

Why Transition Feels Harder Than It Should

Post-session summary + practical worksheet

Understanding why career change unsettles even capable people - and how to respond more wisely.

The aim is not to remove uncertainty. It is to respond to it differently.

1. Understand	2. Recognise	3. Interrupt
Why transition can feel harder than a normal career decision.	The loops and protection patterns that keep capable people stuck.	Use simple tools to move from pressure to action.

PART 1

Session summary

Career transition is rarely just a practical decision. It can unsettle identity, status, routine, confidence, relationships, belonging, purpose and the nervous system.

Under pressure, we protect before we choose.

The core idea

- The visible task is career change. The hidden task is adjustment.
- When uncertainty rises, old success rules and threat responses can activate quickly.
- The first step is not to solve the whole transition. It is to notice the loop you are in.

The transition loop

1. Uncertainty	2. Threat	3. Protection	4. Relief	5. Stuckness
Something important feels unclear.	Body and mind prepare to protect.	Old rules and default behaviours activate.	Discomfort reduces briefly.	Confidence drops; uncertainty grows.

The behaviour can feel helpful in the moment, but it feeds the loop over time.

PART 2

Patterns and tools

Four protection patterns

Over-control Doing more, planning harder, overworking, applying everywhere.	Avoidance Delaying, distracting, staying busy with safer tasks.
Indecision Fogginess, stuckness, circling options, unable to choose.	Over-accommodation Choosing what keeps others comfortable or reduces discomfort.

These are protective strategies. They are not personality flaws - but they can start choosing for us.

Tool 1: STOP

S - Stop	Pause. Feet on the floor.
T - Take a physiological sigh	Double inhale. Long slow exhale.
O - Observe	"I notice..." thoughts, feelings, body, surroundings.
P - Proceed	Regulate, pause, or take one values-led step.

PART 2 CONTINUED

Tiny experiments

A tiny experiment is a small action designed to create information - not prove your whole future.

- Ask one person for a 20-minute conversation.
- Spend one hour testing a new idea.
- Send one exploratory message.
- Attend one event with one clear question.

The purpose is not certainty. The purpose is feedback.

PART 3

Worksheet: my transition loop

Use this to turn the session into one practical action over the next seven days. Keep the answers short and honest.

1. Current transition state

One word for my current experience of transition:

☐ stuck ☐ uncertain ☐ pressured ☐ curious ☐ energised

My default under uncertainty

When uncertainty rises, I tend to:

☐ Do more ☐ Delay ☐ Freeze ☐ Keep others comfortable

What does this pattern protect me from?

What does it cost me now?

3. My old success rule

Old success rules often helped in the past. The question is whether they are still helping now.

☐ I should always have a plan ☐ I must not be seen to struggle
☐ I need to get this right first time ☐ I should not need help ☐ Other

My own wording:

Map the loop

Uncertainty	What feels unclear, exposing or too big?
Threat	What happens in your body, mood or thinking?
Protection	What do you do to reduce discomfort?
Short-term relief	How does it help briefly?
Long-term stuckness	How does it keep the loop going?

Practise STOP

S - Stop: what do I need to pause?

T - Take a physiological sigh: what changes after one breath?

O - Observe: complete one "I notice..." sentence:

P - Proceed: regulate, pause, or take one values-led step?

My 7-day tiny experiment

When I notice:

I will STOP and take this one action:

I will do it by:

The feedback I am looking for is:

Small enough to do. Meaningful enough to matter.

WHAT COMES NEXT

The rest of the series

1. Why Transition Feels Harder Than It Should	The loops, the reset, and the first tiny experiment.
2. When Work Becomes Identity	Re-anchoring from role to values.
3. Making Decisions When Nothing Feels Clear	Acting from values when certainty is unavailable.
4. Building Capacity for What's Next	The four needs and what sustains change.

Final reminder

Transition does not change who you are. It reveals the strategies you have depended on for years.

The work is not to get rid of old strategies. It is to stop letting them choose for you.