

Book Review - Bridges, Managing Transitions

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Book Review

Summarize the main ideas the author is communicating

Doing this course has been timely for me, and reading this book in review could not have come at a better time. It is so on point with what I am experiencing currently at the organization I work. We are experiencing a major transitional change, however, this is not my first time to experience transition at the workplace. This text helps me a lot to understand and even adjust to the reasons behind some actions taken by senior heads especially at my office.

William Bridges has been very helpful in understanding transitions and the change process. Some of the main ideas he wanted us to learn are: One, how to get people to let go. This is a very important one but can be one of the toughest, because in order for the change to take effect, people have to learn how to let go of the old ways of doing things in order to embrace the new. One key element Bridges stated will help with this is to deal directly with the losses and endings; identifying and acknowledging them openly and sympathetically is important, and expect signs of grieving and even signs of over-reacting. In addition, he added that losses ought to be compensated, the past should be respected, give people the right information repeatedly and allow them to take a piece of their old ways with them. I remember the video we watched in a class session "Who took my cheese?" It was hard for Hem and Haw who never saw change coming and when it did happen decided to still look for new cheese using the same old method.

Secondly, Leading people through the neutral zone, another challenging change process. The Neutral Zone can look like a confused state or process, people can be placed into new roles without notice, others play dual roles while others have questions as to what is happening, some people will make up their mind to leave yet some will wait it out to see what the end result will look like. Sometimes too it seems everyone is in the middle of a crossroads waiting on what

next. The neutral zone can be very difficult, anxiety rises, productivity suffers, people can either get overlooked or become polarized. In many cases to have some sense of stability it's best to "normalize" the neutral zone while waiting and re-define it, make this period a time to remember by putting temporary systems in place so that people can have some form of assurance about the future amidst the uncertainty and confusion. He also encourages to strengthen inter-group connections, by communicating every day; this is vital for the members of the groups so as not to feel left out because this season can be lonely.

Thirdly, Transition, Development and Renewal. This aspect of the change process is the new life of becoming, Bridges likens this as the organizational life cycle, he lists seven of them: 1. Dreaming the Dream, this is imaging and planning. 2. Launching the Venture, organizational infancy and childhood stage. 3. Getting Organized, this stage is where people slow down in order to get organized, might feel like a backward step. 4. Making It, organization adulthood begins at this stage. 5. Becoming an Institution, very profound, moves from doing to being. 6. Closing In, this comes from self satisfaction, organization needs to be careful about this. 7. Dying, this is sad but it happens, the company can shut down or file for bankruptcy.

What is one concept that stood out to you in this book?

One concept that stood out to me in this book is in chapter three "How to get people to let go." I believe this is such a very truthful statement because it is almost impossible to move forward into something new if people are not willing to let go of the old. I believe this applies to all spheres of life. As Bridges pointed out in his book, we can all agree, "... people don't like endings, yet change and endings go hand in hand; change causes transitions and transitions start

with an ending.” (Bridges, p. 23) . This first hurdle of the transitioning process is very crucial to any organization making the most of change.

What implications does this concept have for leading in a church context?

One major implication this concept might have for leading in a church context is that of letting go or ending. I think it can be twice a challenge for many, especially for the older folks, however if the church has an anointed credible leader, and the one using this concept then the change and transition will be embraced and welcome even if all the details are not fully understood at first.

What needs to change in your life as a result?

What need to change in my own life as a result is to use the Word of God as my guide in embracing God’s love for me everyday and be open to a renewed mind-set that will lead to the manifested transformational change that is needed.

References:

Bridges, W., & Bridges, S. (2017). *Managing transitions: Making the most of change*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing.