

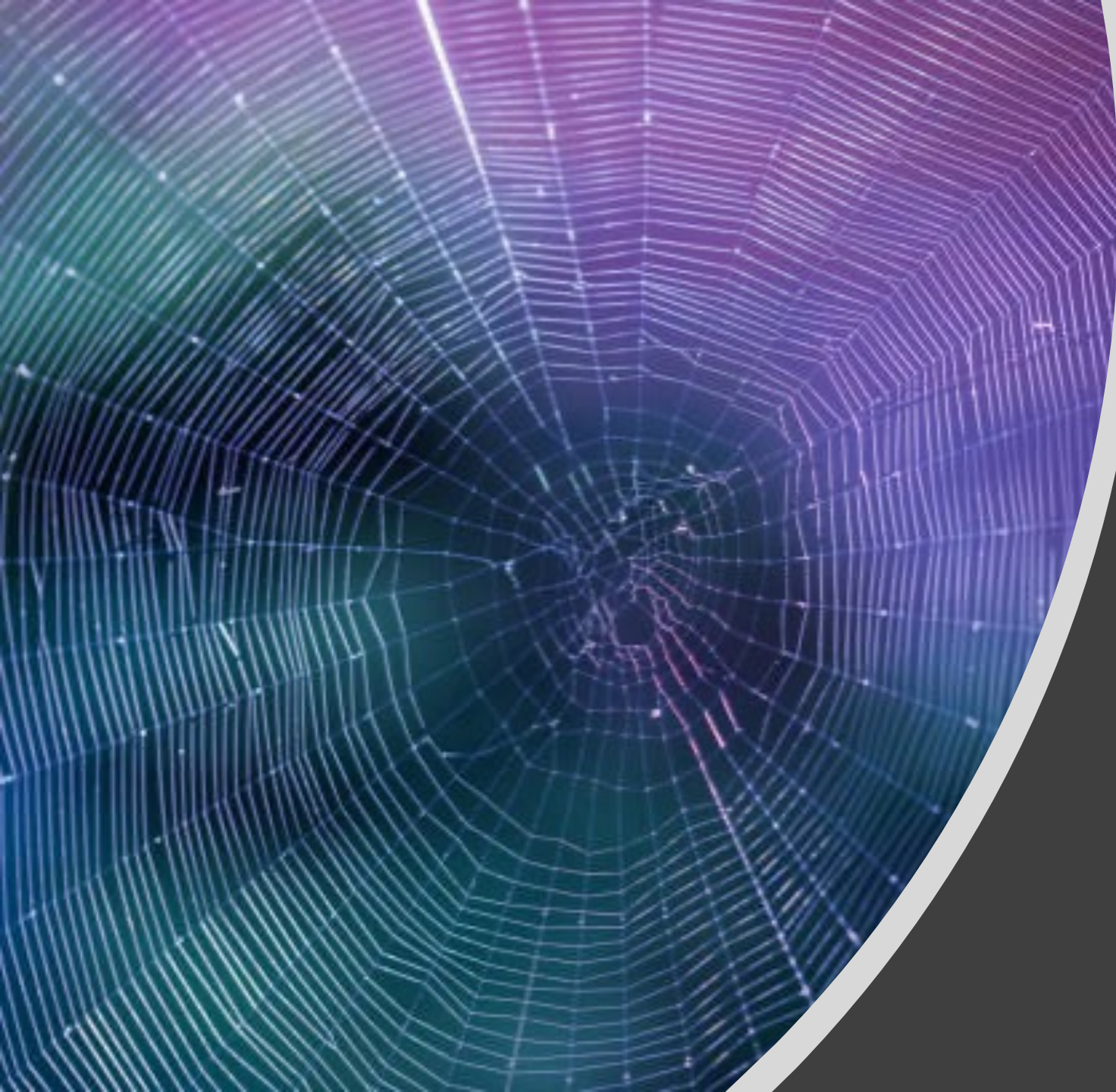


Rebuilding Our Webs of Care

REV. ELIZABETH DENHAM THOMPSON

EREMOS CONSULTING GROUP

FACILITATING TRANSFORMATION FOR CLERGY & CONGREGATIONS



Webs of Care

circular
complete
radiates out from central point
flexible yet structured
multiple points of contact
easily monitored and traversed
singular and basically uniform
ideal expectation of what a web looks like

Expectations

Pygmalion Effect

higher expectations produce higher results
but excessively high expectations = burnout

Pavlovian Response

anticipation of expected results altered behaviors

Soldier Troop Cohesion-Performance-Morale Experiment

three groups – all undertook the same 20 mile march

However each group was told a different version of what to expect

1. Told it would be a 10 mile march, but at the 10 mile break was told they would march another 10 miles.
2. Told they were going on a long march but not told the distance. They would be done, when they were told they were done.
3. Told upfront it was a 20 mile march, but with stops along the way

Differences in outcomes, morale, and behaviors?

“Expectations are
pre-meditated
resentments.”

Marcia McFee
Worship Design Studio



Endings –

Recognizing what's being lost &
left behind

Neutral Zone –

Chaos, Frustration & Creativity

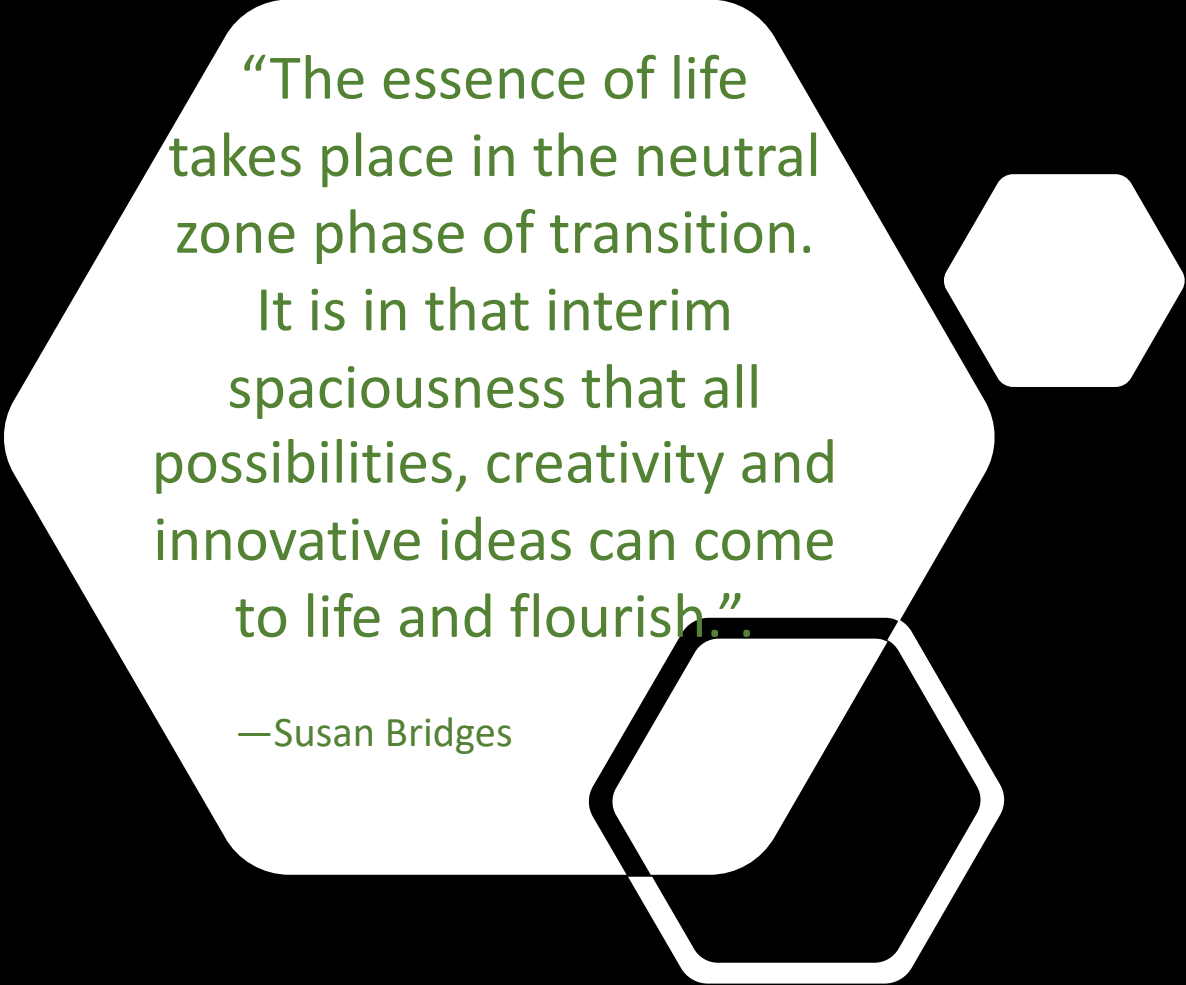
Beginnings –

New values, identity, purpose, energy



Stages of Transition

From William Bridges work on transition

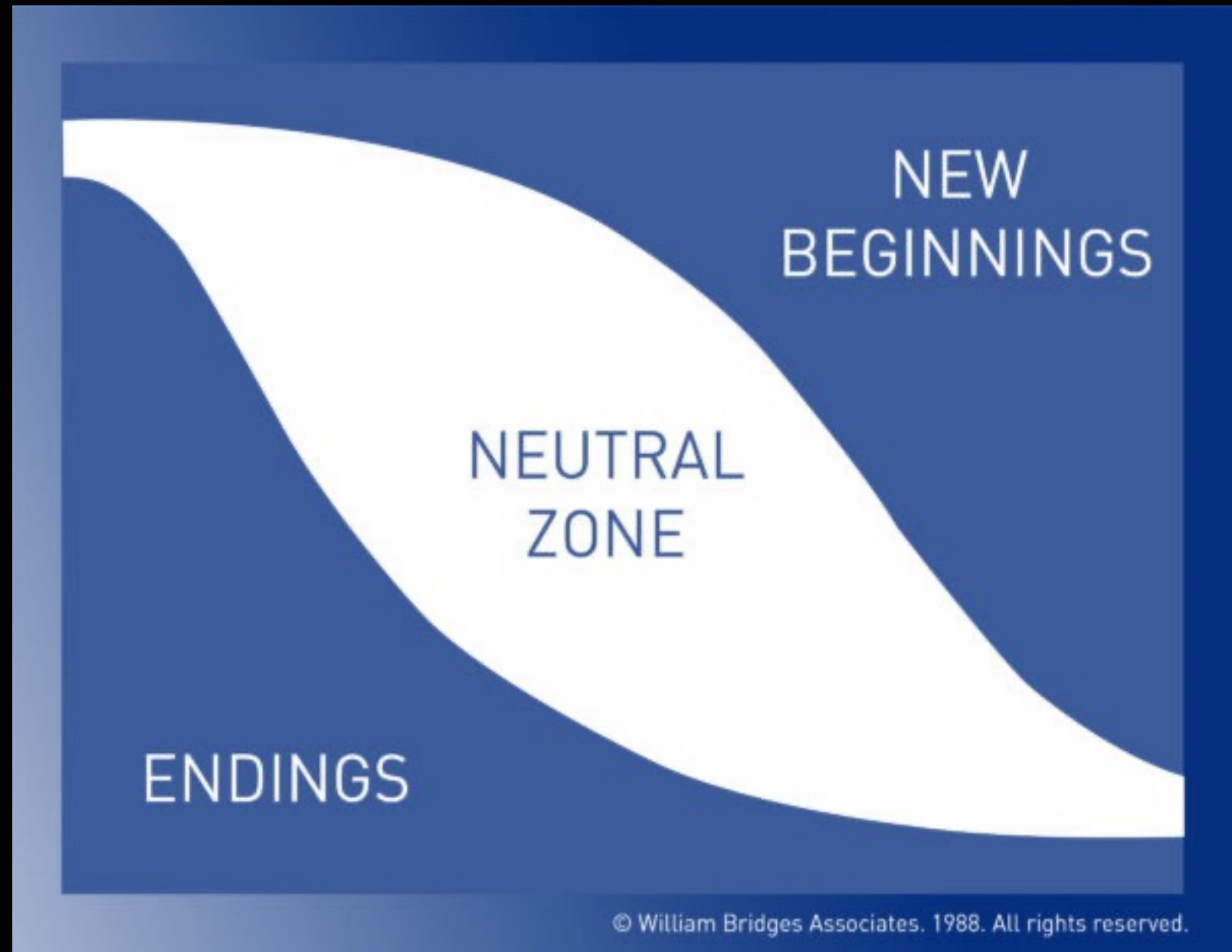


“The essence of life
takes place in the neutral
zone phase of transition.
It is in that interim
spaciousness that all
possibilities, creativity and
innovative ideas can come
to life and flourish.”

—Susan Bridges

All 3 stages co-exist at the same time.

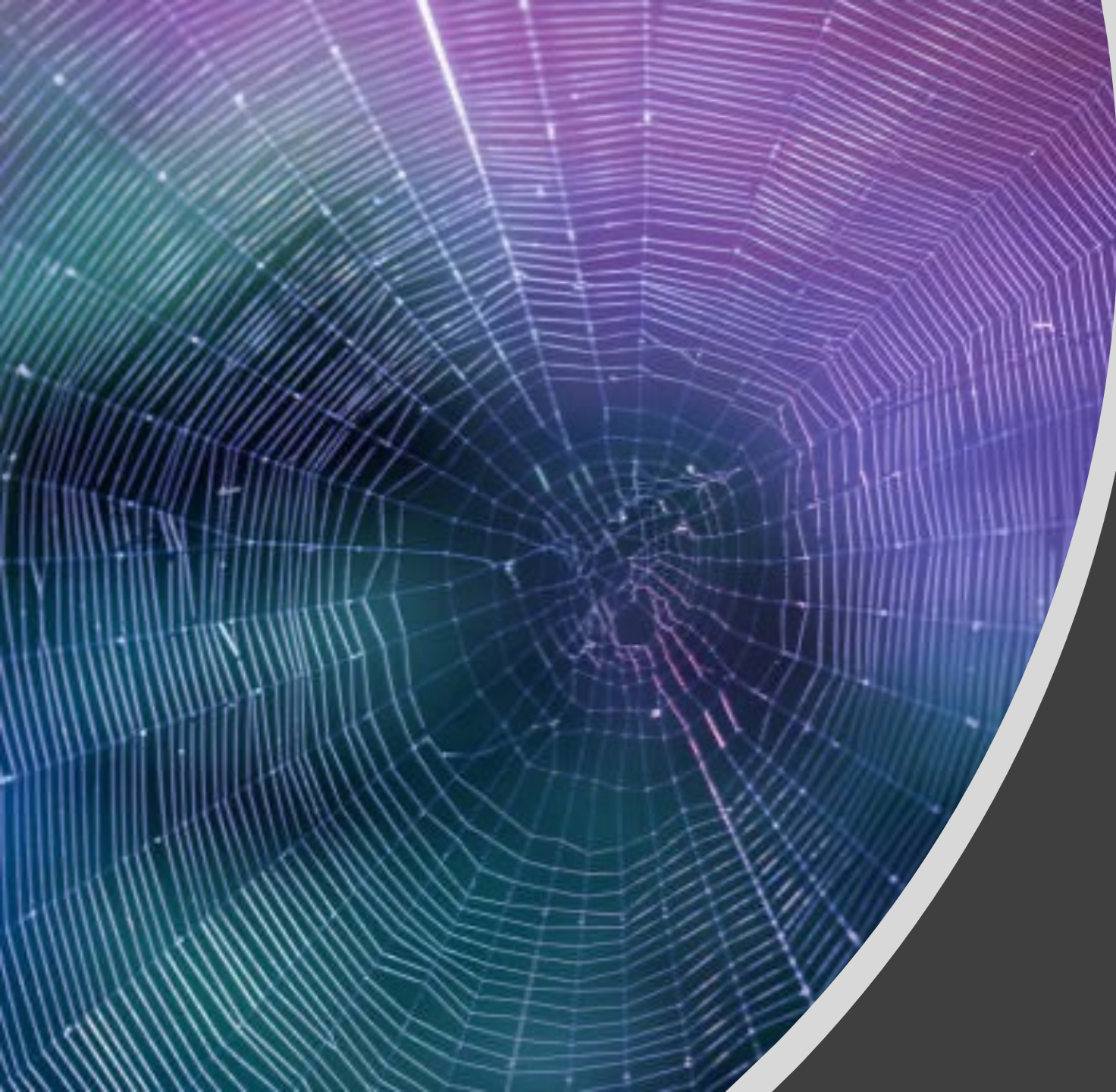
Intensity of each varies, but all are present.



Discussion Questions

- . What expectations are circulating right now?
Helpful or frustrating?
Encouraging or demoralizing?
- . What transition(s) are you experiencing now?
Personally?
For your family?
For your church?
For your community?
- . What are you ending/leaving behind?
With regret? With relief & joy?
- . What are the new beginnings?
- . What are the insights arising from your “neutral zone” transition/transformation?





Webs of Care

circular
complete
radiates out from central point
flexible yet structured
multiple points of contact
easily monitored and traversed
singular and basically uniform
ideal expectation of what a web looks like



What most webs actually look like

Big, gaping holes

Damage is more evident

Loose strands

No central center, but several collectives

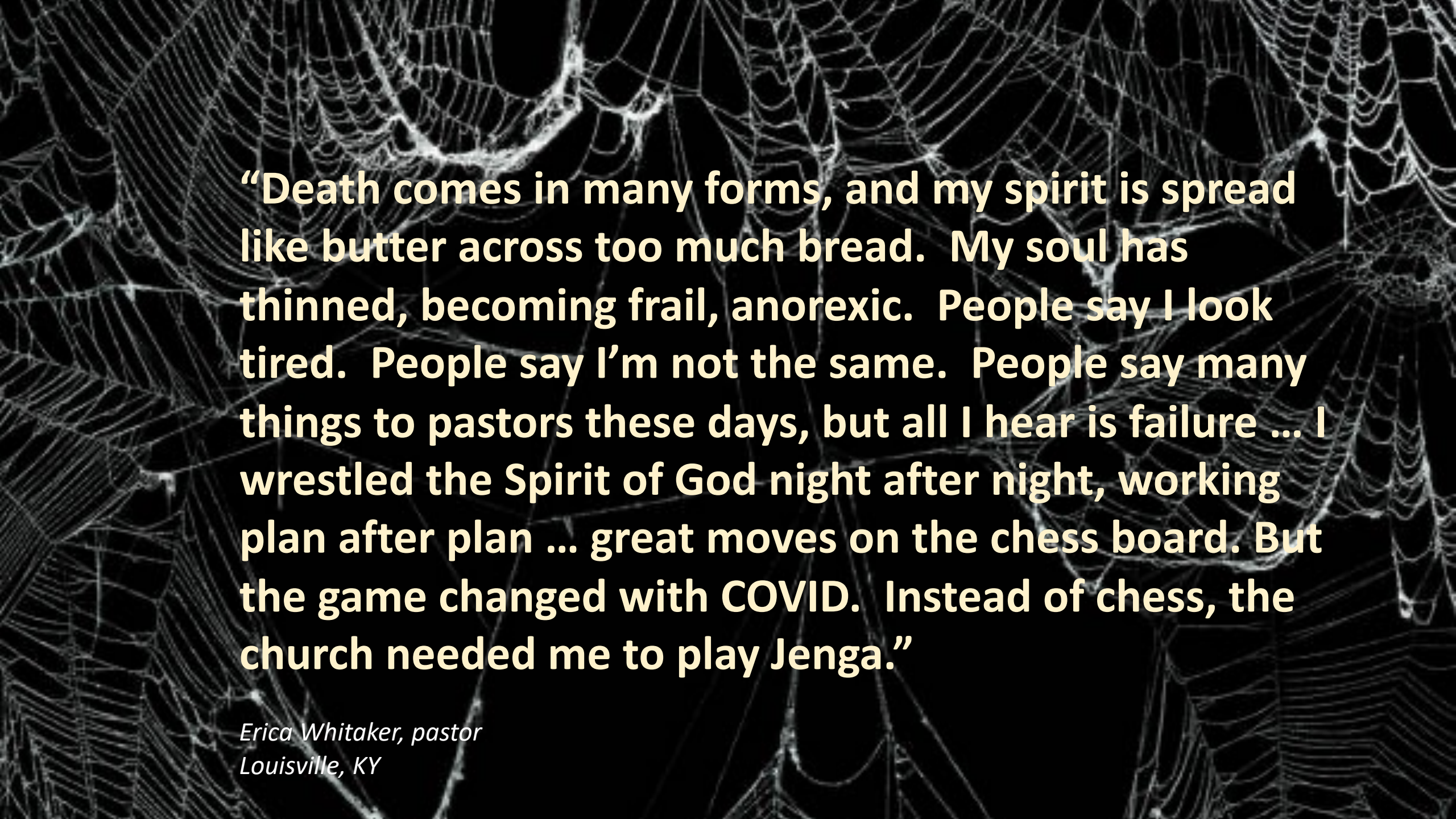
No uniformity, although you know what it is

Still functions, but takes a lot of work to do so

Flexible, but multi-layers of structure

Some attempts to connect what has been torn,
but they are tenuous

It looks tired, exhausted, maybe even covered in dust



“Death comes in many forms, and my spirit is spread like butter across too much bread. My soul has thinned, becoming frail, anorexic. People say I look tired. People say I’m not the same. People say many things to pastors these days, but all I hear is failure ... I wrestled the Spirit of God night after night, working plan after plan ... great moves on the chess board. But the game changed with COVID. Instead of chess, the church needed me to play Jenga.”

*Erica Whitaker, pastor
Louisville, KY*



Elements of Grief & Loss

Shock
Denial
Bargaining
Anger & Exhaustion
Acceptance
Resilience

- ✓ Initiate “go-to” mode(s) of coping
- Reworking of priorities
- Daily experiencing of the Unknown
- Creative moments of joy
- Loss of normalcy
- Chronic vs Acute
- New patterns created
- Questioning ... always questioning
- Deepening Trust
- Trauma Response (new & historic)
- Exhaustion



Byproducts
of
Grief & Loss

Reweaving the Web

A black and white photograph of a spider on its web. The web is a complex, multi-layered spiral structure. A small spider is positioned near the center of the web. Several strands of the web are broken or missing, particularly on the right side, creating gaps in the spiral pattern. The background is dark, making the white lines of the web stand out.

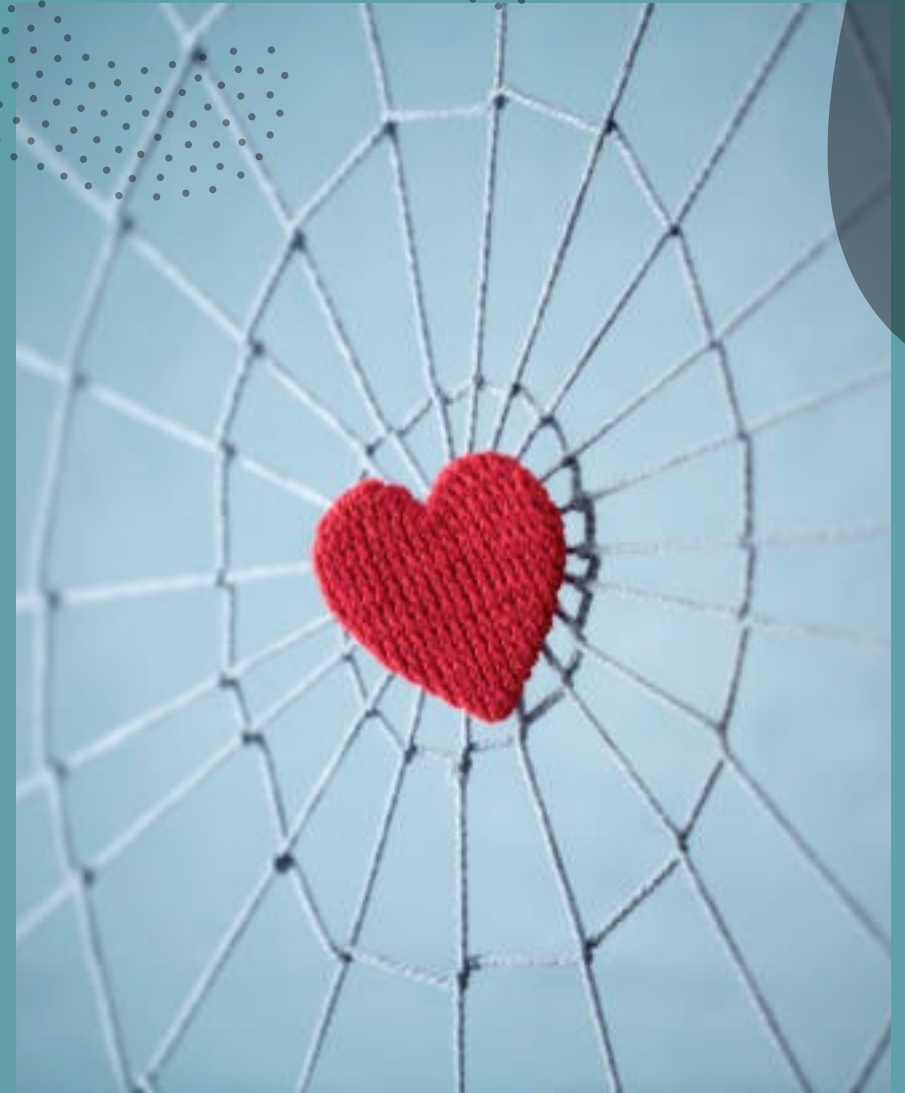
Realizing the gaps in coverage, but still connected
Assessing energy to create new designs for connection
Allowing space for movement
Gratitude that it still works!
Appreciating the beauty of the different designs

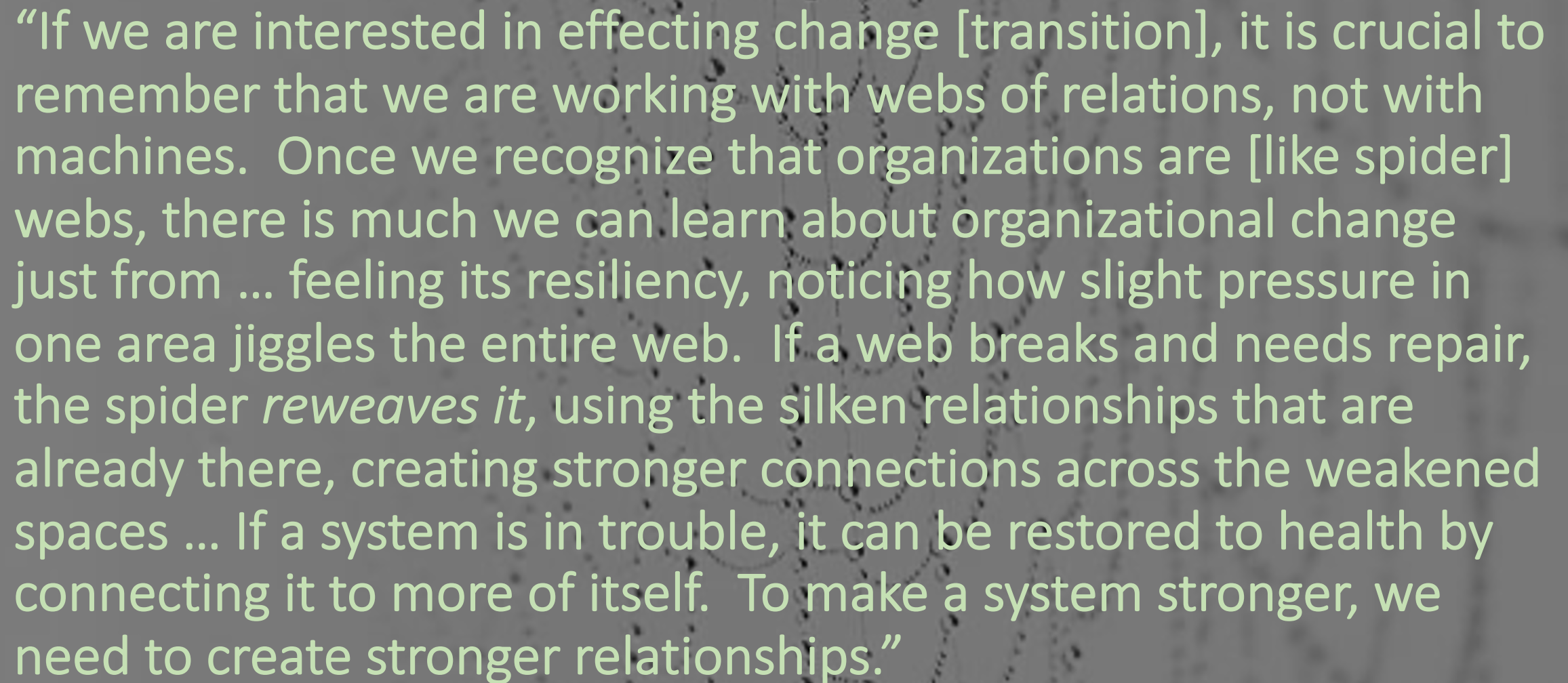
What's needed to reweave the web?

Trust
Acceptance & Grace
Looking for the points of connection/reconnection
Consistency of communication & actions over time
Releasing & cutting away what no longer works
Renewing commitment to the overall vision
Picking up on where the gaps are
Recognizing the strong spots to build upon
It's not all about me/us ... but about God and Kairos time

Reflection Questions

- . What grief work are you experiencing now? Byproducts?
- . What are the condition(s) of your webs?
 - personal?
 - family?
 - church?
 - community?
- . What still seems solid?
- . What needs to be rewoven?





“If we are interested in effecting change [transition], it is crucial to remember that we are working with webs of relations, not with machines. Once we recognize that organizations are [like spider] webs, there is much we can learn about organizational change just from ... feeling its resiliency, noticing how slight pressure in one area jiggles the entire web. If a web breaks and needs repair, the spider *reweaves it*, using the silken relationships that are already there, creating stronger connections across the weakened spaces ... If a system is in trouble, it can be restored to health by connecting it to more of itself. To make a system stronger, we need to create stronger relationships.”

Margaret Wheatley
Leadership and the New Science (2006)

Two Retreat Opportunities

Dancing The Wilderness Retreat: A Regenerative Day for Your Soul

Friday, Oct. 15 – 9am to 5pm (full day)

Saturday, Oct 16 – 9am to 1pm (half day)
with Horses (non-riding)

At Dancing Spirit Horse Ranch in Lyons, CO

These are small group retreats. To be seen and interact energetically with a horse allows you to experience genuine connection, heart-felt support, expanded vision and insight, as well as a deeper level of personal awareness.



*co-led with Rev. Jackie Hibbard of
Dancing Spirit Equine Coaching*

*For more information or to register contact:
Rev. Jackie Hibbard
720-320-7237*

<https://www.dancingspirithorse.com/dancing-the-wilderness>



Manna In the Wilderness Retreat October 26-28, 2021

Tuesday evening thru Thursday lunch

At Cathedral Ridge Conference Center
Winter Park, CO

A 2-night/3-day small group retreat for clergy and lay leaders seeking a time of refreshment and reorientation in trusting God during this extended wilderness season.



For more information or to register contact:
Rev. Kim Seidman
719-687-9038
kim@cathedralridge.org

Thank you!



EREMOS
Consulting Group

Rev. Elizabeth Denham Thompson

Eremos Consulting Group

www.EremosConsulting.com

303-902-7805

ethompson@EremosConsulting.com

