

Insider Transition Secrets

SPECIAL REPORT

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The Secret of Transitions

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Transition Means *No Fear*

Several times a month I'll get a call from someone who is networking and either in a life or a career transition. Most were seeking advice, job leads or my professional contacts. When I asked them specifically what they wanted and why, almost all of them made the same mistake. They played it safe and gave me a generic answer right out of some book they read on how to network for a job.

“Well Jim, I want to be a part of a team and add value. You know, I want to make a real contribution to their success.”

I think to myself, “No kidding?” Imagine that. A senior executive wants to add value. Hopefully, I didn't audibly sigh or visibly roll my eyes. I've learned that many people are afraid of being too specific because it might limit any ideas I have for them.

It's understandable. There are two prevalent sources of anxiety people in transition experience. One is financial. It can be stressful as one's net worth dwindles away while unemployed (or under employed). The other is emotional. Not having an identity tied to rank, title or position is unsettling enough for most high achievers. But it's the lack of engagement and not using their talents to make a difference that really gnaws at them. That is self-worth dwindling away.

After taking the safe way out and chit-chatting, they slide their resume over and start telling me their story. I listen as the resume verbs tumble out - led, created, initiated, developed, grew, increased, decreased, and on and on they go. I've listened to at least 200 people in transition and they all pretty much have the same thing to say.

What I don't hear are words like "love to" or "passionate about" or "must use my life to..." This never fails to surprise me. None of these people were willing to take a stand and declare what they were about, what they really wanted and why. They all lacked clarity about their purpose, what moved them, what brought them joy, and how they could make a difference. That alone compelled me to write *The Secret of Transitions*.

Even more distressing was that they were looking for somebody else to tell them where they could make a difference and find a place they belong - a place where they fit and were needed. They were hoping, and more likely praying, that they would be discovered. It just doesn't work that way any more. No one can or even has the right to tell you what your purpose is or where you fit. That is your first and most important job. Here are a few inside secrets that will help you create your future.

Secret Number 1

*"He who knows others is learned.
He who knows himself is wise."
-Lao Tse*

The great Chinese philosopher, Lao Tse, points the way to the first secret of transitions. Know yourself!

The quote referenced above was written in the year 600 B.C. You'd think by now it wouldn't be a secret, but it still is for many of us. We could save a lot of time and energy if we would only listen to lessons learned by others, especially those discovered thousands of years ago.

In order to transition you have to know your gifts, talents, passion, interests, personal mission, and ethical boundaries and how you want to put those to work. And not only how to put them to work, but also where.

That is best determined by a finding an existing need that pays what you are worth. Look for that need in your ideal industry, organizational size, environment, culture, product, services and customers. It's your life and your career. It's up to you to create your future and be able to tell a powerful story about how you can serve.

Why is it so rare for someone in transition to take a bold stand? My guess it's what stops almost any great endeavor - fear. Personally, I've found that lurking behind my greatest aspirations, there is resistance - usually in the form of fear and uncertainty. The bigger the dream, the greater the resistance.

It's only natural. To transition, we have to leave the safe and familiar behind. Fitting into a new culture, learning new skills or changing ineffective behaviors can be frustrating and awkward. Conscious incompetence is humbling. And that stops many people.

So how do you discover yourself? That's the second secret. Please read on.

Secret Number 2

Chip Away at Frozen Thinking Patterns

It is our beliefs about other people that limit our relationships and careers the most. If we can learn to challenge those beliefs at every step of the way, our lives and careers take on a fresh vitality. And it's from these beliefs about others that we can gain enormous insight about ourselves.

The mind can function like a brilliant prosecuting attorney, creating an airtight case out of the most flimsy evidence. It is especially masterful in collecting evidence about other people. In *The Set-Up-To-Fail Syndrome* by Jean-Francois Manzoni and Jean-Louis Barsoux we learn that the manager's perceptions of a new employee is strongly influenced by early mishaps, a former boss's evaluation and style differences. The manager then categorizes the employee as either "in" or "out." It is the category that then determines what performance evidence the manager will see in the future.

Those who are "in" get autonomy, positive feedback and strong votes of confidence. Not surprisingly, the "outs" get micromanaged and closely controlled. Losing confidence, they lose initiative and react mechanically to being controlled, providing even more evidence of their ineptness. It happens in the office, at home and in schools.

Who have you judged as incompetent and incapable? Do they ever get better? Or do they seem to go from bad to worse? Notice that if you truly believe they are beyond redemption, you never see the slightest degree of improvement in them.

Think of the last 10 times you were most upset, angry or disappointed with someone - at work, at home or with a friend.

Write down what happened and then see if you can find a pattern or a theme. Most of us have a particular sensitivity toward certain negative behaviors. For some people it's lying, incomplete work, missed deadlines, or evasiveness for example. What upsets you?

Whatever that is, there may be a surprise in store for you. But first do this simple exercise. Choose the incident that most upset you and, if possible, the one that stills triggers the most negative emotions. What do you believe about that person? Please go to the link below and download the **One Belief at a Time Worksheet**. It is an amazingly simple yet powerful tool developed by Byron Katie for self discovery.

www.thework.com/downloads/onebelief.pdf

What did you discover? Were you surprised to learn where your reservoir of judgments and evaluations come from? What did you learn about yourself in the turnarounds? Now use that same worksheet as you think about the transition you are considering, this will be especially helpful if you are experiencing any resistance or fear.

Secret Number 3 Neutralize the Fear

Many times, the only thing stopping a successful transition to the next level of mastery is the habit of believing every negative thought cluster that gathers. Like looking at a cloudy sky and thinking it is a permanent characteristic of the sky.

It's not the most quoted part of his inaugural address, but one I admire greatly, when young President John Kennedy said, "So let us begin anew - remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. "Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate."

One of coaching's first responsibilities is to help remove fear from any new situation the client is entering into. When facing a seemingly difficult transition, fear can hold you hostage, and that's why exploring worst-case scenarios can be very liberating.

First identify the worst that could happen. Write it down. Fully explore it by asking, "And then what?" until you can go no further. For example, the worst that could happen might be something like "I could lose my job and run out of money." And then what?

"Well, I wouldn't be able to pay my mortgage." And then what?

"I would lose my home, and my family would be on the street, living out of my car." And then what?

"I'd get a job. Any job. Even three or four jobs. I would do anything to move ahead. Even beg" And then what?

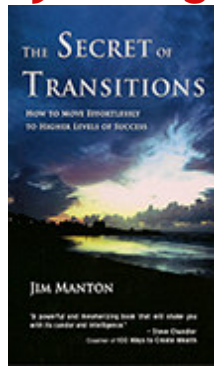
"I would rebuild and reclaim myself and my future. I don't think being homeless would really stop me."

And finally, "Couldn't I live with that? Couldn't I even find a way to benefit from that scenario? Who would I be if I came back from the worst case? What could I do for others with that insight? And

who would I be if I failed to come back? I'd still be the same person who gave all I had to give.”

Find the end of your story about a dreaded future. All stories ultimately end the same way - the fear ends and new story begins. Once you determine the so-called “worst” that could happen, mentally prepare by making contingency plans and focus on creating the best possible outcome for everyone involved.

Courageously Change Your Life!



Jim Manton is a Transition Coach and the author of ***The Secret of Transitions***.

Visit Jim’s website at www.SecretofTransitions.com to get the FREE eBook “Create the Courage to Live Your Life on Purpose.”