

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

08. How to Stay Encouraged in Seasons of Transition

You are listening to episode 08 of the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. Welcome back! I'm happy to journey with you today! Are you finding yourself in a season of transition? Because if you are, many of us are right there with you. Not only that, but our seasons are in transition, too, from summer to autumn. On the calendar they did that last week. Well, let's get into this episode to find encouragement and hope for the seasons of transition we find ourselves in. Are you ready? Let's go.

I can recall the morning well. Being an early riser, I opened my eyes, said good morning to God, and was ready to make it a great day. But then I remembered. It took a moment, but I almost forgot this morning would be different. This morning was the first of many without our children home. No more making sure they were awake on time. No more making breakfast for all of us. And no more hugs before they bounded out the front door for the day.

Goodness the house was eerily quiet.

We had moved our youngest to college the day before, and I wasn't ready for the emotions that accompanied this move. Years prior when our daughter moved out, that was difficult too. But knowing our son was still home with us consoled my grieving heart back then. But with our son now gone, well, this was entirely different. This was it. He was our last at home and with our home now empty, my heart felt the weight of this reality.

How would I make it through this transition when for 15 years, all I knew was raising and parenting our children? And suddenly they are both gone? How am I supposed to function with the house so empty? What am I to do now?

This season of transition was four years ago, but I remember it well and still feel all the feels.

One thing is for sure, seasons of transition are a part of life.

What is a transition, anyway? Well, you know me. I looked it up. Dictionary.com defines it as: *movement, passage, or change from one position, state, stage, subject, concept, etc., to another; change.*

Life is full of transitions, right? And some say life is one big season of transition. I kinda agree. Because your life and mine consistently changes, adapts, adjusts, shifts, and transforms as we mature and as the environment around us changes. Life does not stay the same and neither do we.

Just take a look back at your life five years ago. Are you the person you were back then? (Goodness, I'm thankful I'm not.) Are your surroundings the same? How about your preferences, your beliefs, your dreams and goals? Are they the same? Likely not.

Our lives are full of seasons of transition.

This reminds me of Ecclesiastes, chapter 3.

For everything *that happens in life*—there is a season, a right time for everything under heaven:

A time to be born, a time to die;
a time to plant, a time to collect the harvest;
A time to kill, a time to heal;
a time to tear down, a time to build up;
A time to cry, a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, a time to dance;
A time to scatter stones, a time to pile them up;
a time for a *warm* embrace, a time for keeping your distance;
A time to search, a time to give up as lost;
a time to keep, a time to throw out;
A time to tear apart, a time to bind together;
a time to be quiet, a time to speak up;
A time to love, a time to hate;
a time to go to war, a time to make peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 VOICE

Wow, so many seasons are found in this passage! Did you hear one that described the season you're in right now? Even though life is full of seasons of transition, and we each experience them, they can still be difficult to navigate.

Your season of transition is likely not the same as anyone else's.

In last week's episode I shared about the season of transition I am in because of letting go of something I've done for 21 years. Transitions come from various sources, reasons, and situations. Your season of transition might stem from losing a loved one or a debilitating diagnosis or an unwanted divorce. Or maybe it has to do with a birth or a child, or your children starting or returning to school. Or it might be from a change in jobs, locations, or vocations. Maybe it's from making positive changes in your life like bettering your health or learning a new skill or saying goodbye to a bad habit. Or maybe it's from something entirely different.

No matter, seasons of transition can be full of all sorts of emotions and experiences. Some of us may thrive in transition. Others, not so much. Seasons of transitions are full of change, and for some of us, well, that causes uncertainty, and confusion. Some of us may lose our sense of direction, our purpose, or our ability to function as normal. We might find ourselves in a fog of sorts. Some of us might withdraw or lash out. And some of us might need some help with dealing with a season of transition.

On the other hand, some of us embrace seasons of transition. We're ready for a change, a fresh start, a new opportunity. We may think "it's about time my life is changing!" We may be looking forward to a bright future and this season of transition will take us there.

However you perceive seasons of transition, no way is wrong.

Because we're each different, we process situations differently. We react differently. We behave differently. And that's okay. So, how we seize life and make the most of life through our seasons of transition will vary, too. There's no one way to do this. There's no cut and dry formula. Nor is there a step-by-step plan of action. What's important, however, is to give ourselves grace as we navigate these seasons, and give others grace, too, as they navigate theirs.

As we walk through seasons like this, many of us might even experience the stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance). And that's completely normal. No matter how you experience it, if you're having trouble dealing with the transition, I encourage you to find someone you can talk with. A trained counselor, a pastor, a trusted friend. Don't walk through the transition alone. It's healthy to ask for help.

How we can stay encouraged in seasons of transition?

Draw near to God. I have learned that I don't walk through seasons of transition very well on my own. I need God's presence, guidance, and help. So, I cling to Him when I feel like I've lost my footing or when it feels life is becoming unpredictable in the transition. Because I know He's already going before me, I can trust He will not lead me astray. The closer I draw near to God, the more peace I'm filled with.

Give yourself permission to let go. Sometimes the hardest part is letting go, isn't it?? Letting go of how we've always known things to be. Letting go of how we think things should be. But when we release the past as we transition, we are better able to embrace what's ahead.

Take it one day at a time. You and I don't have to have the transition all planned out. In fact, that's impossible to do. All we need to do is take things one day at a time, sometimes one moment at a time. When life feels a bit heavy, pause, take a moment to breathe, pray, and begin again.

Look for what God is doing. Because God is always with you and me, and because He is good, He will bring good from and in this season. May we be alert to what He is doing. May we pay attention to what He is teaching us, and any lessons He wants us to learn. What blessings do we see? With what unexpected gifts is He encouraging you and me? He is with us. Let's not forget that.

Embrace the adventure. The idea that life is one grand adventure with God continues to encourage me. Even in the unknown seasons of transition, you and I can look to the future with hope and promise. God is carrying us through to His best for us, even if that's different than what we think is best. God has good plans for our lives, friend. We can embrace this adventure with Him.

The seasons of transition we find ourselves in don't have to be dreadful, even if they are difficult. God may be doing something new and beautiful in your life and in mine right now. Right in this season. And instead of us trying to hurry up and get through the transition, safe and sound on the other side, maybe this season is the actual gift. We might just not see it yet.

As our son settled into college, and as I slowly got used to the quietness of our home in his absence, my heart became less and less sad. Little by little, God helped me see that season was a time of growth for all of us. Growing pains are painful. That's why they are called growing pains, I guess. But as I looked for how God showed up and the goodness He displayed in our lives back then, I became oh so grateful for

that season. He was faithful, and He has been in every season of transition I've walked through. He'll be faithful in your season, too, friend. Stay close to Him.

We are discussing this in our new community on Facebook, the Encouragement for Real Life Community Facebook group. I invite you over to join the conversation. We've designed it to be the most encouraging space on the internet. The link is in the show notes. And if you are encouraged through this episode, I encourage you to rate it and review it so others can be encouraged as well.

Thanks for being here today. I appreciate you. God bless you.

Julie Lefebvre