Change is an event: a restructuring, layoff, or new assignment. Transition, according to William Bridges, is the process people go through in order to adapt to the change.

**TRANSITION: THE HUMAN SIDE OF CHANGE**

People need an ending before they can have a new beginning. They let go of something:
- Ways of accomplishing tasks that made them successful in the past
- Goals and priorities they previously worked to achieve
- Assumptions about their job, team, or organization
- Expectations about what it means to be successful

The neutral zone is the state of limbo between old and new realities.

Coping with feelings of uncertainty and confusion can take considerable energy. Yet successful transition requires people to spend some time doing this. It’s at this stage that transformation takes place. New ideas and possibilities begin to emerge.

**SAY GOODBYE**

**THE ENDING**

**HOW TO HELP**

- Communicate reasons for change clearly and concisely.
- Use multiple channels for communication, not just email.
- Clarify what will change and what will stay the same.
- Establish a distinct end point.

**NAVIGATE THE NEUTRAL ZONE**

**LIMBO BETWEEN OLD AND NEW**

- Create a clear implementation plan.
- Clarify exactly what people will be required to do and how they will be evaluated.
- Provide opportunities to learn new skills in a low-risk environment.
- Ask people to help define new roles and practices.
- Work together to identify and remove barriers to performance.

**PHASE 1**

**SAY GOODBYE TO THE ENDING**

- Create temporary procedures and policies that bridge the old and the new. For example, during team relocation, daily 10-minute calls can help people stay in touch and on track with work.

**PHASE 2**

- Establish temporary lines of authority and responsibility that help people remain functional during change. For example, a department may decide that all expenditures under a certain amount may be authorized by any manager.

**PHASE 3**

**START ANEW THE NEW BEGINNING**

- Engage in practices that encourage cohesion. Frequently, groups undergoing change start to fragment, as individuals pay more attention to personal needs than group goals. Leaders can help groups stay connected and productive by creating ways for teams to stay connected and updated.
- Share more information than usual. Communicate early and often about relevant organizational changes.

**TIME**

Adapted from Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change, by William Bridges; other sources by William Bridges & Chris Edgelow; and from Elisabeth Kubler-Ross.

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