



# CHOICE POINT

The Align Your Purpose Program

## STEP THREE: ENDINGS

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD OF CHANGE



**IN THIS LESSON:**

- Allowing Conscious Endings
- How Embracing Change Can Heal Grief

“*Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending*”

Maria Robinson

Welcome to Step 3. As we continue along this journey, we now evolve the Creator within us to the task of mastering our endings as the gateway to new beginnings.

As human beings we are constantly witnessing and experiencing endings and their necessity for life and continuation.

We see it in our bodies as our cells continuously die off while new cells are made... in our seasons and agriculture as forests, plants and fields die off, are cleared, or burned away to allow for new growth.

We also witness the power of endings in our own lives. As some say, “From womb to tomb, the only constant we shall know is change.”

That's why this lesson is so important and why it follows right on the heels of The Creator we sparked in Lesson 2.

Because all true beginnings can only commence at the end of what comes before. And just as the Hindus honor the Destroyer aspect of creation in Shiva and Kali, so too must we honor and awaken the Destroyer within us so that we may end that which does not serve us to make room for what we choose.

In this way, we will learn in this lesson how to consciously choose and allow endings in ways that serve and speed up our personal evolution.



## ALLOWING CONSCIOUS ENDINGS

### **We should be as proud of our endings as we are of our beginnings.**

Often when we meet challenges, set backs, and destruction in our life—what we are actually witnessing is life's uncanny ability to strike down that which no longer serves us... to clear space for something new to develop and grow.

There is immense power in our endings, particularly if we consciously allow them. For it is when one thing ends that an opportunity arises to make a new choice – to create something different.

To consciously allow endings in your life, first we must look back to the Enquirer and ask: “What would you like to end right now?” What can you let go of or release in order to make room for your dreams and desires?

Here are some common answers I've received in the past...

### **I choose to end and release:**

- Fear
- Anger
- Negative thoughts
- Emotional pain
- Physical pain
- Excess weight
- Physical and emotional dis-ease
- Abusive or unhealthy habits and habitual choices
- Relationships that cause more pain than happiness, that keep me stuck rather than inspire me to grow
- Hatred or judgment toward what I may not understand or can't agree with
- Inertia, stagnation, the status-quo
- Any career, environment, relationship, or life-direction/lifestyle that does not make me happy

Whether you want more money, a different life, the love of a soulmate, impeccable health, or anything else imaginable...

One of the most important steps that no one seems to really discuss is the step to END. If we do not end things consciously, eventually life will find a way to end them for us – sometimes tragically or painfully.

However part of owning your power is to hold responsibility for your own endings and to allow them with conscious integrity.

This is also what creates space for your most powerful Choice Points. Because the ending itself becomes a choice.

You are choosing to end that which no longer serves you. You're choosing to end the habits, thoughts, beliefs, and relationships that hinder you or hold you back from your goals and desires.

**Skills Activated Through Conscious Endings:**

- Transition
- Release and Letting Go
- Forgiveness
- Non-Attachment to Outcomes
- Personal Power through Closure
- Completed Grief/Making Whole Again

For many, these skills may not seem particularly attractive or preferred. Yet they are crucial to success and especially to authentic joy. To live on purpose and with purpose, we must be willing to end, release and let go of the parts of ourselves and our past creations that no longer serve our purpose.

And we can always step into our endings with love, integrity and kindness – toward others and also toward ourselves.

Allowing endings is also vital to our psychological and emotional wellbeing, particularly when it comes to healing suffering or past trauma.

Clarissa Pinkola Estes speaks to this beautifully when she discusses the power of descansos in her book *Women Who Run With the Wolves*.

You've seen a descansos if you've ever seen a white cross on the side of a road. It marks the life of one who has gone too soon – before his or her time. It marks an unexpected ending; a death.

She says, “[People] have died a thousand deaths before they are twenty years old. They’ve gone in this direction or that, and have been cut off. They have hopes and dreams that have been cut off also. Anyone who says otherwise is still asleep... To make descansos means taking a look at your life and marking where the small deaths and the big deaths have taken place... where parts and pieces of the self and [his or] her life have died.”



H. Koppdelaney

What I find so profound about the concept of descansos is that we can never truly free ourselves from a tragic or painful ending until we have grieved it and consciously released it. We must honor our endings and any necessary grieving that comes with them.

Otherwise we may find ourselves swimming in the seas of bitterness, jadedness, rage or numbness. And it is hard to create from such a deep and bottomless ocean.

Luckily endings need not be painful. And we can always turn back and complete any past endings or transitions that were not completed—those breakings of our Self or our world that never quite blossomed into breakthroughs.

So here's a powerful exercise on the following page for consciously allowing endings, and for completing breakings in your past so they can never again rob you of joy, achievement, and true transformation.

### **TO DESTROY OR TO CREATE... THE DANCE APPEARS THE SAME**

"The cosmic dance of Shiva symbolizes the interplay of dynamic and static divine energy flow, containing the five principles of eternal energy - creation, preservation, destruction, illusion and emancipation.

Shiva dances in 'Rudra Tandava' or the dance of destruction.

The 'Lasya' or the gentle form of his dance, known as 'Ananda Tandavam' or dance of bliss is associated with the creation of the world, after its total destruction. Shiva's two different cosmic dances take place in one's 'Chidambaram' or in the sky of the mind, portrayed as the centre of consciousness situated at the altar of one's heart."

~ K P Shashidharan



Photo by Paul Freeman





## HOW EMBRACING CHANGE CAN HEAL GRIEF

One of the reasons you might struggle at times with endings or any form of change is that in these instances, something is always lost. It might be a loss of a person in your life, or the loss of a part of yourself. Loss of dreams or a future you'd had planned that becomes no longer possible. There can be loss of home, loss of a job, or loss of more intangible things: trust, faith, love, purpose.

And what is lost must often be grieved – yet in our modern society we are actually discouraged from this.

So in the following exercise I want to show you how to complete endings that perhaps were thrust upon you – in the case that those incomplete endings have held you frozen or stuck in old patterns.

### **MARK YOUR ENDINGS: GRIEVE THE LOSS & CELEBRATE THE CHANGE**

There are many versions to this exercise I'm about to share with you, and for more information I recommend a wonderful resource on the power of endings and how to truly complete and heal grief: *The Grief Recovery Handbook*, which is available on Amazon or at bookstores.

Clarissa Pinkola Estes also gives a beautiful version of the following exercise in regards to her *descansos* concept in *Women Who Run With the Wolves*...

### **The Exercise: How to Mark Your Endings**

In this exercise you're going to mark on a graph or timeline of your life all the losses or endings you've experienced since birth. Then we'll take a look at which are still restricting your day-to-day living and your efforts to create your new life.

As you do this exercise, it's important to remember that no other person can fully understand your loss or ending. And it is impossible to compare or weigh any one person's loss against another's. The loss of a pair of shoelaces for a little boy could be equally devastating to him as the loss of safety another little girl experiences when her family becomes homeless.

No loss or ending is too small. Honor your endings and what they meant for you.

Also keep in mind that many of our unconscious habits are tied to incomplete endings or losses that we never had a chance to consciously process. Instead we were taught unhealthy ways to bypass or "handle" our grief or loss. And we've been repeating those patterns ever since.



With this exercise you can more easily see the patterns that have emerged across your life so that you can begin to change and move beyond them through the rest of this program.

**1.** Place a blank piece of paper horizontally (landscape) on your desk so that it has more width than height. Then draw a line on it from left to right. At the left end, mark the date of your birth and write Birth. At the right end, mark the current date and write NOW.

**2.** Next, divide your line into quarters. You have your midpoint in the middle, and then two more points equidistant from that midpoint to the beginning of the line, and from that midpoint to the end of the line.

**3.** Begin with your earliest conscious memory and continue forward. Plot out each loss or ending you've experienced. You may find you recall only the large, obvious events, however then go back and consider 'smaller' events, such as teen breakups, changing schools, switching careers, moving houses, the death of a pet or a friend moving away... even celebratory events can be seen as endings – like graduation and the end of high school. It's okay if you don't know the exact dates. Just give approximates.

**4.** Now go back to each ending or loss event and note your current emotional response to each one. It's important here to note that each event is experienced at 100% intensity when they occur, yet as we reflect we may now find that some endings or losses have a greater ongoing impact than others. Try to notate the current (ongoing) impact of each event as well as any emotions that arise (rage, frustration, grief, tears).

**5.** Finally, ask yourself, "What is the most painful, life-limiting loss or ending I ever experienced?" If it's not already on the timeline, write it down. Put a star or circle or mark next to it as this will be the most important ending you'll want to consciously complete and heal.

**6.** Now ask yourself ways you can honor and complete that ending from this present moment in time. It might be a letter of forgiveness to yourself or someone else (that you might not necessarily send to them). It could be a beautiful ceremony or ritual to honor that ending and welcome a new fresh beginning, similar to how a descansos marks the spot of an untimely passing. Create art, write a poem, or just cry your heart out.

Anything can work here, the point is to do it with honesty, in a space of responsibility and ownership for the experience, and with a genuine intent to complete the ending and now move forward.

Also remember that you can always keep the information, lessons and positive aspects of any ending and of the thing or person that ended... all you are letting go of and completing here is the pain or grief associated with that ending so that you can move forward into new joys and experiences and beginnings.

{Oh, and in the next lesson we'll deal fully with Forgiveness, which is the most powerful way to honor and complete an Ending...}

