

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

From Creative People

How To Change Galaxies

Recent Athena Award winner and executive director of Lighthouse Christian Ministries (LCM), Erika Steele, transitioned from one business world to another that was almost antithetical to the first. Moving from an international megacorporation where employees see posted daily the company's stock value to a small town, faith-based nonprofit would seem like travelling across the universe from one galaxy to another. Being able to adapt and apply skills across change requires the attributes of creativity, including focus, discipline, openness and application of experiences to the development of ideas.



Everyone faces times when they “change galaxies.” It may be a major geographical change, health transition, relationship loss, career field shift (by choice or demand) or job role change; the place you were and the place you are going to are completely different in myriad ways. Erika's lessons apply.

Learn - “I value education so I read and learned everything I could to see what this ministry was about,” she said. She sought knowledge about the work of the organization, the realities of nonprofit management and leadership, and the lives of people who need the services of LCM. “I still commit 10-15 hours per month to learning about nonprofit management, the community we serve and leadership,” she said.

Listen - Listening is a critical skill when facing significant changes. Erika said that listening played an important role during the early transition, and still does on a daily basis. She can better understand, serve and lead by listening to others, to her calling and to her heart. Listening enables a person to become immersed in their new place and role, while also keeping focused on their purpose and motivation.

Connect - The previous two steps enable connection. Connect to those you serve, those who serve with you, the community and the organization's purpose. No matter what significant change has transported you from one “galaxy” to another, the ability to connect to others and to your focus will make the transition one of empowerment instead of frustration.

Apply - “I love engineering. I was trained as engineer. Engineering is about using information you have and determining what information you need to solve a problem or manage a project. That's what I do in the nonprofit world every day. Being a mom requires the ability to go with the flow. I do that every day at work, too.” You can connect your old galaxy to your new one by applying anew the experiences, wisdom, knowledge and skills from your past situation.

Major changes in jobs, relationships or health can give you the feeling that you've entered the Twilight Zone. Adapt and achieve when you learn, listen, connect and apply.

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*Creative Solutions From Creative People*  
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