

# **Staying Connected and Letting Go: Navigating Ministry Transitions with a Hopeful Heart**

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# Relevant CW Background 1



- Ministry: aide & RN in convent care center
- Consultant on Aging issues for religious communities of women & men
- MS: Gerontological Clinical Nurse Specialist
- PhD: explored Subjective Quality of Life (QoL) among 20 nuns aged 74-98
  - Focus: Discovering individual QoL preferences to inform holistic care for residents of convent care centers
  - Conclusions: *Staying Connected and Letting Go (SCLG)* describes the process by which residents rate their current QoL in convent care centers
- Later identification of relationship between *SCLG* & aging/ministry transitions



## Relevant CW Background 2

- 1969-2002: Sister of the Holy Names of Jesus & Mary (CA province)
- 2002-present: Transfer to Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids
- 2020-2021: FT Nursing faculty during initial COVID pandemic
- 2021: Resigned faculty position due to burnout
- 2021: Transition Questions:
  - Who am I without an active ministry?
  - What is the relationship between mission & ministry?
  - What is the role of gratitude & hope?

DOMINICAN  
SISTERS

CELEBRATE  
800<sup>TH</sup> JUBILEE



# Diocesan Jubilee Celebration



# Jesuit Jubilarians







# Retirement Fund for Religious

Please give to those who have given a lifetime.



*To add life to the years  
that have been added to life*

UN Principles for Older Persons



# Guiding Interview Questions



- How would you define quality of life?
- What is the worst quality of life you can imagine for yourself?
- What is the best quality of life you can imagine for yourself?
- How would you rate your current quality of life?
- What can nurses & staff do to assist you to maintain or enhance your quality of life?



.....STAYING·CONNECTED¶

HE.....HD

.....Maintaining·Community·Bonds

.....Continuing·Meaningful·Activity

.....Spiritual·Activity

.....Task-oriented·Activity

AND

.....LETTING·GO¶

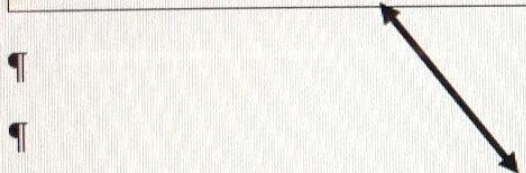
HE.....HD

.....Adapting·to·Church·Changes

.....Changing·Pace·of·Life

.....Facing·Limits:

.....Health,·Energy,·Life



MEDIATING·FACTORS¶

.....Relocation·Circumstances

.....Choice

.....Health·Event

.....Imposed

.....Combination

.....QOL·Temporal·Rating·Orientation

.....Present

.....Past-Present

.....Present-Future

.....Past-Present-Future

.....Bi-directional·Caring

.....Being·Well·Cared·for

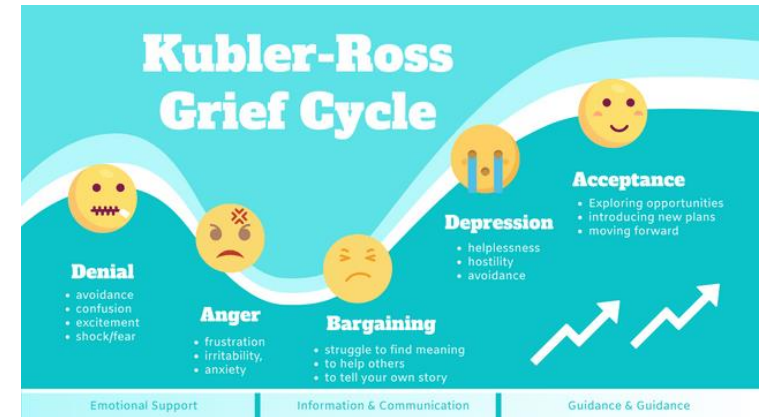
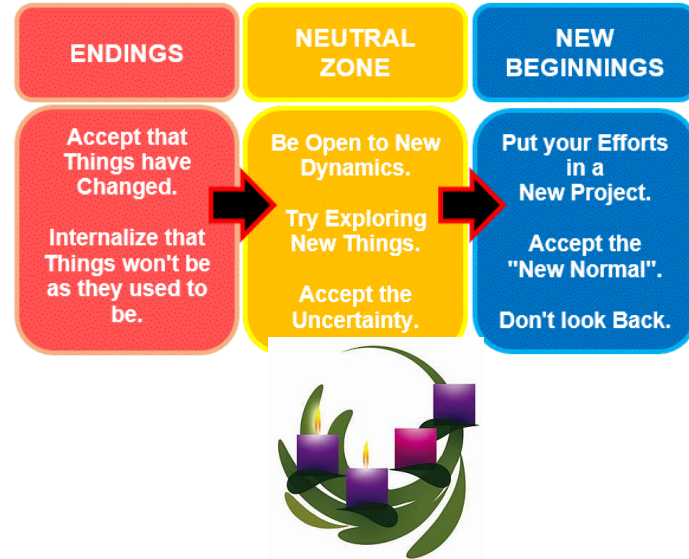
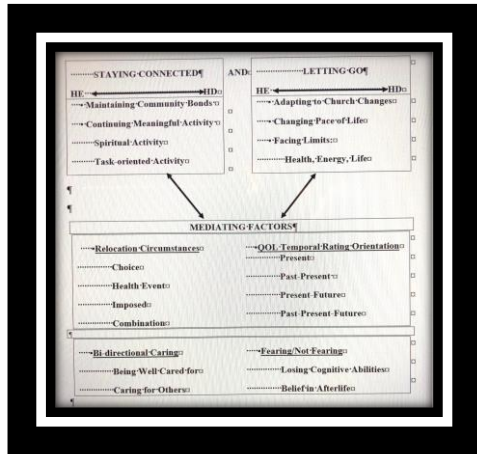
.....Caring·for·Others

.....Fearing/Not·Fearing

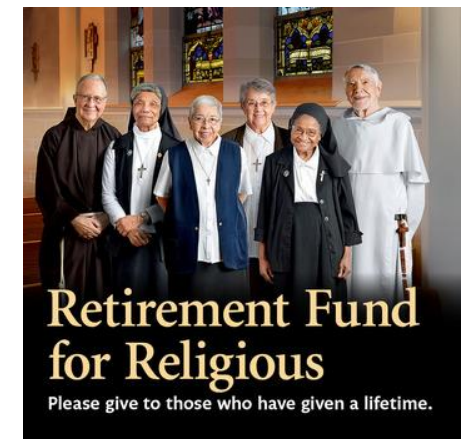
.....Losing·Cognitive·Abilities

.....Belief·in·Afterlife

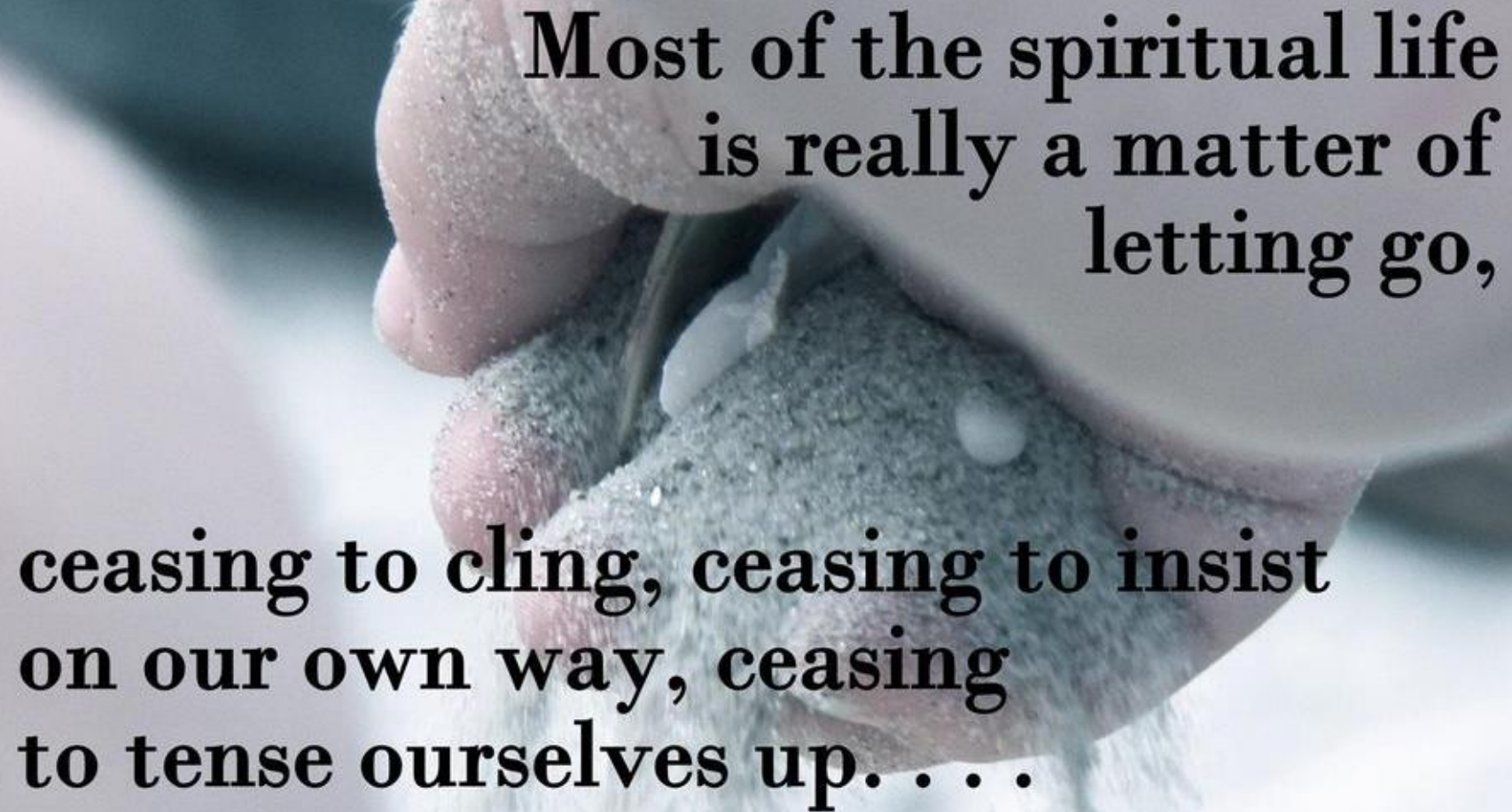
# Staying Connected & Letting Go Evolves.....



Most of the spiritual life is really a matter of letting go, ceasing to cling, ceasing to insist on our own way, ceasing to tense ourselves up. . . .  
—Beatrice Bruteau





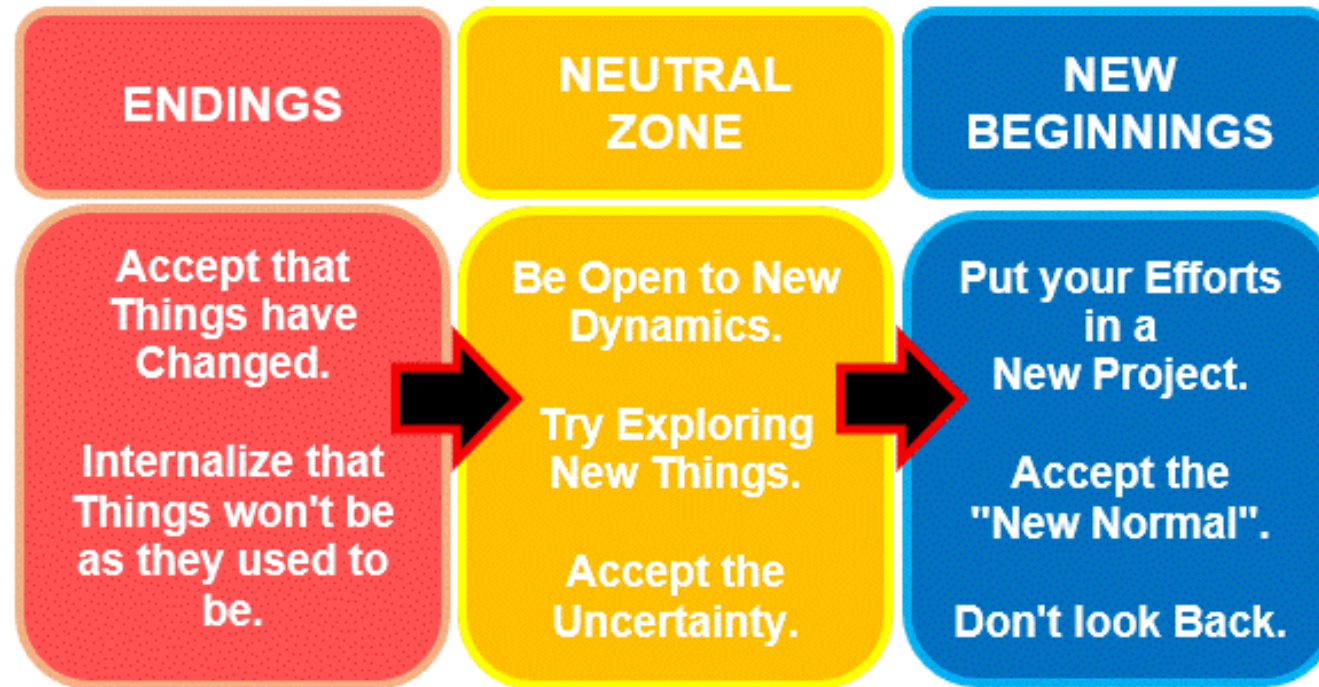


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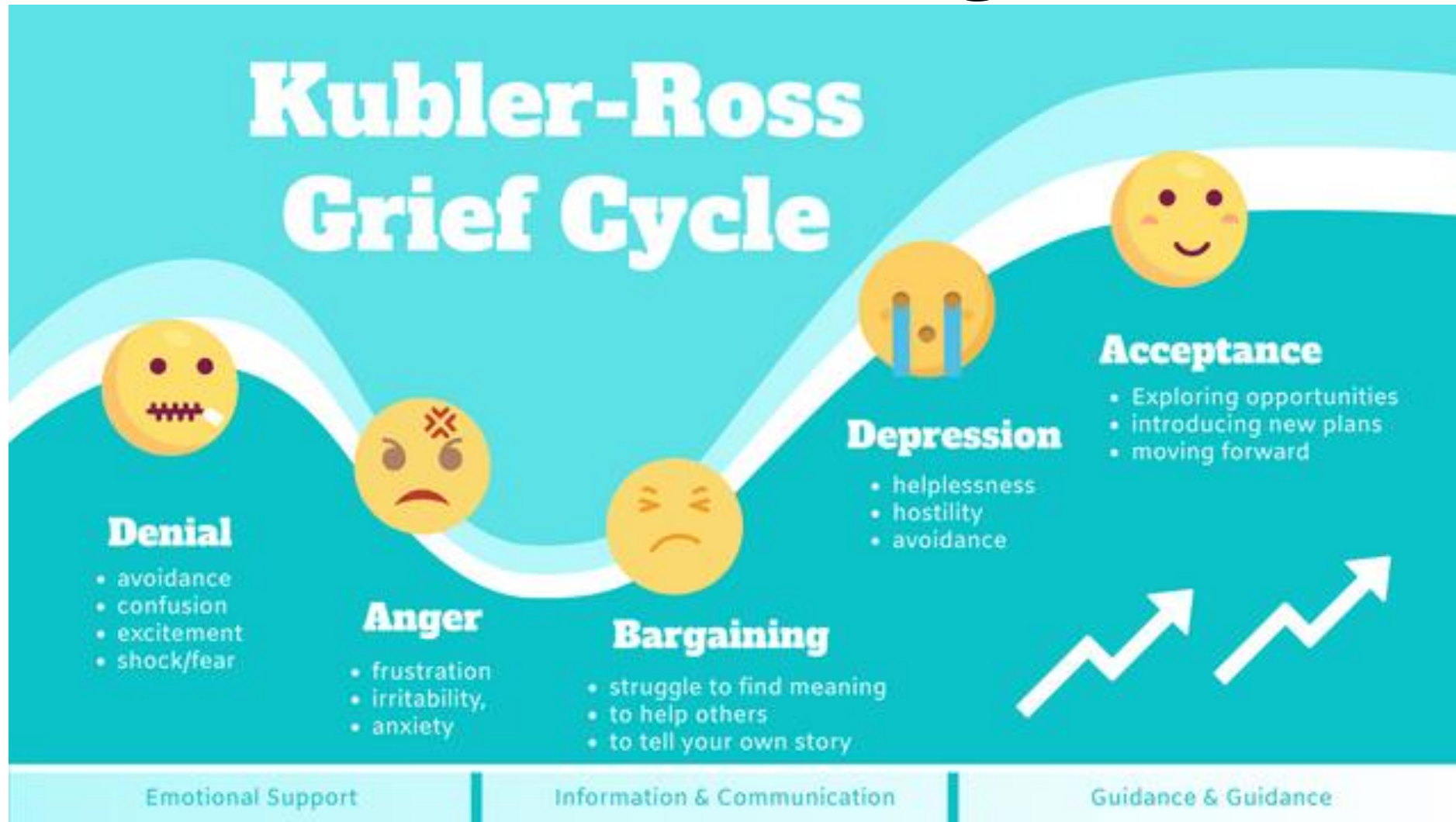
**—Beatrice Bruteau**



# Bridges Transition Model



# Kubler-Ross Stages of Grief



*What we call the beginning is often the end*

*And to make an end is to make a beginning*

*The end is where we start from.*

(T. S. Eliot, Little Gidding)



# Anthony Gittins on Aging

- Overcoming culturally conditioned fear of aging
- 2 faces of aging
  - Weak: frustration, worthlessness/withdrawal/marginalization/cynicism
  - The best is in the past (nostalgia)/isolation/routine
  - Strong: dignity, mellowness/self-respect/engagement/letting go/wisdom
  - The best is in the present (faith/trust)/altruism/community/novelty/hope
- *Moving from* a spirituality of perfection
- *Moving toward* a spirituality of wisdom



# Relationship between Mission & Ministry

1. Basic Christian Mission of evangelization
  2. Specific charism as foundational for congregational mission
  3. Corporate & individual ministries in relation to 1-2 above
- Changing context of ministry in relation to multiple factors
    - Congregational direction/focus
    - Individual talents & health
    - Signs of the times





# Challenges For Leaders

- Communication, communication, communication
- Pastoral presence
- Dialogue regarding individual ministry
- Public acknowledgement of ministry of prayer



# Challenges for Members

- Communication, communication, communication
- Embrace the transition
- Educate yourself
- Spiritual direction
- Counseling
- Gratitude practices



# Grateful Living

## A Network for Grateful Living



WORD FOR THE DAY

We are here to awaken from our illusion of  
separateness.

THICH NHAT HANH

*<https://grateful.org/>*



# **Wait in Joyful Hope (Michael Herry, fms)**

Wait in joyful hope, a savior will come,

Jesus Christ the light of the world.

Wait in joyful hope, a savior will come,

Welcome to the Word of God.

