



We experience three distinct phases while working through transitions.

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By isolating a single aspect of a broader situation and focusing on it, great progress can be made...

Embracing Life's Transitions

by Rosanne Scriffignano, Ph.D.

Life's transitions are an integral part of our human experience. Change is a constant that, although unsettling at times, can provide opportunities for inspiration and growth. Experiencing life during an era of unprecedented social and economic changes, some people may feel ill-equipped to deal with uncertainty and change.

In William Bridges' book *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes*, he suggests that we experience three distinct phases while working through transitions. These phases are endings, the neutral zone, and the new beginning. During the endings phase, we can experience losses, for example, after the death of a loved one or when we reach significant goals such as completing an advanced degree. Whether this time is perceived as a positive or negative, we must find ways to acknowledge this phase in our life.

As we shift into the neutral zone, our perceptions change. We may feel uneasy or experience a lack of energy. According to Bridges "the neutral zone is a time when the real business of transition takes place. It is a time when an inner reorientation and realignment are occurring, a time when we are making the all-but-imperceptible shift from one season of life to the next." During this phase, we may not know who we are or where we're going. Therefore, we need to give ourselves the time and permission for exploration. Engaging in activities, such as meditation and yoga, are viable pathways to introspection and self-discovery.

Once we transition away from the neutral zone, it is time to embrace our new beginning. Because it may not be clear exactly when this transition occurs, we may find ourselves unexpectedly in a place where we feel more hopeful and content. This re-birth can occur from within ourselves and may also be externally evident in our professional and personal circumstances. Regardless of how we get there, fully embracing life's transitions can teach us to be more resilient while journeying down the pathway of transformation and change.

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