

DEBBIE ALLEN

Dancing with Abandon



Dream Team, welcome to the Barbie Podcast Activity Guide! This guide is part of the Barbie Dream Gap Project. The Dream Gap is anything that comes between us and our limitless potential. Everybody, even stars like Debbie Allen, can experience fear and self-doubt on their way to success. These Activity Guides remind us that “You can be anything” by practicing our dreaming skills together. Practicing these skills helps us build confidence. Confidence and connection are the fuel that make dreams possible.

By doing this activity together girls and their adults will:

- Deepen their learning from Debbie Allen's story;
- Connect with the power of expressing themselves;
- Identify their comfort, growth, and risk zone; and
- Practice skills to move into their growth zone.

CHECK-IN QUESTION

Dancing Like Everyone's Watching said she felt nervous about dancing in front of her classmates. Different people have different feelings about dancing in public.

How do you feel dancing in your bedroom alone? What about in the kitchen with family? How about in school with your classmates? Are they all the same, or would they be three different feelings?

Both adults and young people should share how they would feel dancing in different contexts. There is no right or wrong way to feel about dancing. Sometimes we avoid things that make us feel nervous or anxious, but these feelings don't always mean we shouldn't do something, they're just a sign we're doing something new.

ACTIVITY

When Debbie Allen's mom moved her and her sister to Mexico, she was taking them outside their Comfort Zone. Activities just beyond your Comfort Zone can feel a little risky, which we call the Growth Zone. The Growth Zone is where you try new activities, and learn what you are capable of. Beyond the Growth Zone is your Danger Zone, where it doesn't feel safe to fail and mess up. Let's expand our creative possibilities by finding our Growth Zones, the way that Debbie Allen did using dance.

You will each need your own copy of the page three Growth Zone chart.

How do we want to express ourselves? Barbie “Malibu”, Barbie “Brooklyn”, and Debbie Allen all love to dance, but dance is just one way to express yourself. There is also drawing, acting, building, writing, crafting, public speaking, making music—the list is endless. How do you dream of expressing yourself? **Write this on the top of your growth zone chart.**

Find your Comfort Zone. Your Comfort Zone is the area of activities where you feel 100% comfortable. For Dancing Like Everybody's Watching, this is dancing alone in her bedroom. Some people have a big comfort zone because they like to try lots of activities, and for others, their comfort is more specific. There is no right or wrong Comfort Zone, and nobody knows your Comfort Zone but you.

When you think of your favorite way to express yourself, what activities are in your Comfort Zone? **Write or draw them in the smallest circle under the Comfort Zone Label.**

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ACTIVITY continued

Now, define your Growth Zone. Talk together about what might be in your Growth Zone, activities that make your heart race a little, or if you're not sure if you will be successful, but if you fail, you will be okay. For Dancing Like Everybody's Watching, this is trying the salsa step or the bounce at the school dance. **Write or draw these activities in the middle section of the Growth Zone chart.**

Last, think about your Danger Zone. Your Danger Zone is the type of activity you want to avoid, because this is where mistakes feel physically or emotionally dangerous, like being required to perform a dance routine on stage when you really don't like being the center of attention, or having to hold a spider at the science museum when you are terrified of insects. Think about your dream and if there are any choices you could make that wouldn't just make you uncomfortable (that's Growth Zone), but feel emotionally or physically scary to you. **Write or draw those choices in your Danger Zone.**

The great thing about self-expression is that there is so much room for growth. While lots of things might make us feel awkward, feeling awkward is a great sign that you are in your Growth Zone. Feeling awkward isn't a reason to avoid trying something new, but feeling totally emotionally overwhelmed is a sign that an activity is actually in your Danger Zone. Nobody gets to decide your comfort/growth/ and danger zones but you.

Internal Voice. When you look at your Growth Zone chart, and moving from your Comfort Zone to your Growth Zone, what could you say to yourself in your own head? Often the words you need to hear are the ones that a true friend would say to you. Write these words on the Internal Voice line.

External Encouragement. What do you want to hear from each other when you are trying to lock into your Growth Zone? Do you want encouragement? A reminder of when you succeeded in the past? Or silence, so you can think for yourself? **Write down the kind of support you like best on the encouragement line.**

CLOSING

Share your Growth Zone charts with each other, and then come up with a plan to try your Growth Zone activities. **What areas of life do you want to think about your Growth Zone? With making friends? Trying or improving at a sport?** Copies of this Growth Zone page are helpful to have around to take on all kinds of challenges.

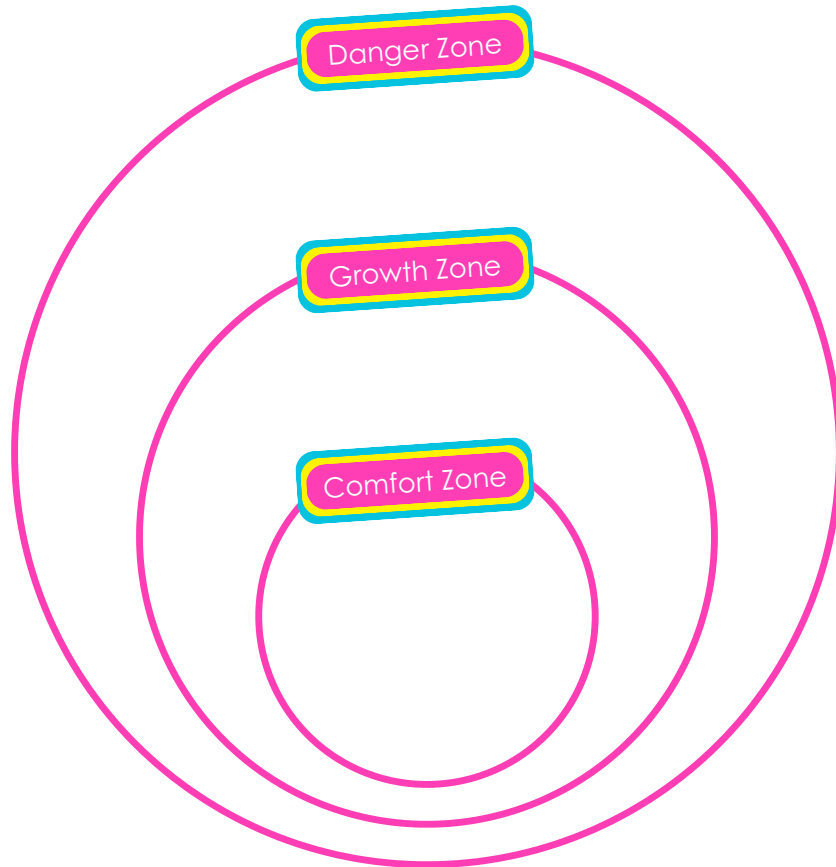
Congratulations on practicing expanding your Growth Zone together. You are both so lucky to have a buddy to flex your self-expression muscle with! Tune into the next Barbie podcast episode to learn about other inspirational changemakers, and to have fun learning together.

KITCHEN DANCE PARTY

Debbie taught Barbie "Malibu" and Barbie "Brooklyn" the salsa and the bounce, but dance can be a free-for-all, too. Try putting on some salsa music to try Debbie's salsa instruction. Next, put on your favorite music to move any way that feels right. You can invite siblings, friends, and others to join you, or just do your own two-person dance party. When you are done, check in with yourself. **Close your eyes and ask yourself, how do you feel? Share your check-in.** Sometimes the best way to shake-up how we are feeling on the inside is to move our body on the outside.

CHARTING YOUR GROWTH ZONE

Your dream, in this case, your favorite area of self-expression:



Internal Voice: What would your bestie say to help you practice your Growth Zone:

External Encouragement: What would you like to hear from others when you get nervous:
