

Newsletter
February 2009

Change & Transition

In our chaotic economy, more and more people are finding themselves losing jobs, being demoted, underemployed, and unemployed for much longer than unemployment insurance covers, if they even qualify for it. These are very scary times. People are under so much stress and pressure. Unexpected, often painful, life-changing decisions must be made.

Recognizing that everyone copes differently, we encourage leaders, managers, co-workers and friends to have conversations around transition and change. In *Managing Transitions* William Bridges writes, "It isn't the changes that do you in, it's the transitions. Change is situational: the new site, the new boss, the new team roles, the new policy. Transition is the psychological process people go through to come to terms with the new situation. **Change is external, transition is internal.**"

The real conversation people should be having with one another is how to care for each other as so many people, all over the world, are feeling the stress of personal and community-wide crisis. As conversations push in that direction people can better cope with the transitional places they might find themselves in as a result of all the change around them.

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*The next article suggests a few practical steps to address change and transition more effectively...*

**10 Styles of Negative Self-Talk**

by Izzy Gesell

(based on the work of Walt Schafer, author of *Stress Management for Wellness*)

Many of us are going through stressful times right now. Think about how you tend to process bad news, anxiety, worry. If you tend to do any of the following, you are not helping yourself or others figure out a way forward. There are effective methods to substitute for this type of thinking.

- **Awfulizing:** Turning a difficult or unsatisfactory situation into something awful, terrible, or intolerable.
- **Blaming:** Incorrectly concluding that something or someone else is directly responsible for certain difficulties you encounter.
- **Control Fallacy:** Making yourself the reason for another person behavior or feelings. [*"If I know where my child is all the time, nothing bad will happen."* *"If I give her lots of presents, she will love me."*]
- **Negativizing:** Seeing only the negatives in situations.
- **Catastrophizing:** Expecting that the worst almost certainly will happen.
- **Overgeneralizing:** Generalizing from a single event or piece of information to all or most such things.
- **Polarized thinking:** Things are black or white, right or wrong, good or bad, perfection or failure; the tendency to go to extremes; no middle ground exists.
- **Magnifying:** Making more of an event than it actually is; making a mountain out of a molehill.

- **Maximizing/Minimizing:** An over-focus on things you dislike about yourself while minimizing your positive attributes. [Thank someone who compliments you and skip the 'but...']
- **"Shoulding":** blaming self, others or circumstances and demand that they change. ["You shouldn't have said that to me!" "People should be more considerate of my needs!" "This disease shouldn't have happened to me!"]

One solution—Monitor/change your self-talk in a systematic way:

1. **Pause and take a deep breath** (really, you need more oxygen; when people are stressed they tend to pant and/or take shallow breaths, think anxiety attack...).
2. **Ask yourself:**
  - What is my self-talk right now, word for word?
  - How am I upsetting myself?
  - What can I control? [it maybe something small, but focus on whatever it may be]
  - How can I reinterpret this situation so I will respond with reasonable and objective feelings and actions?
3. **State your** (new) re-interpreted, **positive self-talk** to yourself. Repeat as often as you like.

Once you recognize your negative self-talk, you can put this method to work for yourself. It is not always easy, takes practice and once you get the hang of it, you will feel less anxious and more in control of your situation.

*Izzy Gesell is a well-known specialist in personal dynamics and the power of self-talk, shares some insights. Stay tuned for more information about the first GFSC webinar, led by Izzy, **How to Achieve Balance in Stressful Times.***

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**GFSC provides mentoring, methods and materials to strengthen community resilience in times of crisis.**

## Gratitude/Gracias

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