

The CHOICE Connection

Positive strategies. Practical solutions.

constructive
CHOICES
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October 2011 "September An Ending or New Beginning-Managing Transitions" Volume 5, Issue 10

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Change - "It's What's Coming"

I am ending the final quarter of this year with an acknowledgement that if you have lived in the previous three themes for this year - building alliances, negotiating agreements and navigating change, then you are most likely smack dab in the

Quotable Quotes

"The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right name." ~ Chinese Proverb

"It is a terrible thing to look over your shoulder when you are trying to lead ~ and find no one there." ~ Franklin D. Roosevelt

"More powerful than the will to win, is the courage to begin." ~ Unknown

"It doesn't work to leap a twenty-foot chasm in two ten-foot jumps." ~ Unknown

Dear Constructive Choices Reader,

September 2011 - An Ending or a New Beginning?

One of my favorite authors is Dr. William Bridges and his writings on change and transition. If you are a reader for some time, you have seen me reference his work from time to time - it has a sense of truth that holds constant for me.



In the first chapter of *Managing Transitions - Making the Most of Change*, I have highlighted the following statements: "It isn't the changes that do you in, it's the transitions ... Change is external, transition is internal ... Unless transition occurs, change will not work.... psychological transition depends on letting go of the old reality and the old identify you had before the change took place ... Once you understand that transition begins with letting go of something, you have taken the first step in the task of transition management ... The second step is understanding what comes after the letting go: the neutral zone ... the no-man's land and between the old reality and the new ... Third, if you escape prematurely from the neutral zone, you'll not only compromise the change but also lose a

middle of managing your transition.

Whether we want a change or not...you can make a safe bet it is coming! And, it won't necessarily be one change nor just one change for today. So let's shift your thinking and consider that what you CAN manage as you are navigating the change is your personal transition. Read on!

Managing the Endings - "The Top 5"

1. Know what you are leaving behind or losing...(is it just a closeout of an old year?)
2. Accept the importance of this (these) losses (understand the emotional ties if there are any)
3. Acknowledge your losses openly and sympathetically (be kind to

great opportunity ... People make the new beginning only if they have first made an ending and spent some time in the neutral zone ..."
Ending - neutral zone - new beginning.

Early in my career of teaching, the month of September and the last quarter of a calendar year was never about endings, rather the start of a school year, the new class of children signified a new beginning. And now in my current career and the work I do that is tied to the government's fiscal year, September is a definitive ending and creating a gentle (well maybe sometimes not so gentle) push into a new beginning.

Whatever your career or your work, you may experience endings and new beginnings at varied times throughout the year. You will then experience the giving up of something as a result of change. And you will find that you may be shifting into uncharted waters and new pathways.

Dr. Bridges explains that to nourish and ground your new beginnings, you will need to focus on the 4 'P's" of change.

1. Purpose - explain the outcome you seek
2. Picture - paint how the outcome will look and feel
3. Plan - lay it out step by step to phase in the outcome; and
4. Participate to Play - allow others how to contribute and determine their part in your plan

When you find yourself in the new beginning there is some additional advice from Dr. Bridges on how to maintain the energy and freshness of the "new."

- Be consistent
- Ensure quick successes - no matter how small
- Symbolize the new identity - message and communicate - SHARE your movement and growth; and
- Celebrate the success!

Change is never easy and your personal transition is just that - personal. While timing is key - knowing when you have ended, then moved on into the neutral zone and, finally, realizing a new beginning - this recognition is crucial. No acknowledgement of your past successes and transition into new beginning (aka no celebrations) leaves you floundering in the neutral zone.

A final word from Dr. Bridges - "... things start when the plan says they will, but the new beginning takes place much more slowly. If transition is mishandled or overlooked completely, beginnings sometimes fail to take place. Then we say that 'the change didn't work' or that it 'fell short of our expectations.' What we ought to say is that we got the people out of Egypt, but they're still wandering somewhere in the wilderness."

yourself for what you have done and may not have had a chance yet to accomplish)
4. Except and accept signs of grieving (yours and others)
5. Compensate for the losses (if you need to take an action, make it right)

Wishing you joy in letting go, finding the opportunity in your neutral zone, and celebrating your new beginning - whenever or wherever that might occur,

Jean

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CHOOSE to...

... Recognize the ending ... grieve your loss ... take good care of the end ... clarify what's next ... communicate your purpose ... create your picture ... plan and support others in how they will play in the change ... transition ... be consistent ... ensure small successes ... symbolize the new identity ... **CELEBRATE!**

Administrivia

My Constructive Choices Audience...

- * Professionals wanting to be at choice in their career and daily work,
 - * New Managers (and aspiring leaders) transitioning to establish a leadership role in their communities,
 - * Individuals wanting to sort through the choices, build a more fulfilling life, lift their voices, and...
 - * Coaches who choose to step out, show up, and say - *YES, it IS all about YOU!*
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