

LIFE TRANSITIONS: NAVIGATING PERSONAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

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Most people experience major transitions at different times in their lives, times when they are undergoing significant changes in their relationships, emotions, body, self-concept, living arrangements, school/career path, or other circumstances. The process of going through adolescence is one such transition that most college students have already navigated. Other transitions can include becoming a young adult, illness or disability, death of a loved one, getting married and establishing a family, divorce, career change or job loss, societal unrest or upheaval, empty nest, moving to a new city or state, entering middle age, menopause, retirement or old age. Each of these types of transitions is unique and carries its own specific set of concerns, challenges and tasks to face. However, the process of going through a life transition is a similar one in some respects, regardless of the specific type of transition. Also, it is not uncommon that some of these changes coincide with attending, or coming back to, college.

Sometimes you go through a life transition that you choose, such as marriage, a voluntary career change or retirement. Other times, life transitions are not of your choosing, but are the result of getting older, facing external limitations, or needing to take on new responsibilities. Sometimes a life transition can come as a surprise, for instance if a person loses a job or a spouse leaves. Life transitions that are chosen by someone or that take place in a positive context can still involve stress, confusion and a sense of disruption. Life transitions that are not chosen can involve these same feelings, along with additional challenges. The questions below are intended to provide you with a structured opportunity to reflect on your situation and help you navigate your transition, regardless of what kind of transition it is.

١.	How would you describe the life transition that you are experiencing? Rather than just giving a one or two word answer, such as "divorce" or "moving to a new city," go into some detail and include the specifics of your situation.

 What are the challenges or dangers involved in this life transition? a. Practical, financial or logistical challenges: 				
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k	o. Emotional challenges:			
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C	c. Relational challenges (involving your relationships):			
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C	d. Other challenges			
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	e. Of the challenges you listed above, what would you rank as your top three challenges?			
3.	You may be familiar with the saying that the Chinese character for crisis connotes both danger and opportunity. You have reflected on the challenges or dangers involved in your situation. Now try to identify opportunities that may be present in your current situation or that may lie ahead on the other side of this transition. Go ahead and give it a try. If it's too difficult to come up with much at this point, that's okay.			
	a. Potential opportunities for practical changes in circumstances (for instance, living on your own for the first time; going to school full time as opposed to taking one class at a time, etc.):			
	b. Potential opportunities for emotional growth:			
	c. Potential opportunities for improving or deepening relationships, or developing new relationships:			

strengths, and aspect of your personality that you have not developed that you may be in a position give attention to on the other side of this transition? (Examples could include artistic interests, voicing true opinions in relationships with others, or a greater sense of independence.)
e. Of the opportunities you listed, which ones do you find most intriguing or compelling?
What do you need in order to move through this transition? (Examples may include things like support from others, a plan and help prioritizing tasks, time and space to grieve for losses, a vision for the future, or financial assistance.)

4.

•	After completing this exercise, what are the things you want to try to remember or keep in mind? What are the next steps that you want to focus on?