

Book Review

Managing Transitions – William Bridges

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As I understand the meaning of transition is that it means adapting. As I moved from Haiti to the US, the transitions were not easy because of the climate. So, I had to learn to adapt to the new change. Transitions are not always easy to deal with, but it is sometimes necessary. It was not easy for me to deal with the cold weather in New York when I first came to the United States, but it was necessary that I adapt quickly simply because New York had become my new home. Also, the language barrier was another factor of the transitional process. I had to learn to speak English properly. So, going to school and learning to speak English as a second language was not an easy task but adapting to the change was a must. After all, I had no choice. I had to learn to change quickly so that I could do well in school. As I transition from speaking Creole to English, I discovered it is task that takes times to master. As a foreigner, I spend most of my life in transition due to culture, language and lifestyle and religious belief. When I read the book “Managing Transitions” by William Bridges, I learned several key points about transitions which I believe should be useful to everyone.

The first key aspect of transition, I learned from the book “Managing Transitions” by William Bridges is that “Transition start with an ending” before that he stated that the starting point for dealing with transition is not the outcome but the ending that you’ll have to make to leave the situation behind.” These statements by Bridges made more sense to me when he gave examples of being promoted at a job and or having a new baby. He then went on saying “With the new baby, you probably had to let go of regular sleep, of extra money, of time alone with your spouse, and maybe time alone period.” Now, he was talking about me because everything he said regarding a job promotion and being a parent all related to me. Honestly, I can’t remember the last time I had a good night’s sleep after the children were born. Though I was excited with the

new change and having a baby and becoming a dad but letting go of sleep and spending time alone with my wife was tough to adapt. My first child, my daughter, woke up every two to three hours every night screaming asking for attention and food. After a while, I became exhausted and beyond tired. Most nights, it was my turn to care for my daughter and she would not fall asleep until early in the morning. Also, I had to walk around caring for her and singing. Oh yeah, letting go of good night sleeps so that I can care for my daughter was not an easy task but necessary.

As Bridges used many examples in his book to explain transition, I have had the experience with yet another case at work. Recently, I was promoted to a management position. With the position came many changes that needed to take place and the team that I am managing will need to adapt to the new change. A new chief in our section took over my department and laid out the new changes that need to be taking effect immediately. It just so happens that these new changes came as I became the manager of my section. Now, everyone in my section has a different approach and different work habits. No one was willing to change and adapt to the new change. In his book, Bridges gave different approaches to deal with change at work. One of the many approaches is “Category 1: Very important. Do this at once.” Bridges stated, “Figure out exactly how individuals’ behavior and attitudes will have to change to make teams work.” I had to learn that with my team very quickly. Everyone in the team tends to work alone and tends to not follow protocol. Everyone has his or her own way of responding to assigned tasks at work. So, I had a meeting with the team and explained to them the recommended changes came from the big Boss and I shared with them some of the emails that I received from the chief. Further, I explained to them the need for the new change. One of the changes that needed to be implemented was using our signature in emails. My department deals with IT Support, and we

use automated systems email when we have to reach out to a client. These clients never know who they are communicating with since there is no signature from anyone. Once I explained to them the need for adding their name and signature in the emails, they started implementing the change. Also, I explained to the team the importance of using protocols rather than their logic. After a few successful occasions of applying these protocols, the team bad habit started to revert. It has been a slow process, but positive changes have taken into effect.

It is evident that change is part of our life as human beings. We are forever changing into something different. As culture and society evolve, so does the nature of human beings. Due to technology, we have changed the way we process information. Though at times we don't like changes, it is something that we cannot get away from. Bridges stated that "It has become a truism that the only constant today is change." So, change is part of our life as human beings and there is nothing, we can do about it. Once we acknowledge that we are changing constantly, it makes it easier to adapt to change.

References:

William Bridges, *Managing Transitions: Making The Most Of Change* (United States of America: Perseus Books Group, 1991, 2003, 2009)