

# LIFE TRANSITIONS

*The Lesson: When we are ready to make a beginning, we will shortly find an opportunity!*

The feature focus of this issue is on "Life Transitions". Two books by William Bridges [Transitions and Managing Transitions, Perseus Books, ©1980 & ©1991, respectively] are important to this topic and are highly-recommended for your reading library. This column draws largely on the work of William Bridges and these two books.

*"What we call the beginning is often the end; and to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from." T.S. Eliot (Little Gidding).*

Our lives are filled with transitions. An example is transitioning from infant to toddler to youngster to teenager to young adult to middle adulthood through to our end-life-maturity. Within each of these "life stages" though, are the *personal stories of many other important transitions*. Each person's various chapter stories have **endings, transitions and new beginnings**. Some may involve family situations, relationships, career situations, health, with integral combinations and complexities therein. All these various transitions can essentially be modeled...or patterned...along the lines of endings, transitions and new beginnings. *With this model (or pattern) we can identify where we are at a given point in time. We can also cope better with the difficult, painful or confusing times in our lives.*

So, what happens when an ending is about to happen? Bridges shares that there are 3 D's that provide the signals to us. When we listen to our intuitive voice, we will sense one or more of these!

**Disengagement** - When we find ourselves being disengaged whether willingly or unwillingly from the activities, relationships, settings or the roles that have been important to us. We get signals of a time of personal transition. Feeling like we don't "fit in" is a common, recognizable sense.

**Disidentification** - Not being quite sure of who I am or what I am or where I belong anymore - particularly in identifying with a job! It is the breaking of old connections and self-definition. It is feeling like a non-identity.

**Disenchantment** - This involves a long list from disillusionment to betrayal. It is when we feel cheated, victimized, repelled. Sometimes we're propelled forward because to stay is difficult too, and we reach the (bifurcation) point that it is time--to end, and to transition to something anew.

## **Endings:**

Sometimes the source of an **Ending** can be evoked (come from within)--a gradual dawning as we learn from experience that what we are doing is not working and something needs to change. It can be provoked (come externally)--a' la the "pink slip." We need to recognize "endings" as opportunities...as well as losses. We should recognize (even celebrate) an "ending" with a ritual (a closure). It is best if a closure happens in a way that closes out the past, yet still provides an openness for new directions to come.

## **Transitions:**

Then we come to **Transitions**...the time that is exemplified by being "seemingly stuck". We are in neutral gear, not going forward, not going backward; treading water. This is when we need to take the time to listen to our inner teacher, to access our intuitive voice. It is the time to factually weigh things, to use both the rational mind and the intuitive mind. *When we are ready to move on, to make a new beginning, we will shortly find an opportunity!* Sometimes we can be stuck in neutral...afraid to move forward...unwilling to go backward, for a long, long time! In a **transition** we feel disconnected from the past and yet emotionally unconnected to the present, and not clear on the future. It is wise to use this time to reflect and get reoriented.

**New Beginnings:** *Beginnings* signify the launching of new priorities and new direction. We receive the signal--a faint intimation of something different, a new theme, new insight, an inner-idea that keeps resonating. We might even have "the Flash" of an intuitive sense of knowing. We find a renewed energy and a sense of being drawn to something anew.

*Health Tip: Crunch Fitness and JetBlue Airways offer a seat pocket-guide to Airplane Yoga. Here is one that I tried that promotes circulation, gives a great stretch yet can be done without drawing attention. While seated in your airplane seat...(or in a chair at your meeting or conference)... Cross your legs/or cross your ankles. Raise the armrests so they are not in your way. Then put your hands on the seat and push your body upwards. Even lift yourself off the seat, if possible; meanwhile squeeze your legs or ankles at their point of crossing. I held my breath while within this tightening. Then relax, breathing out. Repeat it about 3 times. Yes, I tried this on a recent trip, and subsequent to that during a business meeting. It is a good one! It helps those muscles to contract and relax...aiding circulation. Add a quick "hands up in the air stretch" to it and you are good to go!*