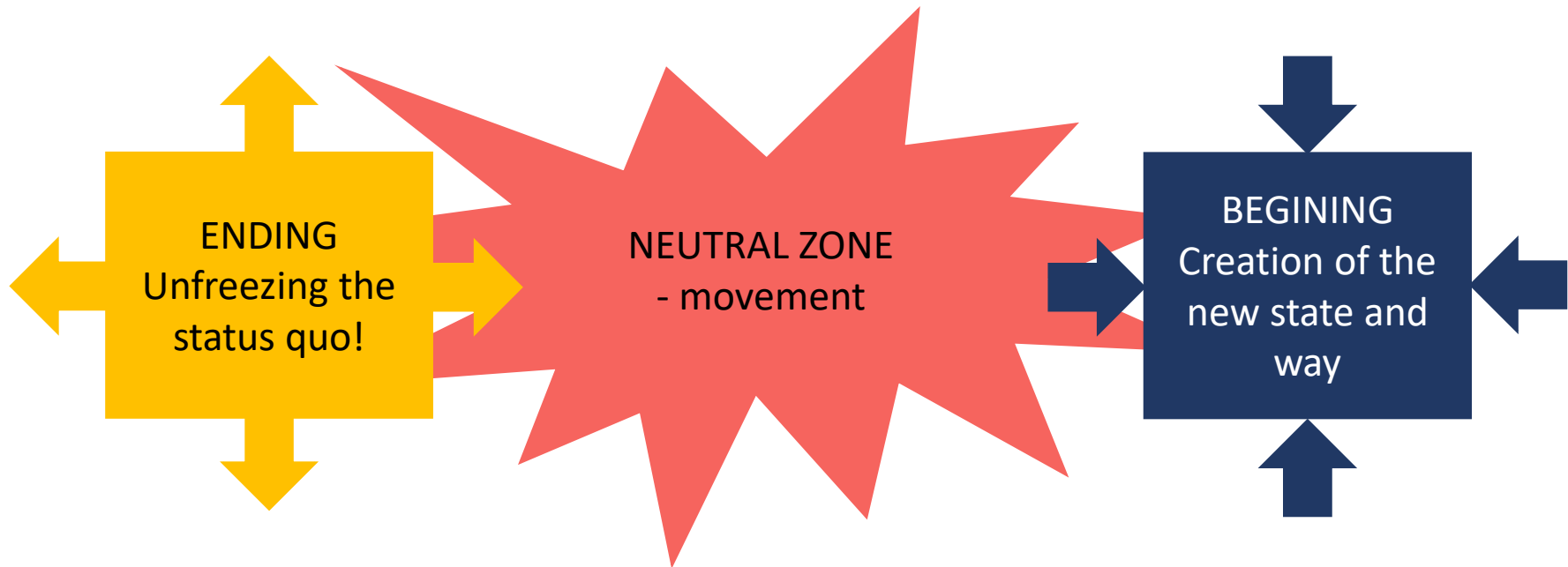


Transitions

The William Bridges transition model has three distinct stages. We firstly take a look at the whole model and then review a summary of each stage, including the typical emotions encountered, and the important work that must take place. The three phases he describes are natural and predictable.



Transitions

Let's summarise the three different stages:

We need to recognize that change can put people in crisis. The starting point for dealing with transition is not the outcome but the endings that people have in leaving the old situation behind. Change will only be successful when the transition that people experience is also addressed during change. Supporting people through transition, rather than pushing forward is essential if the change is to be successfully transversed and integrated into a new way. As a Mentor, this may be one of the most important ways you can support your Mentee.

The Ending : Identifying, letting go and managing the loss of what will no longer be

- Transition starts with endings. This seems like a paradox. In this first phase we begin by identifying what is being lost and determine how to manage these losses. They pin point what is over and being left behind, and what will be kept and remain. Examples include relationships, processes, team members, status, or locations. Attachment to the known and the familiar will potentially be a key issue during this stage. Letting go of things that have served us in the past is never easy.

The Neutral Zone : Stranded between the old and without clarity about what is emerging.

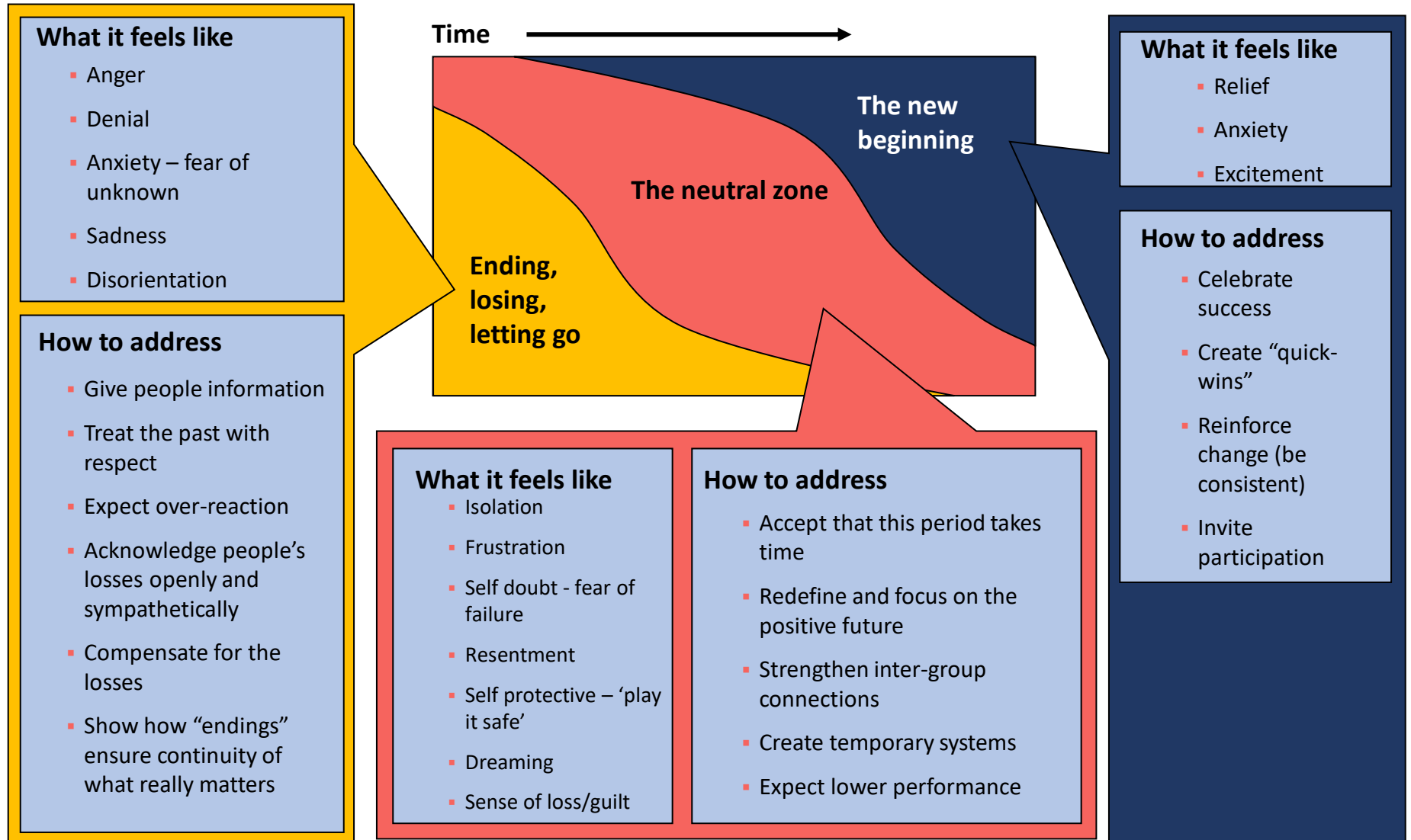
- The second step in transition comes after letting go: the neutral zone. People go through an in-between time when the old is gone but the new hasn't fully arrived or isn't fully operational. Some people experience this zone like being in the doldrums in a boat on the ocean – the shore has been lost sight of, and there is a horizon surrounding the boat, but the new shoreline is not in view. Time during this stage can sometimes seem like it will go on forever. It is during the neutral zone that critical psychological realignments and re-patterning occur. This stage is at the heart of the transition process, as the old reality and sense of identity are transformed yet the new one hasn't fully arrived. People are creating new meaning, processes and learning and they may be caught in flux a feeling confusion and distress. However, the neutral zone is the seedbed for new beginnings

New Beginnings : exploration, experimentation and developing new understanding

- Beginnings involve the creation of new understandings, values, identities and attitudes that are marked by a release of energy in a new direction – they are an expression of a fresh reality and perspective. Well-managed transitions allow people to find a new understanding of their purpose, the part they play, and how to contribute and participate most effectively and as a result, they feel reoriented and renewed. They find their new place – and a new meaning, as well as new ways of being with an understanding of a new future.

Transitions

The complete model also looks through the lens of the emotional landscape and how to deal with it within an organisational context.



Transitions

Keys to Effectiveness

There are three things that can be done to enhance effectiveness in leading people through a transition process.

First, be aware of where you and others are in the transition process. People experience transition differently because of their personal experience with past changes, and how they are affected by the current change. If it is an organisational change then you can expect that the top, middle and front line levels of an organization will typically go through the three stages at different times. Senior leaders often find themselves in new beginnings, while middle managers are in exploration, and people on the front lines are in endings.

- You must be keenly aware of where people are in the transition process.
- How are you reacting to the change, and how are others reacting to it?
- What emotions and behaviors do you observe in yourself and others?
- What stage of transition are you and others in?
- Focus on the purpose of each stage, and what needs to be done to help everyone get through it together.

Second, provide support. People need emotional support during transition. For example,

- during endings, are you being empathetic and respectful of what others are experiencing? During exploration,
- are you encouraging creativity, and creating the environment that is needed to find a better way to operate? During new beginnings,
- are you celebrating success, and reinforcing the attitudes and behaviors needed to make the change?
- Are you a role model for the new way?

Third, provide information and structure. Bridges points out the four P's that people need to make a new beginning.

- What is the purpose of the change? People need to understand the reasons, and the logic for making the change so that they can put their minds to it.
- What is a picture of what the outcome will be like? People need to experience the change in their imagination before they can give their hearts to it.
- What is the plan to make the change happen? People need a clear step-by- step plan so they understand how they can get where they need to go.
- What part will each person play? People need to know the part they play in the plan so they can personally participate, and make a positive contribution.

On the following pages is a checklist for each stage that you can use with your Mentee to explore these keys to effectiveness and develop strategies to support change.

Transitions

Transition Model Checklist : Managing Endings

Yes	No	Management Intervention	Actions to help yourself and/or others manage endings?
		Am I giving people accurate information, sharing again and again?	
		Have I defined clearly what is finished / over and what isn't?	
		Have I permitted myself or others to grieve and acknowledged with empathy the losses felt, even if they may seem like an overreaction?	
		Have I worked hard to unpack old baggage, hurts, heal old wounds, hold clearing conversations and finish unfinished business?	
		Have I found ways to symbolically or ritually 'mark the ending', not to denigrate the past, to find ways to honor it? Have I said thank you or recognised those who have contributed ?	
		Have I harvested the learnings from the past and figured out what served and didn't serve and how they can inform me in the future?	
		Have I given people or myself a piece of the past – a remembrance to take with them?	

Transitions

Transition Model Checklist : Managing The Neutral Zone

Yes	No	Management Intervention	Actions to help yourself and/or others manage the neutral zone?
		Have I understood and/or explained the neutral zone as an uncomfortable time which can be turned to advantage? Have I chosen a meaningful metaphor to describe it?	
		Have I created realistic short-term goals and gate-checks, training, policies, procedures, role, reporting relationships, and organizational groupings, or individual support mechanisms?	
		Have I found ways to acknowledge my own of other people's value and sense of belonging ?	
		Have I made sure that there is realistic feedback flowing upward, downward and sideways? Am I being honest with myself?	
		Have I encouraged experimentation, creative thinking and trying out new things?	
		Am I protecting myself or other. people from further change, and if I can't protect, am I clustering the changes meaningfully together so they make sense?	
		Am I pushing for certainty too quickly, when it would be more realistic to live with ambiguity, uncertainty and questions for a longer time?	

Transitions

Transition Model Checklist : Managing New Beginnings

Yes	No	Management Intervention	Actions to help yourself and/or others manage new beginnings?
		Have I clarified the primary shift and helped others do the same? Do I have a connection to this or am I just mouthing the words without any belief?	
		Have I a story or narrative that makes sense of this transition? Have I communicated this picture effectively, including the purpose or why behind it and what will emerge from it?	
		Am I watching out that I don't stake too much on a forecasted future that is static – verses include best and worst case scenarios?	
		Do I accept that there may be ambivalence toward this beginning? Have I helped myself or others discover the part they have in the new system? Have I included quick wins?	
		Have I been careful not to introduce additional unrelated changes whilst I and/or my people are still struggling with this current transition?	
		Have I ensured that any policies, processes, procedures are consistent with the new beginning? Am I watching my own actions to ensure I am modelling the new way? Have I found ways to recognize those who are becoming new people?	
		Have I found ways to celebrate the new beginning and its benefits? Have I kept or given others a piece of the transition to keep as a reminder of the journey that's been taken?	