



AGING TODAY **Liminal Space**



By Bob Roth, Managing Partner of Cypress HomeCare Solutions

What is Liminal Space? The word “liminal” comes from the Latin root, limen, which means “threshold.” The liminal space is the “crossing over” space – a space where you have left something behind, yet you are not yet fully in something else. It is a transition space.

I was first introduced to the concept of liminal space by my friend, and former Congregation Beth Israel's Associate Rabbi, Rabbi Rony Keller. Rabbi Keller is now the Senior Associate Rabbi at Congregation B'nai Israel in Boca Raton, FL. Rabbi Keller defines liminal space as being always there, it is the space where we are going to and where we have come from. We are thrust into it and it is what we do in this liminal space that assists us in our trajectory on how we come out. Liminal spaces exist all around us; how we recognize and sanctify them is up to us. Jewish tradition teaches us that we mark doorways with mezuzot because we are commanded to inscribe those words onto our doorposts. The mezuzot reside in that liminal space where we are neither in the home or outside the home. The same can be said about the “chuppa” (the wedding canopy) when the couple enters the chuppa they are single going in, and when they come out they are married. While in the holy space of the chuppa a transformation occurs. Lastly, Rabbi Keller gives another example of the havdalah service. Havdalah is the ritual to separate the Sabbath from the rest of the week. Utilizing four blessings and three objects (wine, spices and a twisted candle), we transition ourselves from the holiness of Shabbat into the mundane of our regular week. Once we begin this beautiful ritual we find ourselves neither in the holy space and time of the Sabbath, but also not in the time and space of the secular week; that period of time in havdalah is liminal, because we were neither here nor there.

For all of us, it has been a crazy couple of months...!

As a result of this pandemic we are all now in this “liminal space,” between what was (prior to stay at home orders) and now with our State opening up, what will our lives and world look like when we come through to the other side?

We have all been forced into an unknown and unpredictable part of life that we are not really accustomed to. As a self-professed “control enthusiast,” I really struggled with this at first. Then I decided to lean into it.

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, I was traveling a couple of times of month – being away from home at least 5 to 8 days a month, while at home I would have early morning meetings and then sometimes meetings in to the early evening, and then coming home grabbing dinner, after dinner reviewing emails and or making phone calls that I wasn't able to get to during the day, and then I would wake up and do it all over again. Each day was different, but each day brought new set of challenges that we would have to overcome.

Now since the coronavirus pandemic, I start my day by going on morning walks, I was doing this prior to the pandemic, now I am going on much longer walks, sometimes alone with my thoughts, other times listening to podcasts or returning phone calls from the day before. The only difference now versus pre-pandemic, is after about 30 minutes our yellow Labrador Lacey in her own little way says take me home, I have had enough. So, I now return her home and then go out for another hour or more. Another amazing by-product of this pandemic is I feel I have a deeper connection now than ever before with my life-long partner and love of my life, Susie. We have been empty-nesters for a little while now, but to be home with her literally 24/7 has brought us both back to why we fell in love with one another, and wanted to share our lives together in the first place – so now we are doing just that.

When faced with challenges, we have a choice. We either get lost in it or we decide to navigate the best we know how. In a strange way, I am somewhat grateful for this pandemic. I feel like I am a better Husband, Dad, Son, and a better leader because of it. I choose gratitude and joy every single day...especially on the hard days. I am grateful for being in an essential business, and really loving the work that we do at Cypress HomeCare Solutions. I really like this quote I saw the other day - "In the rush to return to normal, use this time to consider which parts of normal are worth rushing back to."

I would like to leave you with this thought from Dr. David Katz, Epidemiologist, founding director of Yale University's Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center. Dr. Katz says, we are now keenly aware that the people that are most vulnerable to losing their lives to COVID-19, are those people with underlying health conditions; such as diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and obesity, we should use this time staying at home to work on taking better care of ourselves. Dr. Katz recommends that there should be a national health-promotion campaign to encourage people to improve their diets and lifestyle before they become infected.

So, as we transition out of this liminal space are you going to go back what used to be your normal? Or are you going to make some changes to your life? Take this time in this liminal space to decide what you want to become. The decision is yours.

This column was published in [Lovin' Life After 50](#) and [Jewish News](#) as Cypress' monthly contribution.