

# Closure / Goodbye Process – Workbook

This workbook is designed to guide couples and therapists through a structured closure process. It integrates reflection, shared values, practical tools, and staged strategies to help partners separate with dignity and stability, while protecting children's wellbeing.

## A. Frame the Work & Objectives

This is a continuation of therapy, shifting the goal from repair to closure. Each session is treated as if it may be the last, encouraging completion in the moment rather than relying on a future session. Spacing sessions further apart can be useful – it gives partners time to test agreements in real life and return with feedback. It may also be helpful to include individual sessions for each partner alongside joint ones, to allow for deeper differentiation work.

## B. Shared Interests & Stance

Even in separation, couples often share values. Identifying these creates a compass for decision-making. Map all shared interests (children, respect, pets, finances, reputation, family ties). Then choose a guiding stance that anchors sessions. Example: 'We will prioritize the kids' or 'We commit to respect and honesty.'

## C. Goodbye Reflections

Each partner reflects individually, and may share in session if safe: - What I liked / appreciated - What I disliked / found difficult - Treasures I'm taking (learnings/strengths) - What I'm leaving behind (resentments/patterns)  
Optional: write letters of acknowledgment and gratitude, witnessed by the therapist.

## D. Differentiation – Reclaiming Identity

Closure therapy supports partners in separating their identities. Prompts: Who am I outside this relationship? What values do I want to live by? What strengths am I carrying forward? What boundaries do I need?

## E. Working with Stuck Points (EFT-style facilitation)

Couples often get stuck on recurring pain points (betrayal, finances, parenting). The therapist identifies these hot spots and gains consent from both before working through them. In this stage, EFT-style facilitation works best: therapist leads the dialogue, tracks emotions, names needs, and validates both partners. The goal is acknowledgment, not necessarily resolution. Imago-style direct dialogue is less effective in closure contexts, as it can increase reactivity.

## F. Kids First – Access & the First 3 Months

Children's core question is: 'Do I still have access to both parents?' Access is the first priority, before money or property. The first three months are particularly sensitive: children may regress (bedwetting, clinginess, school struggles). This links to their developing sense of object permanence. Practical tools include visual calendars, consistent messaging, and rituals at transitions. Therapists can frame themselves as 'on the kids' side,' which often helps parents collaborate.

## G. Communication & Practical Tools

Clear communication systems reduce conflict. Couples can use apps like OurFamilyWizard, TalkingParents, or Cozi for scheduling and messaging. Rules: texting only for emergencies or time-sensitive changes, not for emotional processing. Shared calendars for parenting time, school, and activities. Expense apps (Splitwise, Honeydue) reduce disputes.

## H. Finance & Interim Agreements

Finances are a major stressor. Therapy focuses on emotional safety, while professionals handle details. Prompts: What are you aiming for financially? Stability, fairness, security for kids? Draft interim agreements (child support, shared expenses, housing affordability, debts). These reduce uncertainty and allow testing before long-term arrangements.

## I. Staged Strategy – Reducing Overwhelm

Separation involves many changes at once. Breaking it into blocks prevents overwhelm. Example roadmap:

Block	Focus Area	Main Tasks	Timeline
1	Access to Kids	Schedule, exchanges, apps	Weeks 1–2
2	Finance	Support, expenses, budget	Weeks 2–8
3	Housing	Living arrangements, moves	0–3 months
4	Childcare/School	New care, school comms	1–3 months
5	Logistics	Calendars, holidays	3–6 months
6	Future Planning	Long-term finances, new partners	6–12 months

## J. Safety, Boundaries & De-escalation

Rules keep closure therapy safe: No late-night emotional texts. Time-outs are allowed, with a return to stance. Some topics may be off-limits until emotions settle. Neutral third parties may be used for exchanges.

## K. Ritual of Goodbye

A symbolic act can help bring closure: letters of thanks, acknowledgment, returning meaningful items, or a final joint session naming what is honored and what is ending.

## L. Review & Next Steps

Set a review cadence (weekly, fortnightly, monthly). Track what's working and what's not. Indicators of completion: both partners feel heard, kids are stable, and logistical systems are running smoothly.