



Well Being
Department

Wellbeing in Spiritual Ministry during

Transition AND CHANGE

A Space for Grace

INTRODUCTION

It was John Henry Newman who wrote, 'In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below, to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often.' Change is an essential element of Christian discipleship, and in a very particular way it is part of our lives as spiritual leaders within The Salvation Army, marked by periodic farewells and welcomes.

Whether your forthcoming change of appointment fills you with joyful anticipation or fear and anxiety, I hope that in this booklet you may find something that helps you in the next few months and leads towards growing personal maturity and unexpected blessings.

The content is somewhat different in tone from previous publications in the Wellbeing series, in that it includes practical reflective tools such as the Transition Examen, as well as some exercises designed specifically for families in transition.

Feel free to use the space provided around the pages to journal and make any notes of your own for later reflection.

I am grateful to Tony Horsfall for his theological exploration of transition in Jesus' incarnation, inviting us to a more conscious awareness of the threefold pattern of letting go, making adjustment and taking hold as we journey into new spheres of ministry. My thanks go also to Mike Frith, Founding Director of OSCAR (One Stop Centre for Advice and Resources) and trainer in cross-cultural transition and adjustment in ministry, who has provided helpful teaching material on the process of transition. Thank you to those officers who have been willing to share the highs and lows of their own stories. Elements of their experience will no doubt echo with your own, and they encourage us to remember that we are not alone on our journey.

Major Sarah Evans
Director for Well Being

Finally, I want to thank the members of the Well Being Department team who have contributed resources, prayers and insights into the production of this booklet. It is our prayer that as you read it you will be reminded of the unfailing provision of our loving Shepherd:

Father
I am seeking:
I am hesitant and uncertain,
But will you, O God,
Watch over each step of mine
And guide me.

(St Augustine: Confession 11.17)

CONTENTS

04

A Theological Reflection on Transition by Tony Horsfall

06 - Transition Culture

08 - Transition Change

09 - Transition Model

10 - Transition Curve

12 - Transition Experience

13

Where are You on Your Change Journey?

18

Prayer of one going to new ministry

14

A Transitional Examen

19

Prayer of one who is moving on

17

Prayer of a pilgrim who struggles with the journey

20

Transition and Change Family Exercises

All Bible references are from the New International Version unless otherwise stated.

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A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON TRANSITION

By Tony Horsfall

Transition is the term used to describe the movement from one state or stage of life to another. In any transition, there is an observable process that involves **1. Letting go, 2. Making adjustment, and 3. Taking hold.**

Life involves many transitions, and in ministry as a Salvation Army officer there will be numerous changes, so it is important to be aware of the process. This will help us be prepared mentally and spiritually for the inevitable upheaval that change may bring.

Discipleship is about following Jesus and walking in his footsteps. It is encouraging to see, therefore, that Jesus experienced significant moments of transition in his life, none more so than when he came to earth, and then returned to the Father. He put it like this:

'I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.'
John 16:28

Here we see a double transition, first in the incarnation (his coming) and then in his exaltation (his going).

The first transition is beautifully described by the apostle Paul. He writes:

'For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.'
2 Corinthians 8:9

His coming into the world required great personal sacrifice, a self-giving that brought blessing to us all. Sacrifice did not begin for Jesus in his death at Calvary, it was already present in his birth at Bethlehem. Indeed, we can say that any authentic Christian ministry will have this notion of sacrifice at its heart. Transitions in ministry are simply an opportunity to follow in his footsteps.

The passage that encapsulates this downward movement is the ancient Christian hymn quoted by Paul in Philippians 2:5-11. It is a sublime description of his double transition, coming into the world and then returning to glory. For our purpose, we will focus on his coming into the world.

LETTING GO

Here we see that the Son of God was perfectly at home in heaven. He was 'in very nature God' and sharing 'equality with God' (Philippians 2:6). We can imagine something of the glory that was his in heaven, as he was worshipped and adored by angels and archangels.

Bishop Frank Houghton (1894-1972) described it in a hymn:

**Thou who wast rich beyond all splendour
All for love's sake becamest poor,
Thrones for a manger did surrender,
Sapphire paved courts for stable bare.**

Paul reminds us that the Son of God did not cling to his position and status, or the glory that was his by right, but willingly relinquished everything. He had to lay aside his majesty. All transition starts with a willingness to let go of that which is familiar and loved. All change involves cost, and the only motivation for such sacrifice is obedience to the Father and love for those to whom he sends us. Sometimes this literally involves leaving home for another country or location. Often it requires us to say goodbye to friends and family, projects that were dear to us, and even our sense of what is normal and familiar. We may need to let go of status and position to do the Father's will.



MAKING ADJUSTMENT

We are familiar with pictures of the babe at Bethlehem, and they give some indication of the adjustment that had to be made as the Son of God became the Son of Man. Charles Wesley (1707-1778) spoke about 'our God contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man', a reminder that in the incarnation we are dealing with the greatest of mysteries. In becoming human, the Son of God became subject to all the normal stages of human development, from being nursed by his mother to learning how to walk and talk (Luke 2:40, 52). The period from birth to adulthood marks the way Jesus adapts to every new situation.

Such adaptation was made possible by two amazing characteristics or attitudes of mind which we are called to emulate in our own transitions.

First, we are told he 'made himself nothing' (Philippians 2:7), or as other translations say, he 'emptied' himself. Theologians scratch their heads as to the exact meaning of this. In another hymn 'And Can It Be, That I Should Gain?', Charles Wesley (1738) daringly suggests he 'emptied himself of all but love', although some would disagree.

Whatever was involved, this self-emptying is a crucial characteristic of those who make positive transitions. They are willing to forgo their own needs and desires for the sake of others.

Second, in becoming one of us he took 'the very nature of a servant' (verse 7), which means he came with the intention of seeking the good of others, not his own. Jesus fulfilled the prophecies in Isaiah (42:1-9, 49:1-6, 50:4-9, 52:13-53:12) and became the 'Suffering Servant'. As his followers, we too must develop a servant heart. Christian ministry is first and foremost servant ministry. It is not about seeking position or power, but rather desiring to see others grow and develop in God. When this requires us to move on in ministry, we can do this, although it may not be easy, because our only desire is to serve God and others.

Making a good adjustment in a new situation is made possible when we have the same selfless attitude of mind that Christ displayed.

TAKING HOLD

The ministry of Jesus only got under way after he was baptised by John in the Jordan, but for those few short years he embraced wholeheartedly the task that God had given him. His life of ministry is summed up like this: 'he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him (Acts 10:38).' Effective ministry, of course, is impossible without the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The heart of what Jesus came to do centred on the cross, and the giving of himself as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). As a servant, he humbled himself and in obedience to God went to Calvary, and 'became obedient to death - even death on a cross' (Philippians 2:8). Only in humility can we fully take hold of what God has for us to do. Only in giving ourselves sacrificially in service can we accomplish the work God has given us to do.

Transition is never easy, and smooth transitions are rare. There will always be ups and down, moments of panic and fear, but when we have the mind of Christ we will get there and be able to enjoy a fruitful ministry.

Tony Horsfall, Charis Training
Author, retreat leader, mentor, friend

TRANSITION CULTURE

THEORY

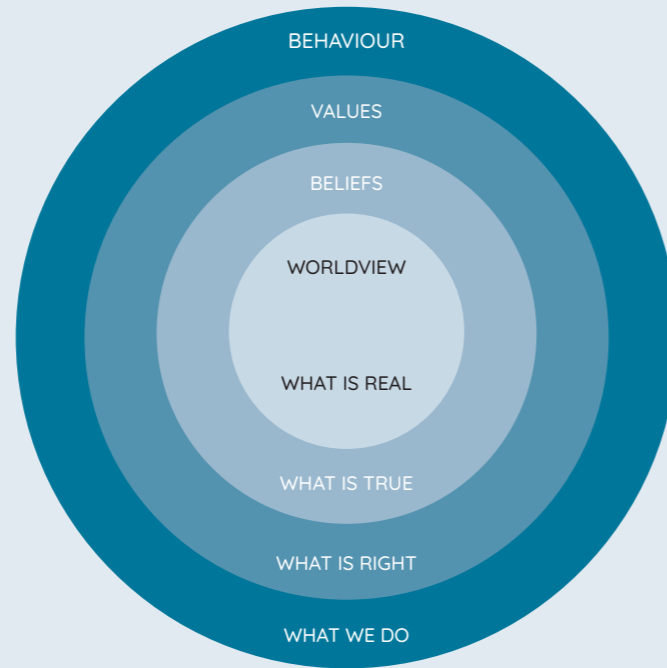
Every group of people has its own culture. Culture is that which gives a group its identity, and therefore the culture is important to that particular group. When we enter another culture, we must learn to respect that culture so that we do not give offence. This is particularly important for us as Christians as we seek to share the gospel. See 1 Corinthians 9:20-23.

A Model for Understanding Culture

1. Culture is learned
2. Culture is shared
3. Culture is a mixture of good and bad
4. Culture can lead to pride (ethnocentrism)

When you look at a culture from the outside, all you see is the behaviour (what we do) and are quick to judge. You need to look deeper to fully understand what drives the behaviour and what gives any group its collective, cultural identity through their values (what is right), beliefs (what is true) and worldview (what is real).

We are part of many groups and, therefore, have quite a complex culture. Some cultural traits, like national traits, are common to lots of people. Some, like family traits, are particular to only a small group of people.



Personal Application

1. List as many of the things that make you identify with other people who are part of any group you belong to.
2. Anticipate which cultural norms or traits might be different in the situation you are moving to.
3. For those things that are different, and for some of those that are the same but for different reasons, try to dig deeper to understand why it is so.

NOTES



Returning to the UK after spending 28 years in Italy:

In terms of behaviour, one of the things we have noticed is how the rhythms of daily life are so different.

There is a feeling of disconnection from the rest of our neighbours when we are happily chatting and laughing while walking our dogs around the streets at 11pm. Everyone else has their lights off and is presumably in bed.

For the first few weeks, David quite often had moments of panic when crossing the road, because the cars come from the opposite direction than expected!

We tend to still use hand gestures a lot, talk a bit more loudly than most, not notice queues and expect to have a chat with strangers on the street, in the shops and elsewhere.

Majors Elaine and David Cavanagh
(Regional Wellbeing Officer for Scotland and Ireland and Assistant to the Secretary for Scotland)

Having served in Italy and Greece Command for over 12 years I have returned to the UK.

As a woman, everything works efficiently here in the UK. In Italy, being a British white woman was difficult – even registering with a doctor! How did I cope? I grieved. It has taken me 18 months to get into a rhythm. I have to say I have taken that time to get into that rhythm, to set my own rhythm. I haven't always gone with the rhythm that's been expected, but I have made sure I was in charge! Sometimes we need to set our own rhythm.

Major Estelle Blake
(Corps Officer – Oldham Fitton Hill)

TRANSITION CHANGE

THEORY

Whenever there are changes in our lives, we need to transition from one state to another in order to embrace the changes. The changes can be minor, like our favourite supermarket closing, or can be major and multiple, like when we change ministry appointments. Part of coping with change is defining what is actually changing. To do this, you need to reflect on the situation you are leaving and learn about the situation you are moving on to.

A few things to note:

- The external change will be relatively instantaneous (when you journey from one appointment to the other) but your internal change will take much longer.
- Your transition can be an invaluable opportunity to learn more about yourself, others and God.
- Embracing change, whilst often challenging, is always an opportunity for a new start.

Personal Application

1. Understand your own preferences and how they will be affected by the changes.
2. List what you like and dislike about the situation you are leaving.
3. Plan to take some familiar items with you if possible.
4. Maintain a conversation with someone who knows you well through the changes (e.g. spouse, a video call with a friend etc.)
5. Learn as much as you can about the situation you are going to in advance.



Transition change is like a roller coaster. It has much excitement and fear alongside, many highs and lows, and with monumental twists and turns, never leaving you quite the same person. Moving from one culture to another had its challenges but it always felt like home, it felt right even with many changes. I think the greatest thing I learnt in my period of transition change from a UK appointment to a German appointment and vice versa, was the change that took place in me. I learnt that I am more resilient and stubborn than I gave myself credit for. It's a choice, do we accept the transition change that is taking place in and around us or do we fight it? In accepting it I learnt so much more about myself and the God who calls me and knows my capabilities."

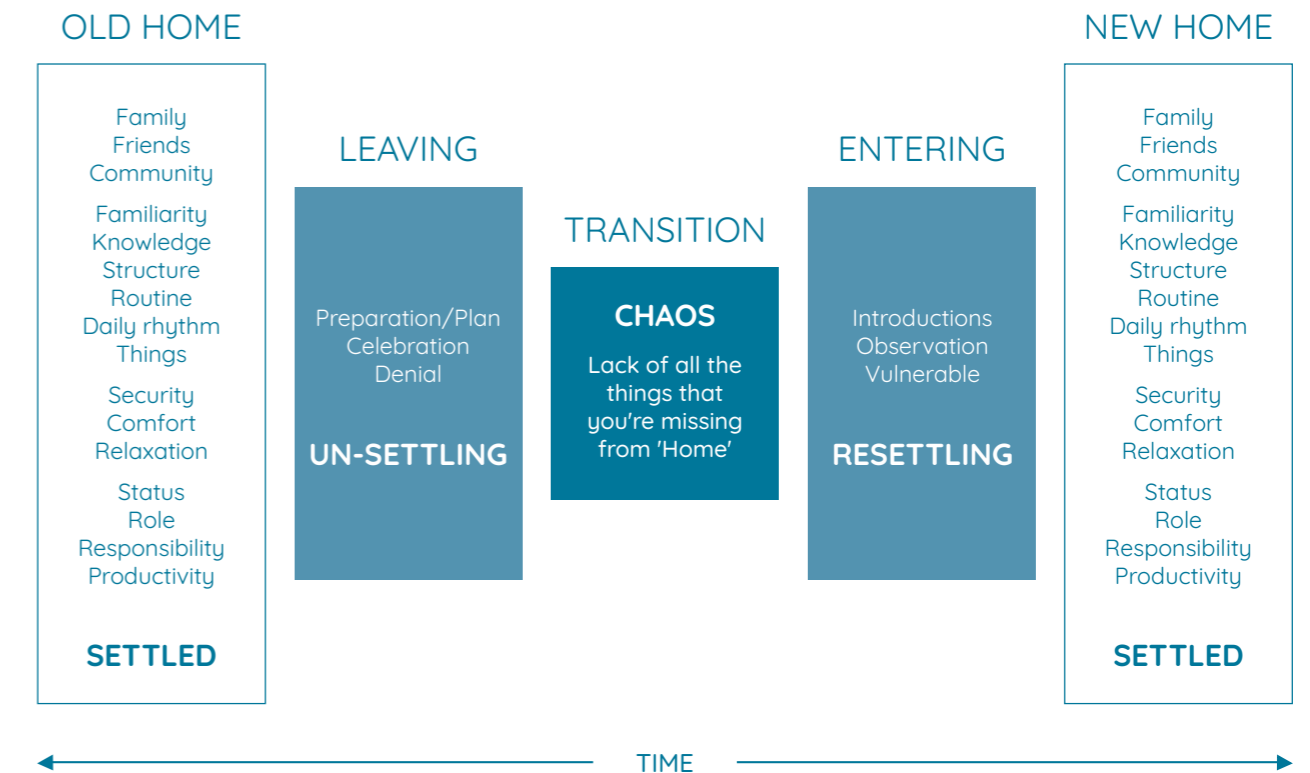
Captain Laura McLean
(Corps Officer - Shipley)

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TRANSITION MODEL

THEORY

The diagram below is a simplified model for transition with the various stages depicted. To make a successful transition from your old home to your new home, it is as important to leave well as it is to enter well. Bringing closure to your previous stage of life and all the issues you have faced will help you move on and be able to take up new challenges.



Personal Application

1. End well – try to leave your previous situation as positively as you can. This may include doing the following: mend any broken relationships, be forgiving, show your thanks to those you have appreciated, celebrate the stage of life you have just passed through etc.
2. Make a note of the changes you are experiencing as you experience them (i.e. journal).
3. In the chaos stage, concentrate on finding your identity and security in God.
4. Be prepared in your mind – go into your new situation as a learner, be teachable and humble.
5. Don't try to project your way of doing things on to the new situation until you have understood why and how it is different.



We have the joy of moving appointments in July 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. How did we finish well?

We planned a long way in advance and looked for the positives for our family, as a couple and for our ministry, looking forward ahead to be ready for the actual time of moving.

Practical things to remember:

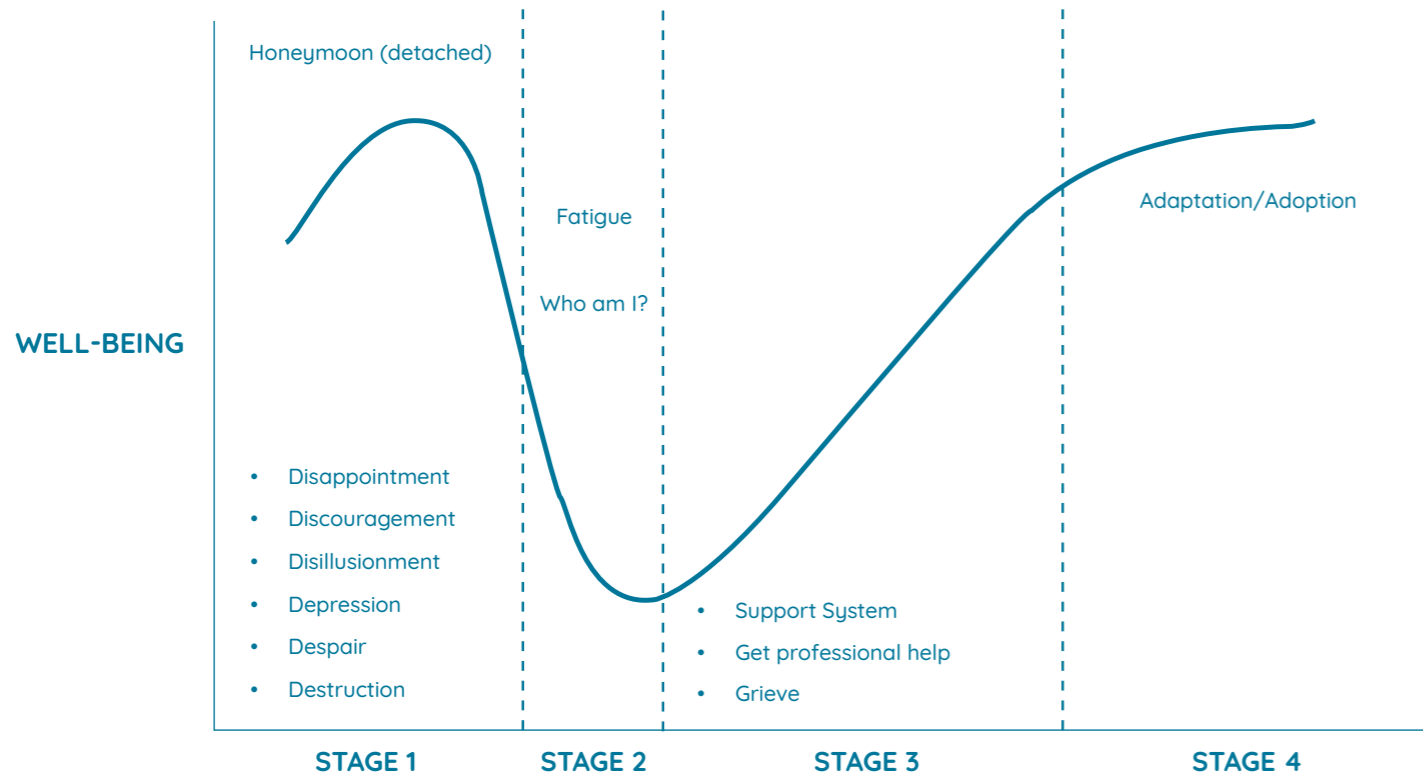
- Start saving soon so that you can buy new things for your house to make it home.
- Get kids into school as early as possible so they can make friendships and get to know children in the area.
- It's a difficult time, so give yourself some slack and book some time off for 6–8 weeks time; it will feel like home before you know it.

Majors Mike and Lisa Lloyd Jones
(Divisional Leaders – Central South Division)

TRANSITION CURVE

THEORY

The diagram below is a standard transition curve for coping with a major change in life. The curve starts when you arrive in a new situation. The vertical axis is well-being and the horizontal axis is time.



Personal application

1. Plot and date where you are on the transition curve at any point in time.
2. Anticipate the stage ahead and plan appropriate measures to help cope (e.g. fatigue will need more rest.)
3. Recognise when you are not coping very well and utilise the help at your disposal (i.e. reach out to trusted friends and family, contact the Well Being Department etc.)



Our situation was quite different as we had been 'stranded at Avalon' for four months due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We returned to Jamaica at the end of June 2020 for four weeks before returning to the UK for a sabbatical and then a new appointment.

On returning at the end of July, we were able to spend time with our families. We commenced a Sabbatical on August 1 – October 31st. Spending time with our children and grandchildren was a great 'honeymoon' time – enabling us to enjoy each other's company in a very relaxed way. I found a Spiritual Director to accompany me on my spiritual journey during the Sabbatical, which included expressing some of my experiences in the Caribbean. This was a good support and strength. We also spent time with officer friends who had stayed in touch with us during our time in the Caribbean which then enabled some informal 'debriefing'. I also undertook a 'tiling course' which was a complete distraction and a great leveller! The Sabbatical was a great blessing and was needed for recovery, adjustment and restoration."

Colonel Jenine Main
(Territorial Secretary for Leadership Development)

"Being away from family and friends, away from mainstream shops and the safety of familiar areas is one of the challenges being appointed 'overseas'. We are so privileged to be the officers here in the Western Isles of Scotland, yet there are some practical aspects you need to get your head around as you prepare to move. Our next nearest corps is four hours away and DHQ is nearly seven hours from our corps. This means that you rely on good communication through phone and email. Never be afraid to ring and ask for help. Each community has different demands on our time, however it is important to reach out and share the load with those who can help. This will help you be sustainable and an asset to your corps fellowship. God's got this and he uses people and situations to get the best out of us."

Lt. Faith Thompson (Corps Officer - Stornoway)

STAGE 1

Stage 1 is the honeymoon phase where, like being on holiday, you experience the novelty of the new situation without the challenges of having to adapt. It might last from a few days to a few weeks.

STAGE 2

Stage 2 is where you start expending energy on learning to live in the new situation. Everything takes more effort, resulting in more tiredness and potential fatigue if not kept in check. Often questions of identity arise such as 'who am I?' and 'why am I here?' This all could result in more stress. The six 'D's are potential situations people face under such stress. This low point often takes place four to six months after arrival.

STAGE 3

Stage 3 is the recovery, which usually happens naturally but is helped by:

1. Having a functional support system
2. Having access to professional help if and when needed
3. The time to grieve the loss of what has been, and accepting the change process

STAGE 4

Stage 4 is when sufficient recovery has been made to feel that one has adapted to the new environment and adopted it as the new home.

NOTES

TRANSITION EXPERIENCE

THEORY

Transition is like a journey from one place to another which has physical, mental and spiritual implications. Biblical accounts of journeys demonstrate that most of the things God teaches are during the journey and not just at the destination (see Psalm 84 where the people of God go from strength to strength whilst on pilgrimage). Transition times can be trying times but also precious times.

In addition to the advice already given, here are some overarching suggestions that will, hopefully, make your transition experience a pleasant one.

Personal Application

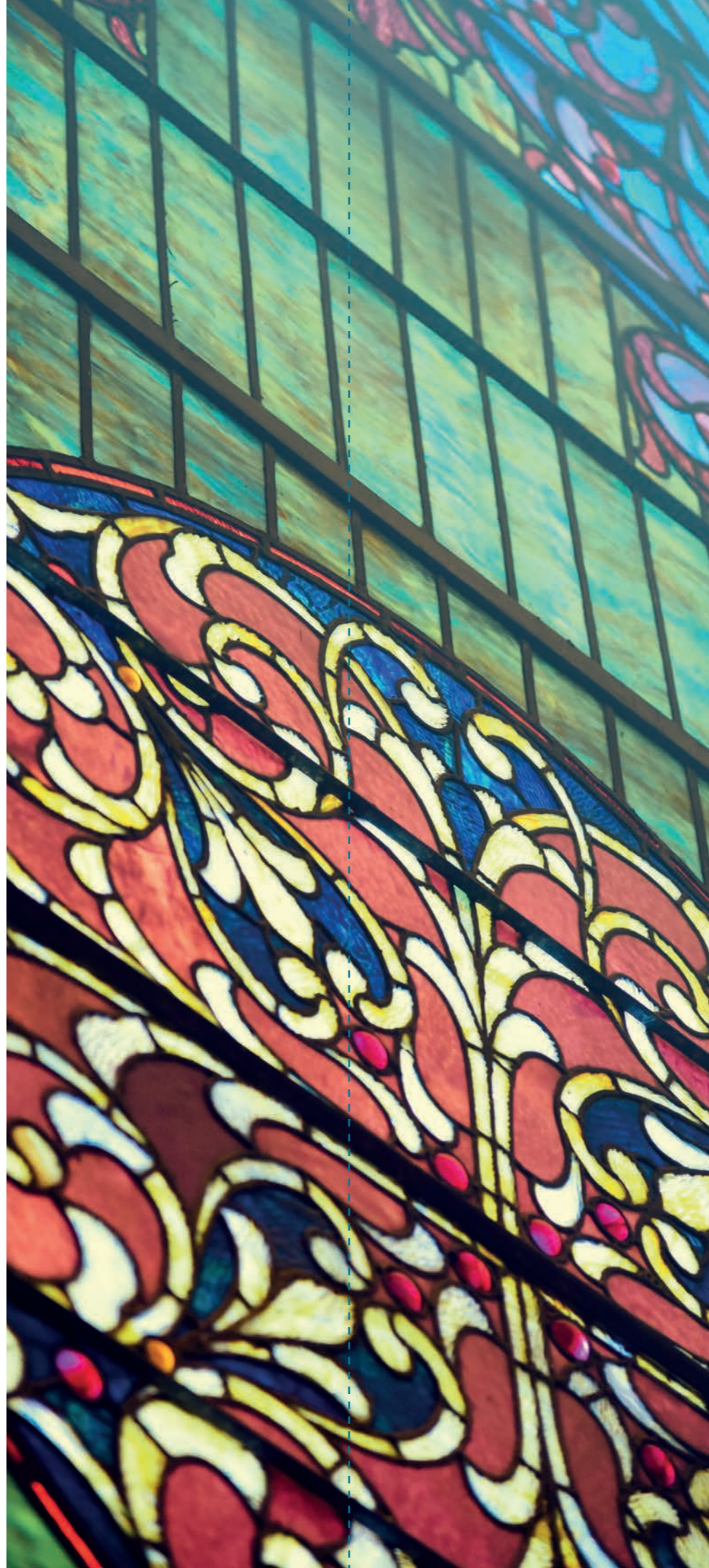
1. Try to always keep a good attitude and perspective.
2. Take regular breaks, exercise, holidays and recreation.
3. Be patient with yourself and others.
4. Set yourself reasonable goals and expectations.
5. Make sure you occasionally enjoy yourself and have some fun.
6. Make friends along the way.
7. Draw on your spiritual resources.



As I had a long way to travel to my first appointment, I took the opportunity to stop off in York for a night and visited the Minster. I had not expected leaving WBC for the last time to be so emotional and felt a deep sense of loss as I left - mainly for the community I was leaving behind. God felt my loss, didn't try to remove it, but held me anyway. Being able to lament that loss helped me to receive the new gift of my home and appointment in Wallsend and the pause in the journey allowed me to take my arrival in a new light."

Lt. Luke Cozens
(Corps Officer - Wallsend)

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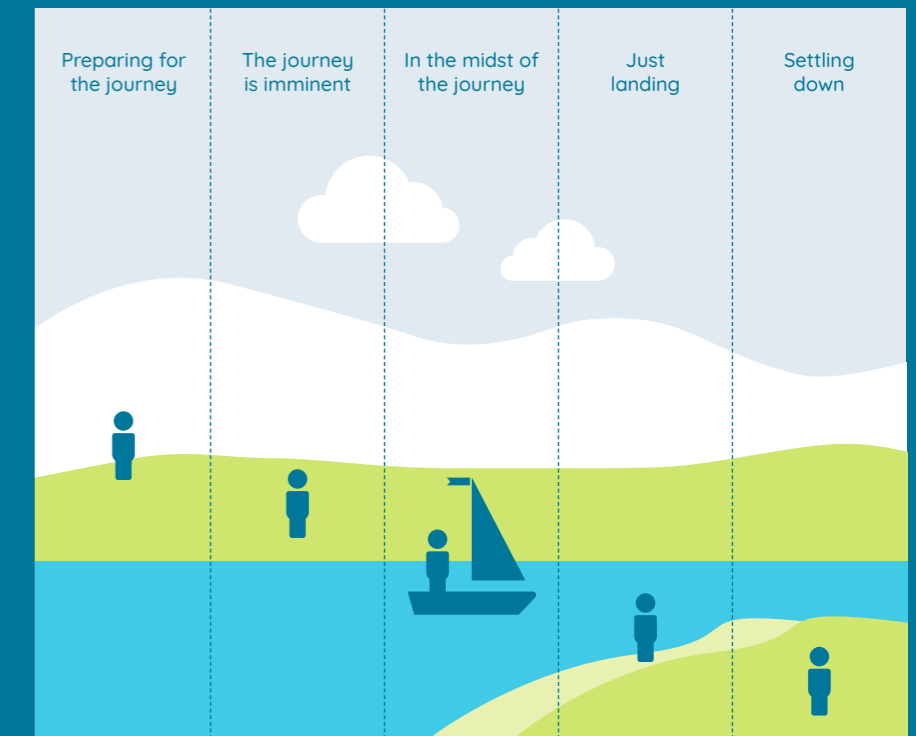


WHERE ARE YOU ON YOUR CHANGE JOURNEY?

Another way to reflect on your change journey is to use this model created by Bev Shepherd, and to be aware of the five stages of your transition and change. Using the image of a boat on a journey, she highlights the following: preparing for the journey, the journey is imminent, in the midst of the journey, just landing and settling down.

Remember that as a couple or family, you will probably journey through these stages at a different pace and it is often not straight forward! The model may also raise some questions for you as you reflect, allowing you to pace yourself through the journey and embracing the grace of God as you acknowledge the support and resources available to you.

It may be helpful, after completing this reflection to have a conversation with a member of the Well Being team or DHQ team, or a colleague to explore what you have discovered.



We still experienced our move from Switzerland to the UK. Due to COVID a lot of things haven't happened. It makes it difficult to build up relationships, but it helps you to settle in as a family and to keep in touch with your contacts in your home territories via technology. Many things are different in the culture, but also in The Salvation Army. But at the end of the day, you are who you are, and this knowledge helps you to find your way through."

Captain Timon Stettler
(Corps Officer - Berwick)

Step Four: Respond

Use your reflections as a guide to prayer.

Praise God for those things you can celebrate.

Thank God for what you have learned.

Share your grief with God.

Formally seek or extend forgiveness:

'God, by your grace I choose to forgive _____
for _____ and I release them to you.'

Acknowledge what you are taking with you and formally leave behind what you need to:

'Lord, by your grace I am choosing to leave behind _____
_____.'

Entrust to the Lord:

'God, I choose to entrust _____
_____ to you and your good care.'

Bless:

'Lord, I choose to bless _____
_____ as I leave.'

Are there any other ways you need to respond, such as:

- Write a thank you note or share some encouraging words?
- Ask for forgiveness?
- Pray a prayer of blessing over someone or an organisation?

This process will take some time and effort, but it will help you to transition well.

Adapted from 'A Transition Examen: Key Questions to Ask When You Transition' by Dr Steve A. Brown (The Officer magazine April-June 2020, previously posted on Arrow Leadership's blog, sharpeningleaders.com)

PRAYING OUR GOODBYES

Four aspects for praying a goodbye:

1. RECOGNITION

Identify and name the loss. Be honest.

2. REFLECTION

Give yourself time. Don't be afraid to look inward. Ponder, wonder, listen, be still.

3. RITUALISATION

Consider symbols or images that help you understand or put into words what you are feeling. (e.g. dry bones, wilderness, ashes, lost buttons, torn clothes, cleaning out cupboards, flowers among weeds, new leaves or shoots, fledglings learning to fly, road to Emmaus, photo albums, love letters)

4. REORIENTATION

Amidst our reflection and ritualisation, a 'God-connection' occurs and life is gradually reorientated and given a new direction and energy.

PRAYER OF A PILGRIM WHO STRUGGLES WITH THE JOURNEY

Walking Meditation:

Take these words with you and go for a walk, preferably a walk where you can be alone with the scripture and can let the words of God, to Jacob, settle in your pilgrim heart:

"Be sure that I am with you; I will keep you safe wherever you go." (Genesis 28:15).

Listen to the words of God to Jeremiah, also, as you walk along:

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11).

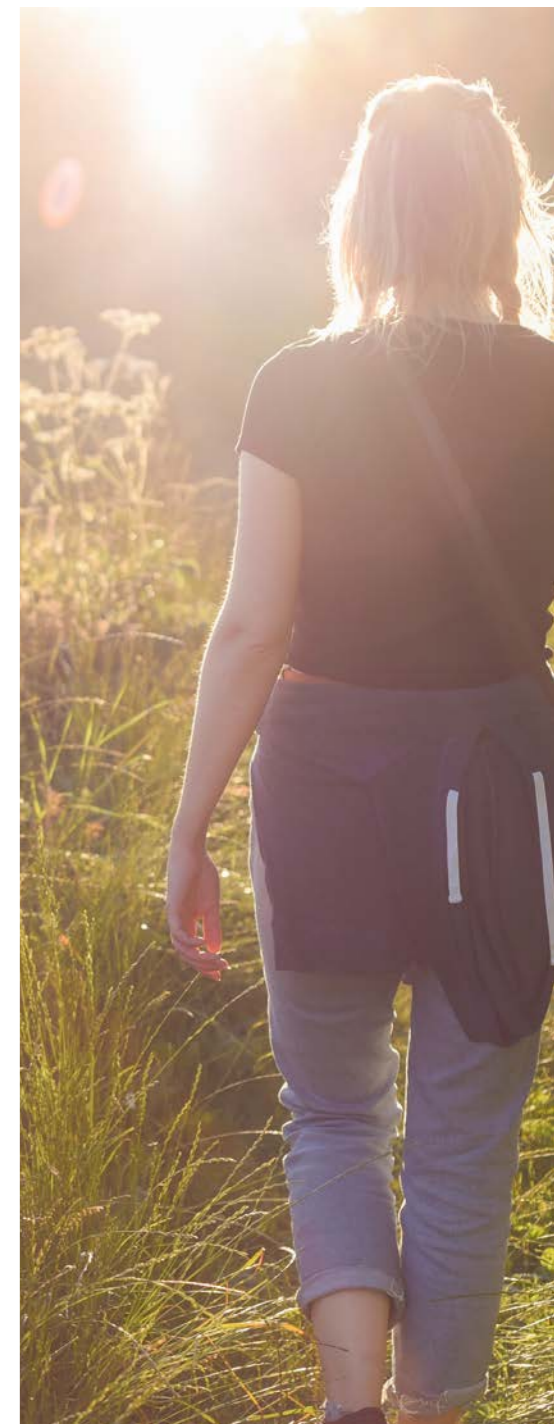
After you walk, write down any thoughts, ideas, feelings which occurred to you as you walked your pilgrim prayer.

PRAYER

Pilgrim God, there is an exodus going on in my life - desert stretches, a vast land of questions. Inside my heart your promises tumble and turn. No pillar of cloud by day or fire by night that I can see. My heart hurts at leaving loved ones and so much of the security I have known. I try to give in to the stretching and the pain. It is hard, God, and I want to be settled, secure, safe and sure. And here I am feeling so full of pilgrim's fear and anxiety.

O God of the journey, lift me up, press me against your cheek. Let your great love hold me and create a deep trust in me. Then set me down, God of the journey; take my hand in yours, and guide me ever so gently across the new territory of my life.

Amen.



PRAYER OF ONE GOING TO A NEW MINISTRY

Read and pray Psalm 121

Reflect on:

- The call of God in your life
- The love relationship that you have with God and the people of God
- Your own Egypt (anything that enslaves you and keeps you from moving on)
- The covenant and the promises of God
- The blessings of your past days and years of ministry
- The hopes you have for the future

Hold the bowl of fruit in your hands. Raise it in gratitude to God for all of your blessings.

Hold the seeds in your hands. Raise them in intercession for the dreams and goals of your new ministry.

Reflection: The sowing and the going

“I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.” (1 Corinthians 3:6-7)

Days of hard hoeing careful setting of seeds, delight of daylight, announcement of green touches. Earthened secrets give birth.

After hours in the garden, a greater meaning comes between the tiny radishes and tender shoots of asparagus.

Autumn will find me elsewhere, the garden left to harvest by hands that never knew the birth of its greening.

So, too with my ministry. The garden encircles the truth: sowing and going are trademarks, familiar patterns, for disciples.

The tug of the sowing and going is tempered by the stronger hold of a much greater Gardener, one who sowed first face of seed, who entrusted the growth to others, and gave himself to the going.

Thus it is that I stand reflectively in a garden so much smaller, praying the heart of sowing and going, and wanting to join in the journey.

All materials are adapted from *Praying our Goodbyes*, by Joyce Rupp (New York: Ave Maria Press, 1997)



PRAYER OF ONE WHO IS MOVING ON

Read Genesis 12:1-19 and Exodus 6:2-13

When you pack a case or box:

- What blessings of your life do you most want to carry with you as you move on? Name these.
- Thank God for the gift to carry these blessings with you in your heart as you move on.
- What blessings are you most in need of as you continue your journey? Name these.
- Pray for the grace to have these as part of your journey.

PRAYER

Guardian, guide, no pillar of cloud by day nor fire by night,
Yet I sense your presence with me, God of the journey.
You are walking with me into a new land.
You are guarding me in my vulnerable moment.
You are dwelling within me as I depart from here.
You are promising to be my peace as I face the struggles
of distance from friends and security,
the planting of feet and heart in a strange place.
Renew in me a deep trust in you. Calm my anxiousness.
As I reflect on my life I can clearly see
how you have been there in all of my leavings,
you have been there in all of my comings.
You will always be with me in everything.
I do not know how I am being resettled,
but I place my life into the welcoming arms of your love.
Encircle my heart with your peace.
May your powerful presence run like a strong thread
through the fibres of my being.

Amen.



NOTES


TRANSITION AND CHANGE FAMILY EXERCISES

TABLE TALK

Use the picture cards and Aces from a pack of cards as conversation starters for the whole family to join in. Cards are shuffled and drawn at random. Answers can relate to family, friends, schools/college, corps etc.

See the table below:

 DIAMONDS Questions linked to precious memories that shine brightly.	 CLUBS Questions linked to people.	 HEARTS Questions linked to love and things which have been life-giving.	 SPADES Questions linked to messy situations and digging deep.
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Jack: What memory of your time here shines brightest?

Queen: Who has had the most positive influence on you?

King: Where have you been able to shine the most during your time here?

Ace: What's the most precious memory you will take with you?




Jack: Which group of people have you most enjoyed spending time with / serving?

Queen: What would you like to say in a 'farewell speech' to your friends?

King: Within the groups of people you have got to know, where have you seen Jesus?

Ace: Who are the people you will miss the most?




Jack: What have you loved doing while living here?

Queen: Who has had the most positive influence on you?

King: How have you seen God's love expressed?

Ace: What's the funniest thing you'll remember about living here?



Jack: Thinking of the things you've done while living here, what's caused you to 'dig deep'?

Queen: Who have been the people who have helped you 'dig deep' or maybe even taken over and done the digging for you?

King: In the digging, is there something that has gotten stuck to you and you need to shake off?

Ace: What have you 'aced' / been really pleased about, and would want to celebrate while living here?



PAPER CUBE CRAFT ACTIVITY WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN

Make a cardboard/paper cube (you can find a free printable template here: <https://www.firstpalette.com/craft/paper-dice.html>).

Using old magazines/comics/online search, ask the children (each family member) to choose some pictures to stick on the cube that represent:

- Things they are looking forward to about moving
- Things that make their tummy feel funny or what they feel scared about
- Things they will miss
- Choose two pictures for each category. Play as a game with the children or as a family and ask them to each explain the picture shown after a roll.

FAMILY MEMORY BOX

Creating a family memory box is a helpful way to gather up precious things e.g. photos, fabrics (part of a school uniform), flyers, magnets etc as a way of acknowledging loss and taking those precious things into the future. Children (and maybe all of us) can sometimes be fearful that they will forget people, places and this can be a helpful tool in allowing them to take the love and the memories into the new setting.

NOURISHING RELATIONSHIPS

The value society places on autonomy and individualism may mean we are at times tempted to develop a spirituality that does not require others; we 'go it alone'. Yet nourishing relationships can actually strengthen our resilience, helping us to remain true to our vocation.

A Biblical Basis

- The Trinity:**
Companionship between Father, Son and Spirit places friendship at the very heart of the nature of God. [Genesis 1:1,2; Colossians 1:15-17; Luke 3:21-22]
- Friendship in the Bible:**
 - Church as a body: 1 Corinthians 12 – Making the journey together.
 - Jesus and his disciples: John 15:13-16 – Jesus invited his followers to be his friends.
 - Examples of friendship within the Bible – David and Jonathan: 1 Samuel 18:1 (start of friendship), 2 Samuel 11:26 (death of Jonathan).
 - Ruth and Naomi – Ruth 1:16-17.

Ministry and Transition

- Time and Distances**
As officers we are never in any one community for a great length of time. Our nomadic way of life can mean we invest in fewer friendships, or the friendships we have are spread out geographically, requiring increased intentional investment of our time and energy.
- The nature of the role**
The dynamic of being a pastor will be different from being a friend. As officers we give without expectation of return; the relationship tends to be one of providing care.

SUPPORT NETWORK MAPPING EXERCISE

Start off by writing your name at the centre of a sheet of paper. Focus on the following: your family, your neighbours, who you consider to be a friend, who is an acquaintance and who you provide care for.

- Around your name, write down names of all the people you feel supported by, and draw an arrow from each name to yours. The more support you get from them, the thicker the arrow you draw.
- Write down the names of people you play an active role in supporting. Have an arrow from your name to theirs, and the more support you give the thicker the arrow you draw.
- Who are the 'believing mirrors'? These are the people who reflect a positive belief in you and what you do. Draw a circle around their names.

Looking at your support network as a whole, how do you feel? Are there any changes you would like to make? Are there some relationships you would like to strengthen? Perhaps others you would like to take a step back from?

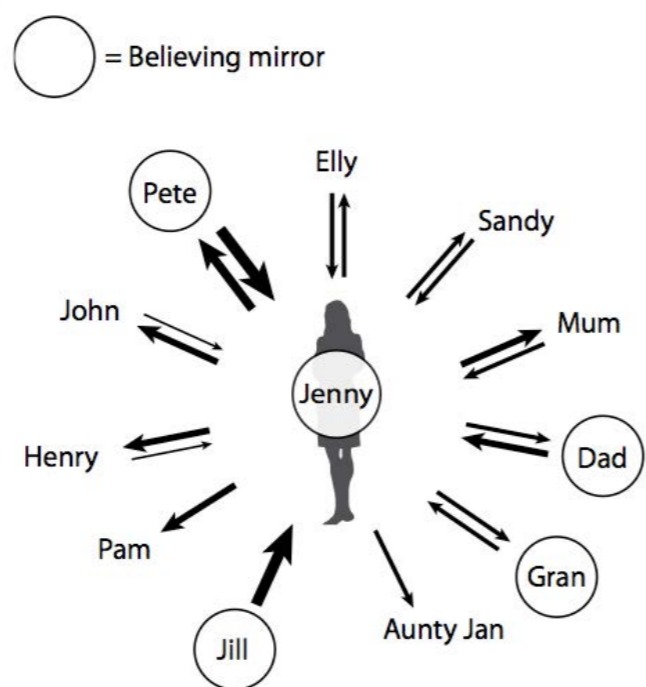


Diagram: Chris Johnstone 2019 (Resilience Practitioner Training) used with permission.

Friendship will be two-way, a mutual and reciprocal giving and receiving. A 'believing mirror' is somebody who reflects back positive belief in you and believes that you can succeed.

'In caring for me, my friends ... do not simply want me to stay the way I am. Rather they seek my growth. They want me to become all I can be. To develop my gifts and fulfil my potential. They want nothing less for me than that I become the full-orbed person I am called from eternity to be in Christ.'

Sacred Companions (D.G. Benner, 2002, pp67,68)

Things to consider as you transition from your appointment:

- What nourishing relationships do you have in your life? (It may be helpful to write these names down in this booklet).
- What will be required to maintain these relationships?
- Which supporting relationships will you let go of?
- As you move from your appointment, who are the people that will be assigned to the next officer?

NOTES

PRAYER

I come to you today in gratitude for the people in my life: friends, co-workers, family and neighbours. I give you thanks for all the relationships in my life and ask that you be present and at work in each of them.

I thank you for the way I am encouraged and built up particularly by _____ and ask for your help in keeping each of these nourishing relationships alive.

I pray for the people I have journeyed with. I give them to your care and ask that you help them to continue to make progress with the person who is succeeding me in the appointment.

Open my eyes to the new friendships I can make, and new people I can connect with.

Help me to be a good friend to others, to always look out for their wellbeing and seek their growth. May I be patient with them as you are with me, and see their potential as you do. Help me to shine your light in my friendships in all that I say, think and do.

In your name I pray.

Amen.

NOTES

'Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.' (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

'Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.' (Galatians 6:2)

'A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.' (Proverbs 17:17)

'Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.' (1 Peter 4:10)



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The Salvation Army is a Christian Church and registered charity in England and Wales (214779), Scotland (SC009359) and the Republic of Ireland (CHY6399)