

THE HEALTHY RIPPLE EFFECT,
EXPLAINED

“Bungee Jumping Pushed Me to Go After My Passion and Start a Business”

By Christina Williams, as told to
Jane Bianchi

Four years ago, I felt chained to my desk. I had worked in IT for 16 years, at times clocking 80-hour weeks. I was turning 38 soon, completely burned out and over it. I needed a vacation.

I'd seen clips of New Zealand in a TV show, and it looked beautiful. So I persuaded two friends to take a couple of weeks off to get away with me. In February 2015, I left Charlotte, North Carolina, and went on an adventure.

A week into the trip, while hiking in Abel Tasman National Park, I met a traveler who told me about the Queenstown Nevis Bungy: a 440-foot fall, the longest in the country. I went for it.

But when I got up to the platform, nerves set in. A mantra popped into my head: “Take the leap and trust that the universe will catch you.” I repeated the words until I gained the courage to jump. To my surprise, I didn't feel a sense of dread during the fall. I had faced my fear and plummeted into the unknown.

When I got home from the New Zealand vacation a week later, I returned to work and couldn't help

thinking that my bungee move was a metaphor for my life. I did not want to do this job anymore; there was more for me out there. I saved my money so I could quit and travel by myself for a year.

The biggest takeaway from that extended excursion was how open people were with me, when I was so used to feeling isolated. On a bus trip in Germany, I realized I hadn't packed food. The man next to me gave me a sandwich, a pretzel roll, and water. He also translated for me. Those small acts made a major impression.

I returned home in July 2017, knowing I wanted a career that channeled this desire for community. In November 2018 I launched BackGetters, a company that sells women's and men's shirts with compassionate

messages (think: “You are loved” and “You are enough”). A quick, powerful line helps me eliminate the voice that spews self-doubt in difficult situations, like when I went bungee-jumping. Now my hope is that the messages on the shirts act as reminders that you matter and that you can trust yourself and take risks.

Thanks to this new career path, my mind and body feel better. This journey gives me a purpose. Several times, customers have shared that they've been approached by a stranger while wearing one of the shirts, and the person has smiled and said the message out loud to them in passing. Who knows—some day, one of my T-shirts may be the nudge that someone else needs to take a leap and change their life.

