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Heart, Hope, Healing

Release Grief Meditation (2019)

BY KARYN SHANKS MD | MAY 11, 2019



We need tools to help us manage the challenging emotions of grief, like anger, fear, guilt, and sadness. While these emotions are entirely normal aspects of being human, they can get stuck. It's important to give them assistance to flow and release.

I have used this simple breath visualization technique on difficult emotions that were too painful for me to take on with my mind. It's easy to get tangled up in our stories about the nature of grief and the emotions that come with it. With this simple technique, we can bypass trying to mentally work things out and release a lot of the negative energy being held within the body.

Breathe In Love, Breathe Out Negativity

Sit seated with your eyes closed, hands over heart. Breathe deeply. Think about who or what you love most. Allow that sensation of love to arrive and expand within you. Continue to breathe slowly and deeply, and concentrate on that person or thing you love and the physical sensations it creates within you.

Are there negative emotions or sensations competing for your attention? There might be

anger, hurt, grief, anxiety, frustration, depression, pain, discomfort—emotions or sensations that also reside within the body, that get in the way of your perception and experience of love.

As you sit quietly, breathe in love. Imagine that your breath is the golden light of love coming in through the crown of your head as you inhale. Feel or see it descend, flowing in with your breath, filling up your chest. Then let that golden light of love expand within you on the exhale.

Imagine the competing negative emotions or sensations (pain, frustration, grief, anxiety, anger?) as black smoke. Let your next inhale push that black smoke down through your body, letting it leave through the base of your spine and enter the earth.

Breathe in the golden light of love through the crown of your head. Breathe out, let it expand. Breathe in, push that black smoke of negativity down and out through the base of the spine. Breathe out, see it leave and enter the earth.

I like to think that the earth “composts” that pain or negative energy, reutilizing it for something good. Say: “Golden light of love in [on the inhale], dark smoke of [fill in the blank; for example negativity] out [on the exhale].” Repeat this ten times.

How do you feel? Is there a detectible shift?

Resources

Karyn Shanks, MD. [My Ten Rules for Starting a Meditation Practice](#). 2016.

Karyn Shanks, MD. [Slow Healing Power Tools](#). 2019.

Karyn Shanks, MD. [Deep Dog Meditation](#). 2016.

Rod Stryker. [3 Meditations to Live By](#). 1999.

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Karyn Shanks, MD, is a physician who lives and practices in Iowa City. Her work is inspired by the science of Functional Medicine, body-mind principles, and wisdom gleaned from the transformational journeys of thousands of clients over her twenty-five-year career. Her work honors each individual and the power of their stories, their inner wisdom, and innate healing potential. She believes that the bones of healing are in what we do for ourselves. She is the author of *Liftoff*, a manual of energy recovery and healing through essential self-care practices.

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