

Building a Mindset for Professional Development and Growth

How to thrive in times of ambiguity

Session Overview

Transitions Model:

- “Ending, Losing, Letting Go”
- “Neutral Zone” (the epitome of ambiguity)
- Circle of Concern/Circle of Influence (eye of the storm)
- “New Beginning”

Volunteers will be invited to share their responses to worksheet prompts throughout the session.

Sources: William Bridges “Managing Transitions”, Stephen Covey “7 Habits of Highly Effective People”





ambiguity

Characteristics: Causal relationships are completely unclear. No precedents exist; you face “unknown unknowns.”

Example: You decide to move into immature or emerging markets or to launch products outside your core competencies.

Approach: Experiment. Understanding cause and effect requires generating hypotheses and testing them. Design your experiments so that lessons learned can be broadly applied.

Building a Mindset for Professional Development and Growth Worksheet

Workplace transition that brought much ambiguity:

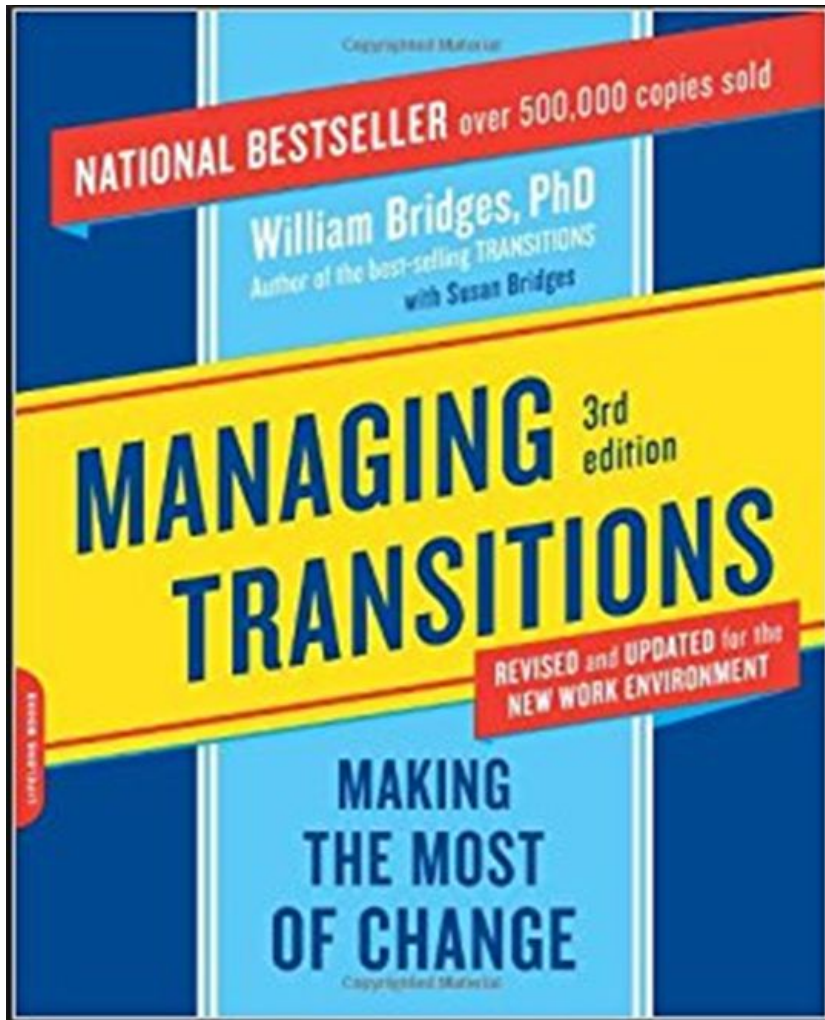
A call for Volunteers:

- You will have four opportunities to share
- Each time you will have a choice to opt out of sharing
- You share as much or as little as you are comfortable

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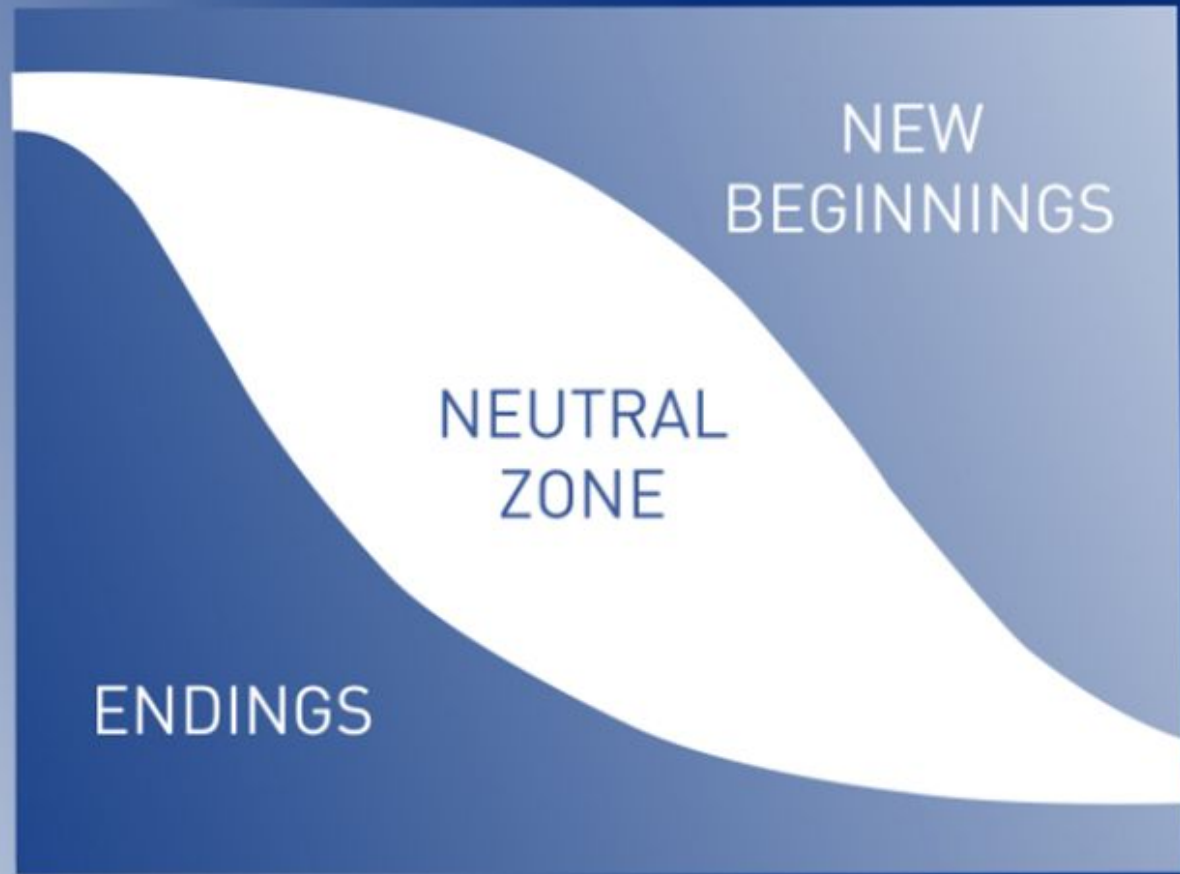
Volunteers share their responses via Q&A:

Focus on transition, not change



- Change brings ambiguity
- Change is external
- Transition is internal

TRANSITION MODEL



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Stage 1 – Ending, Losing, Letting Go



Stage 1 – Ending, Losing, Letting Go

Poll: Are you currently in the beginning of a transition (experiencing loss)?

Stage 1 – Ending, Losing, Letting Go

- Fear
- Denial
- Anger
- Frustration
- Disorientation
- Uncertainty
- A sense of loss

Stage 1 – Ending, Losing, Letting Go

- Accept the change
 - You don't have to agree or like it
- Acknowledge your resistance
- Understand the emotions involved

Stage 1 – Ending, Losing, Letting Go

Poll: Are you are supporting your teams through transitions?

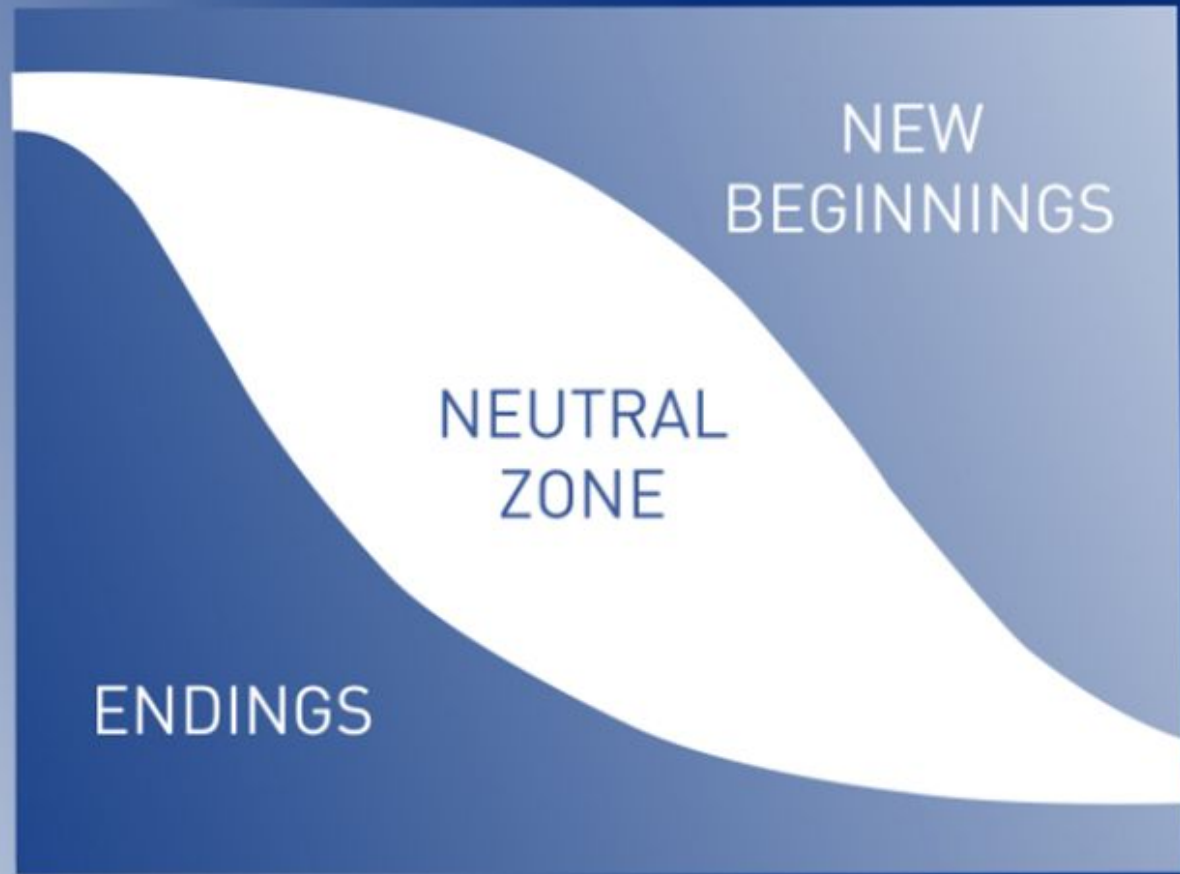
Getting Through Stage 1

- Imagine the change is a cue ball rolling across the pool table. There are lots of other balls that can be hit. Try to foresee as many as you can.
- Ask yourself “What are the secondary changes?”
- Listen empathetically and communicate openly about what is going on
- Define what’s over and what’s not over
- Treat the past with respect

Tips for How to Help Others Let Go

- Identify Who is Losing What
- Accept the Reality and the Importance of Subjective Losses
- Don't Be Surprised at "Overreaction"
- If Possible, Offset for the Losses
- **Give People Information, and Do It Again and Again**
- Mark the Endings
- Let People Take a Piece of the Old Way with Them

TRANSITION MODEL



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Stage 2 - The Neutral Zone

- Old is gone and the new is not fully operational
- Feels like there's nothing to hold on to
- Feels like no one knows what they should be doing
- Disorderly and confusing
- State of limbo
- This is not comfortable!

The ambiguity of this stage gets our inner critic going with thoughts like...

Why can't I get it together?

It's too hard!

This is just not working.

Stage 2 – The Neutral Zone

Poll: Are you currently in the thick of the transition (Neutral Zone)?

Managing the Ambiguity of the Neutral Zone

Crucial keys: involvement and support

- It's not the change people fear, but the uncertainty and disruptions to normalcy
- This is a ripe time to be innovative and creative

Although it is uncomfortable, do not rush through this stage

- Tendency is to retreat to what is comfortable (back-pedal to the past) or speed through to the new
- Rushing through the neutral zone jeopardizes the success of change efforts
- Task at hand is to “let it be”

Managing the Ambiguity of the Neutral Zone

- Adjust your expectations – this is likely a less productive time for you
- Set some short term achievable goals to give you a sense of accomplishment
- Create temporary solutions to the temporary problems found in the Neutral Zone
- Feeling stuck? Don't fester! Utilize available resources.
- Experiment and innovate!

Building a Mindset for Professional Development and Growth Worksheet


What helped me stay grounded:

Building a Mindset for Professional Development and Growth Worksheet

Volunteers share their responses via Q&A:

Group Discussion

What helps us stay grounded? (via Group Chat)



Storms arise within us and around us.

In the
CENTER
lies a haven of
CALM

GO THERE

Personal Influence

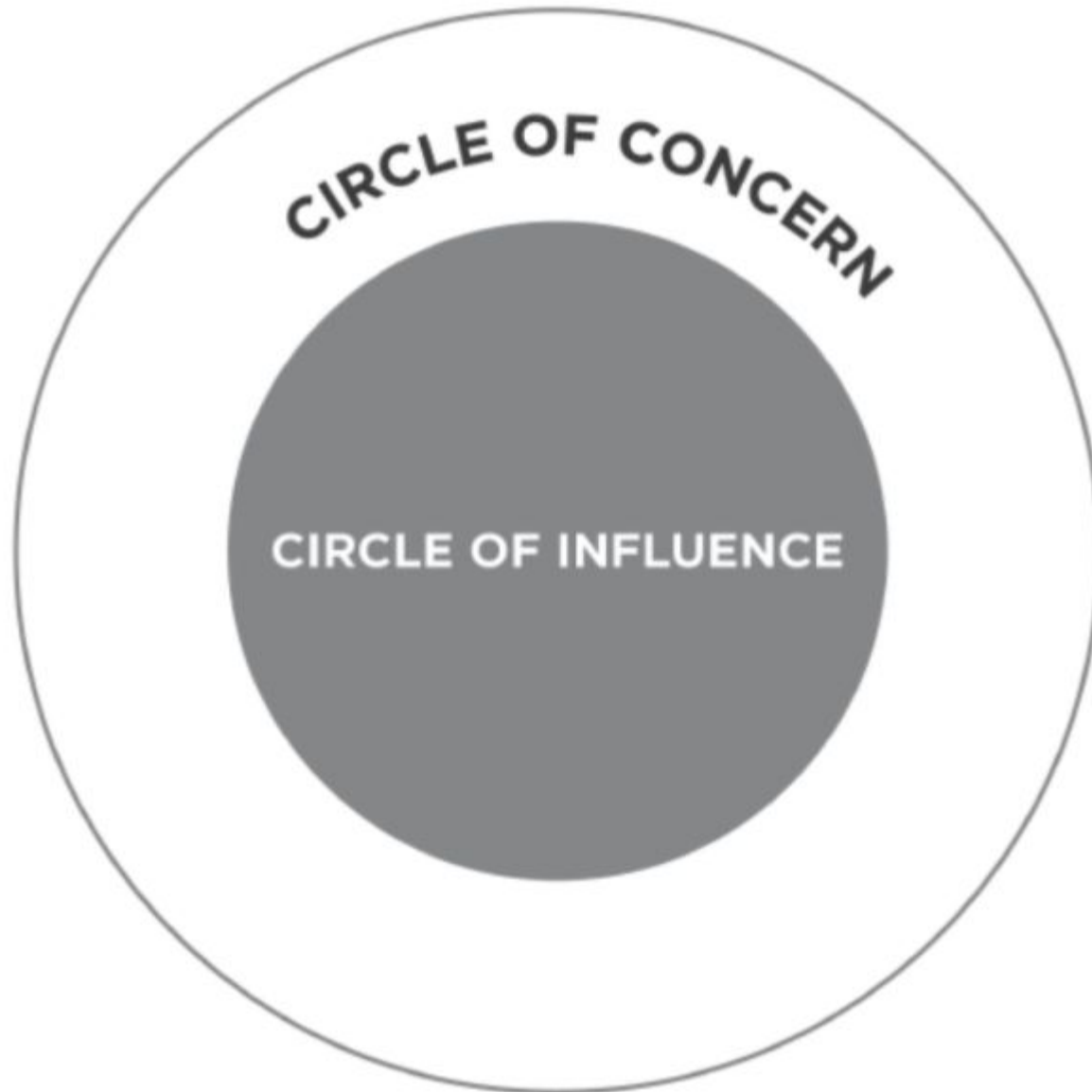
True influence is without authority

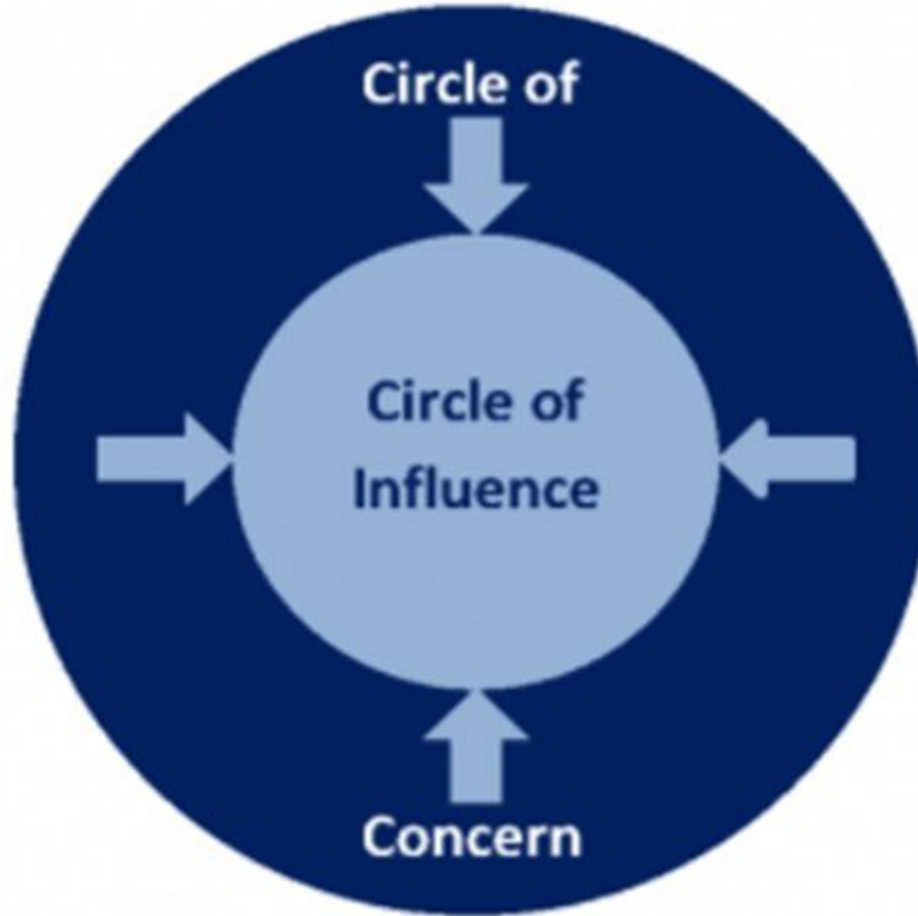
Personal Influence

Examples of people who are masterful at exercising their personal influence

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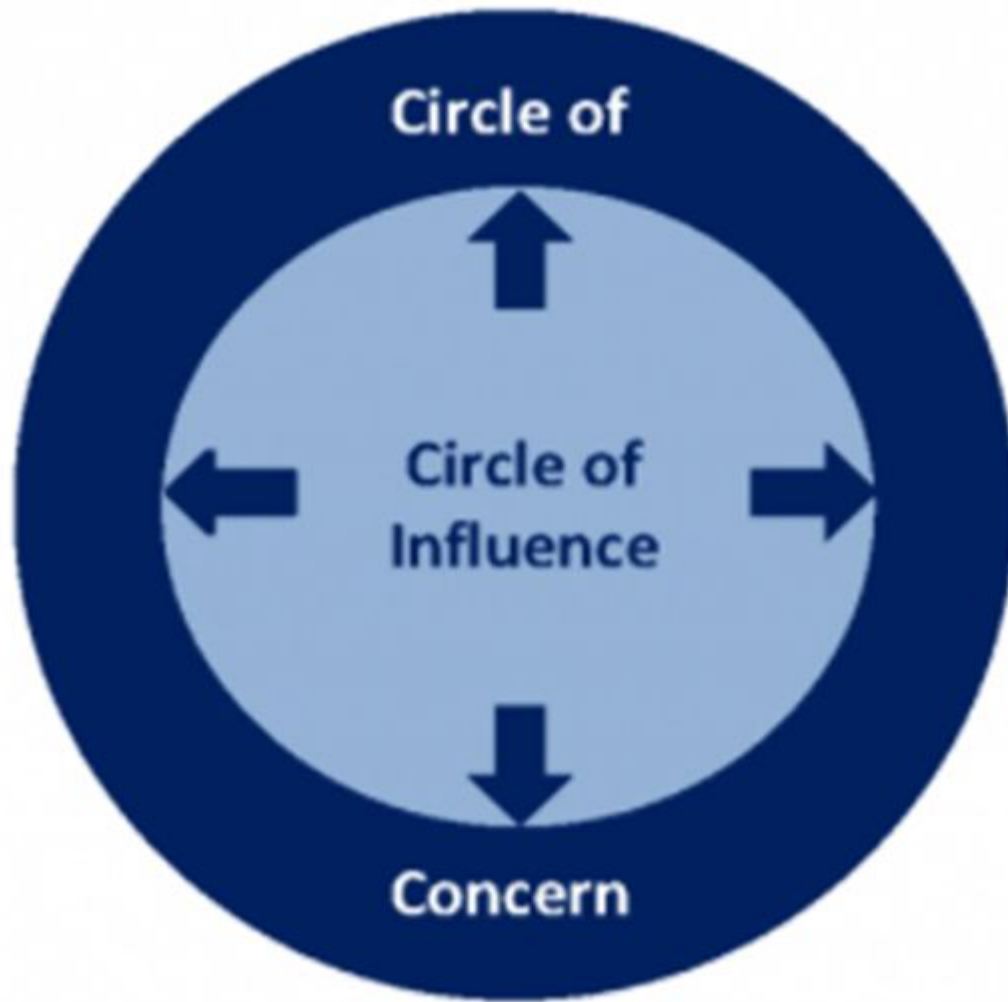






Reactive Focus

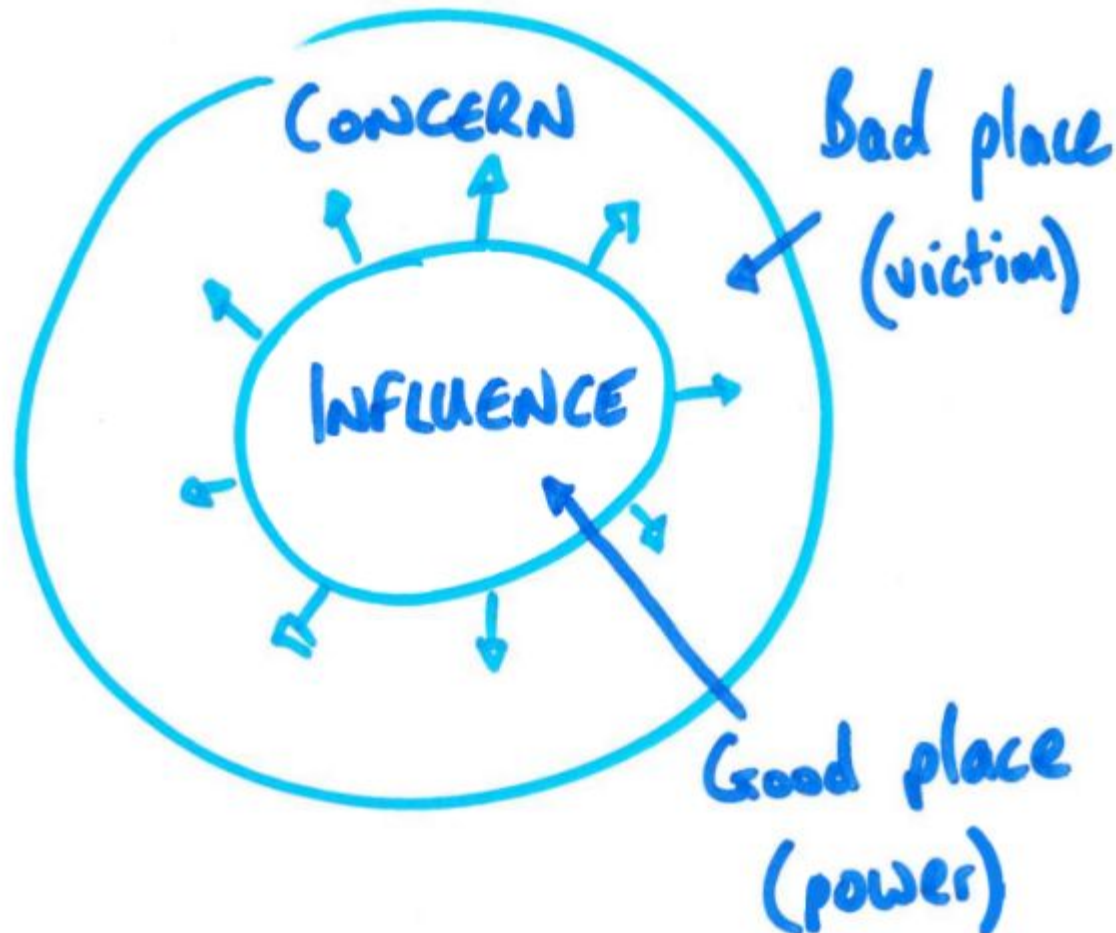
Negative energy reduces Circle of Influence



Proactive Focus

Positive energy enlarges Circle of Influence

What can I do?



Building a Mindset for Professional Development and Growth Worksheet

Volunteers share their responses via Q&A:

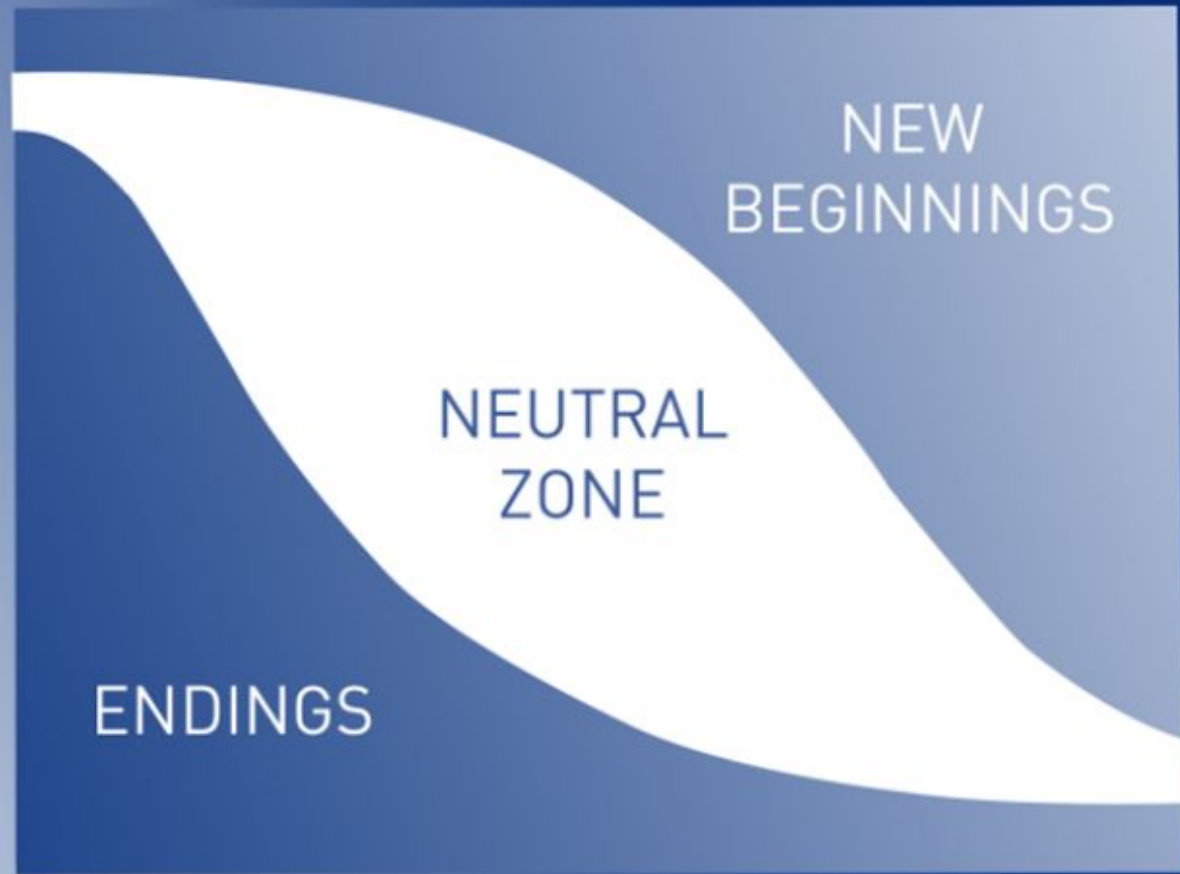
Only share your entries from inside the Circle of Influence!

Group Discussion

Thoughts and reflections so far via Group Chat

BREAK

TRANSITION MODEL



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Stage 3 – The New Beginning



Stage 3 - Timing

- New skills are being built
- Early wins are occurring
- Energy is high
- Renewed commitment

Stage 3 - Timing

Poll: Are you currently winding down a transition and entering a New Beginning?

Stage 3 - Retreating into Stages 1 or 2

- Beginnings reactivate some of the old anxieties that were originally triggered by the ending
- Beginnings mean that the ending was real
- New ways of doing things represent a gamble

Stage 3 - The Four Ps

- Ask for/provide clarity around the basic **PURPOSE** behind the outcome expected by the leadership.
 - People have to understand the logic of it before they can turn their minds to work on it.
- Ask for/provide a **PICTURE** of how the outcome should look and feel.
 - People need to experience it imaginatively before they can move toward it.
- Ask for/offer to shape a step-by-step **PLAN** for phasing in the outcome.
 - People need a clear idea of how they can get where they need to go.
- Ask for/propose a **PART** to play in both the plan and the outcome itself.
 - People need a tangible way to contribute and participate.

Stage 3 - Reinforcing a New Beginning for Others

- Be consistent in your message. And, WALK your talk.
- Ensure quick successes and celebrate them
- Symbolize the new identity

Ambiguity Calls For Adaptive Approach

Technical Problem

- Solution is known
- Solution is supported by existing mindset, structures and procedures
- Creating and implementing solutions requires INformational learning

Adaptive Challenge

- Solution is not known
- Solution requires overhauling existing mindset (priorities, beliefs, behaviors, loyalties)
- Defining, creating, implementing solution requires TRANSformational learning

Based on Ronald Heifetz, HKS and Robert Kegan, GSE

Navigating ambiguity supports increasing our mental complexity

Robert Kegan's Stages of Adult Development

- Stage 1 — Impulsive mind (early childhood)
- Stage 2 — Imperial mind (adolescence, 6% of adult population)
- **Stage 3 — Socialized mind (58% of the adult population)**
- **Stage 4 — Self-Authoring mind (35% of the adult population)**
- **Stage 5 — Self-Transforming mind (1% of the adult population)**

Building a Mindset for Professional Development and Growth Worksheet

I used to think (before this session)...

And now I think...

Building a Mindset for Professional Development and Growth Worksheet

Volunteers share:

I used to think (before this session)...

And now I think...

O'Reilly Resources

- [“Unlock your potential: Use the method perfected by best-selling Harvard researchers to change the habits that hold you back”](#) live online training on March 10
- “Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change” by William Bridges and Susan Bridges
- Leadership in Action: Leading Transition: A Talk with William Bridges
- “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” by Stephen Covey
- Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change
- Managing Change and Transition

Group Discussion (via Chat Window)

Q&A (via Q&A window)

FEEDBACK

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