



UICS NEWS

It has been said that the only constant in life is change. Often, many of us don't stop to appreciate how true this statement really is. If we look around, we can see that everything is in flux, from nature to society to our own sense of identity. Nothing stays the same for very long. This principle is most apparent to us on a personal level during life transitions. Examples include graduating from high school, starting and ending relationships, changing careers, or starting a family; but, the examples are endless. Transitions often involve mixed emotions. There can be excitement and/or anxiety about what is to come, alongside relief and/or grief about the end of the way things were.

Here at UICS, we are going through a major transition of our own. After over 25 years of dedicated service, our beloved administrative assistant, Joan Bond, retired at the end of May. For us, there is definitely a sense of grief about not having her regular presence in the office. However, we are also happy for her as she enters this exciting, new chapter of her life. There is also a sense of optimism and excitement in the office as we welcome our new administrative assistant, Natalie Maga. We feel certain that Natalie will fit in nicely and work hard to serve our members and clients.

Please join us in both a fond farewell to Joan and a warm welcome to Natalie. And, as always, please know that the UICS team is here to support you with whatever changes life throws your way.

The Team @UICS



10 Signs It's Time For A Major Life Change

Change is part of life. And whether you like it or not, it's going to take place with or without your approval. Often, change can be more enjoyable if you make a change instead of waiting for the universe to do it for you. Here are 10 signs it is time for a life change:

1. When you romanticize the past to escape the present.

Ask yourself why you're afraid to look at the present, and take steps to create a more positive situation.

2. When you resist unexpected opportunities out of fear of the unknown or what others will say.

Instead of holding onto what isn't working, be open to letting go so you can make room for what will work.

3. When you feel numb.

When we feel numb to life, it's because we've lost passion and motivation. Ask yourself if you're just going through the motions. Try doing more of what you love each day and watch your inspiration come back.

4. When you've lost all passion for your current situation.

Be willing to let go of what no longer serves you. Some situations, places, hobbies and people have expiration dates. As you grow and change, so do your passions.

5. When you start to lie to yourself and others to avoid the truth.

Lying creates inner turmoil, shame and guilt. Instead of festering in these feelings, ask yourself what you're running from and are afraid to admit.

6. When your actions don't align with your words.

Actions will always speak louder than words. If you aren't doing what you say, ask why you're overpromising.

7. When your relationships feel superficial.

Sometimes breaking up with a best friend or romantic partner is the best thing for your personal well-being.

8. When you feel disenchanted with life.

Staying in situations that no longer serve you always produce a byproduct of discomfort. Give yourself permission to follow your heart and step into your future.

9. When you sense you are settling.

Repeat the mantra, "I do not settle. I am worthy of my desires and believe in my well-being."

10. When your mind drifts to better ways of being.

Trust the nudges coming to you. These inspirational pushes are the catalyst to propel you into a happier and healthy life.

Adapted from Mindbodygreen.com

6 Keys to Handling Life's Transitions

Ready or not, we all go through numerous transitions in our lives. Some are by choice, and others are imposed on us. Whatever the circumstances, navigating this grey zone of transitions can be difficult, presenting us with new problems and demanding us to respond in new ways. Here are some tips for surviving and thriving through these difficult and uncertain times:

Expect to feel depressed and anxious. Whenever we move forward we leave something behind, and this creates a psychological state of grief, however small. And if the change is unexpected and unwanted— the sudden job layoff or relationship breakup – the shock and depression are greater. And with such turmoil comes anxiety. We are out of our comfort zone; our imaginations run wild; we worry about an unknown future.

Realize that this is a new / old chapter in your life. While you need to acknowledge your loss, you don't want to get stuck in the past. Acknowledging that a door is closed is psychologically healthy; spending your time staring at it is not. While it sounds like a cliché, the next step after an end is a new beginning, a new chapter, and keeping this in mind can give you a sense of a fresh start. And while the particular circumstances are new, the process itself is familiar. You have, after all, made transitions before – changing schools, neighborhoods, relationships, jobs. You know the terrain, you've acquired experience and skills along the way. You can do this again, and this time even better.

Think positive, think opportunity. During times of transition, when everything seems to be in flux, when your old patterns have collapsed, you may feel unsteady but are also most malleable to change. Now is the time to explore, brainstorm, and consider the make-over before your life begins to naturally solidify into new patterns. You now have the unique opportunity to begin your new life in a new way. This is the time to think outside the box.

Hit the ground running. And don't take too long to get started. We are creatures of habit and routine, if we let anxiety take over during a transition, then those routines can quickly congeal. The momentum is then lost and it will feel harder to break out.

Get support. It's tough to do this all on your own. It can be very beneficial during times of change to turn to friends, family and counsellors for support. When you are feeling a bit ungrounded, support from others can help you keep perspective and forward momentum.

Have realistic timeframes and expectations. It should be expected that there will be difficult days when setbacks occur. It is important to practice patience and appreciate that it takes time to adapt to new circumstances. Anything less will only add more pressure and stress.

Transitions are those unique times when we toss off the old but have not yet stepped into the new. While the circumstances are always different, the skills and attitudes needed to successfully move ahead are always the same, namely being positive, patient, and proactive.

A new journey awaits.

- Adapted from *Psychologytoday.com*

Couples Corner



Fixing Relationship Problems with Humor

Humor isn't a miracle cure for relationship problems, but it can be an important tool to help you overcome the rough spots that afflict every relationship from time to time.

Whether your relationship problems stem from issues connected to money, sex, commitment, health, employment, parenting styles, or growing apart, you can use humor to help resolve problems and strengthen relationships.

Humor can help you and your loved one:

- **Form a stronger bond to each other.** Your health and happiness depend, to a large degree, on the quality of your relationships—and laughter binds people together.
- **Smooth over differences.** Using gentle humor often helps you address even the most sensitive relationship issues, such as sex or in-laws.
- **Diffuse tension.** A well-timed joke can ease a tense situation and help you resolve disagreements.

Ways to Develop Your Playful side:

- **Monitor your partner's nonverbal cues.** If your partner is not appreciating or enjoying your attempts at humor, you'll be able to tell from his or her body language. Does her smile seem fake or forced? Is he leaning away from you or leaning towards you, encouraging you to continue?
- **Avoid mean-spirited humor.** It may work for some comedians on stage, but used one-on-one at home, it will not only fall flat but may also damage your relationship. Saying something hurtful or insulting, even when framed as a joke, will alienate the other person and weaken the bond between you.
- **Create inside jokes.** An inside joke is something that only the two of you understand. It can often be reduced to a word or short phrase that reminds you both of a funny incident or amusing story, and is usually guaranteed to generate a smile or laugh from the other person. When you and your partner are the only ones "in" on the joke, it can create intimacy and draw you together.
- **Don't be afraid to "play the fool."** Remember, you're not trying to impress or entertain your partner, but simply to lighten up and make the two of you more relaxed. Goof around and be silly like a kid. It can lower your partner's defenses, relieve tension, and help you to smooth over differences.

Adapted from Helpguide.org

"The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance."

- Alan Watts