

WEEK 1 WORKBOOK

CONSCIOUS RELAXATION

Grief sends our body into the stress response known as fight-flight-freeze. While stress can be a motivator, and keep us out of harm's way, continuous exposure can impact our physical and mental health in devastating ways. Stress also adds unnecessary suffering to an already painful situation.

Conscious relaxation sends a signal to your body that it is safe to let go of stress, which allows it to return to a state of balance. Simply taking deep breaths can have a huge impact on your stress levels, and reduce or relieve both physical and mental distress.

In fact, when you give your body the space to elicit the relaxation response (the physiological opposite of flight-fight-freeze), you reduce the symptoms of many stress-related complaints that show up with grief, including the following: insomnia, anxiety, nausea, mild to moderate depression, mild to moderate migraines, high blood pressure, muscle tension, and more.

WHAT IS YOUR ASPIRATION FOR THIS WEEK?

Take a few moments to settle into feeling your breath and body. Close your eyes, and reflect on the following question. When you are ready, write down your reflection:

**“As I engage in these conscious relaxation practices this week,
what do I hope to receive in my life? To let go of in my life? To become more aware of in my life?”**

THIS WEEK'S GUIDED MEDITATIONS

This week you have access to 4 guided meditations that are about 5 minutes each, and one meditation that is 30 minutes long. The research indicates that just 20 minutes a day of practice can have long term physical and mental health benefits, but even if you only do 5 minutes a day every day, you will begin to experience the benefits, and even crave longer sits!

Regular practice is more important than the length of practice, so this week, try to do a minimum of 5 minutes a day, every day. We will steadily increase the time over the next 8 weeks. Try out all the meditations in this module at least once. If one appeals to you more than another, let that become your daily practice!

You can use this sheet to check off each meditation as you complete it.

FOCUSING MEDITATIONS

Focusing meditation can give your mind a break from all the worry and anxiety that comes with grief. By choosing just one thing to focus upon, you give yourself a respite, and activate the relaxation response. The most important thing about the focusing practices is to realize that it is not important how LONG you stay focused, it is how OFTEN you catch yourself wandering off, and CHOOSE to bring yourself back. It is in the returning to the object of focus that the “magic” happens.

- ☐ Counting The Breath
- ☐ My Mantra Meditation
- ☐ Breath Focus Meditation

RELAXATION MEDITATIONS

Relaxation practices also use an element of focus and elicit the relaxation response. At the same time, a relaxation practice invites you to consciously choose to relax any areas of tension in your body, to whatever extent you are able. Symptoms of grief include physical tension and pain, and we often feel we don't have control over either of these. These practices will help. Rather than commanding your body to relax, imagine that you are sending it a friendly invitation to let go!

- ☐ Three Part Breath
- ☐ Relaxation for Anxiety, Grief, & Stress

THIS WEEK'S JOURNALING PROMPT

You may find this exercise more beneficial if you do it after one of your meditation practices, a brisk walk, yoga or other physical activity.

Imagine that your body had a voice and could tell you its history. What would it want to say? Begin your entry with these words: "I am your body and this is my story. It all started when _____"

JOURNALING TIPS

1. Keep your hands moving.
2. Don't cross out.
3. Don't worry about spelling, punctuation, or grammar.
4. Lose Control.
5. Don't think. Don't get logical.
6. Go for the jugular.

From Natalie Goldberg, [*Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*](#)
Learn more at <http://mindfulnessandgrief.com/grief-journaling/>

7 SLEEP HYGIENE TIPS

1. Exercise During the Day, Before 7pm
2. Avoid Caffeine & Alcohol After 3pm
3. Receive Massage or Bodywork
4. Create a Sleep Sanctuary
5. Turn Off Electronics & TV 1 Hour Before Bed
6. Keep a Grief Journal
7. Relax Before Bed

Learn more at <http://mindfulnessandgrief.com/grief-sleep/>

WEEK 1 HOME PRACTICE

Prepare for Your Practice in Advance:

- ☐ Pick Out Your Grief Journal or Register for a Free Account at [AfterTalk.com](https://www.AfterTalk.com)
- ☐ Set Up Your Clutter Free Practice Space
- ☐ Schedule Practice Time For the Next Week Using Your Calendar
- ☐ Schedule The Weekly Calls in Your Calendar: Monday Nights from 7-8 PM EST

Daily Self-Care:

- ☐ Drink 8 Glasses of Water
- ☐ Eat Regular, Healthy Meals

Do These Practices Daily:

- ☐ 5 Minutes of Focusing or Relaxation Meditation
- ☐ Write in Your Grief Journal for 5-10 Minutes
- ☐ Practice Good Sleep Hygiene

Do These Exercises Once This Week (More often if you like!)

- ☐ Complete The Coping Skills Worksheet
- ☐ 30 Minute Guided Meditation: Relaxation for Anxiety, Grief, & Stress
- ☐ Write In Your Journal For 10 Minutes Or More Using This Week's Journaling Prompt

GRIEF COPING SKILLS REFLECTION WORKSHEET

Coping strategies are the efforts you put forth to manage grief – some are adaptive and helpful while others are not. Keep this paper handy throughout the week and record what you witness – without judgement. You may also fill in rows with coping methods of which you are already aware.

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