



Embracing Wholeness

Facing Loss and Finding Joy in a Fractured World

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Agenda

8:45: **Session 1:** *The Gates of Grief*

10:00: *Break*

10:15: **Session 2:** *The Luminous Pause*

Noon: *Lunch*

1:00: **Session 3:** *The Unbreakable Bond*

2:15: *Break*

2:30: **Session 4:** *The Courage to Care*

3:55: *Closing Comments*

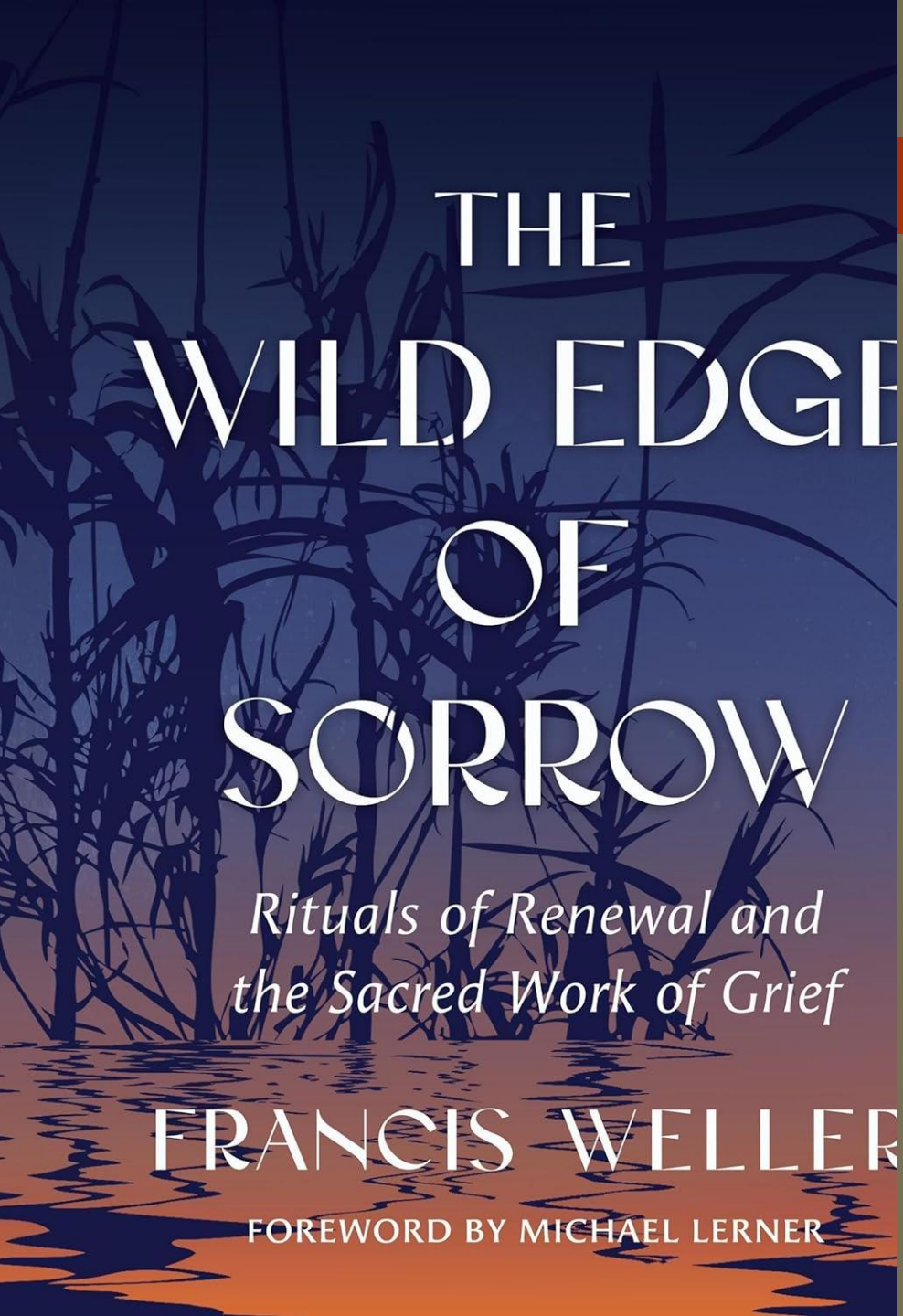
4:00: *End*

Learning Objectives

- Identify the gates of grief as a practical framework for working with clients facing overwhelming loss
- Apply the concept of impermanence when supporting clients through personal and collective grief
- Describe at least two concrete actions you can take to contribute to collective healing in your professional context
- Explain the relationship between grief and joy, and how honoring both supports healing
- Implement three specific strategies to restore your own resilience and maintain compassionate presence when working with profound loss

Session 1: The Gates of Grief

Facing Personal and
Collective Sorrow with
Honesty and Courage



THE
WILD EDGE
OF
SORROW

*Rituals of Renewal and
the Sacred Work of Grief*

FRANCIS WELLER

FOREWORD BY MICHAEL LERNER



The Gates of Grief

*"Grief and love are sisters,
woven together from the
beginning."*

-Francis Weller



The Gates of Grief

- **Everything we love we will lose**
- The Places That Have Not Known Love
- **The Sorrows of the World**
- What We Expected and Did Not Receive
- Ancestral Grief
- Grief for Harm Done
- Trauma
- Anticipatory Grief
- Other



Gate One

Everything We Love We Will Lose



Life Includes Suffering

“The first noble truth of the Buddha is that when we feel suffering, it doesn’t mean that something is wrong. What a relief.”

-Pema Chodrin



The Origin of Suffering is Attachment

*“And we can
know this
cause...which is
the Reactive
Mind.”*





The End of Suffering Is Letting Go

No grasping.

No clinging.





The Path to Joy

Mindfulness In A Nutshell

- ▶ *See What Is*
- ▶ *Accept What Is*
- ▶ *Choose Wisely*




Impermanence

"To me, this cup is already broken."

-Ajahn Cha

*The Story of Kisa
Gotami*





The
Obstacle of
This Gate:
“If I don't
love, I won't
get hurt.”

"We are all the walking wounded in a world that is a war zone.

Everything we love will be taken from us, everything, last of all life itself.

Yet this reality does not diminish love. It shows us that loving is the most important business."

-Clarissa Pinkola Estés

The Skill of This Gate: Stay Open

“The work of the mature person is to carry grief in one hand and gratitude in the other and to be stretched large by them.”

-Francis Weller



The Lesson of This Gate: Hold Loosely

- ▶ Love fully, knowing loss is inevitable
- ▶ Hold what you love close
- ▶ When the time comes, let go





Gate Three

The Sorrows of The World



“

"Interdependency is not a contract but a condition; even a pre-condition."

”

-Maria Puig de la Bellacasa

Downtown Minneapolis January 23, 2026





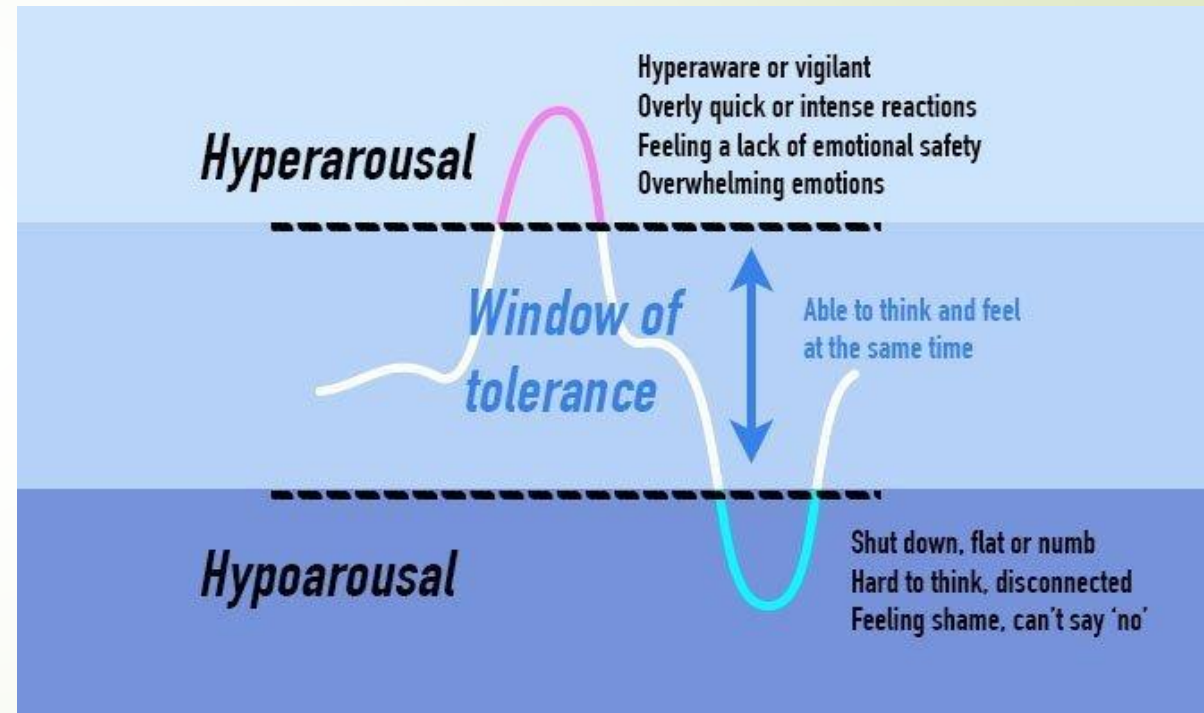
Double Anxiety

*"Don't be afraid of your sorrow, or grief or rage.
Treasure them.
They come from your caring."*

-Joanna Macy

The Window of Tolerance

- There's an optimal level of everyday arousal
- Stress that's too high or too long puts you in survival mode
 - Hyper-arousal=fight or flight
 - Hypo-arousal =freeze
- Collective trauma narrows the window



The Medicine of This Gate: Entanglement

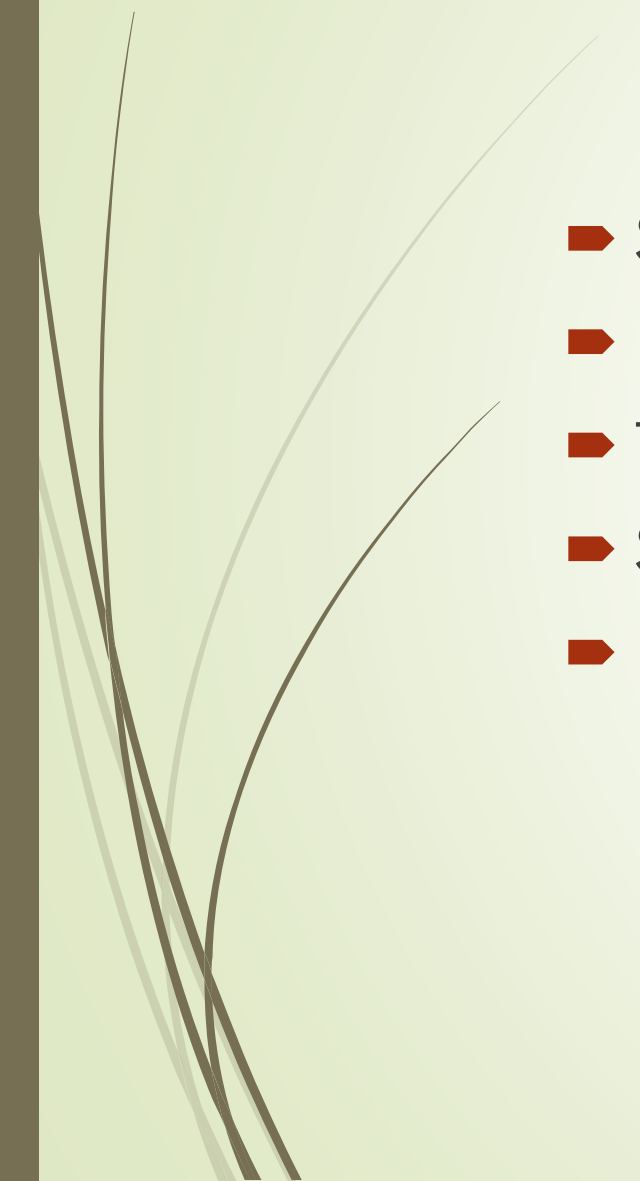
*"Joy is the practice of our
entanglements."*

-Ross Gay





How We Can Work With This

- ▶ See what is with clear eyes
 - ▶ Feel what you feel
 - ▶ Take wise action if so moved
 - ▶ Stay open
 - ▶ Find your people
- 



Who Are Your People?

“...those who say, 'Look!' and laugh in astonishment, and bow their heads.”

-Mary Oliver

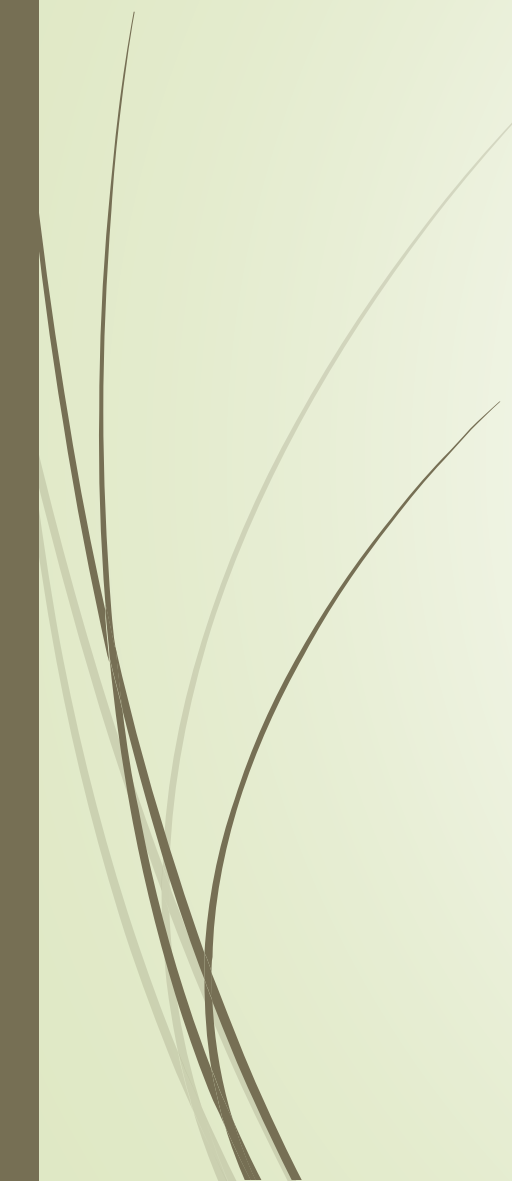
Feel Everything

*"Let everything happen to you:
beauty and terror.
Just keep going. No feeling is final."*

-Rilke

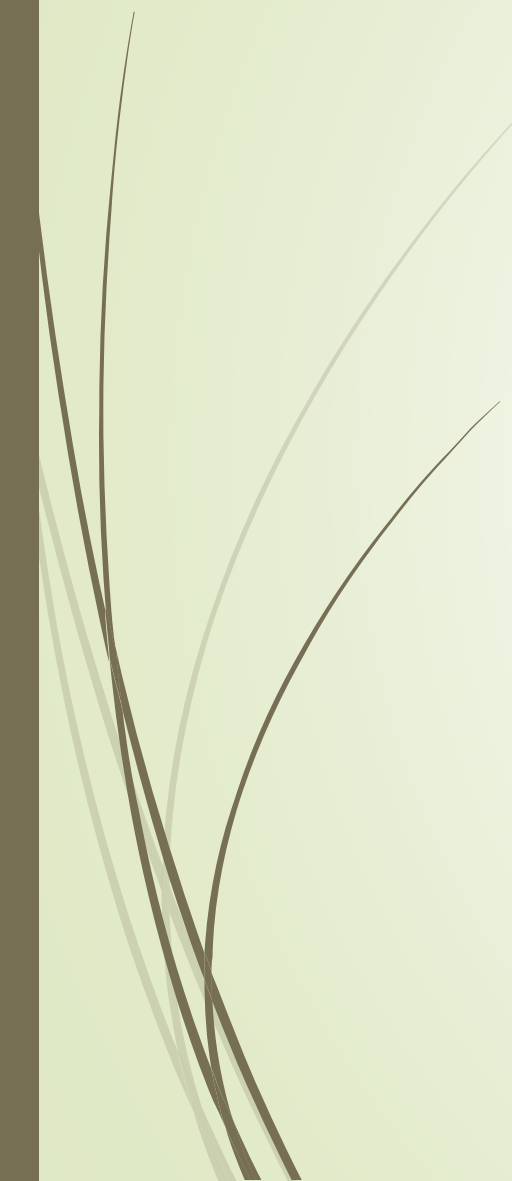


Reflection: What Grief Are You Carrying?

- Gate 1: What personal loss touches your heart?
 - Gate 3: What collective sorrow weighs on you?
 - What happens when you name it?
- 



Large Group Sharing

- ▶ Share what you're willing to share
 - ▶ No fixing or advice
 - ▶ Just witnessing
- 



Grief is a Thin Space

“To live in this world you must be able to do three things: to love what is mortal; to hold it against your bones knowing your own life depends on it; and, when the time comes to let it go, to let it go.”

-Mary Oliver

