

Healthy & Resilient You



Famed Ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus is attributed with saying, "There is nothing permanent except **change.**" Change is inevitable: it's what makes life exciting, and personal growth possible. But if that's the case, why is change so hard to accept sometimes? The answer could lie in our brains.

Different regions of the brain specialize in different types of tasks. For instance, the basal ganglia executes routine, repetitive tasks that don't require much focus. It's a kind of laid-back area of the brain, which is why we feel comfortable when we're in a routine.

But, when something changes, the prefrontal cortex takes over to solve new and complex problems, burning more energy and demanding heightened focus. The prefrontal cortex is also linked to the amygdala—known as the lizard brain—the area associated with primal instincts, like the fight, flight, or freeze response, as well as feelings of fear, sadness, and anger.



A Bridge Just Far Enough

It's no wonder that, when confronted with change of any kind, our lizard brains start to freak out, triggering feelings of anxiety and stress. So, how can we help our rational minds prevail over such a primal response?

William Bridges, a respected speaker and organizational consultant, provided brilliant insights in his 1991 book Managing Transitions and introduced the Bridges Transition Model. The model suggests that rather than occupying ourselves with the change itself (which is often beyond our control) we focus instead on the internal transitions we need to make in order to adapt to change.

Bridges' Three Levels of Transition

Stage	Common Responses
Ending, Losing, and Letting Go	Strong emotions like fear, denial, anger, sadness, loss, and uncertainty
The Neutral Zone	Resentment (regarding the change), low morale and productivity, anxiety, and skepticism
The New Beginning	Higher energy, openness to the change and learning, commitment to the change, and a renewed sense of hope



It's important to remember that everyone is different, and will move through the stages at a different pace. But it may be comforting to remember that following every ending comes a new beginning. The trick is navigating that uncomfortable in-between.



Just Passing Through

Here are some ideas to help you ease the transition and more smoothly get from feelings of ending and loss to a sense of hope and excitement whenever you need to make a change.

- Be patient with yourself. Give yourself time to mindfully experience and process the strong emotions triggered by change.
- Acknowledge that the change will happen. This can be the hardest step, but it's important. Try repeating to yourself, "I accept that things can't stay the same.
 I know I can't go backwards. I will find a way to adapt."
- Put stress in perspective. If stress from change does set in, remind yourself that not all stress is bad, and can actually help us adapt and finish more difficult tasks. Here are some ideas to help stress work for and not against you.
- Be an active participant. Though change is often out of our control, we can control the way we react to change and how we choose to embrace it. Consider adapting Bridges' 4 Ps technique to build an action plan to help you adapt and participate.

- Purpose Write down some reasons why the change is important, both to you and, if applicable, others who it might affect.
- Picture Visualize what the future might look like after this change. How will you make the most of positive outcomes? How will you turn <u>setbacks into opportunities</u>?
- Plan Write down the steps that you need to get to the positive future you just pictured. Make them small, achievable steps that you can implement without feeling overwhelmed.
- Part If the change involves family members or co-workers, what part would you like to play in the change? Come up with ideas for how you can work with others to effect change and then discuss them with your team, managers or family.

As David Bowie says, "Turn and face the strange. Ch-ch-changes." These techniques can help put more wind in your sails as you navigate your way through unsettling changes, and on to your next adventure.

For even more ways to help cultivate mindfulness and resilience in 2018, visit the Resilience Hub[™] at www.ConcernResilienceHub.com regularly. First time users may be asked to enter their company ID.

This newsletter is intended for informational purposes only, and should not be used to replace professional advice.

If you find your level of stress is impacting your wellbeing, you can contact us for additional help and support.

Call: 800.344.4222 employees.concern-eap.com