

# Episode 3: The Zone Where Growth Happens

Background · Practice · Zone of proximal development · scaffolding

*By the end, you will know how to set the difficulty of your own learning, so it is hard enough to grow but not so hard you drown.*

## THE MOVE • Find Your Edge

Before you start a task, place it in one of three zones. Then move it toward the edge.

- 1 Too easy: you can already do this alone. It feels comfortable and a little boring. Move it up a notch.
- 2 The edge (your zone): you can do it with a little help or effort. It feels like a stretch, not a wall. Stay here. This is where growth happens.
- 3 Too hard: even with help you are lost. Drop back a step, or add a scaffold, until it reaches your edge.
- 4 Use a scaffold, then remove it: a worked example, a hint, a tool. Take it away as soon as you can, one piece at a time.

## USE AI AS A THINKING PARTNER • copy this prompt

I'm working on [TASK]. Here is what I can already do on my own: [X].  
Here is where I get stuck: [Y].

Give me the smallest hint that lets me take the next step myself.  
Do not do the step for me. On the step after that, give me an even smaller hint, so I am leaning on you less each time.

## YOUR CHECKLIST THIS WEEK

- Rate the task: too easy, at the edge, or too hard?
- If it is too easy, raise the difficulty by one notch.
- If it is too hard, add a scaffold or step back to what comes before it.
- Use help to get moving, then take the help away as soon as you can.
- Check you are still working at the edge, not coasting or drowning.

## ONE SMALL BEHAVIOUR

Pick one thing you are learning and move it one notch this week. Up if it bores you, down if it is drowning you. Aim for the edge.