

Exploring New Pathways

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"Every beginning is a consequence. Every beginning ends something." - Paul Valéry **How do you manage transition?**

Distinguish between change and transition

Leaders of change often assume that "change" and "transition" are the same thing. These words are used interchangeably to indicate a new way of doing something, associated with an expected economic or technological benefit for organizations.

William Bridges in his book "Managing Transitions" states that "change" is situational: a new reporting line, a new product being launch, a new team structure ... However, a "transition" is psychological, as it is the process people need to go through to accept the elements of the new situation resulting from the change. For an organization, the ability to get people through the transition process, is what will determine the success or failure of a change initiative.

How do you differentiate between change and transition? How do you manage a transition process? How can you tell if a transition is successful?

A successful change initiative is one where the people concerned are doing things differently than before, and intended results are being achieved. William Bridges suggests that individuals must be given the possibility to go through the following transition process for a change initiative to succeed:

1. **Ending** - Letting go of the old ways and the old identity. Transitions are rendered difficult when individuals do not identify and prepare for endings and losses linked to the change. Successful change management occurs when an organization helps individuals address endings and losses.
2. **The Neutral Zone** - Individuals have let go of their old identity but have not yet endorsed their new identity. William Bridges describes this stage as the core of the transition process. It involves a lack of clarity (due to the uncertainty) but also opportunities (where individuals and organizations can be creative, define their new identity and change old patterns).
3. **Beginning** - People develop the new identity, and discover a new sense of purpose. At this point, people are beginning to get comfortable with their new identity, experiencing new energy, thus contributing to a successful change.

Transitions begin with an ending and finish with a beginning. Many organizations, with the desire to get a quick, successful outcome, start with the last phase, discarding completely the first two phases. Not addressing the letting-go process and the feelings of loss will guarantee a mismanaged and ephemeral transition.

My invitation is:

- Help individuals go through the transition process.
- Understand the ending or loss provoked by a change initiative.
- Co-create and imagine new possibilities around a transition and a new role.
- Notice signs that individuals have completed their transition process.

Note: Concepts presented in this newsletter were inspired by William Bridges' book, *Managing Transitions*.

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The concept behind this newsletter is an invitation for you to explore new ways of thinking, new perspectives, and new behaviors, so as to increase your personal effectiveness. The themes we have selected are commonly addressed topics in coaching. We have chosen them carefully and are eager to share them with you, in the hopes you will find them both thought-provoking and valuable.

Warmly,

Céline Brillet

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Top 8 reasons to partner up with a coach

1. You want to make yourself a priority.
2. You feel stuck.
3. You want to build on your strengths.
4. You want to reach your goals more effortlessly.
5. You need a neutral sounding board to bounce ideas off.
6. You are facing a stretch challenge.
7. You have an important decision to make.
8. You are ready to move to the next level.

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