

Journaling Exercise: Life Transitions

The following is an example of moving through a life transition and a journaling template to help you process your own change. Remember that life disruptions are normal. In fact, you can expect that every person will go through 10-12 life disruptions, or “life quakes” in their lifetime. If you account for you, your family, loved ones, and friends, it likely means someone you know is going through a life transition right now. The good news is that you can come out better on the back end of a life quake; it just takes a little work.

Note that you may not go through these stages linearly, and you may go through them more than once. It takes time to go through all of the stages, so don’t feel pressured to complete this exercise in a week, a month, or even a few months. To complete the last step – Tell It – you need to have space between the disruption and today so you can reflect on your entire transition. Depending on what the life quake was, that could take a year or more. There’s no right or wrong way to do this.

Life Quake Example

The journaling prompts that follow apply to any life transition, but let’s use this example as we work our way through the stages: You’ve been let go from your job, and you feel lost about what to do next.

Continue on through journaling exercise on the next page...

Step 1: Accept It

The first step to process a life transition is to accept it. Neither you nor a higher power can change it. In our example, accept that your employment has ended. Your employer isn't going to call you back and say they made a mistake and ask you to come back to work.

For your own life transition, use the space below to identify why this change is difficult. What emotions are you feeling around the change? Is anything holding you back from accepting it? If so, what are some realistic ways you can overcome each of them?

Step 2: Mark It

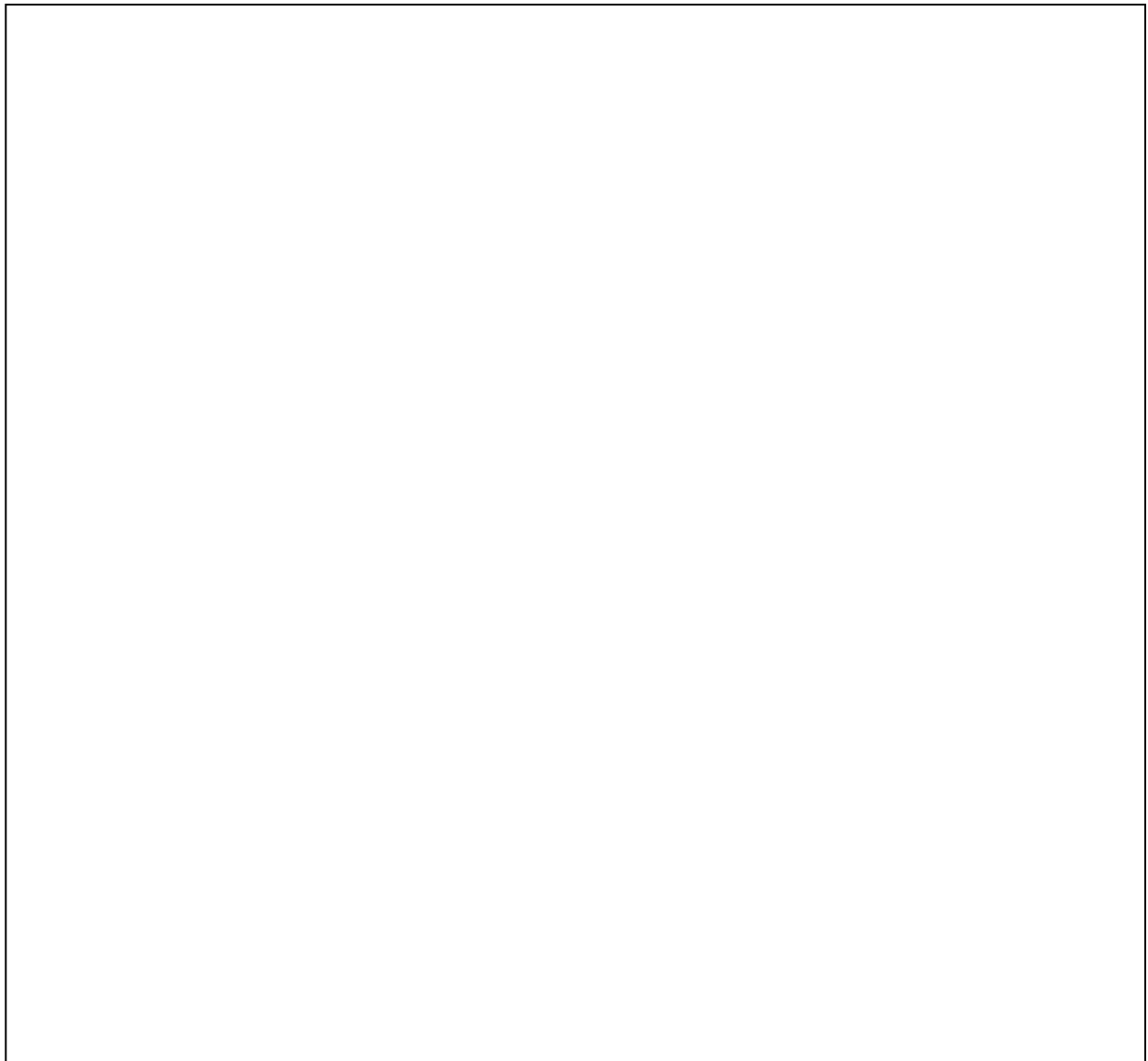
Make a commitment to today being the day you start moving forward. In our example, you might celebrate the change by going out with some friends, you might go on a hike to clear your mind, you might (safely) burn something from your old job.

As you work through your transition, how can you mark your commitment to change? Use the space below to identify a ritual you can use to mark the change. What will you do, where will go, and who (if anyone) will you invite to mark it with you?

Step 3: Shed It

Let go of your old attitudes. They're holding you back. In our example where a previous employer let you go, perhaps you feel resentment towards their management team. Let it go of it. Holding on to resentment or perceptions about your old job will not help you find a new one. Focus on moving forward.

Dealing with your own life quake, use the space below to identify old attitudes that may be holding you back. Instead of focusing on the negativity that has happened, how can you focus on moving forward towards positive change?



Step 4: Create It

Learn some new skills, try new things, or start new hobbies to create the new reality and who you want to be on the other side of the crisis. In our example of looking for a new job, do you want to change careers or try to make a move up in position? You could take classes towards a degree or certification, start volunteering within the industry you're interested in, or go to networking events to meet new people.

To help with your own change, use the space below to write what new activities, hobbies, or interests you want to learn about in order to make the new you. Be specific. Where can you engage with these activities and when will you start?

Step 5: Share It

Connect with someone close to you and let them know about your goals. Get their feedback and ask them for support. In our example of looking for a new job, reach out to a trusted friend or colleague and tell them your plan for a new job. Have them review your resume to make it stronger.

Use the space below to identify 1-2 people in your life you can share your transformation with. Note what you're going to share with them and how you might need their support.

Step 6: Launch It

Make it official! Publicly unveil the new you. This doesn't have to be a media event or even done on a big stage. Just publicly say who you are now. In our ongoing example of finding new employment, maybe you'd make a post on LinkedIn to let your contacts know that you're looking for a new job.

Use the space below to outline how you'll launch the new you. How will you publicly announce the change? What reaction do you anticipate, and how will you handle feedback (negative and positive)?

Step 7: Tell It

Time to tell your new story! Look back and see how far you've come, share how you changed and how you see a positive future ahead of you. In our example of finding a new job, once you've found a new employer and had a chance to acclimate to the change, reflect on how far you've come. Maybe have a party celebrating the new you, make a post thanking the people who helped/supported you, or just take a moment to reflect on how far you've come and how you feel about the future.

In the space below, tell your story. Recap where you were when you started this process. What have you learned? How do you feel about the future? Do you feel better prepared for the next life transition?

Additional Resources

For more information on managing life disruptions, we encourage you to read *Life Is in the Transitions: Mastering Change at Any Age* by Bruce Feiler.

Additionally, Youturn Health peer coaches can help you with stress management, life transitions, grief, coping strategies, and more. [Learn more about peer coaching.](#)