

THE GRIEF PRACTICE



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

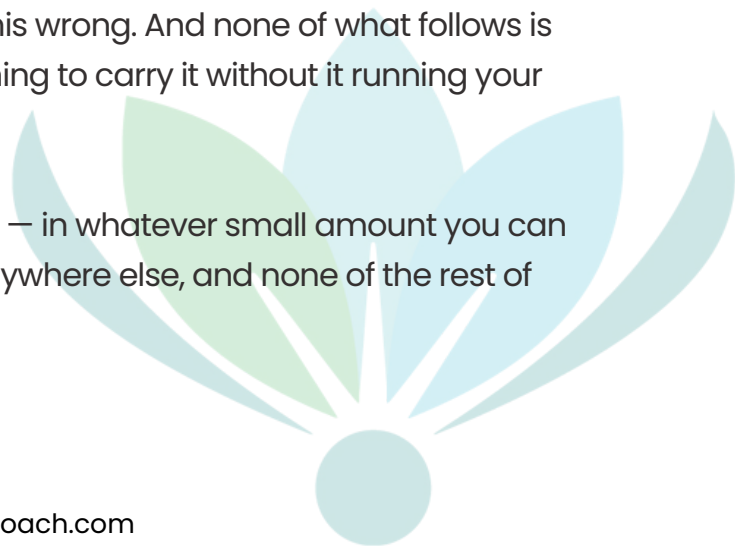
If what you're feeling includes wanting to hurt yourself or someone else, or thoughts of ending your life: stop here. Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline), or go to your nearest emergency room. Everything below is for grief. It is not for crisis.

Another thing: if it's been a long stretch — a year or more — and the grief hasn't eased at all, and it's still getting in the way of you functioning, that's also worth bringing to a professional. Not because something is wrong with you. Some griefs are simply bigger than a sheet like this one.

A few more things to know before you start:

There's no deadline here, and no version of you that's supposed to be finished by a certain date. Don't compare your grief to anyone else's, including your own from a different loss — there's no such thing as doing this wrong. And none of what follows is about letting go of what you lost. It's about learning to carry it without it running your whole life.

Care for your body first. Sleep, food, movement — in whatever small amount you can manage. Grief lives in the body before it lives anywhere else, and none of the rest of this works if you're running on empty.



THE GRIEF PRACTICES

These aren't steps to move through in order, and you don't need to do all of them, or even most of them. Read through what follows and notice which one feels possible. Start only there. The rest will still be here whenever you're ready for them.

TALK IT OUT

See a therapist. If this loss is large, layered, or doesn't have a name yet, it may be more than a sheet of paper can hold. A good therapist can sit in that difficulty with you, in a way a worksheet alone can't.

Find a grief group. There's a particular relief in grieving alongside people who already understand, without needing the loss explained or justified first. You don't have to carry this weight alone or explain it. They already know.

WRITE IT OUT

Journal. Let whatever comes up come out, without censoring it or writing for anyone, including your future self. This isn't about producing something worth rereading. It's about getting the thing out of your head, where it loops, and onto paper, where it can finally sit still.

Write the letter you'll never send. To the person you lost, or to the circumstance itself. Say everything you didn't get the chance to say. It doesn't need to be fair, complete, or kind. It only needs to be said.

ACT IT OUT

Mark it with a ritual. If this loss never had a funeral or a ceremony, you're allowed to create one yourself — light a candle, say the loss's name out loud, write and read a eulogy. This is a single act you do once, to mark that it happened, that it was real and to honor it.

Build a daily grief practice. Where the ritual marks the loss once, this is where you return to it, gently, over time. Choose ten or fifteen minutes, put them on your calendar like any appointment that matters, and sit with whatever comes up until your timer rings. Grief that has somewhere to go is a little less likely to ambush you at two in the morning instead.

WALK IT OUT

Walk in nature. No destination, no agenda, ideally no phone. Let the world outside — a tree, a bird, the weather on your skin — take up a little more space in your attention than the loss does, even for a few minutes. That's the whole practice. You're not trying to outrun anything. You're just letting something larger than you hold you for a while.

WAYS IN

How to start implementing the Grief Practices

You don't need all of these today. Read through them and notice which one feels least impossible right now. Begin there.

TALK IT OUT

There isn't a worksheet exercise for this one, and that's alright. Some things are better begun with another person than with a page. If this is where you want to start, the exercise is simply this: find the number of someone you trust, or search for a grief-informed therapist near you, and reach out today, even if all you say is that you don't know where else to begin.

WRITE IT OUT



Journaling Prompts

Set a timer for ten minutes. Don't stop to reread.

- What, exactly, did I lose? Name it plainly, without minimizing it.
- What haven't I let myself feel about this yet?
- Who would understand this loss without needing it explained?
- What part of my old life am I still waiting to go back to?
- If I fully accepted this had happened, what would change tomorrow?



The Letter

To the person, or to the circumstance. This one is never sent.

- Begin with something like: "What I never got to tell you is..."
- Say the angry thing. The unfair thing. The thing you would never say to their face.
- Say the tender thing too, if there's room for it.
- Let it end however it ends. It doesn't need a bow tied on it.
- When you're finished, you can keep, burn, or shred it. All three will do.

WAYS IN

ACT IT OUT



Make a Ritual

For the loss that never had a ceremony of its own.

- Choose one small act to mark it: light a candle, plant something, read something out loud.
- Speak out loud to the loss, name it to tame it.
- Chant, pray, give a eulogy; do what feels right to honor the loss.



Build Your Altar, Then Use It Daily

A small, deliberate space for the loss to live, and a habit of returning to it.

Setting it up, once:

- Choose a single surface in a private space — a shelf, a windowsill, a corner of a desk.
- Place one or a few objects that hold something of the loss: a photograph, a ticket stub, a ring, a name written out on paper.
- Light a candle if that feels right, or don't. The point is that you return here, not the specific ritual you use to do it.

Then, most days:

- Put ten or fifteen minutes on your calendar, the way you would any other appointment, and try to treat it as just as non-negotiable.
- Set a timer. When it rings, you're done for today, even if you're mid-sentence, or tear.
- Sit at your altar, or somewhere quiet and still, for as long as the timer runs. Let the loss have the room. Let whatever comes up, come up, and stay with it until the time is over.

WALK IT OUT



The Walk

No phone. No podcast. Just you and whatever's outside.

Walk until something beyond yourself — a tree, a bird, a change in the weather — begins to take up more room in your attention than the loss does, even if only for a moment. That's the entire exercise. There's nothing else to get right.