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the European Union

O.L.M.E. One Life Many Endings END EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL TOOLKIT

A Guide for Facilitating Workshops on Endings with Adolescents (Ages 13,19)

WHAT IS END EDUCATION?

End Education is a **preventive educational methodology** founded in 2023 by Francesca Marchegiano (Italy) and designed to help adolescents (ages 13,19) navigate the inevitable endings, transitions, and losses that are part of life.

Unlike therapeutic interventions that address crises after they occur.

End Education **prepares young people in advance** by teaching them:

- That endings are a natural part of life
- How to recognize which stage of transition they are in
- Practical tools to move through endings with awareness and resilience
- That impermanence is not something to fear, but something to understand

WHY IT MATTERS FOR ADOLESCENTS

Adolescence is the most **ending,dense period of human life**. Between ages 13 and 19, young people experience:

Universal endings:

- The end of childhood
- Separation from parents (moving from dependence to autonomy)
- The end of the child body (puberty and physical transformation)
- Loss of innocence (awareness of mortality, injustice, complexity)

Situational endings:

- Death of loved ones (grandparents, friends, pets)
- Parents' divorce or family restructuring
- Moving to new cities or schools
- End of friendships or romantic relationships
- Exclusion from social groups

- Academic or athletic failure
- End of dreams or identities

The problem: Most adolescents face these endings without a map, without language, and without understanding that what they're experiencing is **normal and navigable**.

The solution: End Education gives them **the map** (the 8 stages of the Hero's Journey), **the tools** (practical exercises for each stage), and **the language** to name what they're going through.

THE THREE WORLDS OF ENDINGS

End Education addresses endings across three interconnected domains:

1. THE INNER WORLD (Module One)

- Physical, emotional, cognitive changes
- Managing the body's transformation
- Emotional literacy through endings
- Setting personal boundaries and limits

2. THE RELATIONAL WORLD (Module Two)

- Friendships and romantic relationships ending
- Family conflicts and divorce
- Grief and definitive loss (death)
- Communication during transitions

3. THE OUTER WORLD (Module Three)

- School and community transitions
- Environmental and global changes
- Identity formation and life purpose
- Responsible citizenship in a changing world

PREVENTIVE, NOT CURATIVE

End Education is NOT therapy.

It is an **educational framework** that can be delivered in:

- Classrooms
- Youth groups
- Community centers
- Life skills programs
- Support groups

When to use End Education:

End Education is appropriate for:

- Normal, developmental transitions
- Relational endings (within normal range)
- Grief and loss (uncomplicated)
- Social transitions

- Identity exploration
- Preventive education

When NOT to use End Education (refer to specialists):

- Complex trauma or PTSD
- Active suicidal ideation
- Severe depression
- Eating disorders
- Psychosis
- Severe self-harm

WHO THIS TOOLKIT IS FOR

This toolkit is designed for **helping professionals** who work with adolescents, including:

- Teachers
- School counselors
- Youth workers
- Social workers
- Psychologists and therapists
- Community educators
- Life coaches

You do not need prior training in End Education to use this toolkit.

This guide provides the theoretical foundation and practical tools you need to facilitate workshops using the **End Education slide presentations** (available for free download at <https://www.olmeproject.com>).

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

Step 1: Read this toolkit thoroughly to understand the 8 stages, the tools, and the approach.

Step 2: Download the End Education slide presentations from www.olmeproject.com.

These slides cover the three modules (Inner World, Relational World, Outer World) and provide structured content for workshops.

Step 3: Use the slides as your primary content delivery tool, and refer to this toolkit to:

- Deepen your understanding of the theory
- Apply the 8 practical tools with adolescents
- Design workshop activities
- Know when to refer to specialists
- Practice self-care as a facilitator

Step 4: Start small. Facilitate a single-session workshop first, then expand to multi-session programs as you gain confidence.

THE 8 STAGES OF THE HERO'S JOURNEY

THE HERO'S JOURNEY: A UNIVERSAL MAP FOR EVERY ENDING

In 1949, mythologist Joseph Campbell published *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, in which he identified a universal pattern that appears in myths, legends, and fairy tales across all cultures: **The Monomyth**, or the Hero's Journey.

From Buddha to Jesus, from Odysseus to Cinderella, from Luke Skywalker to Moana, **every story follows the same structure.**

But the Hero's Journey is not just a storytelling tool: **it is the structure of transformation itself.**

Every time a human being goes through a major life transition, birth, adolescence, marriage, illness, loss, death, they move through these stages.

FROM 12 STAGES TO 8: THE END EDUCATION MODEL

Campbell originally described 17 stages. Other scholars condensed this to 12.

For End Education, we have distilled the journey into **8 essential stages** that are accessible, practical, and directly applicable to adolescent experiences of endings.

These 8 stages provide adolescents with:

- **Orientation:** "Where am I in this journey?"
- **Normalization:** "This is a stage everyone goes through. I'm not broken."
- **Hope:** "This stage will pass. There are more stages coming."

THE SPIRAL: HEALING IS NOT LINEAR

Critical concept: The 8 stages are not a straight line. **They are a spiral.**

Adolescents do not move 1→2→3→4→5→6→7→8 and finish.

Instead, they move forward, but as they spiral upward, **they revisit the same stages at deeper levels.**

Example:

- An adolescent reaches Stage 6 (Victory) after their grandmother's death.
- Two weeks later, they're back in Stage 5 (Conflict), feeling rage again.
- **They are not going backward.** They are **spiraling through Stage 5 at a new level**, with more experience, more tools, more understanding than the first time.

Key message for adolescents: *"You're not stuck. You're spiraling. Every time you pass through a stage again, you go deeper into healing. Same stage, different you."*

Over time, the spiral **widens**, the intervals between revisiting a stage get longer, and the intensity softens.

THE 8 STAGES: OVERVIEW

Here is a brief summary of each stage. Detailed descriptions follow.

1. **Comfort Zone** – "I thought it would last forever"
2. **The Call** – "No, this can't be happening"
3. **The Threshold** – "I'm entering the unknown"
4. **The Encounter** – "I'm finding help and discovering new parts of myself"
5. **The Conflict** – "I'm fighting, but I cannot win. Two things die: what was outside, and who I was with it. I surrender."
6. **The Victory** – "I survived. I'm fragile, but I found a treasure I didn't know I had. It will never be the same, and I'm still alive."
7. **The Return** – "I'm back, but I'm different"
8. **The Liberation** – "I have integrated this. I am free."

STAGE 1: THE COMFORT ZONE

In adolescents:

- "I'll always be in this class with these friends."
- "My parents will always be together."
- "My body will stay small and safe."
- "My grandparents will always be here."
- "I'll always belong to this group."

Key emotion: Illusion of permanence.

What they need: Gentle, preventive education about impermanence, teaching that endings are part of life BEFORE the crisis hits.

Key question: *"What in your life feels permanent and unchangeable?"*

STAGE 2: THE CALL

In adolescents:

- "We need to tell you something." (parents announcing divorce)
- "Your grandma is very sick."
- "You're moving to a new city."
- "We're not friends anymore."
- The first moment they notice their body changing.

Key emotion: Refusal. Denial. Shock.

Classic response: "No. That's not true. You're lying. I don't want to talk about it."

What they need: Validation of the denial. Don't force acceptance.

"I know this is hard to believe. You don't have to accept it right now. I'm here."

Key question: *"What are all the ways you're saying 'no' to this ending?"*

STAGE 3: THE THRESHOLD

In adolescents:

- First day at new school
- First night sleeping in "Dad's house" vs. "Mom's house"
- Entering the room where grandpa died
- Walking into the cafeteria alone after losing your friend group
- Looking in the mirror at your changed body

Key emotion: Fear.

"I don't know who I am here. I don't know the rules. I'm lost."

What they need: Validation of fear + presence.

"I know this feels scary. I know you don't know what's coming. I'm here. You don't have to do this alone."

Key question: *"What are you afraid will happen in this new, unknown world?"*

STAGE 4: THE ENCOUNTER

In adolescents:

- A friend who says, "I'm here for you."
- A counselor who says, "It's okay to not be okay."
- Discovering, "I can survive on my own."
- Finding a book or movie with a character going through the same thing.

Key emotion: Connection. Hope.

What they need: Help seeing their allies and resources.

"Who is helping you? What are you discovering about yourself?"

Key question: *"Who and what can help you on this journey?"*

STAGE 5: THE CONFLICT (Part 1: The Fight)

In adolescents:

- Explosive rage: "I hate this! I hate you! I hate my life!"
- Bargaining: "If I behave perfectly, will they get back together?"
- Trying to force the old reality back: "I'll make them include me again."
- Rule-breaking, defiance, risk-taking behaviors

Key emotion: Rage.

What they need: A safe container for the rage, not punishment.

"You can be as angry as you need to be. But I won't let you hurt yourself or others. Let's find a safe way for this to come out."

STAGE 5: THE CONFLICT (Part 2: The Surrender & Two Deaths)

The turning point of Stage 5:

The moment when the adolescent realizes: **"I cannot win this battle. The ending is here. I have to let go."**

The rage collapses into exhaustion. The fight ends. **Surrender happens.**

And in that surrender, **two deaths occur**:

FIRST DEATH (external):

The thing outside of them that ended.

- Grandma died.
- Parents divorced.
- Friend moved away.
- Lost the role on the team.

SECOND DEATH (internal, THE INVISIBLE ONE):

The identity that was defined by that external thing.

- "I, the grandchild loved by grandma" that version of me is gone.
- "I, the child of an intact family" that identity is dead.
- "I, the person who belonged to that group", that part of me no longer exists.

Why the second death is harder:

Because it's **invisible**. No one sees it. No one names it. But the adolescent feels it, and doesn't understand why it hurts so much.

What they need: For someone to **name both deaths**.

"You didn't just lose your grandma. You also lost the part of you that was her grandchild. That identity died too. And that deserves to be grieved."

Key questions:

- *"What are you fighting against? What feels unbearably unfair?"*
- *"What two deaths are you grieving, the external loss and the internal identity?"*

STAGE 6: THE VICTORY

In adolescents:

- "I survived. I didn't think I could, but I did."
- "I discovered I'm braver than I knew."
- "I can feel sadness without breaking."
- "I have a voice."

Key emotion: Fragility + quiet discovery.

What they need: Protection of their fragility + help naming the treasure.

"You just survived something enormous. What did you discover about yourself? What treasure did you find?"

Key question: *"What did you discover about yourself by going through this?"*

STAGE 7: THE RETURN

In adolescents:

- Returning to school after a loss
- Re-entering the cafeteria after exclusion

- Showing up to practice with a changed body
- Answering "What does your dad do?" when dad is dead

Key emotion: Uncertainty. Tentative re-entry.

What they need: To rehearse their story, to prepare different versions (close friends, acquaintances, strangers) so they feel safe.

"How will you tell this story to others, in a way that feels safe for you?"

Key question: *"How will you tell this story to others, in a way that feels safe for you?"*

STAGE 8: THE LIBERATION

In adolescents:

- "My parents got divorced when I was 14. It was hard, but it taught me that families can change shape and still be families."
- "I lost my grandma three years ago. I still miss her, but now when I remember her, I smile."
- "Getting kicked out of my friend group freed me to find people who actually see me. I'm grateful it happened."

Key emotion: Freedom. Wisdom. Integration.

The final transformation: Hero becomes Mentor.

The adolescent who survived the journey is now ready to guide others walking the same path.

What they need: An invitation into their new role.

"You've walked this path. Would you be willing to help someone else who's walking it now?"

Key question: *"Who have you become because of this ending, and what can you offer to others walking this path?"*

VISUAL SUMMARY: THE 8 STAGES



AS THE SPIRAL RISES, YOU REVISIT EACH STAGE AT A DEEPER, WISER LEVEL

Remember: This is a SPIRAL, not a line. Adolescents will revisit stages, but each time at a deeper level.

THE MANIFESTO OF END EDUCATION

THE 12 PRINCIPLES

1. Endings are an integral part of life

We recognize that every human experience contains both a beginning and an ending. Endings are not exceptions to be feared, but precious moments in the natural cycle of existence.

2. Every ending is an opportunity for transformation

Within conclusions, separations, and losses lies a transformative potential that, if embraced consciously, leads to growth, wisdom, and renewal.

3. Small deaths prepare us for the great transition

Learning to navigate daily endings with awareness trains us to face physical death with greater balance and serenity.

4. Awareness of endings intensifies life

Paradoxically, it is through accepting impermanence that we gain the capacity to live with greater intensity, gratitude, and presence.

5. The body knows before the mind

Endings manifest first in the body, through sensations and emotions, and only later are they processed cognitively. Recognizing these somatic signals is essential.

6. We are part of natural cycles

Nature continuously teaches us the wisdom of impermanence through seasons, lunar cycles, and circadian rhythms. Reconnecting with these cycles supports our capacity to embrace endings.

7. Stories are bridges in transitions

Storytelling is a powerful tool for giving meaning to endings, integrating them into our identity, and transforming them into shareable wisdom.

8. The Hero's Journey is our inner compass

In every experience of ending, we can recognize the universal stages of the Hero's Journey, which guide us even when words fail.

9. Endings are not overcome, they are crossed

The task is not to "get over" endings, but to traverse them fully, honoring each phase of the process with respect and awareness.

10. Teaching endings is teaching how to live

When we learn to navigate endings with awareness and dignity, we acquire one of life's most essential skills. Educating ourselves and others in the art of ending is not preparing for death, it is learning to live fully.

11. Endings are not a loneliness journey

No one navigates endings alone, even when it feels that way. We are held by communities, relationships, nature, and the universal human experience of loss. Connection and witnessing are essential to moving through endings with grace.

12. The end is a phase of a process

An ending is not a singular, isolated event. It is one phase within a larger cycle of transformation. What appears to be an ending always contains the seeds of a new beginning, not to bypass the grief, but to honor that life is constant renewal.

HOW TO USE THE MANIFESTO IN A WORKSHOP

Here are two practical ways to use it with adolescents:

ACTIVITY 1: The 13th Principle (20 minutes)

Instructions:

1. After reading the 10 principles, ask:
"If you could add an 13th principle to this Manifesto, something you believe about endings that isn't here yet, what would it be?"
2. Give participants 5 minutes to write their own principle.
3. Invite volunteers to share.
4. Discuss: "What do your 13th principles tell us about what matters to you?"

Why this works:

It empowers adolescents to **co-create** the philosophy. They're not just recipients, they're contributors.

ACTIVITY 2: Personal Manifesto (Individual reflection, 15 minutes)

Instructions:

1. Ask participants: *"If you were to write your own personal manifesto about endings, based on what YOU believe and have experienced, what would it say?"*
2. Give them 10,15 minutes to write 3,5 principles of their own.
3. Invite (but don't require) sharing.

Why this works:

It honors their **personal wisdom**. They're not just learning End Education, they're articulating their own philosophy.

THE MANIFESTO AS A TOUCHSTONE

Throughout your workshops, **return to the Manifesto repeatedly.**

When a difficult moment arises, you can say:

- *"Remember Principle 5: The body knows first. Where are you feeling this in your body right now?"*
- *"This connects to Principle 2: Every ending is an opportunity for transformation. What might be trying to emerge here?"*
- *"Principle 9 says: Endings are not overcome, they are crossed. So we're not trying to rush through this, we're honoring the crossing."*

The Manifesto becomes the shared ground you stand on together.

FINAL NOTE: THE MANIFESTO IS NOT DOGMA

The Manifesto is not a rigid set of rules. It's a **starting point for conversation.**

Adolescents may disagree with some principles. That's okay, **welcome the disagreement.**

The goal is not compliance. The goal is engagement. When adolescents wrestle with these ideas, they're doing the work of meaning, making, and that's where transformation happens.

THE 8 PRACTICAL TOOLS

How to use this section:

Read through all 8 tools first to get a sense of the full toolkit. Then, when you're working with an adolescent, **identify which stage they're in** and choose the corresponding tool.

TOOL 1: THE PERMANENCE INVENTORY (Stage 1 - Comfort Zone)

Purpose:

To gently introduce the concept of impermanence before an ending hits, so adolescents have already touched the idea that "nothing lasts forever."

How to use it:

Step 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Say: *"Today we're going to do something that might feel a little uncomfortable, but I promise it's useful. We're going to talk about impermanence."*

Explain:

"Impermanence means that nothing in life stays the same forever. Everything changes. Everything ends. But most of the time, we don't think about that, we live as if things will last forever."

Step 2: Create the list (10 minutes)

Ask participants to write down **10 things in their life that feel permanent**, things they believe will never change.

Examples:

- My parents will always be together
- I'll always live in this house
- My best friend will always be my best friend
- I'll always be in this school
- My grandparents will always be here
- My body will stay like this
- I'll always feel safe

Give them time to write. Encourage honesty.

Step 3: Add the reality check (5 minutes)

Now ask them to go back through their list and, next to each item, write:

"This will also end someday."

Not to be depressing, but to plant the seed of awareness.

Example:

- My parents will always be together → *This will also end someday.*
- I'll always live in this house → *This will also end someday.*

Step 4: Reflection & discussion (10 minutes)

Ask:

- "How did it feel to write 'This will also end someday'?"
- "Did any items surprise you?"
- "Does knowing that things will end change how you feel about them now?"

Why it works:

It introduces impermanence **before** the crisis. When an ending comes later, the adolescent has already touched this awareness: *"Oh. I knew, somewhere, that nothing lasts forever."*

TOOL 2: THE CATALOG OF NO (Stage 2 - The Call)

Purpose:

To validate and normalize the refusal, instead of fighting it.

How to use it:

Step 1: Acknowledge the denial (2 minutes)

Say: *"I know you don't want this to be true. That makes sense. Saying 'no' is part of the journey."*

Step 2: Invite them to catalog the refusal (10 minutes)

Say:

"Let's make a list of all the ways you're saying 'no' right now. All the ways you're refusing this."

Examples:

- "It's not true"
- "This isn't happening"
- "If I don't think about it, it's not real"
- "I can stop this"
- "I don't want to talk about it"
- "Everyone is lying"

Let them write or say every version of "no" they can think of.

Step 3: Validate all of it (5 minutes)

Say: *"All of these are valid. Saying no is part of the journey. You're allowed to refuse this for as long as you need to. But I also want you to know: When you're ready to say yes, or even just 'maybe', I'm here."*

Why it works:

It validates the denial instead of fighting it. Paradoxically, when we stop fighting the adolescent's "no," they can start to move toward "yes."

TOOL 3: MAPPING THE UNKNOWN (Stage 3 - Threshold)

Purpose:

To visualize the unknown, making it less overwhelming.

How to use it:

Step 1: Give them materials (2 minutes)

- Blank paper
- Colored markers or pencils

Step 2: Explain the metaphor (3 minutes)

Say: *"You're about to enter a new world, a world you don't know yet. New school, new family structure, new reality after this loss. Let's draw a map of this unknown territory."*

Step 3: Guide them to draw (15 minutes)

Ask them to draw:

- **Mountains** = obstacles ("What will be hard?")
- **Forests** = fears ("What scares you?")
- **Rivers** = emotions ("What feelings will you have to cross?")
- **"You Are Here"** marker = where they are now
- **Destination** = where they're trying to get to (even if unclear)
- **Safe houses** = where they can rest along the way (people, places, activities)

They can draw literally or symbolically, whatever feels right.

Step 4: Discuss the map (10 minutes)

Ask:

- "What did you discover by mapping the unknown?"
- "What's the biggest mountain?"
- "Where are your safe houses?"
- "Do you have a sense of the path?"

Why it works:

Fear of the unknown is paralyzing. But when we **map** the unknown, make it visual and concrete, it becomes manageable.

TOOL 4: THE ALLY LIST (Stage 4 - Encounter)

Purpose:

To help the adolescent see that they are not alone, they have resources, both external and internal.

How to use it:

Step 1: Explain the concept (3 minutes)

Say: *"In every Hero's Journey, the hero finds allies, people and resources that help them. You have allies too. Let's find them."*

Step 2: Create three lists (15 minutes)

Ask them to write:

List 1: People who can help me

- Who can I talk to?
- Who listens without judging?
- Who just sits with me?

List 2: Inner resources I have

- What strengths do I already have?
- What have I survived before?
- What part of me is resilient?

List 3: Places or activities that help me

- Where do I feel safe?
- What calms me down?
- What gives me energy?

Step 3: Reflect (5 minutes)

Say: *"You are not alone in this. You have allies, both outside and inside you. When it gets hard, look at this list. These are your resources."*

Why it works:

Adolescents in crisis often feel completely alone. This tool helps them see: *"Oh. I do have support. I do have strength."*

TOOL 5: THE CIRCLE OF POWER (Stage 5 - Conflict)

Purpose:

To help the adolescent see what they can control (inside the circle) vs. what they cannot control (outside the circle), and redirect their energy toward what they can nurture.

How to use it:

Step 1: Draw a large circle (2 minutes)

Give them a blank paper and markers.

Ask them to draw a **large circle** in the middle of the page.

Step 2: Outside the circle - What makes you angry (10 minutes)

Say: *"Write outside the circle, all around it, everything that makes you angry about this situation. Everything that feels unfair, wrong, out of your control. Don't hold back."*

Examples:

- "It's not fair that she died"
- "I hate that my parents divorced"
- "They excluded me for no reason"
- "I can't control my body changing"

Step 3: Inside the circle - What you can rely on (10 minutes)

Say: *"Now write inside the circle, everything that is still here for you, even in this terrible situation. Everything you can rely on. Everything that supports you."*

Examples:

- "I have one friend who really listens"
- "I can still feel the sun on my face"
- "My body is strong"
- "I survived this long"
- "I can write/draw"

Step 4: Explain the boundary (5 minutes)

Say: *"The circle is a boundary. Outside = what you cannot control, no matter how hard you fight. Inside = what you can nurture, protect, and grow. Your anger, all that rage outside the circle, it's energy. But you cannot change what's outside by fighting it. The only power you have is to stop feeding the outside and start feeding the inside. Every time you put attention on what's inside, you give it your energy. And it grows."*

Step 5: Choose one thing to nurture (5 minutes)

Ask: *"What's one small thing inside your circle that you can nurture this week? Just one thing. What will you feed?"*

Why it works:

It validates the rage (you write it all down) but redirects the energy from "fighting the uncontrollable" to "nurturing what you have."

TOOL 6: THE TWO DEATHS EXERCISE (Stage 5 - Surrender)

Purpose:

To name both deaths, the external loss AND the invisible identity loss, so the adolescent can grieve both fully.

How to use it:

Step 1: Introduction (3 minutes)

After the adolescent has moved through the rage and is starting to surrender (quieter, exhausted, collapsing into sadness), say: *"I want to talk about what you've lost. Because I think you've lost two things, not just one."*

Step 2: Name the first death (5 minutes)

Ask: *"What or who did you lose? What ended outside of you?"*

Let them name it:

- My grandma
- My family
- My friend group
- My childhood

Step 3: Name the second death (10 minutes)

Say: *"Now I want to ask you something harder. Who were YOU with that person/in that place/in that role? What part of your identity was defined by that thing? What version of yourself has to die now that it's gone?"*

Guide them with examples:

- *"You're not just losing grandma. You're also losing the version of you who was 'grandma's favorite,' who got to visit her every Sunday. That version of you can't exist anymore."*
- *"You're not just losing your friend group. You're also losing the version of you who was 'the popular one,' who belonged. That identity is gone."*

Let them sit with this. Let them cry. Let them be silent.

Step 4: Validate both deaths (3 minutes)

Say: *"Both deaths are real. Both deserve to be grieved. It's okay if the second death hurts even more than the first. That makes sense."*

Step 5: Ritual of letting go (15 minutes)

Give them two small pieces of paper.

Say: *"On the first paper, write what you lost outside of you, the external death."*

(Example: "My grandma")

"On the second paper, write what you lost inside of you, the identity that died."

(Example: "Me, the grandchild who was loved by grandma")

Step 6: Say goodbye & tear the papers (10 minutes)

First paper:

"Hold the first paper. Read it, out loud or silently. Say goodbye to it."

Now, when you're ready, tear it up. Rip it into as many pieces as you need to. Let it go."

Second paper:

"Now hold the second paper. Read it. Say goodbye to that version of yourself."

When you're ready, tear it. Let that identity go. It served you. But it can't come with you."

Step 7: Aftermath (5 minutes)

Say: *"You just did something really brave. You named both deaths. You let them go. This doesn't mean you won't feel sad again. But you've honored what needed to be honored."*

Why it works:

It names the invisible death that no one else names. And once it's named, the adolescent can finally grieve it fully.

TOOL 7: FINDING THE LIGHT (Stage 6 - Victory)**Purpose:**

To help the adolescent see the treasure, the new strength, resource, or awareness they found in the darkness.

How to use it:**Step 1: Introduction (5 minutes)**

Say: *"You've just been through something enormous. You fought. You surrendered. You let go. And now... here you are. Still breathing. Still here. In every story, when the hero faces death and survives, they find something they didn't expect. A treasure. You found something too. Let's look for it."*

Step 2: Ask the discovery questions (15 minutes)

Ask these questions slowly, one at a time:

Question 1:

"What did you discover about yourself that you didn't know before this ending?"

Examples:

- "I'm stronger than I thought"
- "I can survive alone"
- "I can feel pain without breaking"

Question 2:

"What can you do now that you couldn't do before?"

Examples:

- "I can cry in front of people"
- "I can sit with sadness without running away"
- "I can survive loss"

Question 3:

"If this ending had a gift to give you, a treasure hidden in the darkness, what is it?"

Examples:

- Resilience
- Courage
- Compassion
- Wisdom

Let them sit with this. Don't rush.

Step 3: Name the light (5 minutes)

Give them a small piece of paper or card.

Say: *"Write on this paper, in one word or one short phrase, what your treasure is. The thing you found in the darkness."*

Examples:

- "Courage"
- "I am stronger than I knew"
- "Resilience"

Step 4: The lantern metaphor (5 minutes)

Say: *"This is your lantern. You found it in the darkest moment of your journey.*

And now it's going to light your way forward. When things get hard again, you can hold this and remember: 'I found this. I earned this. This is mine.'"

Step 5: Where will you keep it? (2 minutes)

Ask: *"Where will you keep this lantern? In your wallet? On your mirror? Under your pillow?"*

Let them decide.

Why it works:

Stage 6 is fragile. The adolescent feels weak. But they're not weak, they're **transformed**. This tool helps them see the transformation as a gift.

TOOL 8: REHEARSING THE RETURN (Stage 7 - Return)

Purpose:

To prepare their story, so they feel safe when people ask questions.

How to use it:

Step 1: Map the questions (10 minutes)

Say: *"You're about to go back into the world. And people are going to ask you questions. Let's think about what they might ask."*

Common questions:

- "Where have you been?"
- "How's your family?"
- "What does your dad do?" (if parent died)

- "Are you okay?"

Write down all the questions they're afraid of.

Step 2: Create three versions (20 minutes)

For each question, prepare **three versions** of the answer:

Version 1: Close Friend (Full Truth)

For people they trust deeply.

Example: "My dad died last year. It's still really hard."

Version 2: Acquaintance (Partial Truth)

For classmates, casual friends.

Example: "My dad passed away." (Then change subject)

Version 3: Boundary (Deflect)

For people who have no right to know.

Example: "I don't really talk about that." or "That's personal."

Step 3: Roleplay (15 minutes)

Say: *"Now we're going to practice. I'll be the person asking. You answer using one of your three versions."*

Practice 2,3 key questions. Let them try different versions and see what feels comfortable.

Step 4: Emergency phrases (5 minutes)

Give them backup phrases for when they freeze:

- "I'm not ready to talk about that yet."
- "Can we talk about something else?"
- "It's complicated."

Why it works:

Pre-rehearsed answers = less panic when the question comes. The adolescent feels **prepared** and **in control** of their story.

TOOL 9: FROM HERO TO MENTOR (Stage 8 - Liberation)

Purpose:

To invite them into their new role: **Mentor**. The one who guides others walking the same path.

How to use it:

Step 1: Recognize the transformation (10 minutes)

Say: *"You've come so far. Think back to when this ending first happened. Who were you then?"*

Let them reflect.

Then ask: *"And who are you now?"*

Let them name the transformation:

- "I'm stronger"
- "I'm more confident"
- "I'm not afraid anymore"

Say: *"That transformation, that's the Hero's Journey. You're no longer just the Hero. You are the Mentor."*

Step 2: The Mentor's gift (10 minutes)

Ask: *"Is there someone in your life, right now, who's going through something similar to what you went through?"*

If yes: *"Would you be willing to help them? Not to fix them, but to be their Mentor. To offer them what someone offered you, or what you wish someone had offered you."*

Step 3: Create the Mentor's Toolkit (20 minutes)

Ask them to write:

- 1. The map:** Will you share the 8 stages with them?
- 2. Your story:** What parts of your journey would help them feel less alone?
- 3. The tools:** Which of the 8 tools helped you most?
- 4. The words you wish you'd heard:** What do you wish someone had said to you?
- 5. What you can offer:** Just by being present, what can you give?

Step 4: The Mentor's Pledge (optional, 5 minutes)

Invite them to write and sign: *"I have walked through the darkness and found the light. I have survived an ending that I thought would destroy me. Now, I offer what I have learned to those who walk the path behind me. I will share the map. I will offer my presence. I am a Mentor."*

Why it works:

It completes the Hero's Journey. The cycle closes, and reopens. The one who suffered becomes the one who guides. This gives **meaning** to the pain.

FACILITATOR SELF-CARE & BOUNDARIES

WHY SELF CARE IS NON-NEGOTIABLE

If you are sitting with adolescents in grief, in rage, in despair, **you need to take care of yourself.**

This work is heavy. It requires you to witness pain, hold space for difficult emotions, and remain present even when you want to look away.

If you don't take care of yourself, you will:

- **Burn out** (physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion)
- **Experience vicarious trauma** (carrying the trauma of the people you help)
- **Lose your capacity to be present** (you can't pour from an empty cup)
- **Cause harm** (to yourself and to the adolescents you're trying to help)

Selfcare is not selfish. Selfcare is how you stay effective.

Here are the **non-negotiable practices** for anyone doing End Education work:

1. SUPERVISION (Non-Negotiable)

2. LIMIT YOUR CASELOAD

3. RITUALS OF CLOSURE (After Every Session)

Create a **ritual of closure**, a physical or symbolic act that marks the end of the session and releases what's not yours (examples: wash your hands, shake your body, journal for 5 minutes). Find what works for you. But do it EVERY TIME.

4. PHYSICAL DISCHARGE (Move the Energy Out)

Running, swimming, yoga, dancing, cycling, massage, acupuncture, time in nature, breathwork: if you only sit and talk all day, the energy gets stuck. You must move.

5. CONNECTION (Don't Isolate)

6. YOUR OWN THERAPY (Ongoing)

7. KNOW YOUR LIMITS (And Honor Them)

Your worth is not determined by how much you sacrifice. Boundaries are not selfish. Boundaries keep you effective.

THE MANTRA TO REMEMBER

"I can offer the map. I cannot walk the journey for them."

Your job is to: **witness, name** (the stages, the emotions, the deaths), **offer tools, hold space**

Your job is **NOT** to: **fix them, take away their pain, carry their grief, save them,**

You are a guide, not a savior.

When you try to be a savior, you burn out. When you stay a guide, you can walk alongside many people for a long time.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE WORKSHOP

1. START WITH THE ENDING IN MIND

Before you design activities, ask yourself:

- **What do I want participants to walk away with?**
- **What transformation am I inviting?**
- **What's the one key insight I want them to have?**

Let the answer guide your structure.

2. BALANCE THEORY AND PRACTICE

Don't lecture for 45 minutes straight.

Use this rhythm:

- **10,15 minutes:** Present concept (theory, story, stage)
- **15,20 minutes:** Hands, on activity (tool, exercise, reflection)
- **10 minutes:** Discussion or sharing
- **Repeat**

Keep participants **active**, not passive.

3. CREATE EMOTIONAL SAFETY

At the start of every workshop, establish:

Ground rules:

- Confidentiality (what's shared here stays here)
- Respect for timing and emotions (it's okay to pass, it's okay to cry)
- No fixing or advice unless asked (witnessing, not problem, solving)

Say explicitly: *"This is not therapy. If something feels too heavy, you can step out. You're in control of what you share."*

4. USE THE BODY

Don't make workshops purely cognitive (talking and thinking).

Include:

- **Movement** (stand up, stretch, shake out tension)
- **Art** (drawing, coloring, collage)
- **Somatic awareness** (body mapping, noticing sensations)
- **Ritual** (lighting candles, tearing papers, creating symbols)

Adolescents process endings **through the body**, not just the mind.

5. END WITH INTEGRATION

Never end a workshop abruptly.

Always include:

- **Reflection time** (What did you learn? What are you taking with you?)
- **Grounding** (breathing, closing circle, gratitude)
- **Optional sharing** (one word, one sentence)

- **Resources** (who to talk to if they need more support)

Leave them **grounded**, not activated and abandoned.

6. OFFER CHOICE

Whenever possible, give adolescents **agency**:

- "You can share out loud or write privately, your choice."
- "You can draw or write, whatever feels right."
- "You don't have to answer this question if it's too personal."

Choice = safety.

7. WATCH THE TIME

Always **run shorter than you plan**.

If you plan for 60 minutes, activities will take 75 minutes (because people need time to settle, questions arise, emotions come up).

Build in buffer time.

8. HAVE A PLAN B

What if:

- Someone has a panic attack or emotional breakdown?
- The group is resistant or shut down?
- The activity flops?

Have backup activities, escape routes, and support plans ready.

9. FOLLOW UP

After a workshop on endings, some adolescents will need **continued support**.

Offer:

- A follow-up session
- Office hours (they can come talk to you)
- Resources (therapists, hotlines, websites)
- A way to stay connected (email, group chat)

Don't do deep work and then disappear.

10. COLLABORATE

Share your workshop designs with colleagues. Get feedback. Co-facilitate.

You don't have to do this alone.

The more facilitators using End Education, the stronger the community of practice becomes.

EXAMPLE WORKSHOP (For Inspiration)

Here's a quick example of a completed template:

WORKSHOP TITLE: "The Spiral of My Life: Mapping Personal Endings"

TARGET AUDIENCE: Ages 13,15, classroom setting, 20,25 students

DURATION: Single session, 90 minutes

ENDING(S) ADDRESSED: Universal (all the small endings students have already experienced)

STAGES COVERED: All 8 (overview)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students understand the 8 stages of the Hero's Journey
2. Students can identify which endings they've already navigated
3. Students realize they've survived many endings and have the map for future ones

STRUCTURE:

- **Opening (10 min):** Intro to Hero's Journey, show spiral diagram
- **Activity 1 (30 min):** Students draw their own spiral and map 3,5 endings they've been through
- **Activity 2 (20 min):** Small groups (3,4) share one ending from their spiral
- **Closing (20 min):** Reflection, "What did you learn? What stage are you in now?"
- **Ritual (10 min):** Stand in circle, each person says one word, "I am..."

MATERIALS: A3 paper, colored markers, pre,drawn spiral template (optional), timer

RESOURCES & CONTACTS

End Education is a growing community of practitioners around the world, educators, therapists, counselors, youth workers, all committed to helping young people navigate life's inevitable endings with awareness and dignity.

You are part of this community now.

This page provides resources to support your continued learning, connect you with other facilitators, and offer pathways for deeper training.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

These books provide deeper context for the concepts underlying End Education:

- *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell (1949)
- *On Death and Dying* by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1969)
- *The Wild Edge of Sorrow: Rituals of Renewal and the Sacred Work of Grief* by
- *It's OK That You're Not OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand* by Megan Devine (2017)
- *Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain* by Daniel J. Siegel (2013)
- *The Primal Teen: What the New Discoveries About the Teenage Brain Tell Us About Our Kids* by Barbara Strauch (2003)
- *The Way of Council* by Jack Zimmerman and Virginia Coyle (1996)
- *Marking the Way: The Journey of an Initiated Man* by Stephen Jenkinson (various talks/ writings)
- *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* by Atul Gawande (2014)
- *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* by Sogyal Rinpoche (1992)

ONLINE RESOURCES

OLME Website:

www.olmeproject.com

Visit the OLME website to:

- Download the **slide presentations** (Inner World, Relational World, Outer World modules)
- Join the End Education mailing list for updates

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Partner: ALMA.THI Thiene (Italy) www.almathi.it / **FRIENDS OF EDUCATION**

Skopje (Nord Macedonia) www.friends-of-education.org / **STICHTING yEuth**

Leiden (Olanda) <https://stichting-yeuth.com>

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- ✓ Adapt workshop activities for your specific context

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