



In this unprecedented time of global change, with COVID-19 impacting ALL of us, we are facing a rare combination of uncertainty and loss of control. No one is 'on top of their game.' It's harder to focus and plan.

You may find yourself being forgetful, distracted, worried or drained as you do your best to cope with this daily shifting landscape. You may even notice a dichotomy in yourself between the instinct of self-protection vs. the call to altruism.

I've studied this universally-difficult experience of endings and transitions in depth – and have developed a visual model to help us explore how to navigate unwanted change.

◆ *The first stage may flow like this:*

Shock: Shock is a self-protective mechanism that your brain generates when faced with a reality that at first you simply cannot take in. The cognitive ability to receive new information and think clearly just shuts down. You feel frozen-in-place and numb.

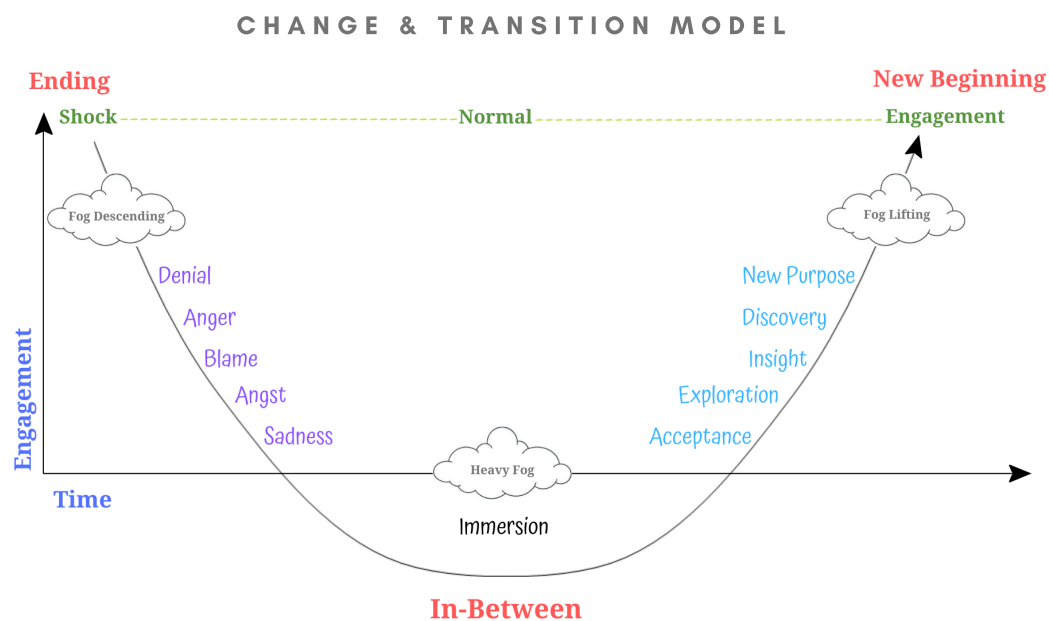
Denial: Denial is a mental defense function that we use – because if you refuse to accept the reality of the situation, you effectively can keep the change at arms-length for a while.

Anger: An upsurge of anger is the natural response when your world has been turned upside down and you didn't have any say in it.

Blame: Blame helps you postpone having to accept the reality of what is happening around you. However, getting stuck in blame only clouds the water and delays your movement through the transition process.

Worry: Worry happens when you imagine all sorts of bad things that might happen to you and your family. Your imagination is a great tool for lots of things – but it stops being an ally when it overly fixates on horrible worst-case scenarios.

Sadness: It's quite natural to react with sadness. It is important to register the sadness, and pause for long enough to let it sink in. Sadness can pave the way for greater self-reflection and depth of feeling as you head into the 'in-between' phase of transition.



THE WISDOM OF TRANSITION

- ◆ *Then comes the 'in-between' second phase*, where you call forth the courage to move towards acceptance of the change. Acceptance gives you the power and resourcefulness to move forward.

The harder the change, the more time is needed for this 'in-between' phase. Time is your ally – so as a vital act of self-caring, hold to the goal of 'taking the time I need'. Be kind to yourself; forget the outside world for a while, and focus on what you're grateful for.

Courage isn't a trait, it's a choice. Fear makes us contract in the face of a challenge. Courage enables us to override the fear and see the situation through the lens of confidence, hope, optimism and personal empowerment. Courage helps us meet challenges with a clear mind, a strong body and a confident inner sense of "I can do this!"

- ◆ *Finally comes the third phase*, when you realize there's extraordinary potential for resilience and innovation. You focus on what you can control and move upward and forward.

Exploration: Even now, courage will be required as you explore new terrain. Exploration requires that you consciously put aside being afraid of the unknown, and instead muster the inner confidence to delve into uncharted waters. You'll be your own hero – because you don't let your worries and inhibitions keep you from being your very best self.

Insight: As you explore new situations and ideas, a seemingly-miraculous phenomenon might occur – you may experience a 'flash of insight' that carries the power to expand your worldview, your sense of who you are, and what's possible in your life. An insight can be either a feeling or a thought, or both at the same time. Insights come from within you, from some deep inner source of realization, creativity and higher knowing.

Discovery: New discoveries can come to us from both within, and from our environment. Discover means to uncover something that's already there, but was previously hidden. To uncover something new and valuable, we need to be open-minded, receptive and curious.

New Purpose: Consider how you've grown regarding your sense of purpose. Many people experience purpose as something that comes to them from their own inner voice of wisdom. Usually purpose becomes real and meaningful after a period of contemplation, where you quiet your thinking mind, and allow a feeling of purpose to grow within you. It's often described as 'trusting your own inner voice' or 'seeking guidance from within' or 'getting in touch with your true nature'.



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Cheryl Benedict is a Leadership Consultant, Executive Coach, Trusted Advisor and Wise Woman who partners with successful organizations to grow their leaders - guiding them in the midst of professional and organizational change and transition.

Her new book, "The Wisdom of Transition" was released in early 2020. Concepts from the book are even more timely than Cheryl anticipated prior to publication, with the global impact to businesses large and small due to Covid-19.

Cheryl is available for company wide webinars to help you and your colleagues unite while navigating unprecedented, global change.