

(E) Ending

“In a little while, we might need to think about looking for a comfortable stopping place.”

“We have about five more minutes.”

Ending may be initiated for two reasons. There may be a time limit to the session, and you may need to be aware of the time and help the person bring the session to a close. In this case, you will want to mention ending at least five minutes before the actual ending, less for sessions which are less than twenty minutes long. (Remember how long you and your Focusing partner like to take for endings. Endings are worth taking time with.) You wouldn't want to say, "It's time to stop now." The felt sense wouldn't like that! It's better to put in lots of 'cushions', and say something like, "In a few minutes we might need to begin finding a comfortable stopping place..." This would be the way to say it with a new person, in a first session especially.

With a regular Focusing partner, especially when you have asked how many minutes they want to be notified before the end, you can just say "We have about ___ more minutes." Be sure to give them whatever amount of time they asked for, even if you lost track of time and went over. That's your problem, not theirs.

Usually, unless the session calls for something else, you would then ask the Focuser to check with 'it' if stopping is OK. "So you might check in your body if it's OK to stop soon, or if something more wants to happen first." Bebe Simon uses this lovely inner relationship phrasing: "Let the place know you are going to stop soon and see if there is anything more it wants to tell you before you stop." Sometimes the best parts of the session come then!

Notice this rather important use of the word "more" instead of "else." "Something more" or "anything more" instead of "something else" or "anything else." "Else" will open the floodgates! "More" invites something from the same issue.

What if something more does want to come, and your time is tight? Have the person acknowledge it, pause, and then ask if it would be OK to mark that place and come back to it. If you have even as much as a couple of minutes, that's usually enough time to have the person acknowledge it, do some inner listening, let it know they hear it, and then see if they need to mark the place.

Guide: "In a little while we need to begin maybe looking for a comfortable stopping place. So you might check with those inside places if it's OK to stop in a while, or if something more wants to come first."

Focuser: "Yes, the lightness wants to say that it wants to come back more often."

Guide: "So maybe you could really acknowledge that, that the lightness wants to come back more often."

Focusing teacher Lucinda Hayden offers the invitation this way: "Maybe checking if there's one last thing it wants you to know." This excellent phrasing offers the opening and the containment in the same sentence!

The other way ending may happen is that the person may initiate the ending process themselves by telling you that they are nearly finished, that that feels like enough for now. You would then help them end using the same processes as with the other ending.

At the very end, after all has come that wants to come for now, there are two final processes that often feel satisfying for completion of the session.

"You might let that place [those places] know that you'll be back."

"...that you're willing to come back."

"...that they can call you back if they need you."

With these suggestions, the Focuser is honoring that this session is part of a longer-term inner relationship. It's not so much the particular sense or place which is being committed to, as it is the Focusing process, the inner relationship itself.

Another possibility: "You might ask it how it wants to be carried, how it wants you to carry it, until the next time you can say hello to it."

If the Focuser has been experiencing something positive, this suggestion can be phrased thus: "You might want to invite that _____ to stay with you even after the session ends."

"See if it feels right to thank your body and everything that has come in this session." or "Notice if you'd like to thank and appreciate your body and your body's process." Thanking a very valuable part of the process, the one I do if I do nothing else as part of ending. It feels right to end a phase of a respectful inner relationship with appreciation. To allow for the possibility that "thanking" may not feel right, we use the phrases "See if it feels right to..." or "Notice if you'd like to..."

Usually a person comes naturally out of Focusing after this, and I like waiting for them to do that. But if a long time passes, and you sense that they are waiting for something more from you, you might say, "And gently begin letting your awareness come back into the room ... sensing the touch of your body on the chair . . . noticing the sounds outside ... and when you're ready to stop just open your eyes," or "In your own time, in your own way, come back to the room and let your eyes come naturally open." People in deep process have reported appreciating this kind of help to come back.