

Seeking Discomfort

The Danger of Comfort Creep - by Sgt. Steve

“Aging is the aggressive pursuit of comfort”

- GARY BRECKA

I was out for my daily run as I heard the biologist and anti-aging expert Gary Brecka utter that phrase on a podcast. I literally stopped in my tracks. This quote is profoundly important for LEOs. There are multiple levels to this concept, and they go far beyond simply extending your life by a few years.

On the most basic level, is the Stoic practice of **“Doing hard things.”** The idea of pushing both your mind and body to become comfortable being uncomfortable makes you strong enough to face challenges. The mind and body both work on a “use it or lose it” basis.

However, I think there is another level to this concept in law enforcement. I started asking myself, *“What is aging in Police work?”* and *“What does the aggressive pursuit of comfort look like in LEOs?”*

Physically speaking, it's obvious: getting soft and out of shape. But what is less obvious and more profound is the **mental side** of things. We all know the "mentally old cop." What happened to them? At some point, they started aggressively pursuing comfort.

HOW MENTAL COMFORT AGES YOU

As Officers: They got disappointed one too many times and started making the easy comfortable decision instead of the highly uncomfortable ethical decision.

As Professionals: They stopped going through the discomfort of relearning laws and policies every time there was a change.

Personal Growth: They stopped asking for feedback. The discomfort of honest opinions is hard to hear, and they stopped growing.

As Supervisors: They stopped showing up to calls. It was more comfortable to just relax and let someone else handle it. Plus, if you are the senior person on the scene, responsibility can feel uncomfortable.

As Leaders: They stopped consorting with "the minions" or stopped having time for the troops. Managing people that you actually know can get uncomfortable. Now when they actually do show up, they wonder why nobody trusts them.

As Commanders: They started ignoring the late-night calls, because the bed is just so comfortable (and they can get away with it).

As Administrators: They learned that making a decision and sticking to it can be difficult and painful, so it's much easier to delay, sit on the fence, and see which way the wind blows.

They aren't bad people. They have just allowed themselves to get comfortable. A series of small steps towards comfort has led them to a place where they can't even see how far they've strayed.

BOLO: COMFORT CREEP

Be On The Lookout for Comfort Creep. It creeps up on you, and you have to be mindful. If you find yourself doing something because it is easy, STOP and take a hard look at yourself.

- Do the hard thing occasionally.
- Find an activity or lesson that you will struggle with, then just go for it.
- Push yourself to the point where you are at least a little bit uncomfortable.
- Write a note on your bathroom mirror: "**Comfort is a bad thing.**"

Ask yourself this: What good, noble, worthwhile thing have you ever done that was also totally comfortable?

When have you ever grown or improved and not been uncomfortable?

Wherever you are doing today, it is my sincere hope that you suffer (just a little bit) and that you find yourself being uncomfortable.

**Amor Fati,
Sgt. Steve**