

# UNDERSTANDING HOW PEOPLE ADAPT TO CHANGE

## WHAT THIS IS

Change is constant but how we experience change follows a pattern.

This short guide helps you recognise where you and / or your team are in the 'change process' and provides guidance on how to move forward effectively.

It draws on the **Kubler-Ross Change Curve** and **William Bridges' Transition Model**; both widely used in leadership and organisational development.

*"Change is external, transition is internal. The real work happens inside us."*



## THE CHANGE CURVE – EMOTIONAL JOURNEY

STAGE	WHAT IT FEELS LIKE	WHAT HELPS MOST
<b>Shock / Denial</b>	"This can't be happening." Confusion or avoidance.	Share information, acknowledge reality, give time.
<b>Frustration / Anger</b>	"Why is this happening?" Resistance, blame.	Listen, validate emotion, maintain empathy.
<b>Depression / Low Point</b>	Loss of motivation, fatigue, uncertainty.	Provide reassurance, connection, and small wins.
<b>Experimentation</b>	Testing new approaches.	Encourage curiosity and experimentation.
<b>Decision / Acceptance</b>	Energy returns, focus on solutions.	Support autonomy and shared goals.
<b>Integration / Growth</b>	Confidence builds; change becomes normal.	Celebrate progress and reflect on learning.

## HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

1. Identify where you are on the curve right now, and / or work with your team members to identify where they might each be today. Discuss and explore how this may have changed over time, which is likely to be unique to each individual.
2. Ask: *What does this particular stage need: time, clarity, support? Something else?*
3. Journal or discuss:
  - What am I letting go of? Or what might I need to let go? What support might I need?
  - What am I learning in this stage?
  - What might the next step look like?
4. Remember: people move through stages at different speeds, and in different orders. Meet yourself (and others) where you are.



## Bridges' Transition Lens

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	FOCUS
Endings	Letting go of what was.	Honour loss; acknowledge emotions.
Neutral Zone	The in-between; unclear, but full of potential.	Experiment, reflect, and explore new possibilities.
New Beginnings	Energy and commitment return.	Define purpose, celebrate learning, and re-align goals.

## WHAT TO DO NEXT

- Map yourself or your team along the curve.
- Note what each stage needs most, and how you can support people in that stage.
- Revisit regularly: uncertainty often means cycling through these phases more than once.
- Pair this with the *Mindtraps* and *Uncertainty Assessment* tools for deeper insight.

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## REMEMBER:

*You can't control the pace of change, but you can control the way you move through it.*

