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Victorious SkillBuilding**TRANSITIONS: SEASONS OF GROWTH**

Spring is nearly over and, once again, nature's transition from winter doldrums into summer's lushness is nearly complete. For many, spring is also a time of personal change.

Are you one of the college graduates, newlyweds, growing families and empty nesters who are starting new jobs, leaving old ones, moving to new or bigger living spaces, or downsizing to smaller, more manageable digs? Or, *like me*, are you a baby boomer for whom parental caregiving is a new fact of life? Over the past year, my mother and mother-in-law have been making changes that aren't only transitions for them, but for me and my spouse as well.

If you can relate to any of these, then you in the growing season called transition.

If you are, here's something you need to know that will help you: though we often refer to change and transition as the same thing, *they aren't*. They are seriously different. By knowing and understanding how, you'll help yourself get through this time in better shape.

Change is a specific external event like a wedding, divorce, a new job, a move to a new neighborhood or city, a promotion, or retirement.

Transition, however, is the *process* that occurs around an event. Graduation, for example, is an event, but the transition of going from forever student to working adult begins long before the ceremony and extends well past it. It weaves the stress of leaving friends, going on interviews, and making connections together with excitement and fear of the unknown. While graduation ceremonies are over in a couple hours, the transition might last for several years.

While you can usually pinpoint a change in your life, the transition has no set beginning or

end and no exact length of time. Ignoring the process can make a transition more stressful but recognizing it will lessen its sting.

How do you manage? Begin by saying to yourself, "what I thought was going to last forever [school, job, lifestyle, independent parents] is over. That time is ended. Done. Now I need to refocus and put my energy toward adapting to my new job/neighborhood/lifestyle."

Basically, this acknowledgement makes you deal with the reality that is, not the one that is past. You are signally yourself to stop dwelling on yesterday and start moving forward.

Yes, it's true that your old job paid the bills, but did you love it? Or, though your toxic marriage might have meant security, now you can get strong, independent and happy on your own. And face it, whatever Mom or Dad were in their prime, they just aren't the same people anymore...*and neither are you*.

Once your mind begins the process of letting go of emotional or physical stuff that is outdated, it adjusts itself to fit your new reality. Soon your behavior will follow your thoughts.

Also, just in case it comes up (and it will), don't be afraid of doubt, fear or questions, like "Will I be successful?" or "Will I fit in?" and even "Will I be safe...or happy?" Transitions bring up those concerns for everyone.

The chaos of transition will last just about as long as it takes for you to feel comfortable and safe in your new environment or lifestyle. *You can handle it*. Remember: **your true power** resides within you. Find it and use it.



You'll find suggestions for making transitions easier in the Victory Stretch on page 2.

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VICTORY QUOTE

"I AM NOT AFRAID OF THE STORMS FOR I AM LEARNING HOW TO SAIL MY SHIP."

- Louisa May Alcott

VICTORY STRETCH

With both mother and mother-in-law moving into new places, my spouse and I spent much of the past year assisting their process and caring for them in different ways. Without paying too much attention, we thought we'd just add our mothers' needs to our to-do list.

It didn't work very well. Maybe you know how it feels to think you can take something is stride...*and then discover you are in over your head.*

At the beginning, we couldn't have anticipated that "the moms" emotional needs would be even greater than their physical requirements...or how hard that would be. Their concerns about comfort, safety, and fitting in aren't any different for them than for us...but since they cannot do as much for themselves as they used to, they are more anxious...and more needy.

Either because we weren't paying attention or preferred denial, my spouse and I didn't actually acknowledge the transition taking place in our lives. As a result, it was pretty stressful. That's what happens to any of us when we aren't aware of a transition going on in our life.

However, once we named and claimed it, our perception changed and we got on course again. So can you.

If you are in a transition, here are SIX TIPS. Use them to get started. Pretty soon you'll be back on your victory path.

1—Be patient. I know...who wants to do that? *Do it anyway.* Patience will enable you to maintain a forward momentum without feeling as though you are swimming upstream. When you are in a transition, be as lovingly patient with yourself

as you would be with a child or other loved one. You may not be at your best, or your sharpest, but that's only temporary. When things settle down, you'll get back to your full mind. Patience will help you find the right path and give you confidence to take the next step.

2—Do one thing at a time. When we feel overwhelmed by a transition, most of us cannot think. However, usually we can be present enough to **solve one problem.** So, get paper and pen and do a mind dump. Write down everything that's bothering you, including all the yama-yama stuff that's been cluttering up your brain. After you write all the things you can think of, take one item from your list, find a solution and take action. When you complete that one, do another. One by one, you'll whittle your list down and move ahead.

3—Get help. Sometimes we can't find our way out the front door, let alone through a transition. That's when it's time to find someone to help.

The day I helped my mother dismantled her china closet started badly for her. As I sorted out all her treasured possessions, my mother was so overwhelmed that she just sat in a chair, half-dazed. When I asked her to pick out what she'd take to her new home, she couldn't think. So I took her dinnerware and put it aside. I did the same with silverware, glasses, etc. until it no longer looked to my mother like a confusing maze.

Soon my mother could focus and was adding to the group I set out. Together we wrapped the goodies and packed boxes for her new home.

That's what it means to get help during a

transition. A friend, life coach or therapist can help you sort out items that are cluttering up your house or your mind. Friends are good for venting, therapists help with problems, and coaches give you direction and encourage you to move forward. You don't have to go through your transition alone.

4—Get over your anger. There are few things that will hold up a transition like being angry. If anger is getting in your way, find a way to release it. Try something physical, like a carpentry project where you have to hammer something a lot. You could also do a "write and burn" exercise. Some women even find cooking or gardening takes the edge off anger. Avoid self-sabotaging behaviors like overeating, overdrinking, drugs, etc.

5—Use the experience to get better. Ask yourself, "What am I supposed to learn from this experience?" and "What good can I get from this?" Grow from your mistakes and experiences.

6—Escape...briefly. My father once gave me a great piece of advice about the stuff that we can't do anything about: "Put your mind in neutral and coast." It works. These one-day coasting suggestions will re-energize you.

Getaway Day: Drive to the country or the beach for some fresh air.

Movie Marathon: Rent 2-3 missed or loved movies; watch them all day.

Laughter Party: Invite a few friends over for wine, cheese and jokes.

Revisit history: Go to a museum.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

SUMMER TELESEMINAR

GETTING UNSTUCK:

How to Finding Your Way Forward while Getting Back to Yourself

DATES: July 10, 17, 24, 31 **TIME:** 8-9pm ET
COST: \$99.00; includes workbook and audio

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FOR FALL

GETTING UNSTUCK



VICTORY UP!

WORKSHOP FOR THE NEWLY SINGLE



COMMUNICATING.....WITH STYLE



NEW: RETREAT AT THE BEACH



CARE TO SHARE?

What worked for you when you went through a transition? What got you through it and back on course?

Send me your favorite idea and if I use it, as a thank-you, I'll send you the "How NOT to Be a Desperate Housewife" audio in CD or downloadable MP3. I'd love to hear from you.

FUN STUFF: Check out my blog at <http://victoriouswoman.blogspot.com>