



# The SHIFT-IT e-Zine



Christina Merkley  
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## A Note From Christina

Dear Christina,

I don't know about you, but I'm pretty much ready for a break and am glad the holidays are just around the corner.

Mother nature took us by surprise here in Victoria, and gave us a dump of snow this last week. Which is a real oddity, especially so early in the year. Amy B from Wisconsin gets an honorable mention for showing up for her custom training in

Welcome to your December SHIFT-IT e-Zine.

## **SURVIVE TRANSITION & ICKY NEUTRAL ZONES**

Sick of what you are doing? Ready to leave your old world but not sure what your new world is? In that painful in-between place? Ahhhhhh transitions. The tricky challenge of moving from one world or way of being into another. When life kicks us out of our comfort zone so we can become our next self.

I have been going through a big transition myself these last couple of years and as it picks up speed and completes (at least on one level) it seems at every turn I am encountering others who are going through the same, sometimes really challenging process. So a little article on transitions and that awkward uncertainty stage called 'the neutral zone' seemed in order (to both reassure myself and others that transitions really are perfectly normal and a necessary component of a well lived life).

the middle of it. (Amy you are a true sport and it was a pleasure working with you!).

Thankfully its melting away now (the usually west coast rain has returned) – but it got me into the winter holiday spirit so I'm ready for that natural lull that occurs around this time. So I can slowdown, eat some shortbread or something and envision my year ahead. Seven is my lucky number and I have a feeling that this upcoming year is going to be a good one. I hope you've got that feeling too about your year coming up!

As I have and continue to go through a big transition with my

**Stages of Transition:** There is a terrific author named [Bill Bridges](#), who has done a lot of research and writing on the topic of transition. I particularly like his book called [The Way of Transition](#). In it (and in his other books) he explains the typical stages of transition. That we tend to do through three big 'Ds': disenchantment, disidentification and disorientation (the neutral zone) before we pop out the other side into a different way of being and stabilize again.

**Disenchantment Phase:** Disenchantment is the phase that I see a lot of folks in lately. They come for coaching or my specialized graphics training because they are looking for something different – the same ol' same ol' just doesn't cut it and they look for something that will add spark, spice or excitement to their life. Get them out of the 'ho hums' they have been feeling for a while. Disenchantment is the same as the first stage in my SHIFT-IT process: Satisfaction Interrupted.

Might be an entrepreneur who wants to change the nature or pace of their business. A skilled professional who is good at but bored by their status quo. A corporate employee who is thinking about jumping ship into a free agent lifestyle. Whatever the circumstances, they are disenchanted with the phase they are now in (which once suited them fine) and are looking for something different.

**Dis-identification Phase:** After or during the disenchantment phase you enter into disidentification. In this phase a person either voluntarily dis-identifies themselves from their

new brand, site and product development I thought I would write a bit about transitions this month. Like attracts like, as many of my coaching clients, organizational clients, colleagues and friends are going through or contemplating personal and professional transitions as well. So it seemed a timely topic. And with the New Year just around the corner, perhaps this is the year that you make some big changes yourself.

In the meantime, I hope that you have a satisfying December and sail through the holidays in good physical, emotional and financial

old life, or something happens to them that causes a separation. Their old identity starts to break up. For myself, this happened when I was no longer satisfied with being a Graphic Recorder and started the convoluted process of becoming a Graphic Facilitator and then a Graphic Coach. The proverbial s#it hit the fan as my geographical location radically shifted and a core relationship also broke up – paving the way for greater shifts. I had to drop identification with one identity in order for a new one to emerge. For me, this identity drop and shift has taken about six years and has gone through multiple levels.

This is the same for many of my clients who are in career or business transitions. They have done something for quite a long time, and might be very good at it and get accolades, but it no longer ‘does it’ for them personally anymore. Others might identify themselves that way still but they themselves no longer do. They often also have the challenge of having their livelihoods and incomes wrapped around this old identity – so it is tricky to find a better feeling replacement right away. So they keep the ‘day job’ so to speak going, long after they have any vested identity in it. Kind of get stuck, especially when feelings of doubt and uncertainty prevail.

**Wandering in the Neutral Zone:** What happens next is a disorientation phase, where one can feel really lost and confused and alone. Where you have let go of the old on an emotional level (maybe not physical) but the new hasn’t come into focus yet. A limbo land. Like letting go of one trapeze and hoping the

shape.

See you next  
month.

Yours in SHIFTing!

Christina Merkley, The  
SHIFT-IT Graphic Coach

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## SHIFT-IT Graphic Coaching Services

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Experience Graphic Coaching for yourself. One-to-one sessions either in-person (having everything drawn out large right in front of you), or by phone (working with my line of coaching templates and manuals that we email back and forth).

A very powerful experience to literally SEE inside your mind and heart to where your answers are. Understand yourself and the flow of your life at a new level. See what your thinking is and how it is working for you or against you.

other one will emerge in time for you to grab it.

Bridges has coined the phrase ‘the neutral zone’ to eloquently describe this experience. Like wandering in the desert or being on your own personal pilgrimage. It is often in fact a kind of spiritual experience to get through your neutral zone and emerge out the other side. Difficult to hang in there when you don’t really know what you are doing or where you are going. Or how things will somehow stabilize into a new reality.

**Natural Process Like the Seasons:** It is fitting to be writing about transitions as we go into winter. When you are in it, the neutral zone can seem like it goes on forever with no end in sight. However that is not the case. It is ‘not terminal’ as Bridges reassures. It is just the prelude to something new. A time of endings and beginnings – just like winter is and then spring follows. All seems to stop for a while but it does pop back up again just when all seems dead or despairing. It really does!

**The Bigger Picture:** To get a sense of these cycles it is often very helpful to map out your life journey to date. So you can SEE your own cycle of transition and change and view how things really do morph and find their own conclusions, like a stream finding its way through the landscape. Your story does go on. It always has. It always will. Creating your Life Map will help you appreciate that. To develop some faith that this too shall pass and certainty and confidence will return again and

SHIFT blocks, negative beliefs and patterns. Create a clear personal vision that guides and motivates you as you take steps aligned with your bigger picture. Unique. Powerful. Long lasting effects.

Info on Christina's  
Coaching Packages:

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you will get moving and going again.

**Other Things That Can Help:** It also helps to just appreciate and accept the process you are in - to give into it and trust it. As opposed to fighting or resisting it. And to just do whatever little steps are in front of you that you do have some interest or energy for. One little, better-feeling step at a time. Doing your best to notice and identify what you do like and do feel good about and move towards that as much as you can. Like will attract like. You will eventually “SHIFT-IT” and move into a new identity (which you will eventually transition out of too – cause that is just the way life goes, change never really ends!).

As someone is quoted as saying ‘life is just one darn thing after another’ and that actually isn’t such a bad thing when you really consider the alternatives. It is all in how you look at it.

All the best with navigating your transitions and in making it through the ‘icky’ (that is a technical term - smile) neutral zone – stability really is somewhere just around the corner. Hang in there!

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The SHIFT-IT Graphic Coach

**WANT TO USE THIS ARTICLE IN YOUR E-ZINE OR WEB SITE?** You can, as long as you include this blurb with it:

Christina Merkley, "The SHIFT-IT Coach" is creator of the SHIFT-IT Graphic Coaching

Process. To learn more about SHIFT-IT, Graphic Coaching and Personal Visioning and Planning, visit [www.shift-it-coach.com](http://www.shift-it-coach.com).

## New SHIFT-IT Coach Website

The new SHIFT-IT Coach website is up and live. Check out articles, portfolio, blog and lots of other resources about the Graphic Coaching methodology -- helping you do personal visioning and planning work in a helpful, visual format. Get clear, get precise, and get what you want in work and life!

[shift-it-coach.com](http://shift-it-coach.com)

**View New Site:**

## About Christina, The SHIFT-IT Graphic Coach:



Christina Merkley, M.A. is a Graphic Facilitator and Coach specializing in Strategic Planning and Visioning. Having worked for such notable companies as BBC, Readers Digest Funds, eBay and Stanford University, she uses interactive, visual thinking processes to literally draw the best thinking out of organizations, groups and individuals. Creator of the SHIFT-IT Graphic Coaching Process, after years in San Francisco, she is now based in charming Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

**Full Bio**

## The SHIFT-IT Blog:

Check out the new posts since you've last read the SHIFT-IT Blog. Graphic ramblings, insights and other tidbits - -- the new blog where you can participate by leaving messages and reading what others think about this graphic way of working.

[Click Here](#)

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"Great coach - positive and nurturing style. Lovely location and adventure in learning. Over two days of focused attention, Christina broke her methods down for me into manageable pieces and segments. I left with greater confidence to become a successful graphic facilitator. Within days of returning I had completed three of my action steps,

created a 'test' company name, and did two graphic projects done". **Sue Keely, Graphic Facilitator 'wannabe', Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.A.**

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