

Unfinished Conversation: Healing from Suicide and Loss
A Guided Journey

By Robert E. Lesoine and Marilynne Chöphel MFT

Instructions for Meditation

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Sitting Meditation

During your grief and healing journey, it can be very helpful to sit silently for a period of time each day. If you're not familiar with meditation, here are some simple suggestions. Create a meaningful space for meditation. You might include some special objects such as a flower, sacred articles, a photo, remembrances of your loved one, or lighting a candle.

Sit comfortably on a cushion with legs crossed or on a chair with your feet resting on the ground. Place your hands comfortably on your lap or your thighs, and allow your eyes to rest softly open or closed.

Allow your spine to lengthen, your head to be relaxed and upright, and your heart area to be open. Relax your body and let your belly soften. Release your facial muscles and allow an inner smile.

Gently bring awareness to your breathing. Breathe in a way that's natural and comfortable for you. Let your awareness rest lightly on each breath, letting go and relaxing with each out-breath.

Allow any thoughts and feelings to arise and pass in a very relaxed and nonjudgmental way. As thoughts arise, you might silently acknowledge them as "thinking" and then let them go, returning your awareness again and again to your relaxed body and gentle out-breath. Allow your thoughts and feelings to drift by like floating clouds. Open your awareness to the silent stillness—just sitting . . . breathing . . . and relaxing your body and mind.

Walking Meditation

Practicing meditation while you're walking can bring you more peace and well-being. Walking meditation is a valuable companion practice with sitting meditation, and some may find a "moving meditation" more comfortable. The goal of walking meditation is not to arrive at a destination, but the walking itself. Here are some suggestions.

Walk in a slow and mindful way, either inside or out of doors. Take relaxed and leisurely steps, and let worries and emotions fall away. With every step, become aware of each foot naturally lifting, moving, and then meeting the earth.

Let your awareness rest with your breathing and the physical sensations throughout your body as you move, and open your senses to what you're seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching in the moment.

If your attention wanders into thoughts about the past or the future, let the thoughts go, and gently return your attention to the sensations of movement and of the touch of each foot as it peacefully makes contact with the earth.

Allow an inner smile to arise as you walk. With every step simply remain present . . . relaxed . . . aware. You may also silently repeat the following phrases, suggested by Thich Nhat Hanh, with each step . . . "I have arrived . . . I am home . . . In the here . . . In the now."

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