Necessary Endings

Title: ***Necessary Endings: The Employess, Businesses, and Relationships That All of Us Have to Give Up In Order to Move Forward***

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Book Summary:

While endings are a natural part of business and life, we often experience them with a sense of hesitation, sadness, resignation, or regret. But consultant, psychologist, and bestselling author Dr. Henry Cloud sees endings differently. He argues that our personal and professional lives can only improve to the degree that we can see endings as a necessary and strategic step to something better. If we cannot see endings in a positive light and execute them well, he asserts, the "better" will never come either in business growth or our personal lives.

In this insightful and deeply empathetic book, Dr. Cloud demonstrates that, when executed well, "necessary endings" allow us to proactively correct the bad and the broken in our lives in order to make room for the professional and personal growth we seek. However, when endings are avoided or handled poorly—as is too often the case—good opportunities may be lost, and misery repeated. Drawing on years of experience as an executive coach and a psychologist, Dr. Cloud offers a mixture of advice and case studies to help readers

• know when to have realistic hope and when to execute a necessary ending in a business, or with an individual;

• identify which employees, projects, activities, and relationships are worth nurturing and which are not;

• overcome people's resistance to change and create change that works;

• create urgency and an action plan for what's important;

• stop wasting resources needed for the things that really matter.

Knowing when and how to let go when something, or someone, isn't working—a personal relationship, a job, or a business venture—is essential for happiness and success. Necessary Endings gives readers the tools they need to say good- bye and move on.

Book Notes:

Today may be the enemy of your tomorrow. In your business and perhaps your life, the tomorrow that you desire and envision may never come to pass if you do not end some things you are doing today. - Location 77

Getting to the next level always requires ending 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. - Location 193

In many contexts, until we let go of what is not good, we will never find something that is good. The lesson: good cannot begin until bad ends. - Location 212

Leaders are people, and people have issues that get in the way of the best- made ideas, plans, and realities. And when it comes to endings, there is no shortage of issues that keep people stuck. - Location 271

In business and in life, executing the three types of necessary endings described above is what characterizes people who get results. (1) If an initiative is siphoning off resources that could go to something with more promise, it is pruned. (2) If an endeavor is sick and is not going to get well, it is pruned. (3) If it's clear that something is already dead, it is pruned. This is the threefold formula for doing well in almost every arena of life. - Location 368

It is in complete alignment with the reality that both businesses and individuals will begin, gather, and have more activities than they can reasonably sustain. - Location 505

Some of those activities may be good, but they are taking up resources that your best ones need. So you always will have to choose between good and best. This is especially tough for some creative people,causing them a lack of focus. They create more than they can focus on and feed, they are attached to every idea as if they were all equal, and they try to keep them all alive. Instead of a to- do list, they have a to- do pile. It goes nowhere fast. - Location 506

But I do believe that there is some number of people in every organization and every life who will be routinely "let go" if leadership is doing its stewardship job. The very nature of people is that there are some good ones who are not right for you, some sick ones in denial who are not going to change, and some who are adding nothing. Always. So if no one ever leaves your organization or your life, then you are in some sort of denial and enabling some really sick stuff all over the place. And it probably is accumulating. I have found this to be rampant in companies that have a high "people value." The value is good, but sometimes it keeps them from doing what is truly valuing to people. - Location 528

In your business and in your life, don't just "cut back" and think that you have pruned. Pruning is strategic. It is directional and forward- looking. It is intentional toward a vision, desires, and objectives that have been clearly defined and are measurable. If you have that, you know what a rose is, and pruning will help you get one of true beauty. - Location 583

That is important because the best predictor of the future is the past. - - Location 1603

So here are the first questions to ask yourself about the anatomy of hope, no matter whether you are assessing a person or some aspect of business: • What has the performance been so far? • Is it good enough? • Is there anything in place that would make it different? • If not, am I willing to sign up for more of the same? - Location 1647

When you consider the past and come to grips with the fact that it is hopeless to expect something different in the future, then you have the kind of hopelessness that will motivate you to move from mere wishing to real hope. - Location 1658

Does the person already in place have the character, the gifts, the experience, or whatever is going to be required to make the future better? You can sometimes have hope for very difficult or unknown realities if you know that your hope is in the right person. Things may be stalled out, but if the right person is at the helm, you can still have hope. - Location 1728

So the question is this: when can I have hope that a person is going to be different in the future than he is now or in the past? Answer: again, look for the objective reasons to hope, other than their saying “I’m sorry” or “I am committed this time.” You need a “reason to believe.” Here are nine objective factors to help you determine whether you can have hope that tomorrow will be any different from today: verifiable involvement in a proven change process, additional structure, monitoring systems, new experience and skills, self- sustaining motivation, admission of need, the presence of support, skilled help, and some prior or current success. - Location 1765

How do you know when to have hope for the future of someone’s changes? Look at the degree to which you are having to drive the process. That is one of the strongest indicators of what is going to happen. - Location 1806

To have hope that people are truly going to change, you must have an admission from them that they really need to change. They must see that they have a problem and own the problem. - Location 1823

Usually, for there to be real hope for the future, there must be someone in the circle of help who knows what he is doing. - Location 1846

So the lesson here is this: you can have objective hope if you are bringing some new knowledge, wisdom, or know- how to the situation. - Location 1920

In a situation where you have decided that you don’t want more of the current or past performance and yet you don’t know whether or not to have hope, the third diagnostic test is this: where is the energy for change going to come from? - Location 1925

Even the best- laid plans will stagnate without a force driving them. - Location 1929

The satellite that will give you the most accurate predictions is the ability to diagnose character. Once you learn the character traits that give real reason to hope that tomorrow can be different, you can know better whom you want to invite into your tomorrow. You can actually know that there is a real reason to go forward. -- Location 2048

There are basically three types of people in the world, or better, three styles of behavior that a person can exhibit in a particular time or context. - Location 2065

I like the way that ancient wisdom literature puts it: 1. Wise people 2. Foolish people 3. Evil people. - Location 2068

The person who ultimately does well is the one who can learn from his own experience or the experience of others, make that learning a part of himself, and then deliver results from that experience base. - Location 2153

Which brings us to the key diagnostic of the wise person: When truth presents itself, the wise person sees the light, takes it in, and makes adjustments. - Location 2159

The mature person meets the demands of life, while the immature person demands that life meet her demands. - Location 2176

And that is the problem with the fool. Whereas the chief descriptor of the wise person is that when the light shows up, he looks at it, receives it, joins it, and adjusts his behavior to align with the light, the fool does the opposite: he 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. - Location 2262

After repeated attempts to get him to see an issue, it is time to quit talking about the problem and time to have a different kind of conversation. Stop talking about the problems, and talk about a new problem: the new problem to talk about is that talking doesn't help. - Location 2335

The strategy for foolish people is simple: Quit talking about the problem and clearly communicate that because talking is not helping, you are going to take steps to protect what is important to you, the mission, or other people. Give limits that stop the collateral damage of their refusal to change, and where appropriate, give consequences that will cause them to feel the pain of their choice to not listen. - Location 2377

When you are dealing with a recurring pattern, there is less hope that just a conversation or a little correction is going to help. Patterns, many times (though not all), are tendencies that people have less conscious control over, and the process of change is more difficult. - Location 2477

You have heard it said that people resist change. That is not always true. It is more true that people resist change that they feel no real need to make. - Location 2536

So getting your brain to move to create an ending, and getting the people around you to do the same, is going to take both: the fear of the negative and the draw of the positive. - Location 2542

So, the first step to getting to the necessary ending that we need is to make the threat to our future as real in our minds as it is in reality. - Location 2560

This is a fundamental truth about endings: you have to be able to face losing some things you might want in order to be free to do the right thing. If you can't, you are stuck. - Location 3004

Note: should you wish to find any quote in its original context, the Kindle "location" is provided after each entry.