

A Meditation on Grief by The Gratefulness Team

When after heavy rain the storm clouds disperse, is it not that they've wept themselves clear to the end? —Ghalib

Grief is one of the heart's natural responses to loss. When we grieve we allow ourselves to feel the truth of our pain, the measure of betrayal or tragedy in our life. By our willingness to mourn, we slowly acknowledge, integrate, and accept the truth of our losses. Sometimes the best way to let go is to grieve.

It takes courage to grieve, to honor the pain we carry. We can grieve in tears or in meditative silence, in prayer or in song. In touching the pain of recent and long-held griefs, we come face to face with our genuine human vulnerability, with helplessness and hopelessness. These are the storm clouds of the heart.

Most traditional societies offer ritual and communal support to help people move through grief and loss. We need to respect our tears. Without a wise way to grieve, we can only soldier on, armored and unfeeling, but our hearts cannot learn and grow from the sorrows of the past.

To meditate on grief, let yourself sit, alone or with a comforting friend. Take the time to create an atmosphere of support. When you are ready, begin by sensing your breath. Feel your breathing in the area of your chest. This can help you become present to what is within you. Take one hand and hold it gently on your heart as if you were holding a vulnerable human being. You are.

As you continue to breathe, bring to mind the loss or pain you are grieving. Let the story, the images, the feelings come naturally. Hold them gently. Take your time. Let the feelings come layer by layer, a little at a time.

Keep breathing softly, compassionately. Let whatever feelings are there, pain and tears, anger and love, fear and sorrow, come as they will. Touch them gently. Let them unravel out of your body and mind. Make space for any images that arise. Allow the whole story. Breathe and hold it all with tenderness and compassion. Kindness for it all, for you and for others.

The grief we carry is part of the grief of the world. Hold it gently. Let it be honored. You do not have to keep it in anymore. You can let it go into the heart of compassion; you can weep.

Releasing the grief we carry is a long, tear-filled process. Yet it follows the natural intelligence of the body and heart. Trust it, trust the unfolding. Along with meditation, some of your grief will want to be written, to be cried out, to be sung, to be danced. Let

the timeless wisdom within you carry you through grief and awaken a tender, open heart.

Keep in mind that grief doesn't just dissolve. Instead it arises in waves and gradually, with growing compassion, there comes more space around it. The heart opens and in its own time, little by little, gaps of new life—breaks in the rain clouds appear. The body relaxes and freer breaths appear. This is a natural cycle you can trust—how life and the heart renews itself. Like the spring after winter, it always does.

Jack Kornfield · Meditation On Grief - Jack Kornfield

Related Resources from Gratefulness.org are available
<https://gratefulness.org/explore/resources/?type=practices-grateful-livinghere>.