

## SHIFTING GEARS

Your kids are going back to school. You're in empty nest. You've just returned from traveling. You're starting a new job. Whether you are experiencing any of these transitions or other changes in your life, they all have something in common. They cause us to shift gears or reorient ourselves to our place and time and circumstance.

I travel a lot both for business and pleasure. When I return home it takes me a couple of days to get back into the flow of my routine. I am often tired and feel a bit disorganized. Rather than get upset, I simply listen to my body. Sometimes it needs to rest. Other times I need a good walk. If I just go with the flow I feel much more balanced and productive within a few days.

I remember when my children started school in the Fall. Summer was fun and our schedule was flexible, but by late August even though we still felt the summer heat, it was time to set the alarm and get back into a routine. When they all went away to college, the house felt empty and my husband and I had to reset our priorities. It is all a matter of change and shifting gears.

Shifting gears has an effect on the body, the mind, and the spirit. We have to come up with strategies for easing into our new situation. We have to cope with change. In the book, *Aging Body Timeless Mind*, Deepak Chopra states "An estimated 6 trillion reactions are taking place in each cell every second...In order to stay alive, your body must live on the wings of change." Essentially we are always adapting to change.

Your body may respond by feeling a bit off. You may experience fatigue or a sense of restlessness. You may feel like you're getting a cold or have a run down feeling. Mentally you may feel a sense of disorientation or not knowing what to do next. You may feel unorganized or a lack of focus. You may also have a positive experience of feeling excited, relieved or contentment. Shifting Gears can strengthen or weaken your spirit and sense of connectedness.

Some strategies for dealing with shifting gears or coping with change are first to accept that you need time to readjust. Recognize that a shift is taking place not just outside you, but within you as well. Ease back into your life situation slowly. You may need to take time off work. If you just returned from a vacation it is good to plan for a day off to unpack and prepare to get back to your normal working routine.

It takes time to adapt to a change in your life, and if it is a big change you may need more time to adapt. Give yourself time to adjust to your current situation. Allow your body and mind to relax as needed. Take a nap or take a walk, whichever is most helpful. Most of all, practice mindfulness- staying in the present moment and accepting a short period of chaos while your body, mind and spirit adapt to change.

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