

Turning a New Leaf

The Transition of “Empty Nesting”

By Kelsi Kellen, BA, Therapist Intern



So often, the experience of watching a child leave the home is difficult, as it is filled with uncertainties and distance from loved ones. Parents might experience emotional pain, sadness, and loneliness when the child leaves. For others, this may be a positive experience, filled with anticipation and happiness. And some might feel somewhere in between.

Where do you fall on this continuum? Wherever you lie, that is okay! It is important to know that we all cope with transitions differently and at our own pace.

For those of you who are struggling to cope with the emotional distress of knowing your children will be leaving the home, or for those of you who have already watched them leave, there are a few things that are helpful to remember.

First, your children are not leaving you completely! They may not make it to the table for supper every night, ask you to do their laundry,

or fix their car, but they will seek you out in different ways. Leaving the home is a transition that is valuable to your child's independence and success in the future. You may have heard of the phrase “empty nesting.” This is a popular way of stating that one's children have left the home (usually all of them). Recently, this phrase has begun to be replaced with “taking flight.”

While your child lived under your roof, you did your best in preparing him or her for the future. This included making sacrifices for the good of your child throughout his or her lifetime. This transition can be considered yet another sacrifice that serves the best interests of your child. Now, it is your child's time to explore the world, build lasting relationships, find his or her career path, and make some mistakes along the way. He or she is “taking flight.” Your child might resist this process, as it can be intimidating. Thus, your role is to gently push your child out of the nest. This process greatly impacts healthy identity development and independence.

Second, just as your child is becoming more independent, you are given the opportunity to take back some of your independence. This may be the reason some of you are viewing this transition posi-

tively. For years, you may have been devoting every extra waking moment to your child(ren). Now, you have an opportunity to devote more time to yourself and other areas of life. You might foster interests you have been putting off or consider strengthening relationships that have been given less attention, such as with your spouse or friends. Thus, along with your child, you continue to transition and grow.

Furthermore, this transition includes developing a new relationship with your child. For some of you, this may sound ideal. For others, this may sound scary. As your adolescent turns into an emerging adult, this relationship often becomes more mature. As you allow your child to develop as an independent individual when he or she leaves the home, your child will begin to build trust in him or herself. This trust is validating for your child and, ultimately, empowering.

He or she might still seek you out when mistakes are made or during decision-making. However, he or she is becoming an adult and has the potential to start relating to you in a more mature way. It is your role to help facilitate that mature relationship. If

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Adjusting to the “Empty Nest”

Find strength in your faith:

- Pray.
- Talk with church members.
- Teach Sunday school.
- Get involved in church organizations.

Engage in self-care:

- Do what interests you!
- Get crafty.
- Read a book.
- Join a sport league.
- Go for walks.
- Join a gym.
- Schedule time to talk with your child.

Strengthen your romantic relationship:

- Go on a date with your spouse or significant other.
- Eat supper as a couple.
- Explore how your relationship and each other have changed since having children.

Enhance friendships:

- Lean on your friends for support.
- Implement weekly get-togethers.
- Attend their children's activities.

Join other groups:

- Volunteer for your favorite charity.
- Seek out support groups.

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Our Mission

New Leaf Resources promotes healthy relationships and personal growth through counseling, education, and consultation from a Christian perspective.

Megan's Mosaic



You Will Join Them

by Megan C. Fisher, MHS, CAADC
Addiction Therapist



Approximately ten months ago, a perky man with an impressive physique visited my church and explained how he organizes marathon runners for a charity which provides clean water for Africa. I was barely paying attention when the

Spirit spoke to me, saying "You will join them." I kid you not; I looked around that church as if someone was playing a practical joke on me. I responded in my head, "Who me?" There was absolutely no way God was referring to me and running in the same breath. I had never run a day in my life. I was excused from the mile requirement during my school years because of a knee issue. I did my best to ignore the message and continued worshipping.

After the service, however, I found my feet taking me over to where the happy, buff man was talking to a group of eager running believers. I sat down and signed a sheet that I would participate in Team World Vision. That, my friends, is how I ended up training for the Chicago Marathon.

I began a journey of training which took way more time and energy than I had ever considered. I ran on my own several times a week at 6am before getting my daughter ready for school. I woke at 5am every Saturday to join my team for group runs with ever-increasing mileage.

I was fitted for proper running shoes, learned about different brands of nutrition chews for sustaining energy during runs, and began foam rolling my muscles. I exercised my mind as much as my body, discovering how

to play games with myself in order to pass the time when running for hours on end. I prayed, prayed, and then prayed some more for God to keep me healthy and injury free.

During my training, I ran over 500 miles and went through two pairs of shoes. I lost about 15 pounds and gained multiple friends. I met my fundraising goal of providing clean water for as many people as miles I was running in the marathon – 26.2.

Finally, the weekend arrived, and I was as nervous as could be. More time went into this goal than my pregnancy! I prayed some more and trusted that I had done all I could to ready myself for this life-changing event.

On Sunday, October 12, 2014, I completed my very first marathon and it was one of the most incredible experiences with which I have ever been blessed. I am in awe of the opportunity God gave me to achieve something I had never believed achievable. I am amazed at World Vision and the good deeds they do on a daily basis.

Last, but certainly not least, I am so grateful for all of the support I have received from family, friends, and New Leaf Resources. Thank you for your encouragement and love.

Save the Date!
Thurs., April 30, 2015
Annual Appreciation DINNER
The Center for Visual & Performing Arts
in Munster, Indiana

Featuring
Comedienne Tracy DeGraaf

Building a Life on God's Promise

A client recently shared how his experience at New Leaf Resources has given him hope, help and healing.

"My wife left our marriage and then I lost my job. New Leaf feels comfortable like home. At one point in my

life, coming to see my therapist to talk was the only thing I looked forward to because she pointed to Jesus the source of hope.

I have gained acceptance, forgiveness, learned to let go and have peace of mind.

I found peace within myself, those who did wrong to me and God. I am now building a life on God's promise that I am a valuable and loved creation of His for His purpose."

- "Nick", 35
in therapy for
life transition, divorce



"I found peace within myself, those who did wrong to me and God."
- "Nick,"
a client

What's "New" at New Leaf Resources



The DeMotte Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Wheatfield/DeMotte location in September.

Welcome to our newest therapist, **Allison Kaminski**. A resident of Valparaiso, Allison is a graduate of the University of Illinois and the Illinois School of Professional Psychology.

As a counselor, Allison likes to help her clients focus on the link between their faith and their physical and mental well-being. Her areas of specialty include helping

those with depression, anxiety, health and medical issues, ADHD and others. Allison will be seeing clients in both the Crown Point and Wheatfield offices

In her spare time, Allison and her husband, **Mark**, are enjoying fixing up their new home. She also likes to spend time with family, teach yoga, journal and volunteer at the local animal shelter.

Therapist **John Collins** was recently certified to utilize Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and is available to provide EMDR in some cases of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Our sincerest condolences to the family of **Ralph Troller**, one of New Leaf's founding members, who passed away in September.

Empty Nesting

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this seems frightening, do not worry. It doesn't happen overnight. Your children will always be your children and you will always be their parent.

No matter what emotions you are feeling during this transition, remind yourself that these are okay. Do not rush this coping process. Remember, this is a time of growth for both you and your child. So it is important to take care of yourself and facilitate your own positive growth in ways that are right for you.

Special Gifts

Contributions to New Leaf Resources can be made in memory or in honor of a loved one or friend. Thank you to the following donors:

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Save a tree

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Help Make a Difference - Ways to Support NLR

1. Please **Pray** for those who seek care and those who provide it.
 2. **Spread the word** - tell a friend, your pastor, your club members about New Leaf Resources.
 3. **Volunteer** to help with **Mailings** 4 - 6 times per year, label, stuff envelopes.
 4. Do your shopping through **AmazonSmile**. For every purchase, Amazon will make a donation to New Leaf Resources.
 5. Host a **Fundraiser** - from garage sales to golf outings to penny wars, you, your group or school could partner with us to help raise funds.
 6. Be a **Corporate Sponsor** - for the Celebration Banquet or other events.
 7. Consider making a **planned gift** to New Leaf ensuring future support. The **Barnabas Foundation** provides free assistance in walking you through the process.
 8. Use **GoodSearch.com & GoodShop.com** - this search engine donates a .01 per search & up to 37% of every purchase to New Leaf Resources.
 9. **Matching Gifts?** Does your company match your charitable contributions -you could double your giving to New Leaf.
 10. **Like us on Facebook, follow us on LinkedIn** and join the conversation. Share our page with your friends.
- For more ideas, please call Terri at (708) 895-7310.

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A **professional mental health agency** which provides counseling and consultation services to individuals, families, couples, children, churches, schools and businesses.

A **ministry** which brings the best possible care to those we serve, striving to reflect God's grace and love to all who seek help.

A **community resource** offering educational services, prevention programs, training, support and coaching.