# Getting through a big change

The three phases of adjusting to a major change, and what helps in each.

Change is what happens on the outside: a new job, a move, a baby, a retirement, a separation. Transition is what happens on the inside as you come to terms with it. Even changes you chose and wanted involve a transition, and it usually takes longer than expected.

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|---|---|
| **An ending** | Something is over: a role, a routine, an identity, a way of life. There is loss here, even in good changes. |
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| **The in-between** | The old way has gone and the new one has not taken shape. Confusing, flat, anxious, sometimes freeing. |
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| **A new beginning** | New routines, a new sense of who you are. It arrives in fits and starts. |

## What helps in each phase

| Phase | What you may feel | What helps |
|---|---|---|
| **Ending** | Sadness, anger, relief, disbelief | Name what you are losing. Mark the ending in some way. Let yourself grieve. |
| **In-between** | Lost, unsettled, low in energy, doubtful | Keep small routines. Do not rush big decisions. Stay in touch with people. Treat it as a time to take stock. |
| **New beginning** | Hope, energy, nerves, wobbles | Take small steps. Expect setbacks. Notice what is working. |

## What to expect

- The phases overlap. You can be in all three at once.
- The in-between is the hardest phase and the most tempting to skip. A lot of the change happens there.
- Feeling unsettled does not mean you made the wrong choice.

**The change I am going through, and what has ended**

**What might be beginning**

*Based on William Bridges's model of transitions.*

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