## Beyond Endings, by John O'Donohue

Endings seem to lie in wait. Absorbed in our experience we forget that an ending might be approaching. Consequently, when the ending signals its arrival, we can feel ambushed. Perhaps there is an instinctive survival mechanism in us that distracts us from the inevitability of ending, thus enabling us to live in the present with innocence and whole-heartedness. [...]

Experience has its own secret structuring. Endings are natural. Often what alarms us as an ending can in fact be the opening of a new journey – a new beginning that we could never have anticipated; one that engages forgotten parts of the heart. Due to the current overlay of therapy terminology in our language, everyone now seems to wish for "closure." This word is unfortunate: it is not faithful to the open-ended rhythm of experience. Creatures made of clay with porous skins and porous minds are quite incapable of the hermetic sealing that the strategy of "closure" seems to imply. The word _completion_ is a truer word. Each experience has within it a dynamic of unfolding and a narrative of emergence. Oscar Wilde once said, "The supreme vice is shallowness. Whatever is realized is right." When a person manages to trust experience and be open to it, the experience finds its own way to realization. Though such an ending may be awkward and painful, there is a sense of wholesomeness and authenticity about it. Then the heart will gradually find that this stage has run its course and the ending is substantial and true. Eventually the person emerges with a deeper sense of freedom, certainty, and integration.

The nature of calendar time is linear; it is made up of durations that begin and end. The Celtic imagination always sensed that beneath time there was eternal depth. This offers us a completely different way of relating to time. It relieves time of the finality of ending. While something may come to an ending on the surface of time, its presence, meaning, and effect continue to be held into the eternal. This is how spirit unfolds and deepens. In this sense, eternal time is intimate; it is where the unfolding narrative of individual life is gathered and woven.

--John O'Donohue, from "To Bless the Space Between Us"

*Published at www.awakin.org on Feb 15, 2010*