

"This book will challenge you to put a stop to things that have been getting in your way for a long time." —Tom Rath, bestselling author of *Strengths-Based Leadership*

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *BOUNDARIES AND INTEGRITY*

Dr. Henry Cloud

NECESSARY ENDINGS

{ THE EMPLOYEES,
BUSINESSES, AND RELATIONSHIPS
THAT ALL OF US HAVE TO GIVE UP
IN ORDER TO MOVE FORWARD }

Necessary Endings: The Employees, Businesses, and Relationships That All of Us Have to Give Up in Order to Move Forward

Henry Cloud

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“If you’re hesitant to pull the trigger when things obviously aren’t working out, Henry Cloud’s *Necessary Endings* may be the most important book you read all year.” —Dave Ramsey, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Total Money Makeover*

“Cloud is a wise, experienced, and compassionate guide through [life’s] turbulent passages.” —Bob Buford, bestselling author of *Halftime* and *Finishing Well*; founder of the Leadership Network

Henry Cloud, the bestselling author of *Integrity* and *The One-Life Solution*, offers this mindset-altering method for proactively correcting the bad and the broken in our businesses and our lives. Cloud challenges readers to achieve the personal and professional growth they both desire and deserve—and gives crucial insight on how to make those tough decisions that are standing in the way of a more successful business and, ultimately, a better life.

Necessary Endings: The Employees, Businesses, and Relationships That All of Us Have to Give Up in Order to Move Forward Details

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From Reader Review Necessary Endings: The Employees, Businesses, and Relationships That All of Us Have to Give Up in Order to Move Forward for online ebook

Kent says

Helpful coverage of the internal and external aspects of bringing closure to life's passing experiences. With eternity set in the human heart by our Creator, we naturally find it difficult to bring an end to things that have out lived their useful life.

Cloud helps navigate the complicated landscape of what I heard Peter Drucker call "Systematic Abandonment." Drucker said, "For every new thing I pick up, I must ask myself, "What will I set down?""

Necessary Endings shatters the "no one has ever been down this trail before" fear and replaces it with the faith to walk a path of closure with the millions of folks who have made necessary endings.

June Sparks says

This is a book to read slowly....very slowly. Read Chapter One and then spend a week thinking about it. Do that for each chapter - meditate on it. There is so much good advice dripping from every page. So many times, change = loss in life. Many times the change is necessary, whether it be moving to a new place, taking a new job or cutting ties with someone in your life. We mourn the loss created by the change, whether the change was good or not. This book provides insight into our feelings and makes it easier to swallow the loss - or better yet - deal with it positively.

Lisa says

This is a must read! A truly excellent book full of wisdom. True, endings are necessary and they do take courage and faith, and this book is one to help you through it. Take courage, endings are not all bad and they are indeed very, very necessary. This book will remain on my shelf for the rest of my days. I will read it again and refer to it often.

Stephen says

I finished and reread this book a few times because I found it to be full of really good insights.

Here's one of my favorite quotes from it:

Some endings require a grieving process to the extent that the person is involved. A mental "letting go" of the energy that has been expended so that you free up energy to be focused on something else.

Cyrus Carter says

If you are contemplating a change in your life, this book may help structure some of your thinking. Whether professional or personal, any change requires an "ending" which can be difficult but will likely be liberating in the end. I recommend the book for its ability to add a sequence to the process; I do wish the editor had taken a red pen to about 25% of the material as it was repetitious at times.

Jeff says

Perhaps the best book I've read thus far this year. I highly recommend this book.

A few insights:

"Getting to the next level always requires something, leaving it behind and moving on. Growth itself demands that we move on. Without the ability to end things, people stay stuck, never becoming who they are meant to be, never accomplishing all that their talents and abilities should afford them."

"Good cannot begin until bad ends." Endings are not only part of life, they are a requirement for living and thriving.

"Am I having on to an activity, product, strategy or relationship whose season has passed?"

Accept Life Cycles and Seasons. There are the tasks of spring, summer, harvest and winter. Be aware of the seasons.

Reality is tough but as Woody Allen said, "Reality is still the only place to get a good steak."

Take a piece of paper and divide it in two columns.

On the first column write down all the things you don't have control over.

On the second column, write down things that you do have control over.

Focus on the second column.

True hope, true perseverance = a real reason to believe that tomorrow is going to be different from today.

The past is the best predictor of the future.

FOUR QUESTIONS OF HOPE:

1. What has the performance been so far?
2. Is it good enough?
3. Is there anything in place that would make it different?
4. If not, am I willing to sign up for more of the same?

There are three kinds of people:

1. Wise people -- they welcome constructive feedback.
2. Foolish people -- they reject constructive feedback.
3. Evil people -- they destroy. Have nothing to do with them.

The mature person meets the demands of life, while the immature person demands that life meet their

demands.

Debbie Petersen says

To get to the new beginning you need to make the necessary ending first.

I wish I had read the book 20 years ago. He makes the point that in the day-to-day, it isn't too hard to put up with something that is no longer right for us. We make it through one day, then another, and the days turn into years. We have an incredible tolerance for pain, especially if we think it will "get better." So, we tell ourselves little lies like "It will turn around" or "it's not always like this." We numb ourselves as a method of coping. So, here is the part that got to me: "Then, stop the excusing, the medicating, the rationalizing, or any other interference, and project into the future: one month, six months, one year, two years, five years, or more. See yourself at that time having the same discussions you are having now, with no better results. Picture it, feel it, smell it. You already know what it is like, so you don't even have to use your imagination. You are living it right now. I just want you to picture yourself living it for real five years from now. Is that what you want?"

Vicki says

I'm not sure why I felt it was important to read this, but I did. I admittedly fought the ideas in the book for almost the entire first half. I could see where this might be important for business leaders and that part made sense. However, I felt it was too simplistic for relationships. After all, relationships are more nuanced and complex. Plus, as a person of faith, I feel like I'm told never to give up on people since God never gave up on us. Where is the love, faith and hope in giving up or becoming hopeless? The book didn't seem to make very strong connections between the two and gave me plenty of space to negate the ideas.

Then came chapters 6 and 7 and I found myself seeing such familiarity that I didn't have as much space anymore. I found myself sadly agreeing that some relationships that just ended were necessary endings.

This book helped me see how much energy I was spending in a situation that wasn't going to change, at least not any time soon, and that was energy that could be spent on things that would bear more fruit. An even harder realization was in how much energy another person was having to spend on me, not to have any forward momentum. We were causing each other to get stuck. A bit of an ouch, but a necessary ouch.

According to the book, I haven't been horrible at saying good-bye in the right way, but I haven't been great at it either. I agree. It was helpful to read the chapters on how to possibly go about it that would bring about health and closure.

I think a bigger take-away was that endings are new beginnings, which I assume could also mean a full circle back around once all of us have grown and matured a little. However, the book points to signs as to whether that is possible or not. I guess I would prefer, at least when it comes to relationships, that it was titled,

Necessary So-Longs. However, if we never take that step we will never get to that place where there is any kind of health.

There is a no-nonsense type of approach here that my sensitive nature had to adjust to a bit, but it wasn't too difficult. I listened to the title on Audible but have now bought a Kindle copy so I can refer to the chapters with questions to ask if I ever feel the doubt about saying "so-long" again.

This was very helpful.

Stan says

Wow! This is an amazing and extremely important book. It isn't an easy read, because you probably won't progress very far before thinking about aspects of your life that may require a necessary ending. And, that is a huge part of why this is an important book.

The author applies his ideas to personal relationships and business decisions and even lifestyle choices. Many examples are given from his decades of counseling and executive coaching. You are likely to find some of your own life experiences in the examples.

This book will help you identify aspects of your life that need to be changed, things that need necessary endings. You will read sage advice on how to determine what can be salvaged and what cannot. Where personal relationships or business relationships are concerned, you will read wise communication strategies. The distinction between wide people, foolish people, and evil people is clear and priceless-the advice on communicating with each type is vital.

Where the book really shines is Cloud's writing about why we resist making these necessary endings and how to find the motivation and courage to follow through.

This is a great book that presents life skills that everyone needs to master. Hands down - the book is pretty indispensable. Get a copy. Don't just read it, master it! Enjoy!

John says

AMAZING. Riveting, foundation-shifting and freeing.

Of the 28 books I have read so far this year, this book is the clear #1. Necessary Endings and Made to Stick are the best of the best I have read so far this year, and Necessary Endings is by far the #1 of those 2. And of the books I have read in the last 10 years, this is in the top 5, for sure.

Hope and perseverance are viewed as positive characteristics, and they generally are. But there are times when we have false hopes and persevere in the wrong pursuit -- in those times, those characteristics bind us, demotivate us, and hold us back.

Good endings are not a strength of many people, but Dr. Cloud brings a normalcy to endings: whether it is

cycles of life or seasons or the healthy passing of life or times in life (infancy, childhood, singlehood, etc.), endings are healthy and good. And dealing with them well is so important.

Wise, Foolish and Evil. Decathexis, funerals, metabolizing. So many, many good concepts.

Don't stay stuck and don't persevere on a false hope.

Steve Poling says

This book is about ending relationships between people. Saying that brings to mind romantic relationships, but this book applies equally to business relationships as romantic ones.

Should you quit that job? Should you leave that church? Should you break up with that girl? Should you fire that employee? Should you excommunicate that parishioner? Should you divorce that spouse?

These questions are answered in the affirmative when it is a "necessary ending" to the relationship. Thus it's important to understand whether the ending is necessary or not. I believe that one should manage all his relationships in a sustainable fashion so that ending a relationship generally won't happen unless it is necessary.

To assist in figuring whether a relationship is at a necessary ending, Cloud partitions humanity into three classes: the wise, the fools, and the evil.

The wise are people you can share negative facts with and they'll respond gratefully. ("You have bad breath." / "Oh, sorry. Here I'll take a mint. Is that better?")

The fools are people who edit their perceptions of reality to remove the parts they don't like. ("Your software has a bug." / "No, it doesn't. You're not using it right. That's not my problem.") When dealing with a fool you have to change the conversation from the problem at hand to why they're not listening.

The evil are people who will use whatever you give them against you. For these people you send "lawyers, guns, and money" and get away from them.

Recognizing where you are in this continuum and recognizing where those you deal with are on it serves to guide in evaluating one's relationships. It's a negative book for negative times when one may have to painfully choose to give up on a hopeless business or dismiss a marginal employee. Recommended.

Larisha says

Author has an easy reading style and he writes with a Christian perspective.

In a nutshell necessary endings is removing whatever it is in our lives whose reach is unwanted. I liked how he further broke it down..."given your abilities, resources, opportunities, etc. are you reaching your full potential, or are you drifting toward a middle that is lower than where you should be if you were getting the

most from who you are and what you have?"

His section on the 3 types of people was excellent. The wise, foolish, and evil.

Judy says

I should just buy this book, and highlight.

I find it sometimes hard to read books by Henry Cloud, and this one seemed mostly applicable to business, but the more I read, the more helpful it was. Following are the most helpful (to me) excerpts:

page 49: "I have watched well-meaning people literally waste years and millions of dollars trying to bring someone along who is not coming. And often the person may have lots of other talent that the leader doesn't want to lose, or he likes the person so much that he is willing to try over and over again...come to grips with the fact that some people--no matter how much you give them or how much you try to help them improve their performance...are not going to change. At least not now, and not as a result of anything you are doing. Accept it..."

page 66-67: "Another relational map is feeling responsible for another person's pain when the enabling is ended...it is a form of caring gone awry. People enable others because they care. But this kind of caring is not caring at all and is destructive to the person being helped. It is a toxic dependency. It keeps adult kids dependent on parents long after they should have been independent adults...there is a difference between helping someone who is disabled, incapable, or otherwise infirm versus helping someone who is resisting growing up and taking care of what every adult (or child, for that matter) has to be responsible for: herself or himself. When you find yourself in any way paying for someone else's responsibilities, not only are you stuck with a delayed ending, but you are probably harming that person."

Page 69: "In the family-owned businesses, the failure-to-launch syndrome can become a business practice...people in their twenties or older, who are living with parents and have not been able to successfully launch into adulthood. Certainly there are circumstances in which living with parents makes sense...But sometimes the situation is not good and enables a child-like dependency in an adult. (In some situations, you cannot even call it a healthy childlike dependency, as many times these twenty-somethings have no chores, requirements, or responsibilities, not is their living with parents in service of anything else, like further education.)

Page 74: "...successful people...all have one thing in common: They get in touch with reality...you must finally see reality for what it is...what is not working is not going to magically being working...The awareness of hopelessness is what finally brings people to the reality of the pruning moment. It is the moment when they wake up, realize that an ending must occur, and finally feel energized to do it. Nothing mobilizes us like a firm dose of reality. Whether is is finally getting an addict to hit bottom and end a destructive pattern or getting a CEO in front of a bankruptcy judge to force the restructuring that he has been avoiding, only reality gets us to do difficult things."

Page 87 ff: "It is imperative that you give up hope if your hope is not hope at all but just an empty wish. But how do we know the difference between wishing and hoping?...definitions of hope contain two elements..."desire or expectation" for something in the future to occur...second is..."grounds for believing" that something...will occur...The real problem is when have have one without the other: a desire without any

grounds. That is hope based not on reality but on our desires, our wishes...In the absence of real, objective reasons to think that more time is going to help, it is probably time for some type of necessary ending...As the saying goes, "Hope is not a strategy." This kind of hope is not worth spending more time and resources on. It is only buying you the time to continue to make more mistakes. If you are in a hole, rule number one is to stop digging...While hope is a great virtue, hope in unreality is not. And sometimes hopeless is the best virtue you have, because it can finally get you to the pruning moment...to hang on to false hope is a fantasy that can end in dismal failure."

Page 92: "The past is the best predictor."

Page 95: "The past does not lie. Of course, you might...ask, "Can't someone do better than their past?" Of course!...the key is this: There had better be good reason to believe that someone is going to do better. Without any new information or actions, though, the past is the best predictor of the future."

Page 96: "...am I willing to sign up for more of the same?"

Page 97: "I was talking to a wealthy friend one time about the ways that he invests his money...He told me that he does not invest in businesses, other than his own...I disagreed, as I knew of several that he had invested in..."Not true," he said, "I did not invest in those businesses...What I invested in was what I always invest in: the person...I knew the leader and his or her team, their track record, and their character. That is what I was investing in, not the business..."...What kind of person deserves our trust, and when do we believe that someone can change?"

Page 99: "...unless something changes, the future that you can expect is more of the past. Sorry or becoming committed does not make Jim Carrey a great golfer, or made Jack Nicklaus funny. Recommitment does not make a person who is unsuited for a particular position suited for it all of a sudden. Promises by someone who has a history of letting you down in a relationship mean nothing certain in terms of the future."

Page 102 ff: "People change...But...not always...you can waste more time, even years...when can I have hope that a person is going to be different...look for the objective reasons to hope...You need a "reason to believe". Here are nine object factors...Verifiable Involvement in a Proven Change Process; Additional Structure; Monitoring Systems; New Experiences and Skills; Self-sustaining motivation...Look at the degree to which you are having to drive the process; Admission of Need; The Presence of Support; Skilled Help; Some Success."

Page 133: "...the fool...rejects the feedback, resists it, explains it away, and does nothing to adjust to meet its requirements. In short, The fool tries to adjust the truth so he does not have to adjust to it."

Page 134-5: "Traits of Foolish Persons. When given feedback, they are defensive...come back at you with a reason why it is not their fault...When a mistake is pointed out, they externalize the mistake and blame someone else...attempts to talk about problems create conflict, alienation, or a breach in the relationship...Sometimes, they immediately shift the blame to you...use minimization...rationalize...excuses are rampant...never take ownership...emotional response has nothing to do with remorse; instead they get angry at you for being on their case...see themselves as the victim...world is divided into the good guys and the bad guys. The good guys are the ones who agree with them and see them as good, and the bad ones are the ones who don't think that they are perfect...lack of ownership of the issue and a refusal to take responsibility...want outside world to change instead of them."

Page 137: "So stop talking. At least about the problem."

Page 142: "When a spouse says to the alcoholic, "you need to go to AA," that is obviously not true. The addict feels no need to do that at all, and isn't. But when she says, "I am moving out and will be open to getting back together when you are getting treatment for your addiction," then all of a sudden the addict feels "I need to get some help or I am going to lose my marriage." The need has been transferred. It is the same with any kind of problematic behavior of a person who is not taking feedback and ownership. The need and drive to do something about it must be transferred to that person, and that is done through having consequences that finally make him feel the pain instead of others. When he feels the pain, he will feel the need to change...A plan that has hope is one that limits your exposure to the foolish person's issues and forces him to feel the consequences of his performance so that he might have hope of waking up and changing."

Page 143: "With wise people, talk to them, give them resources, and you will get a return. With foolish people, stop talking to them about problems; they are not listening. And stop supplying resources; they squander them. Instead give them limits and consequences. With evil people, to quote a Warren Zevon song, the strategy is "Lawyers, Guns and Money."...You have to go into protection mode, not helping mode...I use that phrase to symbolize resources that you use to protect yourself...The bottom line with evil is to stay away, create the firmest protective ending that you can, and get real help to do it. Use your lawyers, law enforcement (that is the guns part), and your financial resources to make sure that you will not be hurt by someone who is trying to destroy you...do not talk to evil people at all, period. "You can communicate with me through my attorney" is a phrase that exists for a reason."

Page 174: "Getting people to finally see the stark incompatibility of certain desires is often what finally gets them unstuck...I met a woman who defined herself as stuck. She was in a relationship that was not all that she wanted...He did not have the "drive" that she desired...So when I asked her why she didn't go after the kind that she wanted, she would say, "because I want him. I love him." "But I thought you wanted someone who was more like the driver...type," I said. "I do...But he is so great in other ways...I want to be with him, too," she said. "Too?"...sometimes we want two or more things that can't coexist...incompatible wishes...Part of maturity is getting to the place where we can let go of one wish in order to have another. The immature mind "wants it all." But...most valuable things come with a cost...we have to give up some things for others."

Page 182: "If you are going to do it "later," then when will that be? Set a date. What real reason do you have for waiting?...If there is not a real contingency, then why are you waiting?"

Page 186: "The maturity to discern when to remain invested in a relationship or situation and when to let go of one is the same. You have to be able to see the whole reality in both situations, the one that you keep and the one that you don't. Otherwise, lasting relationships cannot happen, and bad ones cannot end...we are willing to deal with the negatives to have the positives...commitment...if we...don't love it...ending needed..."

Page 195: "He would be the one to decide whether or not he wanted to be with her. She set the standards for what being with her meant, and he could decide whether or not it was a match. It was his decision, and he could self-select. Good for her as she did not have to judge anymore. Instead, her standards would be the judge. Good for him, as she was no longer going to nag but instead would let him decide whether or not he wanted to be with her in the ways that she required. No bad guy anywhere. Everyone was free again."

Page 197 ff: "Self-selection for yourself works the same way. Set the standard: "If the business has not turned a profit by the end of this year, I shut it down."...I live in L.A. and know many people...trying to make it in the entertainment or music industry...When to quit?...have a date out there...it is a good idea to know how much of your life or resources you want to spend on something before you lose them all..."

Page 204: "...when someone cares about how a person feels, there is the temptation to go squishy on the truth, because the truth hurts. So we tend to get a bit codependent in these kinds of conversations...truth suffers, and often the ending gets flimsy...on the other hand, if you are insensitive to people and just interested in the "truth"...you might really hurt someone needlessly...it is still to your advantage to get this right and begin to care, because if you don't, it has a much greater chance of going bad...If something is not right for one party, it is not right for the other one, either...The truth is painful but best in the end."

Page 208: "Many times...the person will not like hearing what you are saying...But the only person you can control in the conversation is yourself, so stay on message. Whether or not she gets it is not in your control. But remaining empathetic and clear is in your control...Sometimes there is so much danger of distortion...that you should make sure that you have someone in the conversation with you...related to this is the need for good notes and immediate documentation of what occurred...The better the documentaiton...the better off you will be. Judges and juries will be impressed with the one who has a clear, provable record of the facts."

Page 210: "Except in rare cases, don't burn bridges...the person you've just ended something with may be your boss...one day...Above all, don't be squishy...end it and leave it clearly over. Many times people leave a little wiggle room or false hope just to soften the bad news. Do not do that if an ending is what you desire. Otherwise, you are just going to have to do it again...Close it now..."

Page 226: "...watch out for those situations in life...that diminish you or your assets over time. That should be an alarm to move immediately to stop the outflow, reorganize, bring in some sort of help, make a change, or do some kind of ending...end at least the dynamic that is unsustainable."

Sarah says

Incredibly helpful book for both personal and professional life. Thoughtfully written with much practical application. Definitely passing this on to friends and coworkers.

Anita Howard says

I think this is a great book. Since I am no longer in the workforce, I wanted to skip through some of the business related illustrations, but the personal material was fantastic. I especially liked chapter 7 on. I would love it if Henry Cloud would modify the book so that those of us not dealing with the work sector would be able to benefit as well. I would recommend this book to some people, but I think it is difficult to wade through the business examples. Don't miss the last chapter. It is great.
