



JOURNEY HOME
FOR EMPOWERED LIVING AND DYING

Grieving Mindfully

We die because we live, and we grieve because we love.

Grief is the emotion of loss – a loss that we disagree with.

A loss of a loved one, a marriage, a job, a home, a teddy bear, a limb, our health, weight, addictive habits, or what we thought our life was going to look like.

It has a familiar pattern, like a roller coaster. If you pay attention, you'll notice the intensity of grief increases and decreases as we go about our days and lives.

Grief is heavy on the body and heart and can cloud the mind as we want to live from the past, whether conscious of this or not.

Grief is the human asking for acknowledgment that we have become attached to someone, something, or an idea, and now that has changed or shifted.

We seek validation and sometimes a rescue from the pain and deep sadness of change. Sometimes, it feels so all-consuming that you believe the wild edges of sorrow may never soften.

At that point, we have a choice to grieve from guilt and a desire for things to go back the way we want. We step into the victim archetype or grieve from love and acceptance and process this loss with the Warrior.

We permit ourselves to feel the pain and the sadness – we reflect on the loss and find our way through it, knowing loss is a part of life, as life is impermanence. We are powerless of life and death but hold the power within to respond to these painful, unpreferred experiences with our power like a warrior.

Grief is an emotion of life we will all move through; recognizing there are many forms and types of loss and understanding the differences may be helpful to move and process this pain.

Let's Begin

Become aware of any sounds you can hear now—nothing else but what you can hear without strain. Begin to focus on the most distant sounds that you can hear. Let your sense of hearing radiate outward, searching out these distant sounds and following them for a few moments. Move your attention from sound to sound without labelling the source. Now, gradually bring your attention to closer sounds, to sounds outside this building, to sounds inside this building, to sounds inside the room.

See the four walls of this room, the ceiling, the floor, and your body in the room.

Become acutely aware of the existence of your physical body in this space.

Be aware of your natural breath, and become aware of your natural and spontaneous breath that moves in and out of your body without effort. Natural breath flows in through the body. Notice the feeling of the breath; perhaps there is a sense of coolness as you inhale and a sense of warmth as you exhale. Feel this warmth on your upper lip as you breathe out.

Allow your breath to become longer and slower. Take a long, slow inhale, followed by a longer, slower exhale. Make your exhale even slower—notice the slight pause after the exhale. Slowly inhale, even slower exhale, and pause. Long, slow inhale, longer, slower exhale, and then pause where the body is neither breathing in nor out. Continue breathing in this way. Now, welcome back to the natural, easy breath, releasing any control over the inhale or exhale.

Notice the state of your mind, body, and breath. In this moment of calm, peace, and ease, you may experience a rhythmic vibration.

If your body begins to feel stressed, overwhelmed, or hopeless at any point during this reading, come back to this page to reconnect to your senses and breath.

Understanding Loss

Types of loss and know you may experience several types of these losses for one loss –

These are usually identified as *Grief*, but we don't have anticipatory grief; for example, we don't have anticipatory shame, anger, or joy – emotions are of the present moment –

When we change the label of these, it allows us to understand grief is an emotion, and the following is how the mind processes it –

- ❖ Anticipatory Loss
- ❖ Complicated Loss
- ❖ Delayed Loss
- ❖ Cumulative Loss
- ❖ Disenfranchised Loss
- ❖ Traumatic Loss
- ❖ Collective loss

Anticipatory Loss; if you're expecting the loss of someone to prepare for the loss, you might begin trying to envision life without them, and you may already feel you have lost them.

Complicated Loss; your reactions and behaviour will likely extend for very long periods, with little to no improvement. This type of loss will most likely impact your ability to function, and you may feel more depressed and have increased anxiety.

Delayed Loss; is felt for years after a loss; it essentially means that your emotional reaction didn't happen when it should have. This might be due to disassociation, which is common when things are too painful for you to feel.

Cumulative Loss; happens when you experience a second loss while you're still processing grief from a previous loss.

Disenfranchised Loss; loss can be disenfranchised whenever you feel that others don't validate your loss. This can happen when a culture or society doesn't recognize your loss.

Traumatic Loss; is a common result of trying to process grief when there's added trauma that comes from a horrifying, unexpected loss, a violent death, or the loss of someone who abused you.

Collective Loss happens when a tragedy affects an entire community or large group. It's common during war and after major natural disasters that can have long-lasting impacts, such as the pandemic. Many experience loss, which leads to the emotion of grief.

"We can choose to hang on or let go of emotional upsets. We can look at the cost of hanging on to them. Do we want to pay the price? Are we willing to accept the feelings? We can look at the benefits of letting go of them.

The choices we make will determine our future. What kind of a future do we want? Will we choose to be healed or become one of the walking wounded?"

Grief in and of itself is normal. Any time you suffer a loss, it's the most normal thing in the world to have feelings of grief. You may experience a huge range of emotions during your grieving process. Some of these can be physical, while others may be mental, emotional, or social.

Response to Grief

- ❖ Physical Reactions to Loss
 - An actual tightness in your chest
 - Feeling weak
 - Lack of energy
 - Nausea
 - Heart palpitations
 - Restlessness
 - Tearfulness
 - Lump in throat
 - Numbness Irritability

- ❖ Mind reactions to grief
 - Forgetfulness
 - Confusion
 - Spacey
 - Dreaming of the person you've lost
 - Absent-mindedness

- ❖ Emotions reactions to grief
 - Anger
 - Guilt
 - Denial
 - Loneliness
 - Relief
 - Apathy
 - Anger
 - Love
 - Gratitude

This goes back to the 5 stages of grief –emotions and reactions to grief but not grief. Grief is grief, like anger is anger, and happiness is happiness. And when we offer ourselves permission and know we have the strength to navigate these emotions, we can process them to be with ease vs suppressing them to be with dis-ease – the victim is ashamed for what life did to them, and a warrior finds peace with what life offered them.

Remember, the body can hold an emotion for 90 seconds. So grief is held within the emotional body for 90 seconds before it ascends or descends. But this is the roller coaster of grief—it will ride the waves of emotions, especially when we are first to experience a profound loss.

❖ Social Reactions to Loss

Being unusually dependent on other people

Withdrawing from friends

Relationship difficulties

Avoiding family, colleagues, and friends

Increased substance abuse

Neglecting yourself but caring for others

Mindfully Grieve

Meditation in Tibet means becoming familiar with oneself—sitting in stillness and silence to become self-aware. Many of us don't know what grief feels like, yet we have all experienced it throughout our lives, sometimes several times a day.....

Education is key to freedom – emotional intelligence is key to your freedom.

To know what grief feels like and to know how you need to process it – what does your body need?

Anger – scream, hit things, punch a pillow

Happiness – laugh, dance, create, paint, sing

Gratitude – to be in gratitude for knowing and having the experience

Guilt – cry, feel shame and regret

Apathy - weak that they couldn't save, hopelessness

Triggers in The Grief

The question “How are you doing?” can feel threatening when someone is overwhelmed

Sympathy can often feel annoying. We don’t want someone to feel sorry for us, as we already feel sorry for ourselves; we want compassion.

Empathy is irritating; I don’t want to hear about your loss; I want to be in mine.

In comparison to how others experienced grief, those who don’t cry or express their feelings of loss often feel inadequate.

Feeling rushed to “get over it” when there is no timetable for grief

Suggestions in Grief

- ❖ Acknowledge your pain
- ❖ Accept that grief can trigger many different and unexpected emotions
- ❖ Understand that your grieving process will be unique to you
- ❖ Seek out face-to-face support
- ❖ Support yourself emotionally by taking care of yourself physically, mentally and emotionally
- ❖ Recognize the difference between grief and depression
- ❖ Remember, you won’t feel like this forever
- ❖ Be patient with yourself
- ❖ Rest and relax as much as needed
- ❖ Find ways to move your body from love gently

Let’s learn together how to hold compassion for people who are mourning,
including you.