

SECOND CURVE COACHING

Faith For Life's Curves

The faith that carries people through creating and implementing new life trajectories is not faith in human capacity; it is faith in God, for whom all things are possible. This is Second Curve Coaching's central claim: faith in God carries people through the second curve.

Feeling 'betwixt and between' is common when creating and implementing a second-curve life trajectory. Former roles are in the rear-view mirror, or almost so. Second-curve roles haven't been named or entered yet. When you answer those people asking, "What are you doing now?" you know that they may not understand, appreciate, or approve.

You may feel motionless because the speed and action of the previous curve are far different from the newly forming next curve. Even though the demands may be far less in the in-between time, you may find yourself more tired or even exhausted than you have been in a long time.

Faith in God's call and the Holy Spirit's empowerment enable you to wrap up and launch new at the same time. This is the faith that carries you through the second curve.

Simultaneously Carrying the Wrap-Up Phase and Launch Phase May Be Overwhelming

Charles Handy introduced the sigmoid curve as a model for understanding personal and organizational trajectories. It describes almost all human activities. Societies, organizations, churches, ministries, relationships, and our lives tend to follow a slow beginning, a steep climb to a plateau, and then decline. Second Curve Coaching selected our name from Handy's second curve construct.

Handy's central premise is that people and organizations must begin their second curve BEFORE the first curve reaches its apex. Your first curve is still ascending; all is well, and most people don't see any reason to reinvent anything at all.

The time between closing a first curve and launching a second curve is a season where two major realities overlap. Being betwixt and between is an overlap, not a gap.

Two trajectories run at the same time. The former still requires thought, effort, and involvement, while the new demands creativity, strength, time, and resources. Faith, then, is necessary to coexist in two major life curves simultaneously.

God gives faith for you to live within two curves simultaneously. This faith is how you are sustained in the second curve.

Three Second Curve Phases

Arnold van Gennep, an ethnographer and anthropologist, noticed that rites of passage in various cultures share three commonalities: separation, a threshold phase, and reincorporation. Victor Turner examined the threshold phase and described the person experiencing it as structurally invisible. Their past is gone, yet their future has not arrived. They aren't who they were, and they're still becoming who they will be.

Turner noticed that people traversing liminal spaces (thresholds) with other people journeying the same path form a unique connection he called *communitas*. Interestingly, he found this solidarity is only available in this middle phase, not in the other two.

In the past, most cultures celebrated and formalized the threshold. They honored the separation with a clearly defined rite of passage and a generous, public welcome to the reincorporation phase. Western cultures often under-structure rituals for crossing over the threshold. The cross-over is a deeply genuine experience, but the narratives, guidelines, and celebrations are mostly absent.

People leave the separation phase and enter the threshold without language for their experience and without a meaningful way to honor what has ended and what has begun. Often, people in this phase feel something is wrong with them.

The system is wrong, not them. They are traversing a portion of the second curve that Western culture has yet to understand and name. The point is not personal failure; it is an unrecognized threshold experience.

Faith for Your Second Curve Is Embodied

Neuroscience provides insights that make the threshold phase much less stressful.

Your brain excels when it can accurately predict what is coming. It constantly seeks to know what comes next to determine next actions. Transition hinders the brain's forecasts. Mental models used for years are no longer applicable. In the new life trajectory, the brain must continually create and adjust new forecasts. These processes require significant energy. Thus, many people report exhaustion in the threshold phase. They aren't lazy. It isn't a lack of faith. It is the metabolic cost of moving forward without a map.

Your nervous system perceives uncertainty as a lack of safety. Seeking to determine whether this is something you should move toward or away from, your brain constantly scans for hints of safety and threat. Uncertainty registers as a lack of safety and sends nervous system cues to move away from it and toward

predictability. A regulated brain, not in threat or survival mode, is necessary to calm the dysregulation of being betwixt and between life trajectories.

HOPE: The Brain's Key Regulation Factor

Researchers found that hope predicted a greater sense of meaning in life than amusement, contentment, excitement, or happiness. Six studies of 2,300 participants by the University of Missouri and Peking University, published in 2025, supported the finding that hope helps people predict and believe in a better future (Edwards et al., 2025). When a person in challenging times cannot grasp amusement, contentment, excitement, or happiness, hope can arise and provide the sense that life has meaning. Hope may silence the dysregulated brain's emergency signals.

Because hope is tied to a better future, a hopeful feeling can arise in the middle of a difficult experience, when other good feelings are beyond reach. Adversity and uncertainty both threaten a person's sense that life means something. Hope can still create an awareness of safety, a lack of threat, a bright future, and meaning in life.

Hope is not a benefit you earn after life improves. It is the gift you embrace while life is still difficult, and it sustains you in the second curve.

Faith for Life's Curves Is More Than Professed Faith; It Is Practiced Faith

Watching science 'catch up' with the Bible is delightful.

In a 2026 study of 725 self-employed Americans, the *Journal of Small Business Management* explored why some meet economic challenges and loneliness with endurance while others walk completely away (Dwyer et al., 2026). The study

found that, after accounting for purpose in life, personal growth, and perceived mastery over one's life situation, religious affiliation and religious identification (self-reported devoutness) did not increase persistence.

Persistence remained strong not in those who claimed a religious affiliation or self-reported high levels of devotion. Persistence held firm in those who implemented religious coping. Faith put into practice, even under pressure, enhanced persistence. **Faith without works is dead. James 2:17**

Putting faith into practice when launching into a new life trajectory is key to persistent endurance. This practiced faith is what carries you through the three phases of your second curve.

A Continuum of the Hope Sequence

The Bible rarely identifies hope, if ever, as an emotion. In Romans 5:3–5, Paul lays out the hope continuum. Suffering, endurance, character, and then hope! Hope develops through the pressures of suffering and endurance, not before.

“We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:3–5, ESV)

The hope sequence is deeply rooted in God's love. The Holy Spirit pours God's love into our hearts. He doesn't use an eyedropper. He POURS God's love into us. With love like God's, we persist through every temptation to abandon the calling of our next curve. An anchor isn't effective because it is attached to the boat alone. Anchors matter because they are attached to the boat and something outside of it. “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast,” Hebrews 6:19

Practices for Threshold Times Between Life Trajectories

- **Clearly and purposefully state what has ended.** Boundaries help your nervous system; other people and systems may not recognize, honor, or state what has ended and support you in setting your boundaries. Since we narrate to regulate, tell others about your separation, threshold, and reincorporation phases. Ask them to support and honor your boundaries.
- **Place and keep your hope in God.** It is good to be optimistic. Yet, faith goes far beyond optimism and is anchored in God. Optimism anticipates an outcome; hope is anchored in God Himself. Optimism can fail. Anchoring in God is firm and secure.
- **Continue and increase your faith practices both when strained and at rest.** Pray. Read the Bible. Gather with other Christians. Worship. Receive holy communion. Stay connected and talk with trusted friends and family members. Persistence, endurance, and resiliency are founded upon your faith practices.
- **Adjust your timeline.** The speed, rhythm, and pace of the three phases are unpredictable and vary from day to day. Consider 30-, 60-, or 90-day plans rather than 5- and 10-year plans. This adjustment helps you understand and experience being where you are in this moment.
- **Delay important decisions until your brain is regulated again.** Don't buy and sell, sign contracts, or end agreements while you are dysregulated. Regulate first.
- **Connect with people who are in this process.** We co-regulate. Being near and conversing with those who are regulated and loving helps you return to a regulated state. Don't withdraw or isolate. Connect. Relate. Embrace.

The middle phase may seem like the absence of true life. But in this pressurized middle, hope is forged, and that hope sustains the abundant life of your second curve.

Like muscle, faith for life's curves is developed through resistance training. Keep lifting. Stay strong. You are carrying parts of yesterday and tomorrow's life trajectories, and that weight is forming you for what comes next.

You and your fully alive faith are postured for resilience, endurance, persistence, and overcoming hope. Keep going. God is with you in the curve. This is faith for life's curves.

References

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