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Successful Student Transitions

Episode Two Successfully Riding the Waves of Change

TRANSCRIPT EPISODE TWO

Welcome to Successful Student Transitions – A Time to Thrive

This podcast series is for you if you are:

- A student leaving full-time education and moving into the world of work
- A student moving to university or some form of higher education
- An educator, parent or counsellor supporting students as they take the next steps in their journey from school/college/sixth form into the world of further education or work.

For many students this represents the first big life transition. It can be an exciting and challenging time.

This podcast series provides strategies that develop self-awareness, understanding and the ability to thrive through times of transition.

This is the full transcript.

You can also access the Think Sheet mentioned in the podcast by registering [HERE](#).

About Your Hosts

Elizabeth Gillies

Elizabeth is an Education Psychologist based in London who has worked in schools as a psychologist at the individual, group and systems level for over 30 years.

She has been fortunate to live, work and raise her family in America, Japan, and Australia so, unsurprisingly, she is interested in the challenges and opportunities of transitions.

Elizabeth is a CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) and ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) specialist. She works in schools, on-line and near her home base in South London, incorporating walking with talking therapy in green spaces.



At the crunch points at the beginning and end of the school year, Elizabeth runs workshops for young people, teachers, and parents to help them understand common patterns of transition and how to use this knowledge to help themselves during this time and future changes.

Together with a great group of professionals in London, Elizabeth is growing a multi professional support service called Special Networks and can be found [HERE](#)

Elizabeth is a member of FIGT (Families in Global Transition) and with Louise and another FIGT member, is a co-chair of the FIGT UK affiliate. Link to FIGT. Connect via LinkedIn [HERE](#)

About Louise Wiles

Louise Wiles is a well-being, change and transition consultant, trainer and coach and the parent of two teens.

Alarmed by the recent explosion of well-being challenges amongst children and teens, especially during exam years and through times of change and transition, Louise believes we should be better preparing young people for life beyond school and university – helping them to thrive through the natural highs and lows of life.



Louise combines her professional background in organisational psychology (MSc) and coaching, with her expertise as a wellbeing, positive change and strengths practitioner and her personal experience of life on the move, to develop training courses and coaching programmes that help her clients prepare for, and thrive, through the challenge of change and transition.

You can connect with Louise on LinkedIn [HERE](#)

Website [HERE](#) and contact Louise [HERE](#)

Louise is also the author of ***Thriving Abroad: The Definitive Guide to Professional and Personal Relocation Success***

Transcript

Elizabeth Gillies 00:04

Welcome to the second of our podcasts Student Transitions - A Time to Thrive. And we're going to be talking on a bit more about transition today. So here we are with Louise Wiles. Do you want to introduce yourself again, Louise?

Louise Wiles 00:24

Okay. Hello, great to be here. I'm Louise Wiles, I'm a change and transition coach and consultant. And I'm excited to be here to talk a bit more about transitions.

Elizabeth Gillies 00:35

And I'm Elizabeth Gillies, an Educational Psychologist and ACT practitioner. So, we were thinking about, you know, this moving from, you know, from secondary school in particular, to higher education or work or, a gap year. And we were kind of thinking about questions around that are like, are you feeling a bit unsure about this transition? Are you feeling anxious? Are you feeling concerned? You know, have you got lots of 'Oh what if' thoughts like; what if this happens? or if what if that happens? And we want to kind of talk to you today about, transitions can be tricky, and why that's the case. Transitions can be both a challenging time, where you as yourself, and relationships and where you are in the world, and who you're with, can be challenged. But also, it can be a time to learn about yourself. So, we want to talk to you a little bit with you about why that is so. So, we're going to imagine this as a press pause time. And we're going to be pausing to think - why are transitions a challenging time. Louise, what were you thinking about the challenge of transitions.

Louise Wiles 02:01

And actually, just linking into that thought about pause, I think, when you're facing periods of change, and transition, it can be quite a frenetic time, a busy time. And it can be very easy to forget the self-care element of life. So, making time for recovery, making time to pause. So, there's a double sort of sense of purpose behind that comment. So, I would say yes, take a pause now to listen to us as we talk. But also think about when you build in pauses to your life, so that you have time perhaps to do something you really enjoy, but you're not thinking hugely about what's coming up, what you're leaving behind, but just having some fun, and resting or relaxing in whatever way you like to relax, okay, not everyone wants to just rest other people, some people might like to be doing some highly active activity, which is fine, if that's what you would constitute as recovery for you, for everyone, it's different. But just think about how you build that in, and then take that as a template forward in your life for your time in university or whatever you're going on to next remembering to build in that time for recovery.

Elizabeth Gillies 03:15

I agree. Good time to pause. And Louise, tell us about the S curve.

Louise Wiles 03:24

Okay. So, the S curve is a concept that's been developed by a lady called Whitney Johnson and her business, which actually is working with businesses in the corporate environment. And it's about career

development, career change. But I think it works perfectly in this scenario as well, as you're moving from education, perhaps into a career or education to higher education. And so, if you imagine a curve, which is shaped like an S, not with too much of a kickback at the bottom so it's kind of a small line at the bottom, and then you're cutting up to a curve at the top away, that's looking a bit like an S. We'll put that in the show notes, so you can see so you can go and download those to have a look. But the idea is that in your life at the moment, you've come to the end of perhaps full-time education, you've finished A levels, IB, you're thinking higher education in college, and you're thinking of moving on to the next step. And you probably have been feeling really comfortable in your life as you finish school. You know, you've been there for a number of years. You have your friends, you know how it all works, and okay, exams may have been challenging, but you've finished those now. And so, you have kind of reached the top of that educational full time educational S curve in terms of school or college. And what's happening now is you're jumping to a new S curve. And you're likely finding yourself more towards the bottom of that S curve because you're going to be encountering new experiences. You will have to learn new skills to develop your ability to cope with the challenges of your new life, perhaps the first time you've lived away from home, a different city, you're going to make new friends, a different course it's all new. And so, there are going to be challenges. And some of those challenges initially will feel quite tough. And you may find you feel a bit like you're walking through treacle at times, that you're having to work quite hard to do well. But gradually, as you develop the skills in that new environment, you will move up the S curve. And in the middle of the S curve, as you're moving up, it is called the sweet spot. And that's where the challenge is that you're encountering day to day, are ones that you find exciting and interesting, and you enjoy but not overly taxing. So, you kind of have the skill level that is required to cope. And then as you move through your university career time or the career that you're just moving on to, as you get towards the top, you get to a level of mastery. And that level is really where yeah, the challenges actually really aren't challenges anymore, you can do this all quite easily and with ease, and you're beginning to start to think, well, it's getting a bit tired, boring, what am I going to do next, and you're thinking about the next move. And so, we can think about our work or move through life through careers as a series of S curves. And actually it also represents our opportunities to challenge ourselves, to learn new skills to take the next bold step on to something new. And it's a process that we all go through as we transition into something new.

Elizabeth Gillies 06:41

In a very nicely put, I like this as a series of S curves. Because you know, when we're at the top of ours, and you don't really think about it, because you're there and you know how to do everything. It's only when you're back at the bottom again, that you question yourself, or you know that you're going to be at the bottom again, that you start to question yourself, or I'm not going to know this stuff, and its loss. So, this is why transitions can be tricky, you know, they can be tricky for some people who are kind of been at the top there for a while, and they've got to start learning new and different things again. So yeah, yeah, there's a very nice quote that I wanted to share from Doug Ota's book *Safe Passage*. And it was about "*successful transitions, help people ready themselves to perform the actions that will help them feel the feelings, that will lead them to think the thoughts that contribute to a successful navigation of transition.*" So, it's putting us into not just thinking about what we're going to next. But it's helping us think about where we are now. And, and be willing to feel the things that have helped us get to the top of that S place or feel those feelings I think those thoughts about why are were there. And last week, we said we talk a little bit more about RAFT as well didn't we Louise, and why this is another kind of

good metaphor for thinking about transition. So, the RAFT metaphor is the R for reconciliation, I can usually talk about repair, the A is for affirmation, the F is for a farewell and the T is for the think destination. And it's a really good, just like your S curve, I think it is a really good way to be thinking about this as a time to look behind us to help us look forward, to kind of what we need to do, who are the kind of people we want to be in this kind of next place. So, both of those are good kind of metaphors.

Last time, we talked a little bit about some questions that can be around the RAFT. And I think I like to think of the RAFT as both an intra and an interpersonal thing. So the intrapersonal is about looking within, and the inter is looking between, so you can think about the repair a little bit about is there any kind of kind of things that I would like to do differently in the next place I'm in, or the repair could be about is there a way that I'm kind of working with other people or being with other people that I need to do differently? And the affirmation would be a little bit about, what have I done really well to get me to the top of the S curve or to get me to this place or what other people, who are the other people that have helped me. The F is about farewells, and this is the time when we talk about good grief, isn't it about, you know, what am I going to really miss? What are the things that I'm really going to miss or what the people I'm going to miss, or the place or, and then the kind of the T we get onto that is about thinking destination about kind of, what kind of person am I going to want to be? What are the things that I'm looking forward to? How am I going to use my strengths that we talked a little bit before? So, it's those, I think that these two kinds of metaphors sit alongside each other very nicely don't they Louise?

Louise Wiles 10:27

Yes, no, I definitely do. And I think just as you were talking there, and talking about repair, and talking about, it's the intrapersonal, and the interpersonal, so the interpersonal, between you and others. And it just prompted me also to think about the environments in which you live as well and thinking about one thing that's really useful when you're thinking about when you're moving from one place to another is to think about what's important in this environment that has really supported me. So, it's not always just the people, it's also the way in which you live your life what aspects of your environment have been supportive for you? And do you want to try and carry over in some way to your new world? So yeah, think about where the environment has worked for you in the past? So, you've been at school? Or in college? Sixth form? What was it about the environment that was supportive? And perhaps what wasn't as well? So, what wasn't working for you? And is that something that will carry on in your new world? Or will it not? And if it's not, then what can you do differently? To find some more support, or different forms of support?

Elizabeth Gillies 11:44

One of the things I kind of do sometimes, about thinking with people when they're moving in a transition is, you know, what's the world like now? And then what's it going to be like? And I think that thing about, then how the environment helps you. I mean, often schools are a lot about routines, you know, you have to be there a certain time, and it finishes, but actually, works also like that. But a gap year certainly won't be. And maybe University won't either, there won't be those, maybe if you're doing more of a science course, it might be true. But if you're doing more of the art subjects, there's a lot more flexibility. So, it's how if you knew that routines help you, how do you build routines? How do you create a schedule for you? If you thought that was part of the environment that helped? Nice question to think

about the context. And also the people around as well, isn't it Louise, because often, when you're at school, you're with your family, you're with groups of friends you know, and when you go off to this next transition, those people might not necessarily be with you. So, those kind of functions that the people around you, you know, you might be kind of at home where all your basic needs are catered for your you know, you're cooked for, your travels paid, and you're taken to school or something. So, you have to be thinking about how you're going to look after yourself and that, too.

Louise Wiles 13:20

Yes, yeah. So absolutely. And that, that's prompted another thought for me about the general question around the well-being, I think we're kind of moving through RAFT so this is kind of definitely thinking destination now, so we're, perhaps we'll come back for a few minutes in a minute to think about the early stages of the RAFT. But thinking destination is the final, the T in RAFT, the final stage. And so, as you as you start to think forward to your new life, wherever it is university, career, and think about your well-being and what, so we talked a bit about having a rest and renewal time for renewal. And a pause. That was what we were talking about at the beginning. And Elizabeth's just talking about the routines around things that matter. So, you how you feed yourself those important things. And I think often the routine of life in terms of sleep, and exercise and good food and all the good practices that we know we help our well-being can go to pieces when you move to university because it becomes party land in the initial first few weeks as you do freshers and all of that. And that can have a really big psychological impact. If you're not sleeping, you're not eating well. And you're not doing any of the movement and exercise that you would normally do, over time that can have quite a big impact on you. So just hold that in your mind. I'm not saying don't go and have fun. But think about you know, as you settle into university life, what is that routine going to look like? And what kinds of movement do you want to do and all the work in relation to psychological well-being emphasises the value of movement, not necessarily fitness, but movement. So, I'm going to choose to just mention just movement, because I don't want to be a fitness bore. But if you're into exercise, and you love the gym, and running, and all of that kind of thing, brilliant, if you're not, when I say movement, that's not what I'm meaning what I mean is going for a walk, being outside in nature, outdoors, just moving your body or dancing around wherever you live, it doesn't matter. But just moving every day for a little bit. And then nutrition of the I've probably don't need to bore you with a lecture on nutrition, but just thinking about, are you eating healthily in terms of vegetables, and not just chips every night and McDonald's butty for breakfast or whatever it is, and they've horrible things in egg and bacon. So, thinking about your nutrition and making sure you are feeding yourself well. And then also, sleep, sleep is so important. And yet it's the first thing to go in new challenging situations. So, building a good sleep routine for most of the time, okay, some days, you're going to party, that's fine.

Elizabeth Gillies 16:13

Oh, all of that is sort of like a huge drain on your energy in any transition, you know, because you're learning all this new stuff, being with people in a new place. You know, learning new things. So, those energy stores are really important in any transition.

Louise Wiles 16:34

And I'd like to relate that to - Elizabeth and I both come from a wealth of transition in terms of international relocation. And, you know, one of the things I remember from a conversation I had a long

time ago with a biologist, and he was saying, you know, what we forget is the toll that the physical move takes on us, our bodies in terms of so if you're travelling across time, so if you're an international student listening to this, and you've moved across the globe to come to where you are, do remember that that has had a big biological impact. And so, it takes time for your body to catch up for your body to settle and get used to the new environment, you know the new temperatures, if you're in the UK, you we're heading towards winter, autumn and then winter, that may be very different from what you're used to, time zones, food is very different. And this all has an impact on our well-being. So, bear that in mind, too.

Elizabeth Gillies 17:39

So, this is why transitions are challenging, isn't it? Yeah, absolutely. There are so many new things that our body as well as our mind has to get used to. Shall we, shall we go touch back a little bit on the R a little bit, it's about repair. It's a time to be thinking about something that about self-forgiveness, you know, sometimes we need to be able to forgive ourselves for not doing the things that we wanted to do. There's a fantastic study around procrastination, where they looked at university students, groups of students who are procrastinating, and one they taught them to forgive themselves, for the stuff they didn't do that day, and to make another the next day, a new day. And for the, for the students that they taught self-forgiveness, they were able to procrastinate less the next day. So, you know, it's about us being kind to ourselves. So, you say, Okay, I didn't manage to do the thing that I needed to do today, and tomorrow is another day, you know, I can start again, I can begin anew. So, it kind of feeds a little bit into about the stories we tell about ourselves. We've, Louise and I've talked about a little bit about this, you know, are you that person that tells the story, oh, I never get anything done. Or, you know, I never get around to things or I find it really difficult to get down to work. So, a little bit of self-forgiveness would be a really good thing.

Louise Wiles 19:33

When I say, I mean that that mental load. If you're spending time thinking about what you haven't done, you're not leaving yourself the space for things that you can now do. So, end of each day. I mean, so yes, a technique at the end of each day, write down three things that you've achieved three things you feel good about that day, and then let the rest go and move on.

Elizabeth Gillies 19:56

Yeah, I agree. So, you know, we're all of us have this inner critic that can talk stuff to us. But do we listen? Do we take it on? You know, do we take it on board and say, oh, yeah, that's the things that's, that's that talk that tells me I haven't done this stuff. And what we need to do is kind of just be aware of it, but not hang on to it's every word. So maybe we should have a little talk next time about how to deal with that inner critic to do a little bit of sort of skill stuff around how to how to manage those sort of things. And also, when we're talking about self-forgiveness, we need to be thinking about self-compassion. How, when this is a challenging time, when this is a hard time, in any transition is how to be compassionate to ourselves during that time, to just kind of name it and say, this is hard for me to make this transition, this is a difficult time, whatever kind of words that you develop with your, you know, with, with yourself, just to acknowledge that, you know, I do find transitions, you know, difficult and hard. And, and whether you want to add on the end, you know, tomorrow's a new day, or I'll get there eventually. Or you can do that, or you can just sit with this is difficult.

Louise Wiles 21:23

Yeah, I think acknowledging it is really important. And, and that also makes me think about asking for help, as well. So, you know, we're really bad at asking for help, when often people are really, really happy and open to help. And all the studies have suggested that, that you people are genuinely very open to supporting others. And in fact, they get a real buzz from doing that. And actually, it can be a precursor to good friendship. So, it often doesn't come naturally to go and say to somebody do you mind helping me with? but if you're struggling, then don't think you can't ask people for help, because often they'll be more than willing to help in some way. But then there's also how you ask for help. That's a whole perhaps we will have a section on asking for help, we'll have a session on that too, because I think that can be really valuable as well, in terms of how you relate to university staff and or if you're in work, your colleagues and work with them in that way.

Elizabeth Gillies 22:35

Yeah. I mean, and that's where usually at the top of the S curve, you know, where to go and ask for help but when you're at the bottom, you don't know. So, I would often say to kind of young people in transition, find out where the GP is, find out where the health centre is, find out if you're having some difficulties, what you do. So, you know, in advance, you don't wait until you need to find it out. But you're already prepared for it. So go and find those, those places that you can, that you can go to, before you need it. So hopefully, we've helped you understand a little bit about why transitions can be tricky. And because they challenge your body and mind, there's upset, you're at the top of your curve, you're going to go back to the bottom again, and then get up. So, we've helped you understand about that. And also, hopefully, we've put in that kind of reframe, as well as being the challenge, they are time to learn about things, they're a time to like press pause and be thinking about how am I doing? How's it going? Where am I on my S curve, whatever it is. So there, there's sort of strategies to be thinking about how you're coping with stuff, and how you start to thrive. And maybe I was we we're thinking next time, we're going to talk to you a little bit more about how can you tune into yourself? How can you give yourself some, you know, a coach or a pep talk about things that might help you on the way.

Louise Wiles 24:13

Yeah, absolutely. I think, yeah, I think we've probably covered enough for one session today. There was one thing that I was wanting to just say, and that is that, you know, major transitions, do, they impact us personally they are personally disruptive. So, I just think it's important to bear that in mind. And part of the RAFT and I think we mentioned it in the previous in the first podcast episode, so perhaps go back and listen to that for this but we were talking about identifying the skills and abilities that we have that will support us through transition. So, I would just say as a final Thinking point Think about some previous transitions or changes that you've lived through and what did you do to support yourself through those? And therefore, which of those skills can you apply to this one as well as you begin to make your move to the next stage of your life, which is really exciting.

Elizabeth Gillies 25:20

See you next time.

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