Proa Nova

HUMAN CARTOGRAPHY FOR COMPLEX MOMENTS

Practice Guide for Coaches and Mentors

career transitions

How to support career transitions without pushing, without diagnosing and knowing when to refer.



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CHAPTER 1

What this guide is for

Career transitions are often supported badly for one reason: an inner process is treated as if it were a technical problem. People look for a plan, a profile, a list of options, and the person still doesn't move, because what moves inside runs on a different clock.

This guide offers three things.

- **Read before you intervene.** Six moments describe where someone seems to be. They help you decide what to ask, what to leave unsaid and what not to offer yet.
- **A structure to sustain the process.** Three sessions and a follow-up, with a small task between one and the next.
- **Clear limits.** What is yours to do, what isn't, and how to refer without abandoning.

It builds on recognized frameworks, which are named and summarized in its own words: William Bridges' work on endings, the neutral zone and new beginnings; Herminia Ibarra's on how a professional identity is built; Nancy Schlossberg's on the four axes of a transition; Daniel Levinson's on the seasons of adult life; and Robert Kegan's on how meaning is made. The full references are at the end. To cite or expand on them, consult the original books.



MOMENT

They don't know what comes next

HOW IT SOUNDS

- *"I don't know how to introduce myself. I'm no longer what I was and I'm not yet what I'll be."*
- *"Some days everything seems possible and some days nothing does. Sometimes on the same day."*
- *"I started five different things and haven't finished any of them."*
- "I'm not doing anything useful, but I can't stop either."

HOW YOU CONFIRM IT

"What do you tell people when they ask what you do?" "What do you do that has no apparent purpose and yet you keep doing?" "How many answers do you have? Does one win out?" It's confirmed if they don't know how to introduce themselves, if they have several possibilities with no dominant one, if they feel shame or, sometimes, an unusual creative energy.

THE TEMPTATION

Helping them out of there as soon as possible.

> ### THE REAL WORK
> Validating the state as necessary and keeping it active.

MOMENT · THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT COMES NEXT

DO

- Name it: "this stretch has a name and a function."
- Tell apart active from paralyzed.
- Make small moves easier: "what could you try this week that doesn't require commitment?"
- Protect this time from outside pressure.

DON'T

- Interpret the disorder as a problem to solve.
- Propose detailed plans: they often come from fear, not from exploring.
- Pressure them to resolve the ambiguity.
- Follow the person's urgency if it comes from fear.

> **THE CRITICAL DISTINCTION**
> The fog can be **active** (they experiment, create, move things) or **paralyzed** (they wait for an outside signal). The first calls for accompaniment; the second, for activation. If you suspect depression, refer.

A SIGN OF PROGRESS

They start to tell apart what they **don't** want, which is just as valuable, and small experiments appear.

> **QUESTIONS THAT INVITE THEM TO TALK**
>
> *"What have you been doing lately that has no clear purpose and yet you keep doing?"*
>
> *"What paths do you have in mind? Does none of them win out?"*
>
> *"If nobody expected anything of you, what would you do this week?"*

> **QUESTIONS THAT SHUT THE CONVERSATION DOWN**
> *"When are you going to decide?" "Do you know what you want yet?" "What if you think it over more?"*

FREQUENT DILEMMAS

Action versus reflection; exploration versus commitment.

THIS IS A SAMPLE

The full guide

It continues with the ethical framework, coaching, mentoring and other kinds of help, what a career transition is and the limits of the frameworks, the six moments with their sheets, the reading of resources, the session model with an annotated session, the client canvas, the thirteen dilemmas, the risk conversation and how to refer, the contexts that change the conversation, the mistakes worth taking apart, references and a client sheet.

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