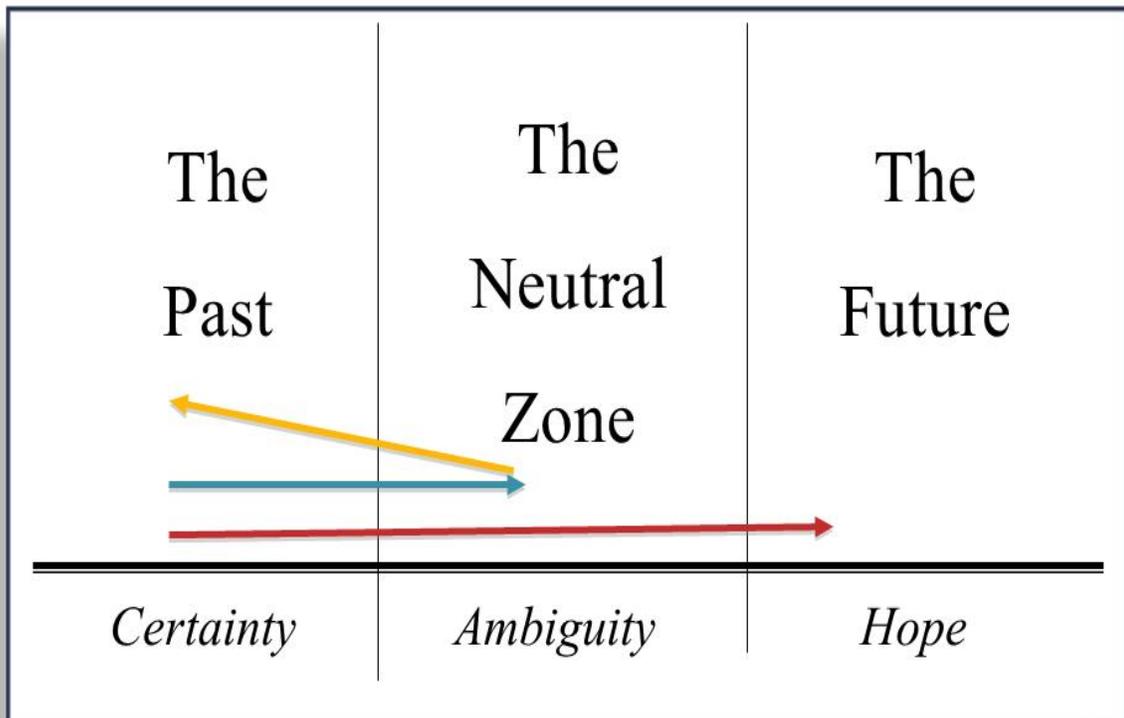


Using the William Bridges Managing Transitions Model to Navigate through Change

The Path to the Future...



Managing Transitions, *William Bridges*

Change happens in everyone's life. The problems associated with change are generally not because of the change itself but more likely the transitions involved with change. According to William Bridges, change could most effectively be dealt with by concentrating on where you put your focus.

If you place your focus in "The Past" where there is certainty then you will never move forward or grow. Focusing on "The Past" allows you to be comfortable because you know exactly what happened and are familiar with all the issues and factors.

Growth and development lies in placing your focus on "The Future" where there is hope. "The Future" holds endless possibilities that lead to growth and development. It is placing your focus here that brings you hope of new and better things.

Between "The Past" and "The Future" lies the "Neutral Zone." This zone needs to be entered into with caution. In the "Neutral Zone" you are neither focusing on "The Past" or "The Future." You are focusing on the ambiguity of the situation. Your tendency in this zone is to want to retreat to your past, hang on to what is familiar and not employ the courage necessary to reach for the hope found in "The Future" zone.

Thus in Bridges transitions model depicted above you see various arrows. The arrow leading to hope is a path that moves straight towards "The Future." A cautionary yellow arrow reminds us that moving to the "Neutral Zone" needs to be done so with caution paying close attention not to give into the temptation to move back to the familiar and limit ourselves with the certainty of the past. Thus, success means to move forward and become proficient at managing ambiguity in such a way that you are able to continue to move to the hope of "The Future."

Transition Stages

People need to transition through change. They do this through three stages:

- Endings—people need to let go of the past first before they can embrace the new.
- Neutral Zone—People begin to explore their comfort with the new change.
- Beginnings—People begin to embrace the new change.

All of us go through these stages, BUT some of us may move through them quickly while others very slowly. And some people will not make the transition at all.

Appropriate Uses:

The “Bridges Model” is a useful tool for anyone who is going through any type of change. Change is dependent upon the situation: a new home, a new job, a new team, the new boss. Change is something that is external to the person going through the change. Change just happens. However, people’s reaction to change is what necessitates a process for managing change. This reaction is internal. The “Bridges Model” is a tool for change management that can be applied by anyone to any situation where change is occurring.

References

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www.wmbridges.com