

## A MEDITATION ON GRIEF

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[To be read slowly to a friend or silently to oneself.]

Let your eyes close.

As your eyes close and you feel your body breathing, let your hand, your thumb, press into that point at the center of the chest between the nipples where it feels so sensitive to the touch. As sensitive as we are. And push into it.

Feel all that pushes back. Feel all that tries to resist, that denies the pain. All the armoring. All the resistance to life.

Push into it. Let the pain into your heart. Breathe that pain into your heart. All those moments of self-hatred, all that anxiety, all those times you could just jump out of your skin.

All those moments you wished you were dead. All held there, all pushing against the pressure, all denying life. Let the heart break.

Breathe the pain into the heart. Let the pain in.

Let yourself in.

Push into it.

It is so long since you have entered fully into your heart.

Feel the grief that lies there just beneath the tip of your thumb. All the loss. All the moments you couldn't protect yourself or the people you loved.

The helplessness. The hopelessness.

Feel it, breathe that pain into your heart.

Let go of the resistance. Let go of the self-protection.

It is just too much suffering to be locked out of your heart. Nothing is worth it.

Push resolutely into your heart. Not causing you pain but creating deep attention to whatever arises there.

Breathe in that pain.

Acknowledge that place which knows that all your children, all your friends will die some day.

The place that knows you might die and leave so much undone.

All the things you didn't say, all the love you didn't give, all the pain you have held on to right there pushing back.

Breathe through it, push into that pain.

Let it in. Let it into your heart.  
Don't hold on.  
Let it in.  
The ten thousand children starving to death at this very moment.  
The pain of mothers with empty breasts trying to feed starving children.  
The pain.  
All those feelings of having been misunderstood, of having been unloved right there in the midst of these sensations.  
And how hard it is for us to love, how incredibly hard it is to keep the heart open.  
So frightened, so doubtful, so scared.  
Let the armoring melt into the center of your heart without force, without punishing yourself. Draw the pain in, draw it in with each breath.  
With each breath let your heart be filled with yourself. So much has gone unexpressed. Layer upon layer covering the heart. Let the pain in.  
Make room for the pain. Breathe it in. Breathe it in.  
Let the pain come and let the pain go.  
Have mercy.  
Have mercy on yourself.  
Let the pain out.  
Breathe it in and breathe it out.  
So much held for so long.  
Let it go. Breathe it out. Let yourself into your heart. Make room in your heart for yourself.  
Have mercy on you.  
Let it come and let it go.  
Let the thumb push into the armoring that guards the feelings of loss and grief there. Focus the attention like a single point of light in the center of the pain.  
Go deeper.  
Don't try to protect the heart.  
Maintaining a steady gentle pressure at the center of the chest, feel the suffering held there. All the loss held, all the fears, the insecurity, the self-doubt.  
Surrender into the feelings. Let it all come through.  
Allow the pain into your heart. Allow the pain out of your heart. Each breath breathing awareness into the heart, each exhalation releasing the pain of a lifetime.  
Let yourself experience it all. Nothing to add to it. Nothing to push

away. Just see what is there, what we have carried for so long. Feel the inevitable loss of everyone you love. The impotent anger of being tossed into a universe of such incredible suffering.

The fear of the unknown. The ache of the loss of love, the isolation.

Let go into the pain. Breathe into it. Allow the long-held grief to melt.

Bring it into a soft awareness that dissolves the holding with each breath. Let yourself be fully born even in the midst of the pain of it all.

Let your heart open into this moment.

Allow awareness to penetrate into the very center of your being. Use the sensations and the grief point as though they were a conduit, a tunnel into the center of your heart, into a universe of warmth and caring.

Feel the heart expanding into space. The pain just floating there. Fear and loss suspended in compassionate mercy. Breathe into the center of the heart.

Let go of it. Let the heart open past its longing and grief.

Now take your hand away and fold it in your lap.

Feel the sensitivity remaining, throbbing at the center of your chest as though it were a vent into your heart.

Draw each breath into that warmth and love.

Breathing in and out of the heart.

Breathing gently into your heart.