

## Transition Series: New Beginnings

It is important to note that this Transition Series is about a process and is not a play by play of what is actually happening. If it felt odd to talk about Endings before I left, talking about New Beginnings in the midst of all the change unfolding is even odder. But you and I will have these lessons to go back to when we really ARE in the midst of endings and the void and then checking to see if we are ready for a new beginning. Since we have developed our video resources, you not only can listen to the series, for half of it, you can watch it. I think I will approach this topic with a series of questions we ask ourselves and then try to answer the questions using information in our text, Finding Yourself In Transition. It is just a way to organize the information.

**How will we know it is a new beginning?** I think there are maybe two parts to this answer. First, Brumet indicates, “there is a subtle inner shift: a new sense of readiness, an inner awakening.” When we grieve and when we find ourselves in a void, sometimes we wake up one day and we are in a different place in consciousness. We are more alert. We are ready for something new to enter our lives. Not in an impatient kind of way. In an awake kind of way.

Second, there is a possibility presented and we are ready to make a commitment. Brumet cautions: “Making a commitment brings with it the possibility of failure. This could trigger any fears we have about failure. It may bring up some unhealed memories from the past. A commitment means being willing to risk oneself in order to invest in something one believes in.” The minister selection process has multiple layers of commitment required. First, the Selection Committee has to be ready to commit to a candidate to present to the board. Then the Board has to be ready to commit to the candidate to present to the congregation. Then the congregation has to be ready to commit to the candidate. If there is division or hesitancy about making that commitment at any level, it isn’t really a new beginning. It might be seeking a way out of the void, but without a solid commitment, it will not be a new beginning.

**Well, if we hire someone and it’s not a new beginning, what is it?**

Brumet calls it a *pseudobeginning*. He says it happens when we “attempt an external beginning before we are internally ready. We may feel uncomfortable in the Void and eager to ‘get on with our life’ and through the power of our personal will alone, we may **make** something happen.” Ring any bells with some people here before I came? Anyone had this experience in your personal life jumping into a relationship or job because you thought it was time you **did something!** The Void is not usually our happy place. We’ve discussed that. Yet the only way through the void, the only way through grief, the only way through our days is step by step moving through it. There are no real short-cuts through the void. Detours maybe. Pseudo-beginnings are detours that bring us right back to where we were in the void.

One of the things I have discovered is that in the Void is **NOT** the place to break rules. You know what I mean? Like, if the rule is you don’t hire an interim minister for the permanent minister, trust that the rule is there for a reason and don’t break the rule. If the bylaws say we hire a Unity credentialed leader, try not to bend the rule and decide that it would really be ok to hire someone without Unity credentials. You know how when we are younger and we have these rules and criteria about who we will date and then it’s Friday night and we’re alone and we’ve had a couple adult beverages and the rules of dating sort of fade from our minds. How does that usually go? Moses got the 10 Commandments in the Void of the Wilderness because folks weren’t doing that great making decisions on their own. We create structure to help us build with integrity. If we made a decision to change the structure when we were **not** in the midst of transition, it is much more likely to come from a place of peace and not fear. Fear based decisions are not as likely to turn out to be true new beginnings. You already know that AND after weeks and months in the Void you will begin to rationalize that it’s not really fear, it’s just adjusting your expectations. Stick with the structure.

**Should we be creating an intention and be intentional about the new leader we desire?** Yes and No. That is the honest and simple answer.

I am guessing that when I came to try-out 11 years ago, there were at least a couple people who thought, “Well this is **not** what I imagined for our new minister.”

It's hard to visualize in advance the package all this awesomeness is loaded into. LOL. And, if you were looking for Unity basics, a sense of humor, someone not too dramatic but creative and someone who could bring a sense of order, well you got what you needed.

Brumet offers that, "Perhaps the best approach is to be specific about the nature and quality of the experience that we desire but not be too specific about the particular form that it should take. Our soul's desire is to express itself in some unique way. It is important for us to determine **what** it is that is seeking expression. Specifically, **how** this is to occur can be left open to divine order."

There will be a balancing in not shutting the door on gifts that don't look exactly as you imagined and opening the door to a gift you don't really want but it's better than no gift at all. Perhaps begin with affirming **clarity** in the process. Clear guidance and harmony. Brumet offers an insight from his own experiences: "I believe that it was necessary for me to formulate my desires and surrender the results. It would seem that the process unfolds in a pattern of letting go and surrendering, making choices and commitments, and then letting go and surrendering once again. We are in a partnership with the divine: at times we must lead, and at times we must follow." Be in the dance and willing to let go when needed and willing to take the lead when needed.

### **Any other advice for a successful new beginning?**

I will start with my mantra for transitions, "Trust the process." Let the Endings be endings, even if it means you will feel sad for a while. Allow the feelings to come up and be acknowledged throughout the process. Let the Void be the empty space of creativity and openness as you prepare the inner work to be ready for a New Beginning. Don't try to rush through the Void. Notice if something is coming up for healing. Listen to one another with love. Practice Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love. The conflict may not be what it appears to be so be willing to go deeper. The issue is not someone's personality. Get beyond that level for the healing to unfold. Making changes after I leave is not a betrayal of me! Change is change and we are on a path to something new! Be clear and in harmony and you will know when the New Beginning arrives.

Commit to the New Beginning AND don't burden the tender new beginning with a lot of expectations. We have built what we have in our relationship over 11 years. Love and trust and relationship grow with contributions over the long haul. Getting to 11 years also takes forgiveness, of ourselves and each other. Remember church is STILL your relationship laboratory. Stuff blows up! Try to pick up the pieces without hurting anyone and don't wear open toed shoes. Oh sorry, that's just for the real laboratory.

This last little piece of advice is from the text: "Accept responsibility for being a creator in one's life." If the process isn't going as you'd like, look within for how to make changes that will alter the external experience. Acknowledge that a part of what you don't like is being generated in some way by you. Remind each other, "The good news is—it's all consciousness. The bad news is—it's all consciousness." Don't be mean. Just a gentle reminder of the power within us all to be the peace, the love and the wisdom we seek.

Next week is Palm Sunday and we will Celebrate Ministry! Based on the Governor's order, we'll still be back here on Facebook live or YouTube so hope to see you again next week.