



UPDATE

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Serving individuals, communities, business, government, and organizations since 1992

Readiness and Compassion in Times of Change

By Kris Lea, PsyD, MS

Custom strategies and programs to support how we live, work and interact

In times of rapid change, whether politically, technologically, personally or professionally, it can become more difficult to navigate day to day. What will be different? How will we, our communities and organizations be impacted? Are we ready? Where can we find support?

Our capacity to respond and adapt ranges from what we do for ourselves in terms of self-care to how we show up for others as compassionate supporters and leaders.

In the **Bridges Transition Model (inset)**, we see *Endings* as part of readiness for change. Endings can be a loss or a gain. For example, if we marry, it is the end of being single and start of a life partnership. If we get a promotion, it is the end of our old role, and the beginning of a new role. Newly elected political leadership replaces the former.

All of the above scenarios move us into the *Neutral Zone*, a period of in-between time when the old is gone but the new is not yet fully operational. During this time, critical psychological realignments and restructuring take place to prepare for *New Beginnings* that are marked by a release of energy in a different direction from what was previously known.

As the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclius reminds us, “The Only Constant in Life Is Change.” Knowing change is constant does not make it easy. In 1969, researchers Holmes and Rahe provided a study on the impact of stress on our lives, and our health. They developed a list of “life events,” both positive and negative, with the understanding that all life events present us with a form of change, and some form of pressure. The cumulative impact can lead to higher probabilities of chronic and fatal disorders – both as individuals and organizations.

Being prepared is key to reducing change-related stress. Among many elements of readiness, Lang & Associates advocates the advantages inherent in the concept of **Compassionate Change Leadership**. This approach to organizational change focuses on acknowledging and addressing the emotional impact of change on employees, and involves five principles:

- Transparency: be open and honest about what is happening.
- Communication: provide clear and timely information.
- Empathy: listen, acknowledge feelings and seek to understand.
- Collaboration: encourage and facilitate full participation.
- Support: provide access to counseling and training services.

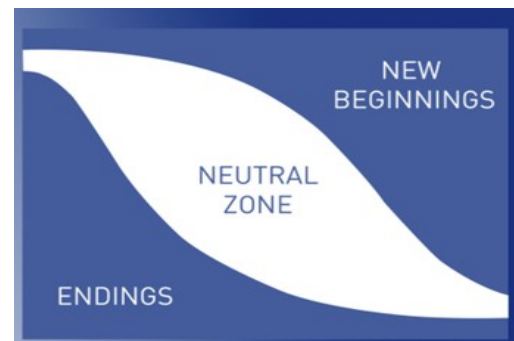
Being sensitive to people's concerns and responsiveness in times of rapid, often unpredictable change, helps strengthen practices that support self-care, monitor stressors and lays the groundwork for new beginnings.

· [Holmes & Rahe Stress Inventory \(Life Stress Units\)](#)

· [Bridges Transition Model](#)

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William Bridges Change Transitions

- 1) Endings
- 2) Neutral Zone
- 3) New Beginnings

Tips for Times of Rapid Change

- ♦ **Physical Health — Exercise, Sleep & Healthy Diet**
- ♦ **Stress Reduction — Intentional Breathing & Relaxation Activities**
- ♦ **Time Management — Focus on Priorities**
- ♦ **Discussions — Deep Listening**
- ♦ **Address Concerns — Conflict Management**
- ♦ **Learning — Professional & Personal Education**
- ♦ **Follow-up — Care about Details**

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