

Stage 1: Letting Go

You're in Letting Go if you're feeling...



teary
loss
anger
don't-care attitude
anxiety
reckless
afraid
defiant
tired
sad
like overeating
nostalgic

LETTING GO

With every change, something comes to an end. "The way things were" becomes no longer possible. So the first stage in dealing with a change is letting go of what you're losing. These tools can help you understand what you're losing, say goodbye and imagine what good would come of the change.

TOOLS FOR LETTING GO:

Seeking Information:

- **Write for yourself** to figure out what you'll be losing when you change and how you feel about it.
- **Ask people you trust for feedback** on how you can let go.

Rituals and Ceremonies:

- **Make up a ceremony** to symbolize closure.
- Read about common rituals in different cultures or religions and adapt them to suit your needs.

Social Support:

- **Identify who could be helpful to you** (and who isn't), and ask those people for specific kinds of support.
- **Write letters** to people you are or have been close to, even if you don't send them.

Reflection and Experimentation:

- **Write** or think about a problem or situation **from the perspective of someone else involved in the change**, such as a trusted friend.
- Identify how you might be able to **make up for some of what you're losing**
- **Imagine new things you might get** from making this change that are better.

Identify Who is Helpful:

I knew I should change schools, but I was scared. I figured out that two people, my editor and social worker, would be helpful to me in figuring out what to do, but my family would not...I feel more in control of what is happening because I am choosing who I want to share this transition with me.



—Natasha



Stage 2: Chaos

You're in Chaos
if you're feeling...



inconsistent

defiant

adrift

lonely

a longing for the past

uncertain

engaged and then disengaged

like taking new risks

cautiously optimistic
fearful

CHAOS

The Chaos stage is a time of confusion. You've let go of the way things were but you haven't adjusted to the new way yet. The Chaos stage can be scary but also exciting. It's a time when you can explore new possibilities and try new ways of doing things.

Daily Ritual:

I read a book called *Path Finder: Real Life and Real Direction*. I decided that one ritual I could do is write progress notes to myself. When I finish reading a passage in the Path Finder book I write a progress note in my diary, so when I am feeling down I can look back and smile because I can see how much I have grown over the months.



—Erica

TOOLS FOR CHAOS:

Rituals and Ceremonies:

- **Set daily or weekly rituals** to order your days during the time of chaos.
- **Create a ceremony** that will give you a sense of closure on the past, or open the gates to a new way of being.
- Surround yourself with things that remind you of good times or make you feel comfortable, peaceful, or at home.

Social Support:

- **Search out others** who may be going through a similar change.
- **Ask a trusted friend** or adult **for feedback** on how you're handling your change

Seeking Information:

- **Read a book** related to the issue.
- Ask yourself, "Now that the old way has ended, what are my options?"
- **Take a class or try an activity** that might help with your situation.

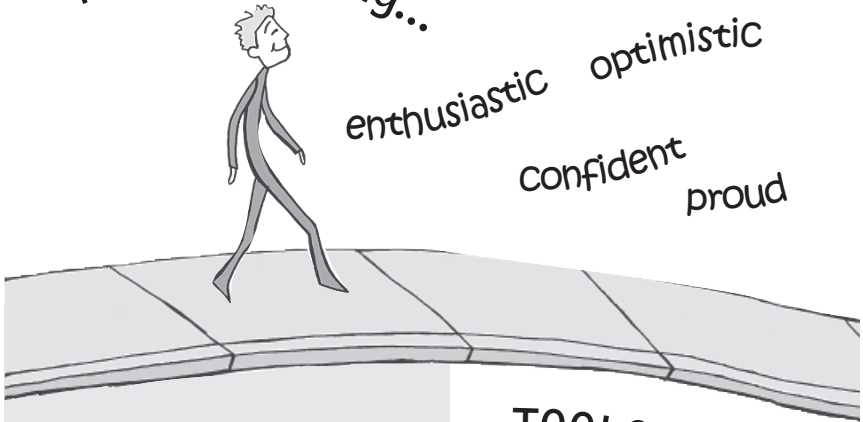
Reflection and Experimentation:

- Freewrite, asking yourself: "**How do the feelings I have about this change relate to my past?** How am I different now than I was back then?"
- **Attend therapy** and talk about your anxieties and hopes.
- **Try new ways of acting** to figure out what might work better for you in the future.

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Stage 3: New Start

You're in New Start
if you're feeling...



All Art by YC

NEW START

New Start, the last stage, happens when you've really accepted the change and have made it part of your life. It can take a very long time to get to New Start—you might need months or even years to change deep-seated feelings and behaviors. You only get there once you've dealt with all of the issues and emotions the change brought up. Then the new way of doing things will start to feel familiar.

TOOLS FOR NEW START:

Social Support:

- **Involve someone in celebrating with you.**
- **Tell your friends how you've changed** and ask them to support the new you.

Rewards

- **Make up** something "official" to recognize your change—like a **certificate to yourself**, or a letter of recognition.

Rituals and Ceremonies:

- **Invent a symbol of your change**, like a memento to carry with you, a change of dress, a picture, etc.
- **Make up a ceremony** to acknowledge that a change has happened.

