

Bold Beginnings Workbook

Endings. Messy middles. Bold beginnings.

A quiet place to begin a new chapter

About the author

Hi, I'm Fay,

I help women navigate endings and step into new beginnings. Whether that's a relationship shift, a career change, a life transition, or a growing sense that something no longer fits.

Originally from New Zealand and now based in the Netherlands, my work is grounded, compassionate, and practical.

I don't believe in rushing endings or forcing clarity before it's ready.

This guide is an orientation.

I created it to help you recognise where you are in a transition, steady yourself, and take a first honest step forward.

Some chapters need more than one layer of support, especially when grief, identity shifts, or unfinished endings are involved. If that's the case for you, you'll find gentle next-step options at the end of this guide.

With kindness,

Fay

A gentle note:

This guide offers coaching-style reflections and practices.
It is not a substitute for therapy, medical care, or crisis support.
If strong emotions arise, or you feel overwhelmed, please pause.
Slowing down is part of the work, not a failure.

If you need additional support, reaching out to a trusted professional is a strong and
wise next step.

How to use this workbook

Move through these pages in order if you can, but follow your energy.
You don't need to complete everything.

Short, honest answers are more helpful than perfect ones.

If you feel flooded, stop.

Take a break.

Come back later, or not at all.

This guide will still be here.

What this guide is for:

- Recognising what's ending
- Steadying yourself in the in-between
- Taking a first, grounded step forward

What it's not for:

- Rushing closure
- Forcing decisions
- Fixing your whole life

This guide opens the door.

It doesn't ask you to walk through it all at once.

Life Snapshot

Take a moment to notice where you are right now.

Rate 0–10 (0 = not at all, 10 = fully true):

Recognising an ending: ___ /10

Steady in the middle: ___ /10

Ready for a beginning: ___ /10

What feels hardest right now?

(one sentence)

What would I like to feel by the end of this guide?

(one or two words is enough)

If this chapter were gently unfolding, what would feel easier in daily life?

(one sentence)

First movement (keep this very small):

One step I can take in the next 24 hours: _____

One step I can take in the next 7 days: _____

You can return to this page later and notice what's changed.

ENDINGS

Every beginning starts with something loosening.

This section is not about forcing decisions or dramatic exits.

It's about noticing what's already changing, and telling yourself
the truth gently.

You don't need certainty to begin.
You just need honesty.

Recognise the End

Something may be ending even if it hasn't fully stopped yet.

Take a moment to name what feels complete, outdated, or quietly asking to change.

What feels like it may be ending (or wants to)?

(a role, relationship, identity, season, expectation)

What signals tell me this is shifting?

(facts, feelings, repeated patterns. Keep this simple.)

If nothing changed, what would this likely cost me over time?

(energy, time, self-trust. Not outcomes)

You are not committing to an action here.

You are simply acknowledging what you already sense.

A Compassionate Truth

Endings don't require harshness to be real.

One kind, honest truth I'm ready to admit to myself:
(What would I say to a close friend in my position?)

You don't have to act on this truth yet. Naming it is enough for now.

You may return to this truth later.

Unfinished Business

(Light version)

Unfinished business drains energy.
But you don't need to clear everything at once.

List up to 6 things that still feel open or unresolved:
(conversations, tasks, boundaries, promises to yourself, practical loose ends)

Choose just ONE small completion to begin this month:
(something doable, not emotionally heavy)

My one small completion:

This is about momentum — not closure.

Boundaries

Endings often require new boundaries, not explanations.

One boundary that would protect my energy right now:

Old pattern (what I've been doing):

New boundary (simple and kind):

I will:

I won't:

I need:

If this boundary feels scary, choose the smallest version that still helps.

A Gentle Release

(FIRST PASS)

This is not about final closure.

It's about loosening your grip, just enough to breathe.

Write a few lines.

Stop when it feels complete for today.

What mattered to me in this chapter was...

What hurt or felt missing was...

What I'm ready to lay down for now is...

What I choose to carry forward is...

Close with this line (if it feels right):

For now, I am laying this down.

If this brings up strong emotion, pause. That doesn't mean you've failed, it means this ending may be layered.

MIDDLES

The Messy In-betweens

Between endings and beginnings there is almost always a stretch of uncertainty.

This doesn't mean you're stuck.
It means your system is adjusting to something new.

The middle can feel uncomfortable, foggy, or emotionally loud, even when you're moving in the right direction.

Nothing has gone wrong. This is where adjustment happens.

What the Messy Middle is (and isn't)

What the Messy Middle Is:

The messy middle is where:

- Old habits loosen
- New ones aren't stable yet
- Clarity comes and goes

You might feel:

- Less confident than expected
- More emotional than usual
- Tempted to go back or rush ahead

What the messy middle is not:

- A sign you made the wrong choice
- A personal failure
- Something to push through aggressively

This phase asks for steadiness, not certainty.

Steadying Yourself

When you're in the middle, your nervous system is doing extra work.

Here are a few **simple steadies** you can use when things wobble:

- Slow breathing (in 4, out 6, for one minute)
- Put a hand on your chest and name three true things you can see
- Step outside and look at the horizon for 60 seconds
- Gently move your body (stretch, shake, walk)

You don't need to use all of these.
One is enough.

When the Middle Feels Like Too Much

Sometimes what feels like “the messy middle” is actually something deeper asking for care.

You might notice:

- Big emotional swings
- Repeated shutdown or panic
- Grief that doesn't quite make sense
- Feeling overwhelmed by small things

If that's happening, it doesn't mean you're doing this wrong.

It often means:

- The ending was layered
- There is unrecognised grief
- Or you're carrying more than this guide can hold

This is where extra support can make a real difference.

You'll find gentle next-step options at the end of this guide.

BOLD BEGINNINGS

Your new chapter

A beginning doesn't arrive fully formed.

It starts as a direction, a willingness, a few small choices made differently.

This section helps you orient yourself toward what's next, without rushing ahead of your nervous system.

Before You Map The Next Chapter

You don't need a fully formed plan to begin.

After an ending, especially one that mattered, clarity often arrives slowly. It comes in fragments, impressions, and small shifts rather than bold declarations.

This next page isn't asking you to define your future or commit to a new identity.

It's simply an invitation to notice the *direction* you're facing now.

You can be tentative.

You can change your mind.

You can leave things unfinished.

This is a first sketch. It is not a final draft.

Your New Chapter

This chapter feels like it's about:

I want this chapter to feel:

If this chapter were gently unfolding, what would feel easier in daily life?

As this chapter unfolds, I'm beginning to see myself as someone who...
(one sentence is enough)

You're sketching an outline here — not locking anything in.

Core Values

These values are your decision filter,
not a personality test or a measure of worth.

My Core Values (circle 3–5)

Authenticity / Achievement / Adventure

Authority / Autonomy / Balance

Beauty / Boldness / Compassion

Challenge / Citizenship / Community

Competency / Contribution / Creativity

Curiosity / Determination / Fairness

Faith / Fame / Friendships

Fun / Growth / Happiness

Honesty / Humor / Influence

Inner Harmony / Justice / Kindness

Knowledge / Leadership / Learning

Love / Loyalty / Meaningful Work

Openness / Optimism / Peace

Pleasure / Popularity / Recognition

Religion / Reputation / Respect

Responsibility / Security / Self-Respect

Service / Spirituality / Stability

Success / Status / Trustworthiness

Wealth / Wisdom

Non-Negotiables

Non-negotiables protect your energy while things are still forming.

Choose up to three:

One boundary that would make this chapter feel safer:

90-Day Experiment

Instead of planning everything, choose one area to gently test over the next 90 days.

My focus for this experiment:

One or two tiny actions I can repeat:

By 90 days, I'd like to notice:

(what feels easier, calmer, clearer — not what's "achieved")

Check-in points (to notice and adjust, not judge):

Week 4 ☐ **Week 8** ☐ **Week 12** ☐

If this experiment stalls or brings up strong emotion, that's information, not failure.

Personally Brave Step

One Personally Brave Step

A bold step doesn't have to be visible or impressive.

It just has to be honest.

One step that would quietly confirm to me that something has shifted:

Why this matters to me:

Support (optional):

After I take this step, I want to notice:

Future Me (a bookmark)

A Letter to Future Me

This letter isn't here to close the chapter.
It's here to mark where I am (honestly) so I can recognise myself later.

Dear Future Me,

Here's what I've begun to lay down, and why it mattered:

Here's who I'm beginning to become:

One brave step I took, or am preparing to take:

When this feels messy again, I want to remember:

With care,

Me

Date: _____

If This Stirred More Than It Settled

Sometimes a short guide is enough.

And sometimes it opens something that needs more space.

You might notice:

- Emotions that feel bigger than expected
- Grief that doesn't quite make sense
- Repeated looping around the same ending
- Exhaustion, numbness, or urgency to "fix" things

This doesn't mean you're doing this wrong.

It often means:

- The ending is layered
- There is unrecognised grief
- Or this chapter needs careful closure, not willpower

That's where deeper, guided support can help.

Next support

Choosing Your Next Support

If this guide helped, here are a few ways to continue at your own pace:

For careful, compassionate endings

A guide for closing a chapter without being harsh with yourself

→ [When You Already Know + Audio Guide](#)

If grief is present but hard to name

A guide for the kinds of loss that don't always get acknowledged

→ [Still Here + Audio Guide](#)

For gentle daily structure and momentum

Support for staying steady as you move forward

→ [Begin Here — A Journal](#)

If you prefer to work with someone 1:1, or you're unsure which support fits, you're welcome to book a free discovery call.

<https://faykortleven.com/contact/>

A Final Word

You are not behind.

You are not broken.

You are in a transition, and those take time.

If all this guide gave you was language for what you're living,
that's already something.

If it helped you take one small step,
that's enough for today.

This is not the end of the work.

It's the beginning of doing it with care.

With kindness,
Fay Kortleven

If you'd like to continue

If you're ready for personalised support to close a chapter and step into
what's next, you're welcome to work with me.

I offer 1:1 coaching sessions online — practical, compassionate, and
designed to help you take real-world steps.

Book a free discovery call:
www.faykortleven.com