



GRIEF AND COURAGE

By Natalie Alyse

Grieving is a very sacred process that can involve much vulnerability and organic emotional flow. Grief and sadness from life may be stored inside if a person is made to feel shame about releasing them. When we feel struck with sadness, many times our first reaction is to try to maintain some control over our reaction by knowingly or unknowingly tensing or pulling in at the chest area or other areas of the body including the shoulders and muscles along the back of the spine. I specifically mention the chest area because the process of grieving is associated with the heart chakra. When we contract, pull, or tense up the areas surrounding the heart it pulls muscles around the front and back of the heart center. The back of the heart chakra is meant to be a portal open and wide in order to release energy. When the shoulders and muscles along the spine are tense, it makes the body hunched and the tension along the spine can severely constrict the opening of the back of the chakra. When grief, or energy, is stuck, the amazing design of tears that the Creator built is not utilized. Because energy wants to thrive and be released it moves around from back to front and in more developed cases of holding all around the body and auras. The energy represented from the heart chakra is the Life Force of the Universe. Since grief and sadness are processed here, this gives us a major clue to the divine lesson of release and unconditional love we can cultivate through the sacred song of grieving.

Although I am interested in exploring the different steps associated with Grief, I would like to instead share some practical techniques and resources to help transform grief and soothe the heart in moments of grief. One practice is a meditation that involves using sound to transform grief into courage. Using "Healing Sounds" is one of many wonderful forms of Taoist practice. Using qigong, one may transform stuck emotional energy into nourishment for the virtues of the five organ system, described by Chinese Medicine. The organ associated with grief is the lung which virtue is courage. According to Chinese Medicine, the lungs extract qi from the air, regulating the supply of internal healing energy as well as assisting the heart with the circulation of blood. When the lungs are weakened by prolonged and unexpressed grief, one's general health and vitality diminishes. When the lung organs are nourished and energy is flowing freely we can transition smoothly in life, breathe deep, enjoy a healthy immune system and experience balance during transformational grief.

Qi Gong "Healing Sound" Practice for Transforming Grief into Courage

- 1. Find a quiet place to practice. Sit upright with your feet flat on the floor, or sit in a cross-legged position on a cushion of the floor, whatever is most comfortable.*
- 2. Take a couple of deep, slow breaths. As you exhale, smile gently, releasing any tension in your face, jaw, neck or shoulders. Feel your energy settling into your lower dantian, the energy field located at the lower abdominal area*

beneath the naval where qi is cultivated and stored.

3. Bring your focus to your lungs: a huge organ, comprised of five lobes, which occupies the majority of your mid-to upper chest. Smile gently to your lungs with your breath, as if saying "hello" to them.

4. Take a deep, smooth, soft inhalation, and as you exhale, make the healing sound ssssss - like the sound of a snake hissing. Direct the vibration of this sound into your lungs allowing any stuck emotion to flow again as simply energy, without a specific name or shape.

5. Make the ssssss sound, with your focus in your lungs and repeat as necessary.

In the second part of the practice, we're going to use the vibration of white light, the color associated with the lung, to nourish the lung's virtue of courage.

1. Close your eyes gently. Inhale and smile down into your lungs, then exhale completely, and with your next inhalation, imagine that you're drawing into your lungs a beautiful shimmering white light - the color of a full moon.

2. "Breathe" this white healing light in through your nostrils, and mentally direct it to your lungs. Observe your body receiving the healing white light, maybe it is coming through every cell of your skin, maybe it coming through your crown, whatever the case focus and direct it to your lungs.

3. Feel your lungs opening to receive the gift of this beautiful healing light - as though they were drinking wonderful nectar, a powerful elixir. See your lungs beginning to pulse and glow - to vibrate with this beautiful white energy.

4. With each inhalation, draw into your lungs this beautiful moon-white light. With each exhalation, observe and bring to your awareness the lung's "virtue" of courage. This is a quality that already exists within you. We're simply using a particular frequency of light to nourish it, to invite it to reveal its full splendor to us.

5. Draw the healing light into your lungs for as long as you like.

6. To end the practice, smile once again down to your lungs, and notice how you feel.

I suggest after this practice that you stand or walk around for a while, observing your breath. As you are walking use your hands or thoughts to move energy from your lungs into dantian, exhale and let it flow man!

Essential Oils and Grief

Yes! There are essential oils that can help alleviate the intense pain of loss that comes with grieving. They are your friends. Essential oils may be used as a resource for tuning yourself before or after meditations like the Qigong "Healing Sounds" practice. I suggest lavender, chamomile, sandalwood and valerian on the sternum, placed in a bath, or in an aroma lamp to tune your space of sleep or meditation.

It is common for one who is grieving or who has experienced trauma to contract the flu or a lung ailment, as grief is associated with the lung. The body has an amazing way of energetically clearing out the effects of the emotional contraction in that organ. Oils that help expel phlegm and congestion are tea tree, eucalyptus, sandalwood, peppermint and rosemary. Receiving these oils with steam or mixing the oils in a carrier then rubbing on the chest assists breaking up stagnation in the lungs. Last but not least, immersing yourself in a warm bath of oils is divine and my personal favorite way of using oils!

Some essential oils that assist and encourage working through pain and promote energetic movement through the body, mind, and spirit are rose otto, frankincense and geranium. Carrying a hankie with oil dotted on it in your pocket so you may sniff them can ease emotional burden and lighten the spirits in the tender moments of your sacred grieving process.

The resources mentioned here are only a few of the infinite resources we have been given to encourage the transformational process of evolution within. May we continue to love our selves through remembering the sacred process of grieving, giving thanks and opening our heart to the many forms in which it unfolds. May we take care in not allowing shame to limit the power of release, May we see the sacred art of grief as a beautiful art

of being. May we know that our stories of grief and transformation are drops into the sea that makes up a whole ocean of love, for we are truly ONE experiencing the love story of ALL.