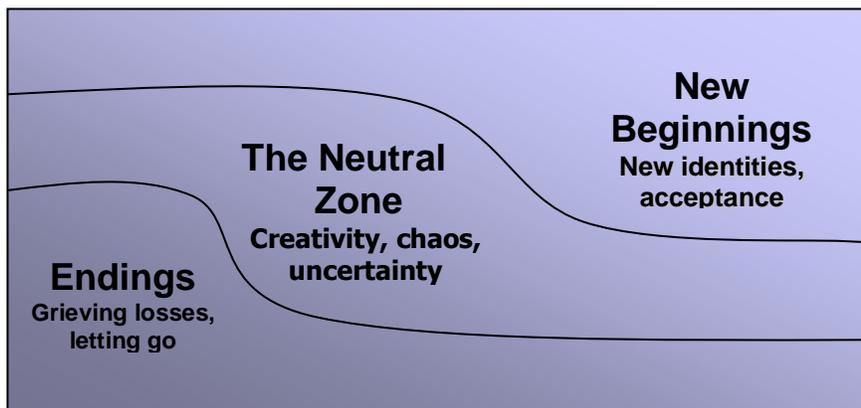


Change and Transition

William Bridges suggests that "it isn't the changes that do you in, it's the transitions. Change is *situational*. Transitions are *psychological*, a three-phase process of internalizing and coming to terms with the new situation."

We want to protect our world and the meaning and identity we get from our perception of it. Being able to observe and name our emotional responses, and discover what strategies are supportive and helpful for us, is what allows us to learn, cope and adapt.



The three phases are not mutually exclusive and people "are likely to be in more than one of these phases at the same time. The movement through the transition is marked by a change in the *dominance* of one phase over the other two rather than an absolute shift from one to another."

Endings:

- Grieving losses, both good and bad
- Fear
- Letting go

Neutral Zone:

- Characterized by energy, creativity, chaos, uncertainty, frustration, excitement, spontaneity, fear....a myriad of differing and opposite emotions; normal for individuals to vacillate between all of these emotions regularly.
- Some people are raring to go and others fearful and resistant

Beginnings:

- Characterized by a new energy and new identity as one accepts new values, beliefs and attitudes; an internal shift
- Managed for reframed fear and/or excitement of the new; welcoming the possibilities
- Acceptance

Even when much is out of our control, focusing on our 'circle of influence' helps most of us navigate our way through the different phases of a transition. We can identify and apply the various skills, resources and learning from other experiences to the present situation. Reframing our perspective can open up new possibilities for what we see as well as widen the options for how we might respond.

A little understanding about the psychological effects can go a long way towards humanizing the experience, both for an individual as well as a group. People tend to have more empathy, patience and caring when they were able to observe and name what they, and their colleagues, are experiencing.

Source: William Bridges, "Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change" (2003)