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Grieving Ceremony

A ceremony for life transitions

by Therese Fisher, © 2009

Grieving something that has been lost or is being lost can be a very difficult thing. There are ceremonies to grieve when a loved one has died; we have funerals, wakes and prayer services, but sometimes we forget to give ourselves permission to grieve the loss of things that don't have a physical body, like a job or a relationship.



We may also forget that when we bring something new into our lives, it means that things have changed. Even if this change is something we welcome and desire (like a promotion or a new house), there are aspects of what our life was before or what we thought it would become; aspects that are nice to honor, thank, grieve, and release.

This ceremony is one I created many years ago when the organization I was working for entered into a merger. It was a time of high stress and changing goals both personally and as an organization. The leadership acknowledged the change and possible feelings of loss, but focused on presenting a forward thinking image and left the grief work to the individual.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines grieving as "To mourn or sorrow for." It is an idea that seems easy enough, but it is not something that everyone is taught how to do. What I needed was to process the grief for myself. After all, no one else fully understood what I was losing, just as I didn't fully understand what anyone else was losing. And so on the last day of the year 2000, I came up with an idea.

Ingredients

Pen (non-toxic)

Bag of nuts or seeds

One or more large leaves or other easily biodegradable container (optional)

Special rock, sand, dirt or some small totems (optional)

Gardening tools (optional)

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Get a large bag of nuts or seeds. The idea is to have something biodegradable, something that will feed the earth and its inhabitants. If you like to garden, you might choose some large seeds that you can then plant and so create a garden of new life out of your grief.

Next, find a spot in nature where you feel comfortable and safe. This might be in your yard or garden, a local park or even some far off wilderness.

Once there, take some time to center yourself, clear your mind and really get in touch with how you are feeling. If you are attuned to Reiki, activate the symbols and allow them to flow through your body assisting you, adding clarity, and providing transformation to your grief. Imagine a brilliant light streaming down on you from above, wrapping your body in comfort and support. With each breath the light around you grows. Imagine now another rich and vibrant light emerging up from the earth. Gently and yet purposefully, it rises up, enveloping you with the nurturing love of the great earth. These two lights merge to create a brilliance unlike any you have felt before. Begin to breath the light into your body allowing it to illuminate your thoughts and feelings. Here is a safe place to feel whatever you feel. No questions asked. No right or wrong.

Take some more deep breaths. Begin to ask yourself what it is that you are losing or have lost. You may find that answers come quickly at first. Go ahead and write them down on the nuts, one thought/item per nut. Take as long as you need. When the ideas stop flowing, ask the brilliant light flowing through you to help you find any other aspects or faces of your grief that you are ready to let go of.

Scan your entire body. Breath the light down into your feet. Is there a way in which this loss will affect how you walk on the earth? Did you lose your feelings of sure-footedness? Breath into your ankles. Will this change your dance? Breath into your legs. How does this loss affect your pace? Continue letting the light guide your consciousness to various parts of your body, allowing you to sense the changes taking place, what was once there that is or will be no longer. See, feel touch, hear, taste, smell. As things emerge, write them on the nuts.

When you feel complete. Gather up your nuts and prepare the area on which you are going to place the nuts. If you are going to wrap them in leaves, set out the leaves to become the receptacle. If you are going to bury the nuts, make sure you have your tools for digging and any prep work done.

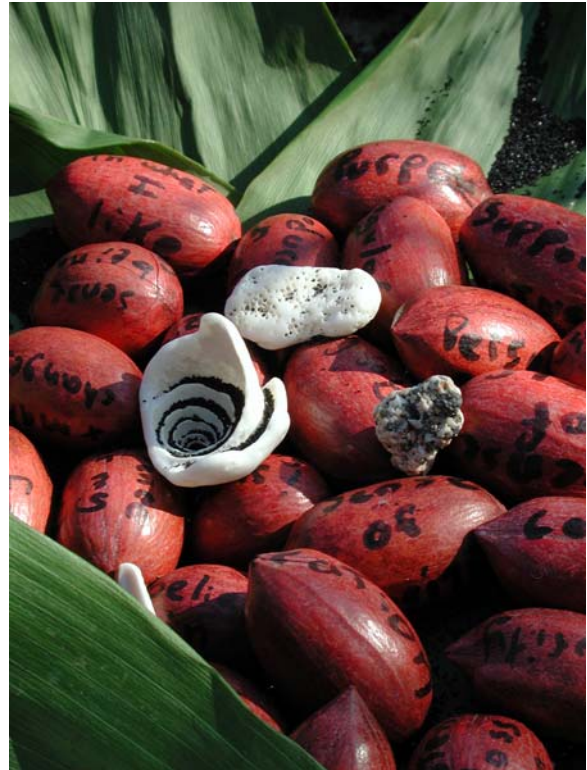
One by one, take a nut in your hand. Focus on what you have written there. Imagine the light flowing through your body scooping up all remnants of this loss. Acknowledge it, and when you are ready, blow the feelings of loss into the nut. As you do this, ask the light surrounding you to



transform this energy so that it can feed and nourish the earth, world peace, hope for the future, or some other aspect of life or creation that calls to you. Or, simply ask the earth to take it to wherever it is needed.

Do this process with each of the nuts until you have gone through them all. You might also wish to state an affirmation each time you do this acknowledging the profoundness of what you have been through and what you are now ready to move forward from. As you progress, notice what things you value, what things really nourish your soul and you would like to have back in your life. (Write them down if you are worried about forgetting.)

When you've finished going through and reflecting/releasing with each nut, take the leaves and bundle them up, or take a moment to sprinkle some additional soil onto the ground where you've buried them, or set them in a place that feels right. You can add some special objects or stones at this point if you like. Acknowledge the things you've lost and what they meant to you. Acknowledge yourself for being an active participant in the transformation that is taking place in your life.



Once the nuts are bundled, wrapped, or buried, take a few steps away from them and sit down. Again take some deep breaths, breathing in the light and allowing it to permeate you. Let it fill every cell and every space between every cell with inspiration and hope. Think of the values that you discovered during this process. Ask the light to expand out into your house, neighborhood, and community and throughout your life continuing out into the world. Imagine it growing bigger and bigger. As it spreads, it is finding those things that you value and creating a path for them to flow into your life in new

joyful, and life affirming ways.

Remember always that you are whole and perfect at each and every stage of this process. Take a moment to thank yourself again for being present, for taking this time to let go and to heal. Thank the light that came to assist you; to nourish and support you. Ask it to continue to support you through this process in your daily life. Sit and breath for a while and when you are ready, get up and walk full of love into your life that you have now created space for.