

# Comfort zones

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**By Lenny Cacchio**

LEE'S SUMMIT, Mo.—A prophet can lead a lonely and disillusioned life. Often it is the prophet's job to deliver unpleasant news to unreceptive people, and that tends to separate the prophet from the company of others. Who wants a grinch in one's social network?

A people-person prophet would be an especially miserable prophet, and therefore many very good prophets leaned toward being task-oriented as opposed to people-oriented guys. That may be why God gave Elisha a special assignment.

There was a woman in Elisha's life who had shown him some special kindnesses. Whenever he passed through her part of the world, she and her husband made sure he had a decent meal and a place to stay.

Read the account in 2 Kings 4 and see that, in spite of their hospitality, Elisha seemed to keep a cool and formal distance from this family, often communicating by proxy even when he was just a few yards from them.

He clearly appreciated all they had done, reciprocating with kindness of his own, but we don't see him exuding warm fuzzies. Instead, he asked his servant to be involved in the human interaction so that he could maintain his customary aloofness.

This woman of Shunem was God's gift to Elisha, not just because of her hospitality but because of what she argued him into doing during her time of need.

When Elisha tried to send his assistant Gehazi as a sort of stand-in for himself, the man of God, she would have none of it.

"I'm not leaving here without you," she said.

We can almost hear Elisha sighing in resignation as he grabs his travel gear and treks with her back to Shunem. It is in Shunem that he finds her dead son whom Elisha's servant could not revive.

God had arranged the circumstances in such a way that they compelled Elisha out of his normally detached comfort zone. To do his job, Elisha had to allow himself some physical contact with another human being.

Not being a hugger to begin with, this would have been an especially unpleasant event for him. But what he did was not only a good thing for the family (the resulting miracle restored their son), it was also good for Elisha. He needed the lesson of the importance of human touch.

Now here's the point: Some management gurus teach that one's skills are best optimized only if that person steps outside of his comfort zone. Personally, I hate leaving my comfort zone, but thank God (literally) that frequently I have been forced to do so.

If you are facing some new challenges that you think are just not you, maybe God is trying to stretch your world of experiences a bit so you can be more effective in His service.

Get out of your comfort zone.