

Getting Teams 'Change Ready'

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## Aims of this session

- To introduce you to some skills that will be critical in leading change
- To recognise the fundamental role that leaders will play in getting teams ready for the changes ahead
- To create an environment where teams see change as an opportunity
- To introduce you to the concept of 'managing transitions'

"It isn't the changes that do you in, it's the transitions"

*William Bridges, Managing Transitions, 1991*

- In the book 'Managing Transitions, William Bridges draws a clear distinction between *change* and *transition*
- Change is defined as being situational e.g. a move to a new site, or the reorganisation of a team. With change, we naturally focus on the outcome that the change produces

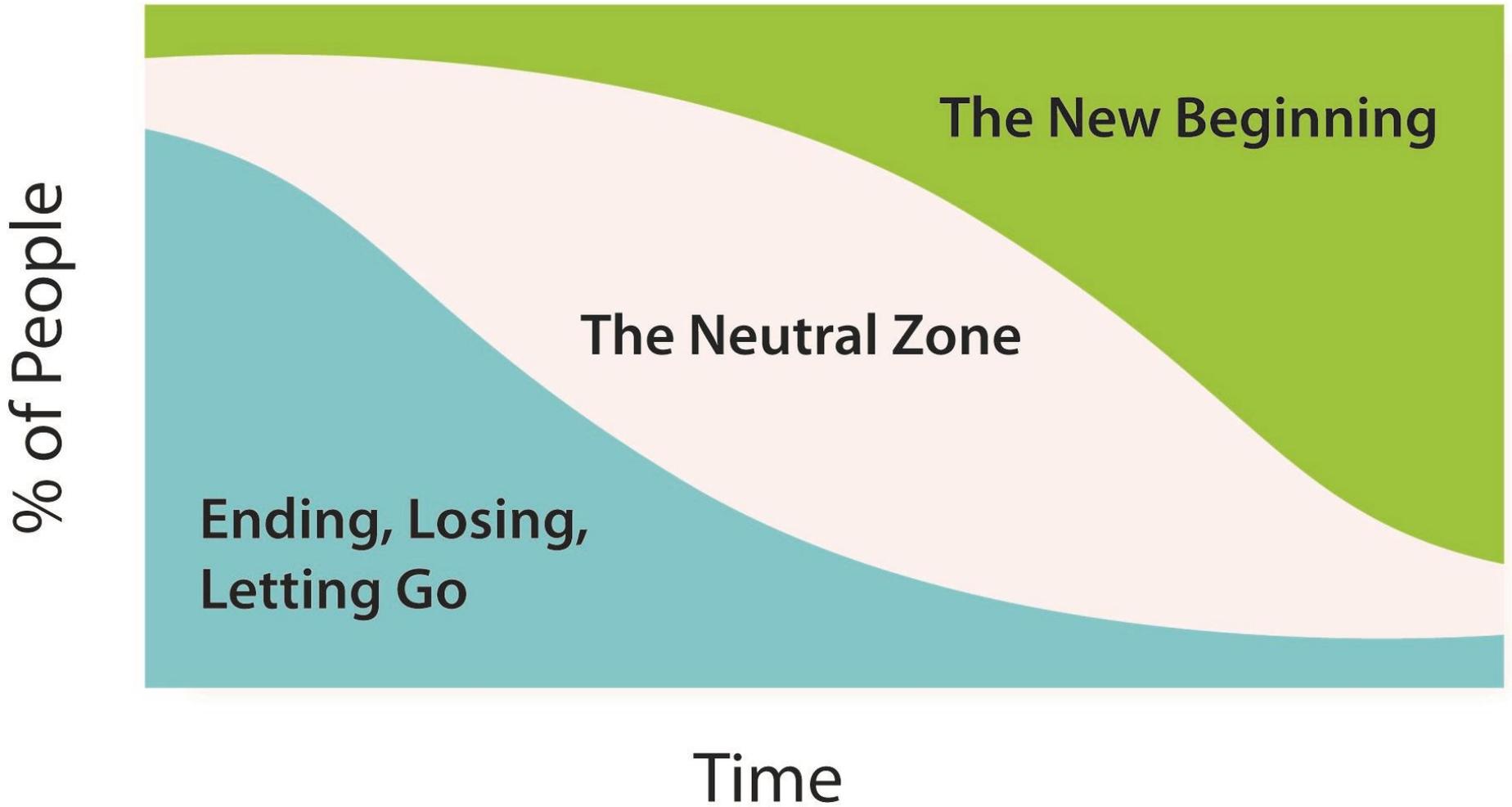
But...

- "without a transition, a change is just a rearrangement of the furniture..."

## | Transition

- Transition is psychological
- The starting point for transition is not the outcome *but the ending that you'll have to make to leave the old situation behind*
- Even where there are good changes, transitions begin with an ending - this is paradoxical, but true
- William Bridges identified transition as a three-stage process that people go through as they internalise and come to terms with the details of the new situation that the change brings about

The three phases of transition  
William Bridges, 1991



## The three elements of transition

- **Ending, Losing, Letting Go.** This involves letting go of the old ways and the old identity people had. This phase is an ending, and the time when you need to help people deal with their losses
- **The Neutral Zone.** An in-between time when the old is gone but the new isn't fully operational. Here, critical psychological realignments and repatterning take place.
- **The New Beginning.** People develop the new identity, experience the new energy and discover the sense of purpose that make the change begin to work

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*"It's not so much that we're afraid of change or so in love with the old ways, but it's that place in between that we fear...It's like being between trapezes. It's Linus when his blanket is in the dryer. There's nothing to hold on to."*

*Marilyn Ferguson, American Futurist*



## | Change - Key points

*Change happens to people even if they don't agree with it.*

*"Before you can begin something new, you have to end what used to be. Before you can learn a new way of doing things, you have to unlearn the old way"*

*The Leader's role in change is not to make people feel happy; it's helping them succeed despite their discomfort.*



Exercise

In small groups, on flipchart paper, answer one of the following questions:

*Group 1: In your experience of change management, what is the impact of not letting go of the old?*

*Group 2: What can you do as leaders to help people let go of the old?*

*Group 3: What can you start to do now to get people started on this aspect of transition management?*



## Managing Endings: A Checklist

- Organisational changes fail where no one has thought about endings or planned to manage their impact on people
- While the first task of *change management* is to understand the desired outcome and how to get there, the first task of *transition management* is to convince people to leave home
- Review the checklist for managing endings and make a note of what you need to do to prepare the people you lead for changes ahead

| Thank you