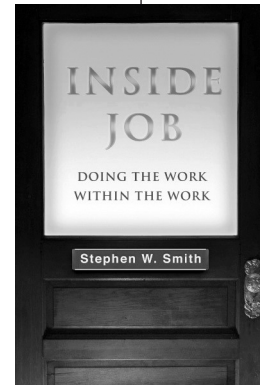


# Session 10

## Chapter 9: The Leader's Transitions Understanding Change



**INSIDE  
JOB**  
DOING THE WORK  
WITHIN THE WORK

## Ecclesiastes 3: 1–13

*There's an opportune time to do things, a right time for everything on the earth:*

*A right time for birth and another for death,*

*A right time to plant and another to reap,*

*A right time to kill and another to heal,*

*A right time to destroy and another to construct,*

*A right time to cry and another to laugh,*

*A right time to lament and another to cheer,*

*A right time to make love and another to abstain,*

*A right time to embrace and another to part,*

*A right time to search and another to count your losses,*

*A right time to hold on and another to let go,*

*A right time to rip out and another to mend,*

*A right time to shut up and another to speak up,*

*A right time to love and another to hate,*

*A right time to wage war and another to make peace.*

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## ExPLANation

To be human is to experience change. Our work, our bodies, our families and our external world is in a constant state of transition. For the leader, understanding this change in ourselves and in others is essential in the health of our businesses, our churches, our military as well as our homes. This session seeks to help you identify some of the seasons of your life as well as support the thoughts and feelings that linger.

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## EXCERPT

Transitions are a new normal in today's quick-changing world. And transitions are different from change. Change is situational and external, while a transition is the process of internal adjustment to that change. Transition is the inside stuff—the inside work, the Inside Job we need to attend to in order to leave clean and begin well in the next season.

For example, an in-between time is when you sense you're ready to leave one job and start the search to find the next. In this new space, you sense, intuit or awaken to the realization that something is going to change. You may not know the specifics, but you know some kind of alteration to life is in the air. Of course, at other times we do know the details: we're diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, a relationship hits a dead end or upper management announces an organizational change that leaves us updating our résumé.

There are many different kinds of transitions: the time between graduating from college and beginning your first real job, the season between being single and being married, the anxiety in transitioning from the second child to the third—something most parents agree they're never fully prepared for (when we had our third son, we realized we had to switch from man-to-man to a zone style of parenting). There is the mental process of transitioning to a new job with greater responsibilities while missing your previous team where trust had been established and everyone knew what to do and what was expected.

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## EXCAVATING QUESTIONS

1. What is your take-away from this chapter? Is there a key sentence or paragraph that you want to remember?

2. If possible, name and define the major life transition that you are in the midst of right now.
3. What is happening inside you as you navigate through this change (where are you, where is God, etc.)?
4. In using the bridge analogy, where do you see yourself? Are you leaving, in chaos or arriving? What markers help you identify that place?
5. What is helping you cope? What do you need to move forward?
6. How is your relationship with God weathering the season that you are experiencing at present?

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## ENGAGING THE SCRIPTURES

Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-13 (provided in page margins)

Consider the following questions:

1. Describe your favorite season of the year and why.
2. In looking at the passage above, locate the season, or time, that best describes your life right now (i.e. a time to heal). Give some details as to why it feels that way.
3. What season do you want to be experiencing? Why is that?
4. Is there a season or time mentioned that you experience the most confusion, doubt or chaos in regard to your own life and relationship with God?
5. Jumping between seasons is not an overnight occurrence- What do you imagine the transition time to be like between the categories that the writer describes? For example: What is the in-between season or time between the time to plant and the time to uproot?

But in the end, does it really make a difference what anyone does? I've had a good look at what God has given us to do—busy-work, mostly. True, God made everything beautiful in itself and in its time—but he's left us in the dark, so we can never know what God is up to, whether he's coming or going. I've decided that there's nothing better to do than go ahead and have a good time and get the most we can out of life. That's it—eat, drink, and make the most of your job. It's God's gift.  
*(The Message)*

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*“So much of this life is lived in between, between the now and the not yet, between arriving and departing, between growing up and growing old, between questions and answers. Lord, help us not to live for the distant day when the in-between will be no more, but help us to have the courage to step into that sacred space of the in-between, knowing that this is a place where life is transformed.”*

—Jim Branch

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6. As you consider the dynamic nature of life, are you weary, hopeful, or \_\_\_\_\_?

## EXTERNAL VOICES

Four months after our cross-country move, a friend asked me how I was doing. “I pretty much just want to drink wine and watch TV,” was my response. Although it shocked me as I said it, I couldn’t deny that it was true. I wanted to escape.

I still wake up in the morning and have to remind myself of where I am. I still have unpacked boxes and unfinished projects in every room of my house. I still miss my former job, friends, house, community where I knew how to get what I needed, and having a sense of purpose each day. I still feel the burning sensation behind my eyes when I am reminded of what I left behind and struggle to keep my attitude in check as the reality of my new life doesn’t meet up to my hopes and expectations. I still...haven’t fully transitioned yet. I am still... in process.

On the advice of a few godly friends, I have given myself grace to just process. The other day I sat for hours staring at a nondescript spot on the wall- frozen. My freshly brewed cup of coffee just sat on the counter untouched. Instead of mentally beating myself up for my inability to produce, I just decided that my mind needed the rest. No thoughts came and I repeatedly pushed back the ones that told me I should be doing something. I truly just sat there for hours. Some days are like that, other days I cross many items off my to-do list and feel empowered just being alive. I feel this battle and tension within myself most days and I continually have to remind myself that I am in transition and to do it well takes more time...still.

The remedy? I have chosen to extend grace to myself when I need to cry, take a nap, or leave a sink full of dishes. The move happened in a matter of days, but the transition is far from over. My body might be here, but my heart is caught between my old life and my new one. The beauty of having grace with myself is that I don’t have to choose between my old life and my new one- I am both. A friend of mine who was an American missionary to Congo spoke about a “soul graft” like a young tree is grafted to another to create a stronger hybrid. I don’t have to chop off the past experiences and become a new entity just because I moved. Those experiences are part of me and I grow stronger by acknowledging and celebrating this part of me.

It is a slow process.

Karen

*Wife, Mother of three, Daughter, Teacher, Office Manager*

The Inside Job Workbook by Stephen W. Smith & Steven C. Forney

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For over two years my husband held the title “transitional deacon.” Most aspiring pastors only hold this title for six months. Instead this phrase became our uncertain existence. Not long after leaving our hometown to pastor in another state, our denomination split. Due to the circumstances, my husband was unable to move forward in his ordination process. We prayed over and over about whether to go home or stay. In the end, we went home. I woke up discouraged on most days. It was hard to sit in church because every service brought pain and confusion surrounding our calling. When will “transitional” no longer be in the forefront of our lives? I wondered. We kept showing up on Sundays and continued to pray. We began meeting with several people about a church plant, and seven months later, my husband was finally ordained as a priest. That same day, I realized that while we no longer held the transitional title, we would never be relieved of uncertainty. What will church planting bring? I began asking. We will always be growing, changing, and waiting for outcomes of some sort. It’s the showing up in the standing still that moves us forward.

Rebecca

*Author, Wife, Mother and Pastor’s Wife*

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## EYEWITNESS STORIES

Dwight has been on the elder board of First Baptist for twenty years now, offering up his heart on every major decision for quite some time. But with some health concerns and desires to travel and see his grandkids more, he stepped down from his elder post, ready to try something new. It’s been several months now and Dwight doesn’t enjoy church as much anymore. Furthermore, seeing his grandkids proved to be difficult because of their busy schedules. Dwight’s not sure he made the right choice.

1. Describe in your own words, the chaos of Dwight’s life. What is the *Inside Job* going on here?
2. What activities might be helpful for Dwight in moving forward?
3. How might others be able to help in this journey?
4. How could rushing through this stage be detrimental to Dwight?



*“Every transition begins with an ending. We have to let go of the old thing before we can pick up the new—not just outwardly, but inwardly.”*

—William Bridges

*“All journeys are similar; all journeys are different.”*

—Janet Hagberg  
in *The Critical Journey*

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*“Life, it seems, is nothing if not a series of initiations, transitions, and incorporations.”*

—Alan Dundes

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## EXTRA SOURCES

1. For those in the midst of transition—
  - a. Draw a bridge labeling where you've been, where you're going towards, and the chaos in between.
  - b. Describe some of the emotions associated with each of these places (the loss, the waiting, what's new) and consider that this is not simple progression, there are starts and stops along the way.
  - c. Attach some personal identity statements to each period of time, i.e. "In my previous job, I was respected and valued. In the waiting, I feel lost"
  - d. Realize how change affects our sense of who we are, what we enjoy, what we want out of life. Take some time to separate the emotions of our lost identify from the events that caused the change.
  - e. Allow for new desires to guide you through the process- Spend some time considering the actions that you can take and the things under your control.
  - f. Consider sharing your bridge illustration to a coworker, a spouse, or a friend
2. Consider reading William Bridges', *Managing Transitions*. There are several online articles that provide assistance as well.
3. Consider reading: *Setting Sail: The Family Workbook*. A helpful tool for families in transition.  
<http://worldwidefamilies.org/index.php/shi>
4. Consider reading *The Land In between: Finding God in Difficult Transitions*, by Jeff Manion
5. Watch a movie about transitions with a friend and discuss it afterwards. Here is a list of a few:
  - a. The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
  - b. It's a Wonderful Life
  - c. The Bucket List
  - d. In the Pursuit of Happyness