

🌟 Why Learning to Handle Discomfort Makes You Stronger

A kid-friendly look at Dr. Abraham Low's ideas from Chapter 13 of "Mental Health Through Will-Training"

Have you ever had a moment when something felt uncomfortable — maybe your heart beat fast before a presentation, or your stomach felt tight before trying something new — and your brain shouted, "This is dangerous!"

Dr. Abraham Low, who taught people how to manage anxiety long before it was common, believed something important:

Most of the time, our bodies are uncomfortable, not unsafe.

And learning to deal with discomfort is one of the biggest superpowers a person can build.

🧠 Discomfort vs. Danger

Dr. Low explains that our brains sometimes mix up two very different things:

- Danger: Something that can actually harm you.
- Discomfort: Something that feels bad but isn't harmful.

He says nervous people often treat discomfort like danger — and that's when fear grows bigger than it needs to be.

👉 The Handwriting Example

One of his students, Phil, had messy handwriting. Every time he tried to write neatly, he got tense and frustrated. Phil thought the tension meant something was wrong. But Dr. Low taught him:

Tension is just discomfort — and you can handle discomfort.

Once Phil stopped fighting the feeling, he could practice calmly. His handwriting improved because he didn't panic about the uncomfortable feeling in his hand.

🚪 The "Comfort Trap"

Dr. Low also talks about how people often chase comfort like it's the most important thing in life. But if you always avoid anything uncomfortable, you end up:

- avoiding challenges
- feeling scared of normal sensations
- shrinking your world instead of growing it

He believed that modern life makes comfort too easy — and that this can actually make us weaker.

💪 The Real Skill: Doing Things While You're Uncomfortable

Instead of waiting to "feel better," Dr. Low teaches people to:

- notice the discomfort
- remind themselves it's not dangerous
- do the task anyway

This is called will-training — practicing the ability to act even when your feelings aren't perfect. It's like building a muscle. The more you practice doing things while uncomfortable, the stronger and braver you become.

🌱 Why This Matters for You

Kids deal with tons of uncomfortable moments:

- speaking in class
- trying out for a team
- meeting new people
- learning something new or confusing, like a musical instrument
- dealing with big emotions

Dr. Low's message is simple and powerful: You don't have to wait for fear to disappear. You can move forward even when you feel shaky or uncomfortable. And every time you do, you grow.