prevent us from what could be a lot of fun. Let's give thought to what we want for ourselves and ask the same of others and together take small steps that challenge us. Let's wear the beginner's badge proudly and confidently. It's time to step into our un-comfort zone and pursue our unique potential.