

F R E E S N E A K P E E K

HONORABLE CLOSURE:

— An Introduction —



"Linda Curtis makes
an original contribution
in establishing new
applications for an ancient
process that can be
applied in modern times."

Angeles Arrien

PHD, Cultural Anthropologist, Author of
"The Second Half of Life"

LINDA A. CURTIS

What is Honorable Closure?

Welcome to this condensed introduction to Honorable Closure. It is intended to give you an experiential “taste” of the process. As long as you engage honestly and authentically with the questions and suggestions below, this booklet can make a real difference, no matter what kind of changes you are going through.

Honorable Closure provides a thoughtful and reflective process that supports us to handle the inevitable endings, exits and good-byes of everyday life. Many traditional cultures believe that if you end your work and relationships well, new and greater blessings and opportunities will arise. They have practiced Honorable Closure for centuries to acknowledge the impact and integrate the lessons of an experience. My Honorable Closure process makes these traditional practices accessible to our modern world and connects us all to the timeless validity of this work.

Everything in life has a beginning, a middle and an end. This rhythm is a sign of life’s dynamism and that things are working. In my experience, we often rush through endings, just like we rush through many of our activities, because they often involve a poignant loss or distress. We sense things will never be the same, and though we yearn for growth and change, that requires that we move towards the unknown where guarantees and sure things don’t exist.

Honorable Closure allows us to transform all endings into life-affirming experiences, creating conditions for happiness as we befriend our mortality.

Change
is an event.

Transition
is the response.

Transformation
*is the possibility
we create through
the process of
Honorable Closure.*

Coming *Full Circle*

Not long ago I asked everyone in a small group to tell me a story about their best experience with Honorable Closure. One man, now happily married, recalled ending a romantic relationship he'd had for six years. There was no acrimony in their ending, he said, only the melancholy of a connection that ran its natural course. Though the thought made him uncomfortable, he couldn't resist calling the woman's father to say good-bye and thank him for all the hospitality and kindness he'd shown him over the years. The conversation was filled with mutual respect and gratitude. The father thanked him for always being good to his daughter, and wished him well. "When I put down the phone," he said wearing a wistful grin, "I felt the whole thing had come full circle. I got so much more out of that conversation than I ever expected."

I loved his image of 'coming full circle,' ending a segment of his life by tending to the details, despite any discomfort. You are the only person capable of knowing when you have experienced Honorable Closure, but it will probably feel like coming full circle, coming clean, nothing left unsaid or undone.

Are You Ready to Work with this Process?

Here is an overview of my 4-Step Appreciative Inquiry Process for Honorable Closure which I developed out of my own personal and professional experience. Using a series of questions, my process allows time for reflection, identifying the lessons and resolving any regrets. My over-riding intention of providing this overview is to help you to assess your readiness to work with this process.

HONORABLE CLOSURE

The 4-Step Process to Skillful Endings



When you are willing to bring curiosity and openness to the situation, you are ready to begin. Admittedly, that itself can take time; and you are only ready when you are ready.

To help you assess your readiness, I've provided six questions below. If you answer 'yes' to the majority of these questions, the time has come for you to complete whatever it is that you need to do with dignity and grace.

- *Are you willing to be curious and open to fresh ways of looking at your situation? Note: This doesn't mean you have to forget what has gone before, or condone bad behavior.*
- *Are you ready to discover and be grateful for the unintended gifts and unexpected positive outcomes that have come from the work, relationship or interaction that is ending?*
- *Can you honestly review and assess the impact you have had on others (either positive, negative, intended or unintended) and resolve any regrets? Note: This requires humility and compassion for yourself and others.*
- *Are you willing to forgive yourself for any harm you may have caused others, whether it was conscious or unintended? If the answer is 'no,' can you forgive yourself for not being ready to forgive yet?*
- *Are you willing to forgive others for any harm they may have caused you, whether it was conscious or unintended? If the answer is 'no,' can you forgive yourself for not being ready to forgive yet?*
- *Are you ready to say or do whatever it takes to be complete?*

As a way to further assess your readiness for Honorable Closure, I invite you to read the next few pages where I share some thoughts about Step 1 of my process. An essential component of Honorable Closure is the quality of gratitude, so that is where we begin.

Step #1: Tell The Old Story In a New Way

HONORABLE CLOSURE The 4-Step Process to Skillful Endings



Honorable Closure is not about letting go of *an event*. What's done is done. But, you can shift your perception and *your present moment response* to what occurred. (My favorite definition of a miracle is 'having a change in perception.')

Using the lens of gratitude, you are now invited to tell the old story in a new way. Gratitude is a humble way of being on the lookout for what is working in life. It is smart medicine, and has been scientifically proven to reduce stress, cultivate well-being, improve relationships and increase productivity. Gratitude opens the heart and when the heart is open there is room for curiosity and learning. Once you are clear about the lesson and can articulate it, you can integrate it. Once you integrate an experience, it's easier to let go of the distress around it. In this way, our distress stories become medicine stories, a healing for ourselves and a way forward.

There are many things in life that we can't be grateful for (war, violence, untimely death, etc.) but if we look deeply at our personal stories, we can always find an opportunity. It may not look like you thought it would, or be the opportunity you were seeking, but it's there waiting for you to discover. Remember, this experience doesn't belong to anyone else but you.

When you're ready to transform your distress story into a medicine story, sit quietly and allow yourself to feel unrushed as you reflect on these questions and write down your answers.

What are you grateful for in this experience or this relationship? Where and how have you been positively impacted? For example, did you learn a new skill or get pushed into a new, unforeseen, positive direction?

When you were at your very best during this time, what were you doing? What qualities did you demonstrate? What qualities came forward from you that surprised you?

The root of the word "question" is "quest." All of the questions in my 4-Step process are designed to send you on a path of self-discovery and transformation. You may wish to revisit these questions several times over the next few days or weeks in order to allow new insights to arise in their own time.

How was your first pass through these questions? Whether it was thought-provoking, surprising, easy or difficult, if you were able to come up with just one new insight this introduction has served its purpose and you are on your way to an Honorable Closure.

And, if you would like to take this process further, please visit my website where you can subscribe to my blog and eNewsletter, and learn about upcoming workshops. I would love to know more about you and what has attracted you to the work of Honorable Closure at this time, so please feel free to send me an email. If you have a question, I'd love to answer it.

I'm here to help.

About Linda A. Curtis

Linda Curtis is an Executive Consultant, Mentor for Honorable Closure, Writer, Speaker and Team Facilitator who lives in the San Francisco Bay area. Linda spent twenty years in the corporate world and held a variety of leadership positions. For more than a decade, she has worked with hundreds of C-suite executives and their teams, high-potential leaders and successful entrepreneurs.

The many endings Linda has experienced in her own life make her a passionate advocate of Honorable Closure. These include: being officially excommunicated and shunned by her family after leaving the Jehovah's Witness religion, divorce, resigning from a thriving corporate career to launch her own business, dealing with the death of her second husband, and surviving breast cancer.



Linda mentors individuals, executives and teams who are going through major life or work events to experience Honorable Closure and move into the future, unencumbered by the past.

Learn more at www.HonorableClosure.com

There you can subscribe to her blog and eNewsletter, and learn about upcoming workshops.

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