

## Choosing Better Outcomes

A guide to using hindsight to evaluate how choices affect different situations and creating metaphors from these findings.

### Drifted Away, Together

Both across from each other in the same room, each fragmented. He's alone on the thunderous table, damp, restless. She's edge-wandering like a trapped spider with all hope down the spun-out drain.

Floated away in a whirlwind of unease and disquiet, wishing for another to glance at them once more. All of their problems could be extinguished with enough effort emitting from their wax cores.

Their detachment, or the last thread that binds them, a strong crimson strand knitted from the cloth of time. Even if their dying connection might feel more like tainted feathers, nobody could deny them the time they had together.

Both, still across the same room, slowly enveloping inwards. Who would choose to glance first? The man that broke her heart or the woman that made him break it? Too soon or too late, maybe they could have shared an empty new fate.

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from *I Wrote This When the World Was Ending* (First Story Group)



## 1. ICE BREAKER

Take **5 minutes** to list **5 occasions** which, in hindsight, you would have chosen to go differently. Think of an argument with friends or family, or a break-up? Perhaps you spoke to someone unkindly or treated someone unfairly. Maybe it was a fight or an accident that you regret. Maybe you didn't show as much gratitude as you now feel you ought to have.



## 2. MAIN WRITING ACTIVITY

Make a two columned table like the one below and spend **5 - 10 minutes** listing up to **10 situations** and how you could have handled them differently. Think about your tone of voice (Sulking? Shouting?), your stance (Refusing to make eye contact? Arms folded?), how you felt inside, the setting you were in etc.

How things went	How I would choose to act in hindsight
I shouted a horrible insult	I should have told them I was hurting

Draft metaphors for each, that convey the sentiment more figuratively. For example, 'I shouted a horrible insult' could become 'My words curled out of my mouth like pummelling fists', and 'I should have told them I was hurting' might become 'Folded together in a bruised origami twist, we'd admit that actually we just missed our late-night calls.'

To create your metaphors, picture what it is you're trying to convey and play a word association game. For instance, insults cause hurt. What else causes hurt? Bullets. Fists. Bites. Slaps. Spikes. Flames. Icy cold rain. Steam. Take about **20 minutes** for this, and try to avoid clichés!

## 3. EXTENDED WRITING ACTIVITY

Take **2 minutes** to discuss the following writing options with a partner:

1. Write a poem of two halves: 'How things went' and 'How you would choose to act in hindsight'.
2. Write a poem that blends the two i.e., jumping between 'How things went' and 'How you would choose to act in hindsight'.
3. Write a poem that solely focuses on 'How I would choose to act in hindsight' and leave your reader guessing as to what went wrong originally.

Once you've chosen, spend **20 minutes** working on your poem. Here are some prompts to guide you:

- **Pronouns:** 'I' and 'you' demonstrate a separation, whereas 'we', 'both', 'us' and 'our' create a sense of togetherness.
- **Rhyme:** Try and experiment in sections where you want to create cohesion and resolution. Keep it minimal though!
- **Rhetorical questions:** After all, choice is all about questioning ourselves!
- **Phonetics:** some words sound sharp and abrupt (blunt, punch, hit, slap, crunch) whereas others sound soft and calming (immerse, cocoon, sweep, dance). Use this to your advantage.
- **Compound verbs:** Using 'She's edge-wandering like a trapped spider' instead of 'She is wandering around the edge like a trapped spider' is a more efficient and interesting way to convey movement!