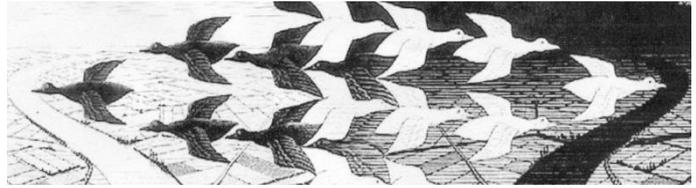


Grief Tending in Community

Here's an outline of some workshops offered by the Devon Grief Tending in Community team for people who might want to host an event.



As with any workshop, especially those creating ceremony or ritual spaces, what comes is always unknown and co-created between facilitators and participants. We can hold intentions about opening a space for grief, and notice that often there is a lot of warmth and playfulness at events we've held, but each will have its own unique and unpredictable journey.

What you can expect from us

- In general we will provide the facilitation and holding of the workshop, and usually the host sorts out a venue, publicity, bookings and administration and holding the budget.
- We will co-design with you a good event – a workshop or something else, including an outline of what processes will be included, who it's appropriate for, some words for publicity and an overall budget.
- We will be available to be in conversation about people who want to come – we are careful about how we offer this work, and about asking people who want to come for some information, as the processes we work with are not suitable for everyone, and can have a powerful impact. We will help you to communicate with participants to be clear that they need good support in place before and after attending a grief tending event.
- Professional facilitation, the gathering of a larger team if needed, prompt communication, clear information about requirements and costs.
- Support to gather materials for the processes we will use.
- Publicising the event through our channels – website, email list and other connections.

What we expect from you

- Clarity about how the roles of organising (publicity, queries and bookings, budget, money, correspondence etc.), hosting (book and liase with venue, provide snacks / food) and facilitation (see above).
- Payment for fees plus costs of travel (and accommodation if needed)

What we will work out together

- Designing the event – the programme and timings, requirements for the venue, who it's suitable for, etc.
- Who takes any financial risk / benefits from additional income; how we will manage the risk of cancelling the workshop (if not enough people book, or something happens to the facilitator).

One day workshop

A day to come together, explore a little of the landscape of grief and its place in leading rich and fulfilling lives – sharing teachings from Martin Prechtel and others, that without grieving our capacity for joy, love and aliveness becomes limited or deadened in some way.

Programme summary 10am – 6pm

- Opening session – meeting each other, expressing gratitude, feeling what supports us
- Sharing an inclusive view of what grief is – not only sorrow but other painful feelings; and the many sources of grief (Weller's 5 Gateways)

- Practices to connect with grief – speaking, writing
- Grief ceremony
- Integrating, reconnecting in the space after grief
- Preparing to return, reconnecting with support
- Closing circle

Logistics

Numbers: 12 – 24 is good. Larger groups need more time to come together and for sharing circles. If the group is too small it's hard to generate enough energy to really to into releasing grief (sometimes!)

Space: Large enough for the group to comfortably sit in a circle, plus a bit extra so we can have shrines, walk in the space, break into smaller groups without being on top of each other!

Food: Invite participants to bring food to share. Host provides space for this, refreshments

People: Facilitator plus someone to take care of the space – bring or gather some flowers, set up shrines, set up the circle, attend to candles burning etc.

Alternative One day Event

We have also offered the Dagara informed Grief Ceremony (see below) in a one day event. This takes longer because of the set up and take down. **We've offered it only to those who have done the 4 day workshop, or who have done a lot of nature based / shamanic / other forms of ritual, and who have solid support in place.**

So far we've offered a core day of 10am – 8pm, with the option of staying overnight and having a morning to integrate and prepare for the return more gently to those who want to.

For this longer 1/ 1.5 day event it's helpful to have one person putting together hot food after the ritual

4 day Grief Tending in Community workshop

A spacious unfolding journey towards the landscape of grief, allowing a deep dive into releasing long held grief, or space to really let current grief move. There is usually a sense of deep loving connection between participants by the end, and a surprising amount of playful energy, song, creativity, laughter even, as well as deep work. This is designed to give a gentle way in, spacious time with grief, and a good amount of time to integrate afterwards and prepare to return to daily life. The overnights and residential nature of this are helpful in supporting this depth of journey.

So far this has been run as a residential event. I'm curious if it could be non-residential.

Programme summary

Day 1 start at 3pm

- Coming together as a group, what are we each bringing, connecting to support (time on land)
- Exploring an inclusive view of the landscape of grief, beyond sorrow, and different sources of grief (see above)

Day 2

- Stories connecting with grief
- Understanding the movement between feeling resourced and letting go in to grief
- Practices for connecting with grief – movement, drawing, writing, speaking

- Building sacred space for a grief ceremony together
- First grief ceremony - quieter, in a circle, witnessing each person who chooses to share.

Day 3

- Second ceremony with drumming, song, shrines, several grieving together, adapting some forms from the Dagara grief ceremony (western African tradition)
- Celebration / feast!
- Integration, reconnecting

Day 4, end at 12.30pm

- Preparing to return
- Final ceremonies of what we've carried in this time
- Closing circle

Numbers

We've been limited to around 22 people max, and this works with the timing above. I think we could increase numbers in a larger space / venue. I think 25 would be fine. 30 possible. Minimum is around 12, to generate enough energy for the ceremonies.

What's needed

Facilitator + co-facilitator; someone to take care of the space; 2 competent Djembe drummers –if they are also participants, a 3rd is good. Support around the edges – keeping an eye for those who need extra support beyond what facilitators can offer..

Group room space at least 5m x 10m (larger for larger group). Another space for the group to convene for social time is great.

Catering and accommodation (provided by the venue / organiser for events run so far)

Other formats

We have a core body of work, currently two main facilitators (Jeremy Thres and Sophy Banks) as well as a team who drum, keep an eye and provide extra support for participants, and are skilled at creating beautiful spaces and impactful shrines. We're open to exploring other formats to meet different needs for facilitating grief – for example

- as part of other events (we have offered the ceremony as a 3.5 hour workshop at a 4 day festival / camp)
- different timing –shorter sessions / evenings
- non-residential workshops
- giving a talk about grief work

If you'd like more information please contact us.

Facilitators' biographies

Sophy Banks: Sophy has worked as a therapist, family constellator and workshop leader. As well as coming to understand grief as healer and teacher through her own inner journey, she was inspired to find shared grief spaces in the work of Joanna Macy and Sobonfu Some, and more recently with Maeve Gavin. In 2006 as Transition Town Totnes was coming into being Sophy co-founded the "Heart and Soul" group, addressing the inner aspects of facing the multiple planetary crises of our time through re-imagining and rebuilding resilient, local ways of living. As part of this global movement for positive change, she has trained many groups and trainers around the world, always including the need for honouring our pain for the suffering and loss that the

modern industrialised way of life also creates. Once an engineer and a keen footballer, in 2005 Sophy left the football pitches of Hackney Marshes and moved to Devon, where she grows vegetables and can still just about get up the hills on her bike.

Jeremy Thres: Founder of not for profit organisation Regenco, Jeremy's interest in regenerating and reintegrating Land, People and Spirit led him to be involved in wilderness oriented rites of passage work and it was within that that he first learned the importance of grief tending. Alone in the wilds he was able to release pent up grief held from many years before, and with that release something else could flood in. Internally though he was told he now had to learn how to do that with people, and it has been through this grief tending in community work that has most deeply made that possible. He found time with Martin Prechtel deeply inspirational in relation to this, as has been touching in with Malidoma, Joanna Macy and playing a support role and participating in work with Maeve. Community based grief tending has enabled the surfacing and release of layers of grief he didn't know he held. <http://regenco.wordpress.com>

Links:

- Sobonfu Some – indigenous teacher from Burkino Faso. Sobonfu died in 2017 but her website is still active: <http://www.sobonfu.com/>
- Malidoma Sobonfu – from the same village as Sobonfu, offers grief tending rituals <http://malidoma.com/main/>
- Joanna Macy – creator of the Work that Reconnects for changemakers www.joannamacy.net
- Martín Prechtel – author of The Smell of Rain on Dust and others: <http://www.floweringmountain.com/>
- Frances Weller, teacher and writer about grief work: <http://www.wisdombridge.net>
- Maeve Gavin, significant inspiration of this workshop: <http://wayofthevillage.co.uk>

Sophy Banks

05/11/2018