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**Support Others in Transition**

**By Rinatta Paries**

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Is someone you care about going through an ending or a difficult transition, feeling sad or grieving? Are you?

Everyone experiences changes in life. With most endings and transitions — such as job changes, the ending of a relationship, or the death of a loved one — grief and sadness are a normal part of the process.

Unfortunately, people experiencing grief and sadness are often given the message that they should do so in seclusion. While in public, they're encouraged to hide their emotions, put on a happy face, get on with life, etc. This is mostly because the rest of us are not comfortable with and don't know how to deal with grief and sadness in others.

Think about the last time you had a conversation with someone experiencing sadness or grief. Once the person started sharing his or her emotions, didn't you immediately want to offer encouragement, inspiration or a solution? Most of us do, and we believe we are being supportive by doing this.

But while we are busy fixing the person's problems, he or she has just lost the opportunity to be listened to. Telling his or her story and being listened to is vital during times of transition.

The following are some ideas to really help someone experiencing the grief or sadness of a transition. Follow the steps outlined below and you will be giving those you cherish a priceless gift.

If you are the one experiencing an ending, grief or transition, share these ideas with your friends and family to create a supportive environment for yourself.

**1. Listen Without Judgment.**

If your friend told you he lost a job, has financial problems or just ended a relationship, would you automatically assume it was his fault? And perhaps it was. However, even if your friend did cause the change, pointing out who is at a fault does not make it any easier to bear. He knows who is at cause.

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Your contribution is to listen while trusting that he will own the responsibility in time.

### 2. Listen Without Telling Your Story.

When people are in transition, they need to talk about emotions, thoughts and concerns. It's possible you may have had a similar experience and have great ideas to share. But the transitioning person is not ready for these just yet. He or she first needs to talk and be heard. No matter how close you are to the person undergoing sadness or grief, it is not your place to provide unsolicited solutions or stop his or her pain. Share your experiences only if asked.

### 3. Handle Yourself in the Face of Sadness or Grief.

Emotions are not contagious. If someone is sad, there is no requirement for you to also feel sad. If you take on the sadness of others, you take away their opportunity to experience their own feelings. If you

become sad as a result of listening to grief, the grieving person will immediately feel guilty and try to make you feel better. Listen to another's grief without taking it on and feeling it yourself.

### 4. Be Prepared to Deal with Your Fears.

When listening to another's difficult emotions, you may experience fear. You may become afraid of someday having to deal with a similar situation and wonder how you will handle it. You may not want to hear what is being said because of this fear. If this situation were to happen to you one day, you would deal with it to the best of your ability. Meanwhile, listening to another does not make it any more or less likely that something like this will happen to you.

### 5. Take Responsibility for Yourself.

If you feel emotionally full after listening to a grieving person, ask him or her to stop sharing. Simply saying, "I care about you and want to listen, but now is not a good time. Can I listen [give possible time]?" will do the trick. Unless you let others know you are not ready to listen, you are sending a message that could be easily misconstrued. If you force yourself to listen when you can't, the grieving person will sense your inability to be fully present. He or she may interpret your "vibe" as a message, something like: "Your sadness or grief is not ok. No one wants to hear about it, not even me. Please put on a happy face." He or she will likely shut down negative emotions to accommodate you. This is not good for either of you, as it makes the grief last longer.

### 6. Allow Sadness.

Emotions are not deadly. And unless your emotions are of a clinical intensity, they cause no harm and are a good and natural part of life. If you suspect clinical depression or any other mental health issue, please get help from a qualified professional. Most dark emotions, such as sadness and grief, are just as natural and healing as joy and laughter. Allow the person undergoing change to feel sad; it is good for the soul. It's also his or her right.

### 7. Don't Determine the Time Limit on Another's Emotions.

We often want others to hurry up and get over their emotions so that our life can get back to normal. It is not up to you to determine when it's time for another to get over his or her emotions. Emotions have their own time table.

## Support Others in Transition

If someone you care about is going through a transition and feeling sad or grieving, simply listen. By listening you will be giving him or her a vital gift.

If you are the one going through a difficult transition and feeling sad, grieving, find supportive people to simply listen to you.

Your relationships will be richer and fuller for the experience.

Your Relationship Coach,  
Rinatta Paries  
[www.WhatItTakes.com](http://www.WhatItTakes.com)

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With nearly a decade of relationship coaching experience, Master Certified Coach Rinatta Paries works with singles to help them attract their ideal relationship, and helps couples create more love and fulfillment in their existing relationships. Visit her web site at [www.WhatItTakes.com](http://www.WhatItTakes.com) or e-mail her at [coach@WhatItTakes.com](mailto:coach@WhatItTakes.com).

### **Why Schedule a Transition Phase?**

**By Matt Russ**

#### **Why Schedule a Transition Phase? by Matt Russ**

The transition phase may be referred to as "off season" training but is not a time to take "off." Actually, there is no "off" season. The transition phase is the time of year to let your body fully recover, both mentally and physically, while maintaining a level of fitness. It is the time to let those nagging little injuries heal up. The transition phase can last 4–6 weeks and occurs directly after the final peak of the season.

I usually give my athletes a week of rest or very limited training following peak, and then start the transition phase. I give them the most flexibility and autonomy during this period. I tell the athlete to take extra rest days if needed and we schedule a few weeks with consecutive days off. Cross training and other activities are encouraged, especially for runners. I like to give the joints and connective tissue a break from the impact of running and will schedule runs as little as 2x per week. I do not encourage racing during the transition phase other than at a base or non-competitive level. I discouraged a race that requires preparation or volume increase.

A typical transition week will have the athlete working out 4–5 days per week with rest days in between.

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There is no progression. Volume can be greatly reduced as long as there are brief bouts of intensity. I will cut interval volume way down but never eliminate higher intensities completely to maintain aerobic capacity. I do encourage one longer work out per week at a base level to maintain endurance. Some light strength training can occur, mainly to acclimate the body for resistance training. Reps are high, weight low, and the number of sets small. Core work is emphasized.

Mentally it may be hard for you to transition for the first time following peak. If you are used to higher volume and high intensity and you may feel they are going to loose too much fitness. I have found that athletes who transition a few seasons actually look forward to it and may train even harder leading up to transition. It is the light at the end of the tunnel. I like my athletes coming out of transition feeling a bit under trained and ready for the increased volume in base.

Conversely: taking time off completely means spending a majority of your base season making up for lost ground. Each season should build on the last. If you take 8 weeks off you may find your race times are similar to last years (or worse).

The transition phase is an important part of an annual training plan and should not be overlooked. Be sure you end your season with a transition before you begin the next.

Matt Russ has coached and trained athletes around the country and internationally. He currently holds licenses by USAT, USATF, and is an Expert level USAC coach. Matt coaches athletes for CTS, is an Ultrafit Associate, and owner of [www.thesportfactory.com](http://www.thesportfactory.com)



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