



MANAGING CHANGE

Transition is difficult to manage. When I grew up it was normal for our family to move around because of my father's job. We transferred from state to state every three or four years. My mother said each of us was individually impacted by at least one move during our lives. These impacts were not always positive.

When I became a parent and began working professionally, Tricia and I found ourselves moving around the country, and the world, with my job. While there is an element of excitement in moving, the biggest impact can be on our kids who often manifest change differently. Children don't often articulate how change is affecting them but reveal it by acting out behaviorally.

Our biggest move came when we moved to Katy from China. It was a big enough change just going to China, but our kids were pretty young. When we moved back our kids faced very different church and school settings. As parents and providers, we also faced many adjustments, which challenged our priorities. Our three boys managed through the changes with various degrees of struggle, some of which lasted a long time and caused a lot of pain.

What I learned is that you have to be there to help your child manage change; you cannot assume it will "work out." I found that my need to provide and "have enough" got in the way of managing the changes that my children were facing. It is an all-too-common problem in our lives to let the urgent crowd out the necessary. The urgency of my need to re-establish job and finances, crowded out my children's need to navigate through the maze of new "friends" and experiences, with the accompanying fears and uncertainties, and to see God in all that was happening.

God in His kindness brought us through this, but it took much longer than it needed to because of this blind spot in my life. I encourage you to keep your priorities straight as you transition through the many changes in your life.