



Pivoting Forward

Understanding Career Endings and Preparing for New Beginnings

By Alexis Monville & Jeremie Benazra

Welcome

Career endings are rarely neutral.

Whether you chose to leave, the decision was made for you, or the ending arrived gradually, something meaningful has come to an end. A role, a mission, a set of relationships, a version of yourself.

This guide exists to help you **slow down, make sense of what happened**, and **move forward deliberately** rather than rushing into the next thing without closure.

This workbook was originally inspired by relationship-ending reflection guides, particularly *Coming Apart: Why Relationships End and How to Live Through the Ending of Yours* by Daphne Rose Kingma.

We were struck by how much care and structure this book offers to help people process personal separations, and how little space is usually offered to process professional endings.

Yet careers are also relationships. They shape us, demand things from us, and sometimes end before we are ready.

Pivoting Forward was written to offer that missing space: a thoughtful, human way to process career endings and prepare new beginnings.

This is not about fixing yourself.

It is about understanding what this chapter was here to teach you.

How to use this guide

- You do not need to complete it in one sitting.
- Some exercises benefit from time in between.
- Write as much or as little as feels right.
- There are no correct answers.

If emotions come up, pause. This guide will still be here.

Part I – Understanding the Story

Exercise 1 – The Job Story

Purpose

To understand what initially connected you to this role, and where reality began to diverge from expectations.

This is the visible story: the role, the organization, the promises made, and the early signals that something was no longer aligning. Taking time to revisit this story helps surface important patterns that are often missed when we rush ahead.

Write

- What attracted you to this role or organization?
- What were you hoping this job would bring you at that moment in your life?
- What explicit or implicit expectations did you have when you started?
- When did you first feel that something was off?
- What happened at that moment, concretely?
- How did you respond when you noticed this feeling?
- What options did you consider at the time?

Pause

Reread what you wrote. What feels important now that may not have felt important then?

Exercise 2 – The Work Story

Purpose

To identify the deeper developmental work beneath the job title.

The job was the container.
The work was the real task.

Beyond responsibilities and deliverables, every role carries a deeper invitation: to grow, to test ourselves, to confront limits, or to develop new ways of being. This exercise helps you surface that deeper layer.

Write

- What were you really trying to learn, prove, or build through this role?

- What strengths and qualities did you bring to this work?
- What challenges or limits did you encounter (yours, others', or the system's)?
- What did this role ask of you that you were not, or were no longer, able or willing to give?
- Looking back, what tells you that this chapter had reached its natural end?

Endings are not always failures. Some are completions.

Part II – Processing the Ending

Exercise 3 – The Departure

Purpose

To create closure around how the ending happened and its impact on you.

This exercise is divided into three parts. You can do them separately.

3.1 The moment

Write

- How did the ending happen?
- What surprised you?
- What felt abrupt, unfinished, or unclear?
- What emotions are still present when you think about it?

3.2 Your responsibility inventory

Create two separate lists.

Write

What I take responsibility for

- Actions I took
- Choices I made
- Signals I ignored

What I release responsibility for

- Decisions that were not mine
- Dynamics I could not control
- Expectations that were never explicit

3.3 Letters (optional)

These letters are not meant to be sent.

Choose one or more

- A letter saying what was never said

- A letter of forgiveness to yourself
- A letter of forgiveness to someone else

 You do not have to write all the letters today.

Exercise 4 – Appreciation and Gratitude

Purpose

To integrate learning without rewriting history.

This is not about pretending everything was positive.

It is about recognizing what this experience gave you, even if it was difficult.



Write

- What did this experience give you?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What skills, clarity, or boundaries emerged?
- What would you thank this chapter for, if anything?

Part III – Preparing What's Next

Exercise 5 – Reframing the Relationship

Purpose

To change how the past occupies your present.

How you hold this story will influence how you step into what comes next.

Write

- How do you describe this experience today?
- How do you want to remember it in five years?
- What story about this ending no longer serves you?
- What new story feels more accurate or useful?

Exercise 6 – Defining Your Next Chapter

Purpose

To clarify what you want to grow into next, and under what conditions.

This is not about finding the perfect role.

It is about identifying your next developmental task.

Your next developmental focus

Write

- What do you want to develop or strengthen next?
- What patterns do you want to avoid repeating?
- What kind of responsibility are you now ready to take?

Your next environment

Write

- In what kind of environment do you do your best work?
- What has become non-negotiable for you?
- What are you curious to explore?

Looking ahead

Write

- What would “moving forward” look like in the next three months?
- What is one small, concrete step you could take?

Closing

You are not late.

You are not behind.

You are between chapters.

You can return to this guide whenever you need.

Some insights take time to surface.

Moving forward does not mean forgetting.

It means integrating what was, so you can step into what’s next with more clarity and intention.

Written by Alexis Monville and Jeremie Benazra



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