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## FIVE STEPS TO HEALTHY ENDINGS

BY CHRIS WALLWORK (MBACP)

Some of the common elements of personal process brought in to therapy are the based around the endings we have experienced, or are worried we will experience in life. These endings, whether healthy or unhealthy can ultimately serve to dominate our past, define our present, and shape our future.

Endings can sit in a variety of areas in our lives, relationship breakdowns, changing employment, grief – there are endings in each of these facets of existence. They can be either controlled by ourselves, others, or even circumstances beyond anyone's control. Whether we view this as healthy or unhealthy will depend on our personal viewpoint, and emotional health at the time.

In those endings in life that we can control, it is important to end healthily. Why? Well simply put, we need to ensure we make the decision that's right for us right now, and in the future. Let's look at five ways we can ensure we do our best to end situations healthily.

### Is it what I want?

Sometimes, we can be persuaded by others that coming away from a situation may be in our best interests. Whether that is a best friend telling you that you should leave your husband, or other peer pressure where it seems that everyone else is making that decision – it doesn't mean it's necessarily the correct choice for you. If

When one burns  
one's bridges, what  
a very nice fire it  
makes.

*Dylan Thomas*



someone else has convinced you to walk away from someone or something, spend some time reflecting as to whether that is an unhealthy ending for you. It's important to question the perspective of the other people in your own mind, and maybe speak to individuals who may offer an alternative, or even objective viewpoint. Stay present in yourself, and don't be swayed by other people's perceived experiences when it comes to your own choices.

### **Take time to consider**

We can often be trapped in negativity, seeing only the bad things in relation to a situation. This can then make us retreat to a place where these bad things can become exaggerated in our own minds and we end up refusing to believe that there is any hope or positivity left in the situation at all. Now, of course there will be times when this may be 100% true, however before ending, do you not owe it to yourself to test the situation and work out whether the opinion you have formed is indeed one that is authentic?

### **Respect the other party**

Face to face is the required communication style of choice here. A phone call may suffice if there is little emotional involvement or attachment between you and the other party/situation, but in order to end healthily, we need to do it authentically and honestly. Writing a letter or sending an email serves only to control an ending and subvert any response. It is important to remember that we are not always the only ones involved in whatever the situation may be, there will often be another party who may be emotionally impacted as a consequence.

### **Actually end**

The worst type of ending is when we feel we have made a decision, but find ourselves unable to actually communicate that we have done so. Instead we let our actions and time cover our tracks. We need to find ways to value ourselves, and others, more in this situation – rather than leaving an ending to assumption.

### **Be mindful that endings are a part of life**

I always find that as a therapist, keeping endings in mind helps serve my clients in the best way I possibly can. It is important for them that I am aware that therapy DOES need to end at some point. This then provides me with an opportunity to work with my client to provide an ending which they can control, shape, and facilitate. I fulfil the role or passenger in their process.



Do you have endings in your life that you may need to revisit? Are there endings which you need to process in order to move on? At Cornerstone we have counsellors who are vastly experienced in dealing with the emotional process of endings, and can work with you in order to package up any unfinished business, helping you to move forward from the situations.

For more counselling and coaching resources – visit  
<http://www.cornerstonesw.co.uk/resources>