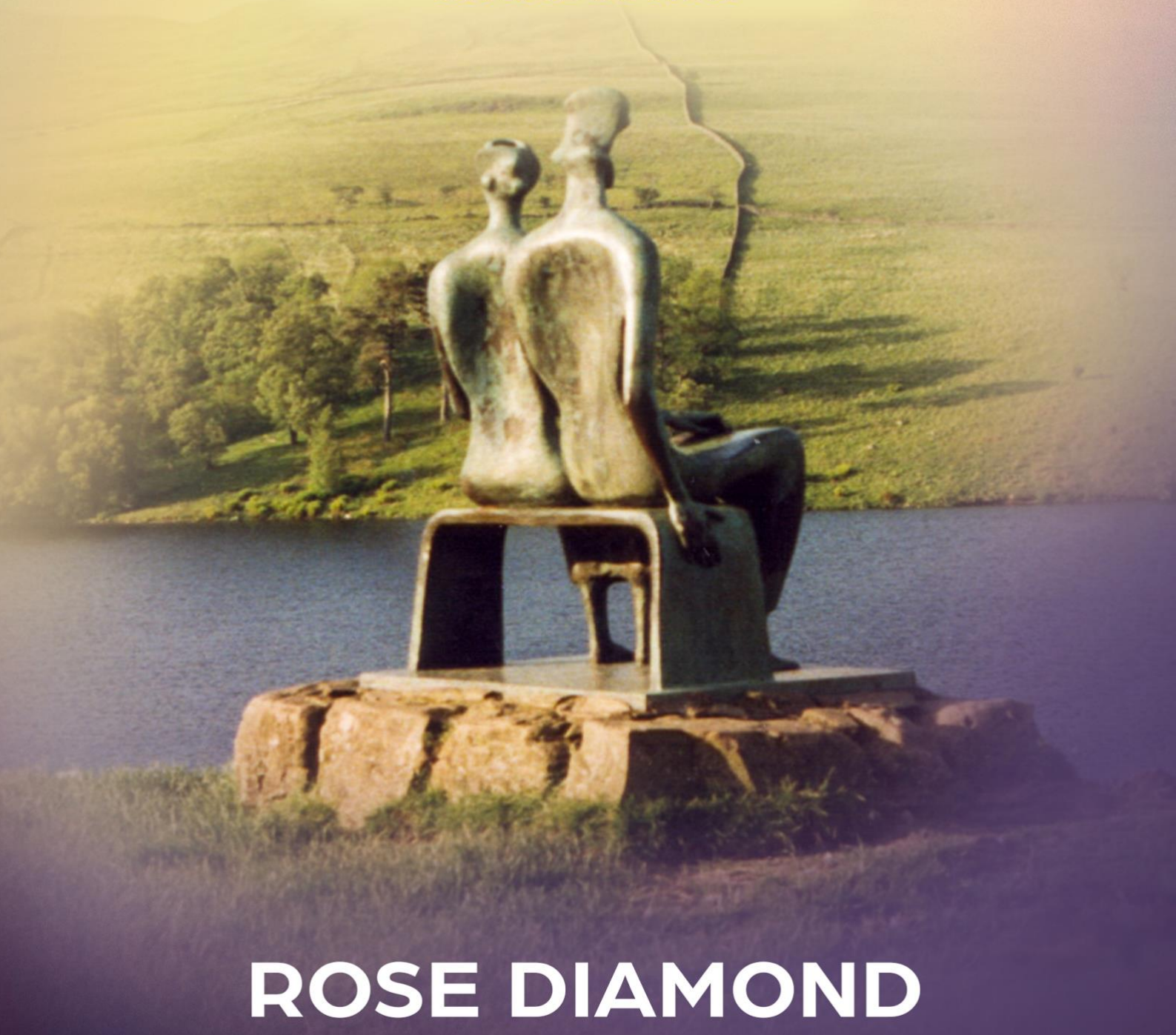


SITTING WITH DEATH

— **AND CHOOSING LIFE** —

THE CONVERSATIONS

INTRODUCTION



ROSE DIAMOND

THE SITTING WITH DEATH AND CHOOSING LIFE CONVERSATIONS

Introduction

***Transforming Grief and Loss into
Wholeness and Creative Power***

Rose Diamond

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Welcome



Thank you from the bottom of my heart for taking this step into ***The Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Transformational Programme***. This is a collection of conversations and simple practices which, if you commit to them, will transform you. Simple practices repeated every day build the transformational muscles and support you to live in alignment with your true values.

So, my first questions to you are: Are there aspects of yourself, your life, or our shared life on the planet that you are longing to uplift?

And, if so, do you know what to do to bring that upliftment into being? What will it take?

By “uplift” I mean to bring yourself into greater integrity and integration, peace, flow, harmony and inner freedom; to live your life with more authenticity, purpose, creativity and passion; to contribute to the making of a more humane, conscious and compassionate world.

I'm sure, since you're here, you long for these more expanded states of consciousness, just as I do. And I bet you want that, not just in passing moments, but as a stable state you live in constantly, no matter what chaos is happening around you.

I'm sure you yearn to be free of suffering; free to be and express your true self; confident in your gifts, and courageous enough to offer those gifts. No doubt you'd love to feel strong yet flexible, open and curious, creative and in service to life. Wouldn't you?

When I say **Sitting with Death and Choosing Life** is a simple practice, I don't mean it's easy. To reach simplicity most of us need to go through a process of inner sifting, sorting and letting go of old beliefs and behaviours that have been limiting us, sometimes for a lifetime. This in itself is a kind of death, or a series of little deaths, and completing our healing tasks can't be rushed. It can be scary and take all your courage at times; when you're in the midst of it you may feel you're in a dark tunnel with no hope of release.

With COVID19 on the rampage, as well as the global devastation of climate change, mass migration and extinction and the destruction of diverse cultures, this process of death and dying into new life is an initiation we are all participating in now. There is a new place where we can be free and creative and at peace no matter what is happening around us. To get there we must move through the death of our old ways consciously. It serves each of us to learn how to co-operate with this process of death and birth, grief, endings and new beginnings. Then we can move through the chaos and confusion more quickly and easily without getting stuck and prolonging suffering unnecessarily. The intention behind this programme is to provide you with a conceptual map of the territory that will support your experience and all the skills you need to transform grief and loss into vibrant, creative life.

The skills for grieving well may begin with your own private grief for the loss of a loved one and will extend to grieving for the loss of your own freedoms and well-being. As you begin to shed your old ways you will grieve the loss of old identities that no longer fit you. And I'm sure you will grieve too for our world, for the devastation of wild nature, people and cultures.

That being the case, isn't it better to approach our collective journeys with skills, understanding, maps of the territory and the best support we can get?



I'm Rose Diamond and my own inquiry into how to grieve well began following the death of my closest friend, Woods, in December 2015; and then six months later, the passing of my brother, David, my last family member. I brought to my grieving process several decades experience as a whole person therapist and educator combined with a similar timespan of spiritual practice. I've long been a deep explorer of the inner world, fascinated by the creative process, and working for positive change in the outer world. In my previous experiences of grief and loss - for example, the deaths of my mother

and father - I had come to see the passing of a loved one as a special time of opportunity, however challenging it may be. Yet, after my brother's death, I was a complete beginner, stripped to the bone and helpless in the face of loss and the reality of death. For six months I was brought to a standstill and had no choice but to sit with whatever was arising within me. Eventually this led on to the **Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Conversations and Transformational Programme**.

In addition to my personal journey, this work in transforming grief and loss draws on 25 years' experience as a gestalt therapist and as a trainer of counsellors and psychotherapists. I also have a background in creating innovative approaches to training community and health practitioners in the skills for creatively and humanely meeting and participating in a changing world. You can learn more about me here: <https://www.tribeintransition.net/about>

The Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Conversations ¹ are a collection of written and audio resources I have created through witnessing my own grief and in recorded conversations with some 50 healing practitioners. The resources are intended to be used as stimulus materials to bring together groups for conscious inquiry and transformational practice and to draw out your own unique experiences and authentic truth. By coming together for these deep discovery conversation, and exploring some of the aspects of being human that are all too frequently pushed out of sight, we can create communities of support for exploring death, dying, grief and loss as pathways to more fully lived life.

My own experience has shown me that grieving is potentially an evolutionary path with the power, not only to renew you and me as individuals, but also to heal and renew our world.

Through these resources I invite you to join me in this adventure of discovery and to explore these questions:

What is the practice of Sitting with Death and Choosing Life?

And, how can this practice have the transformative power to uplift your own consciousness, to evolve culture and to renew our world?

I hope this inquiry will excite you as much as it does me. It takes courage, especially when you are grieving, to open to something which will deepen your experience of yourself. Yet practicing the essential skills of grieving well, and learning to move through loss with grace, are vital for our individual and collective well-being. Grieving well is something we can all learn to do, and as we do so, we have the power to mend what has been broken in ourselves, in our communities, and on the planet.

Through the conversations in the Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Resources my friends and colleagues remind you that death and loss are natural parts of life. We show how cycles of life and death and rebirth are central to your creative process as you move through your own transitions towards a more integrated consciousness. And how we can be better prepared to move through the transition from a life-denying culture to a more integrated, holistic consciousness and culture that honours the interconnectedness of all life.

It is only by being willing to fully face into our mortality and vulnerability that we can find the strength and the will to commit 100% to life. And, it is only as we make this commitment that we can contribute to the making of a humane future. Seen from this perspective, our current global crisis with the Coronavirus pandemic presents a massive opportunity for positive change if only people have access to the necessary skills and understandings to make this choice.

I hope the **Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Conversations** will touch, move and inspire you. They are intended to alleviate the painful isolation and unnecessary suffering which frequently accompanies grief and loss. You will be encouraged to be curious about these natural and inevitable aspects of every human life and to explore them for the gifts they can offer. The practices in this e-book may be used as a stimulus for your own private inquiry or, as part of the Rite of Passage sessions for the **Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Transformational Programme** ² I am inviting you to join the conversation and contribute to the creation of a common language for grief. Together we will

map the movement into the new and unknown territory we all traverse as we heal, transform and uplift consciousness.

My greatest wish in delivering these learning resources is that you will make your grieving process an opportunity for self-healing, healthy self-nurturing and self-love and, by doing so, arrive at a place of deeper compassion and stronger commitment to life. As we deepen and expand our knowledge of what it means to be human, using grief as a pathway, we will create a more connected and caring world.

Rose Diamond

October 2020

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<https://www.tribeintransition.net>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TribeinTransitionCommunity>

Sign up for the newsletter here: <https://www.tribeintransition.net/the-sitting-with-death-and-choosing-life-newsletter/>

1. Find out more about **The Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Conversations** on page 21.

2 The Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Transformational Programme comprises:

1. Two Rite of Passage sessions introducing you to the Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Programme;
2. An eight week Foundation Course;
3. A Transformational Programme exploring:
The Essential Skills for Grieving Well;
Transforming Grief for Our World into Sacred Activism; and
4. A Facilitator Training;
5. The possibility to join The Choosing Life team and run your own groups.

Find out more here: <https://www.tribeintransition.net/the-sitting-with-death-and-choosing-life-transformational-programme-overview/>

An Invitation to Enter the Practice of Sitting with Death and Choosing Life



This e-book offers two one hour practice sessions. These include a meditation and a recorded conversation introducing you to some of the understandings and principles behind this programme and how it came into being, and questions for inquiry. They are intended to be used alongside the two ***Rite of Passage*** group sessions and you will get the most from them if you can find one hour for your own contemplation prior to each group session. They may also be used as a personal practice if you are not joining the group. I trust these will stir a rich vein of inquiry in you and you will then bring the fruits of your practice to the group sessions. However, please don't pressure yourself; do as much or as little as feels right for you. You can participate in the group sessions and do the practices later. The most important thing is to show up and participate.

In the ***Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Transformational Programme***, we always begin our group sessions with a meditation or

“grounding in”. This brings everyone into presence and creates a peaceful and expansive field of consciousness. This sacred space supports and expands our exploration together. Alongside, I also encourage you to cultivate a personal Soul Sanctuary space for your own individual exploration and contemplation.

Inquiry and Practice Session One:

Create your own Soul Sanctuary space by putting aside an hour for meditation, contemplation and inquiry. Make sure you are comfortable and that you won't be disturbed. Switch off your phone and emails and have your journal with you. The meditation is 7.44 minutes. Then follow by reading Some Understandings That Underlie This Practice, noticing which draw you in, and contemplate the inquiry questions.

1. A Meditation for Cultivating Whole Mind, Whole World (7.44 minutes).

Download here:

<https://rosediamond.audioacrobat.com/download/rosediamond-20190101093801-1740.mp3>

Listen here: <https://www.audioacrobat.com/play/WQpd0YkX>

Questions for Inquiry:

- Are there aspects of yourself, your life, or our shared life on the planet that you are longing to uplift or make whole?

If so, how do you approach this? What is challenging about this for you?

- “It is only by being willing to fully face into our mortality and vulnerability that we can find the strength and the will to commit 100% to life. And, it is only as we make this commitment that we can contribute to the making of a humane future. Seen from this perspective, our current global crisis with the Coronavirus pandemic presents a massive opportunity for positive change if only people have access to the necessary skills and understandings to make this choice.”

Does this feel true to you?

Are there any ways in which you are not fully committed to life? And if so, how does that show up on a daily basis? How does being less than 100% committed affect your health, motivation and self-esteem?

How would your life be if you were fully committed? How would you feel? What might you do that you don't do now?

2. Some Understandings That Underlie This Practice

Read the following statements and notice which draw you in and motivate you to explore. Choose at least one and take some time to sit with your inquiry. Whatever you discover will be a good contribution to the group conversation when you participate in the **Rite of Passage** sessions.

Death and dying, loss and grief are natural parts of being human which have been sadly neglected in our society with tragic results.

We all lose people we love through separation or death. We all learn, at one time or another, to cope with and manage changes in our bodies, deteriorating health in ourselves and in our loved ones. We all grow old and infirm and face the approach of our own dying. We all experience failure and disillusionment and lose sight of cherished dreams. We are all, at times, overwhelmed and broken-hearted by devastating changes in our world and loss of faith in our existing power systems. And, for those on a conscious spiritual path and in the process of transformation, losing illusions about the self and throwing off outworn identities is intrinsic to the path, a sign of progress – and very challenging!

Questions for Inquiry:

Where, and how, does grief live in you now?

What, and who, are you grieving for and what grief is incomplete in you?

Are you ready to complete this now? And if so, what would it take?

Our culture encourages us to avoid grief and intense emotion – and there's a huge cost to this avoidance.

Amidst our current state of global upheaval we are in an epidemic of unprocessed grief. This undermines our health and our ability to act creatively and to bring about positive change. We all live with a pervasive state of loss which encompasses the loss of nature, of any sense of stability, and sometimes of hope itself. Yet often this loss is not fully acknowledged or experienced but pushed out of the way so life can go on.

As long as we are not allowing and accepting the death and dying parts of the natural cycle we are not fully available for life. This is a tragic waste.

Question for Inquiry:

Can you see “an epidemic of unprocessed grief” in your world? If so, how does it show up?

It takes time and conscious intent to grieve well.

Healing unfolds in its own time and our busy western culture is not very understanding or allowing of the grieving process, or of emotions in general. Healing requires time, space and quiet introspection and these are often judged as self-indulgent. Other than the funeral, we have no cultural rituals to celebrate death as a natural part of the life cycle. Even talking about death may be regarded as morbid. And, for many people, the expression of strong emotions is seen as a shameful weakness to be hidden away in private.

Questions for Inquiry:

What messages and beliefs were you taught about grief throughout your life?

What gets in the way now of you taking all the time you need to grieve and heal?

When we push aside the strong emotions of grief, we invite mental, emotional and physical ill-health.

The consequences of neglecting or avoiding the deeply hurting self are considerable and can even be life threatening. Whenever you attempt to suppress the pain of grieving and turn back the tide of emotions, you contract the body and literally harden the heart. The energy of grief has nowhere to go and becomes trapped and stored in the cells where it silently wreaks havoc with your physical, emotional and mental health. Life involves many losses, and whatever has not been completed and released piles on top of the last unexamined grief, making it even harder to approach. So you avoid it and stuff

it all down even more. Many of the major diseases of our time – heart disease, cancer, diabetes, eating disorders, addictions of all kinds, suicide – have their origins in unprocessed emotions and grief. That's how important this is.

Questions for Inquiry:

How does your own untended grief affect you?

How are you affected by the untended grief of others?

Grief tends to isolate.

In challenging times, it is common to feel painfully isolated and separated from everything and everyone which previously gave your life meaning. Even if you are normally a highly skilled and resourceful person, someone who serves and leads others, in grief we are always beginners and, where you used to be empowered, you may now find yourself floundering. When loss takes your life apart and strips you to the bone, it's quite common to feel at the mercy of a scary, heart-breaking and all-consuming process, for which you are completely unprepared.

Questions for Inquiry:

"In grief we are always beginners" – has this been your experience and if so, how?

Avoiding grief and the inevitability of death has devastating effects on relationships, community and planetary life.

The widespread social fear of death, and distrust of the inner world and the emotions, keep us limited, self-absorbed and disempowered. We are a species disconnected from our innate wisdom and caring. The resulting wilful destruction of life on our planet is insane, suicidal behaviour. As mounting global crisis awakens us to the dangers there is a growing recognition that we need to adopt skills and practices that enable change from the inside out.

Question for Inquiry:

We can all get overwhelmed by the immensity of the pressing problems on the planet at this time. How do you stay motivated? What feeds your Soul?

Inquiry and Practice Session Two:

Conversation One

Transformation, Community and the Transition to Wholeness, with Rosemary Cozens



I recorded this conversation with Rosemary in 2017 and sadly, she passed away in 2019. She was a feminist counselling psychologist who worked for over five decades with individuals and groups on their personal evolution. Her interests included community organising, women's groups, stress management, addictions, meditation, spirituality and a shamanic approach to healing. She worked in the field of bereavement where she studied and led groups in coping with grief and loss. A mother and a grandmother, she lived in a small village in Ontario Canada.

Our exploration begins with what it might mean to "sit with death" and to "grieve well" and how, in a culture that is phobic of death and intense emotions, holding these deep explorations in community nurtures connection and deepens our understanding of what it means to be human.

Listen here: <https://www.audioacrobat.com/play/WdF4rcxk>

Download the audio here: (48 minutes)

<https://rosediamond.audioacrobat.com/download/rosediamond-20170809074517-5040.mp3>

Questions for Inquiry

- What is the experience of wholeness for you?
How, and when, do you feel whole?
How, and when, do you lose contact with your experience of wholeness, and how do you feel then?
- How do you cultivate wholeness in yourself?
- What do you imagine will change as, together, we bring more wholeness into our world?
- How does grieving help you to become more whole?

Let these questions, and your own, sit in you like seeds in the earth, and notice what new life these seeds begin to bring forth.

THE TURNING POINT

There is a point in the healing journey when you stop being afraid of facing into death and start to embrace it as an opportunity for new life. This is a very significant moment because it means you stop resisting and turning away from grief and face into suffering. This enables you to begin to co-operate and co-create with your natural healing process and opens the door to a new and more integrated stage of consciousness. It doesn't mean to say that suddenly the healing process becomes free of pain but it does mean you exercise your power of choice and agency and that is empowering and builds confidence. You become curious about the process and eager to learn about it and to become more skilled. As you consciously practice skills you find that, whereas in the past you may have got stuck in a depression for weeks or months, now you can move through stuck energy in hours, or even in minutes.

The Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Conversations and Transformational Programme support you to fully open to the life-giving opportunities present within grief. They offer skills, understandings, maps of the territory, and opportunities to explore with like-hearted companions.

As you move through loss to completion you receive and integrate the gifts that are always present in grief. As you practice grieving well and face into the fear, avoidance, isolation and shame that eat away at confidence and health, you bring death, dying and loss out of the shadows. You will find relief from isolation, move forward on more solid ground, and naturally choose to live more fully.

Here are four foundational principles of this work:

Principle One: We are a Tribe in Transition Moving through a Global Paradigm Shift which Affects Us on Every Level of Being.

There are many now who understand that a transformation of consciousness is at the heart of creating a world that cherishes and protects life. What is so exciting about this unpredictable and turbulent time is that, from the glaring need to change how we live, a new culture is emerging in which healing, wholeness and uplifting consciousness, are prime values.

Principle Two: The Process of Transformation Requires Simple Practices Repeated Consistently.

The old paradigm thinking that is driving the destruction of life lives within our psyches and compromises our actions. Until we become fully aware of them these old beliefs and limiting behaviours repeat over and over and give rise to

suffering. They are so deeply conditioned, and so much a part of your mind and behaviour, you can't see them and don't even know they're there. Simple skills applied consistently will support you to become increasingly aware of these limitations. As you progress along the road to healing and wholeness, it becomes ever more possible to see through the old conditioning and to shed it. As you release the old conditioning you also let go of your old identity which has kept you feeling unworthy and lacking. Now you can co-operate with your natural healing process as you move forward on your path to wholeness.

As you commit to daily, simple practices which bring these limiting patterns into awareness and release them, a new inner space is created in which you can more easily contact your own authentic truth and connect with your deeper wisdom. No matter how personal your painful emotions, you begin to recognise these are not yours alone but shared by humankind. This realisation releases you from the lonely prison of suffering into a growing compassion and realisation of the essential interconnectedness of all life. You are then free to choose to follow your own authentic direction and commit to making your unique contribution to Sacred Life on our planet.

Those of us who have chosen at a Soul level to be healers of whatever kind are seizing this opportunity now and arising to the challenge. We can contribute to the awakening of our species into this new level of interconnected consciousness which I call Whole Mind-Whole World.

Principle Three: Repeated Practice Grounds You in Your Essential Self.

As you hold all your emotions in the crucible of your body, feel them fully, trust and surrender to their power, witness and accept your experience, and let the energy flow through you, the core of your essential self grows lighter and more resilient.

It is the bedrock of the Essential Self, or Soul, that will see you through any crisis, not the shifting sands of the personality. This makes grief a powerful pathway to living a more enlightened life.

Principle Four: The Support and Community of a Safe, Intentional Group Accelerates Transformation and Brings You Out of Isolation and into Community and Co-creation.

This transition is a journey we each take within our own heart. As we start talking with each other openly, honestly and vulnerably, we find the courage to share, explore and bring into the light of consciousness, all aspects of our humanity. Although your healing journey will unfold in a way unique to you, connecting with like-hearted others for Deep Discovery Conversations will touch you and provide the reassurance you are not alone. We all move forward more easily upheld by the bigger energy and consciousness of the group.

The Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Conversations spark and light a fire around which individuals can gather to form caring, wise, co-creative, life-centred communities.

Questions for Inquiry

Please read these four principles out loud and see how they resonate with you and how you feel in relation to them. Whether you feel longing, joy, resistance, sadness, or whatever else, use your feelings as a starting place to write in your journal about your experience of being alive at this time and how it both excites and challenges you.

Bring your reflections and insights to the ***Rite of Passage*** sessions. I look forward to meeting you there.

A Questionnaire to Help You to Identify Your Next Steps.

- I invite you to contemplate deeply what has drawn you here.
Write down all your motivations and questions.
And then dig down to find your deepest. Can you express this as an intention? For example, "I intend to find peace amidst the heartache of my grief" or "I intend to adopt healthier practices for transforming grief."
- Where are you now in your process of transforming grief and loss or Sitting with Death? Feel into your physical, mental and emotional states and describe them in a specific and detailed way. Notice what happens as you give your experience this focused attention. Do your feelings shift and change?
- What are your current strategies for moving through grief? How, and where, do you find comfort and support? How do you nurture yourself? Would you say your self-support strategies are healthy? When life gets tough do you revert to old survival patterns like attempting to stuff down your feelings or putting on a happy face? What is most challenging in your grieving process? Are there any feelings or memories you try to avoid? If so, how and why?
- What support would help you through your process? What would the right kind of support look and feel like to you? Release all limitations and really allow yourself to know what you need and want. If there is longing in you, allow yourself to fully experience that longing. If feelings of futility or hopelessness arise, feel those too. As you fully experience and acknowledge all your feelings you meet yourself in a new way. This is an opportunity to allow yourself to feel fully, to experience fully and to know fully.
- What if you could see Sitting with Death, not so much as a trial to "get through", survive, or manage, but as a process of revelation bringing you closer and closer to the whole truth of who you are? How might that change your experience?
- Imagine forward to the light at the end of the tunnel, to your own renewal, whenever that is. What do you see? Who will you be? How might this grieving experience have strengthened you? What is the best that could happen?

- End by remembering a person you've lost, a part of your identity that is dying, or a part of the world that is being destroyed. Choose one quality in your loved one, in your old self, or in the world, that you most love, admire and miss. How might you embody and express this missing quality this week? For example, if kindness was the quality you identified, how might you be more kind to yourself and others? Even though you may not be feeling kind to start with, see what happens as you persist with this practice.

- If you are a community leader or a facilitator of personal and professional growth or transformation, how might you offer this work to your community ?

Introduction to The Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Resources and Transformational Programme

The learning resources are organised in this **Introduction** plus a series of five other e-books:

Series 1: Essential Skills for Grieving Well

Series 2: Transforming Loss

Series 3: Death and the Soul Journey

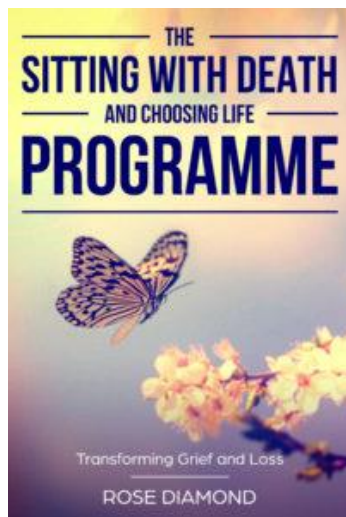
Series 4: Grieving for Our World

Series 5: Choosing Life

In addition there are ***Deep Discovery Conversations: Awakening Community Wisdom for a New Era; Sitting with Death and Choosing Life: What My Brother Taught Me About Grief; Portrait of a Gentle Man: Conscious Living, Conscious Dying and a Guidebook for the Transformational Journey***, which accompanies the Foundation Course.

<https://www.tribeintransition.net/the-sitting-with-death-and-choosing-life-resources/>

When explored through the ***Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Programme*** these resources will provide you with:



Three Simple Pathways for Transforming Grief and Loss

1. Stimulus Materials to Support Inquiry, Exploration and Discovery;

The rich food for thought within these e-books and conversations will touch and move you and encourage you to think, feel and connect more fully with your own experience and authentic truth.

2. Simple Practices to Support Healing and Transformation;

Simple skills applied consistently will support you to move forward on your healing path as you co-operate with your natural healing process. You will then be free to choose to follow your own authentic direction and commit to making your unique contribution to sacred life on our planet.

3. The Support and Community of a Small, Safe, Intentional Group.

When we come together with others for Deep Discovery Conversations, we can bring death, dying, grief and loss out of the shadows - where fear, avoidance, isolation and shame gather. Although your healing journey will unfold in a way unique to you, connecting with like-hearted others in this way will provide the reassurance you are not alone. We all move forward more easily upheld by the bigger energy and consciousness of an intentional group.

Grief and loss come in many forms and these conversations may touch those who have lost a loved one to death, recently or in the past, or those of you who are facing your own mortality due to a life-threatening illness. You may also be experiencing sudden disruptions in your life in the form of trauma following a crisis such as COVID19. Or perhaps you have lost your home to a fire, flood or earthquake; suffered a sudden loss of livelihood or the ending of a marriage. A spiritual awakening, long term illness, miscarriage and even the birth of a child, can also precipitate a grieving crisis.

These resources provide the support and skills to practice sitting with, and developing a kinder relationship with death, dying, grief and loss,

So that you can:

- **Become active in shaping your healing**, even when you are feeling fragmented;
- Face into the heart of your pain to **release unnecessary suffering**;
- **Make friends with all your emotions** including the most intense and difficult;
- **Develop skills for co-operating with the transformational power within grief and loss**;
- Let go of old, limiting beliefs and habits, and **transform loss into new, vibrant life choices**;
- **Develop shared understandings and a common language** for the demanding process of transition and transformation;
- Encourage you to **connect more fully with your authentic wisdom**, your inner knowing and unique path;
- As you practice being present with your experience, however uncomfortable, and befriend all your emotions, you will **recover your authentic self, discover the gifts buried in the heart of your deepest challenges, and realise your humanity more fully**;
- By making conscious choices, combined with intention, experimental action and consistency, you will **master your creative process and deliver your gifts**;

- As you enlarge your inner community of self and connect with the community of all beings you will **find your true home and place of belonging.**

The Evolution of this Project

I began to write about my grief, following the deaths of my closest friend and my brother, in the hope of coming to a deeper understanding and integration of it. The result was my book, ***Sitting with Death and Choosing Life***. I shared this with a group of friends and healers in New Zealand, some of whom were also grieving a current loss or had experienced deep grief in the recent past. We came together for conversations and explored our grief in an open-hearted and undefended way. The energy in the room lightened as the conversations progressed and it was clear, one or two of these "sitting with death" sessions was enough to stimulate healing shifts of consciousness. Far from being a dark or morbid subject, death ignited our passion for life. We discovered shared themes, as well as recognising the unique qualities of each grieving experience.

Sitting with Death is an Opportunity to be Seized

As we explored our grief we agreed that emotions activated during times of profound personal loss can be overwhelming and may at times feel catastrophic in intensity. These emotions and states of mind may be so deeply felt they are often difficult to put into words and to communicate, even with ourselves, let alone with our closest companions. This often gives rise to an experience of isolation and a sense of having moved out of the acceptable range of normality. This in turn may cause us to withdraw, disconnect or shut down, sometimes for a long period of time.

When it comes to grief we never step into the same river twice and no two people's grieving experiences are exactly the same. In this sense, we are always beginners. I'm sure this is also true of our great love encounters and our spiritual epiphanies. Every experience that lifts us out of our fixed views of reality, is completely unexpected and takes us into new and unknown territory.

Inspired by these initial conversation circles I followed by creating recorded conversations with healing practitioners as they shared their own experiences of death, grief and loss and the approaches they have developed to support others. Over time these conversations expanded beyond personal grief into and exploration of the Soul Journey and then into the collective grief arising in response to the numerous crises and injustices in our world. Many healers

now recognise that personal healing and global healing are intimately connected and that deep healing is essential for individual and collective well-being.

Skills for fully choosing life

Next I created a 22 Day transformational learning programme, **Build Your Soul Sanctuary**³, taking participants through a daily practice for healing and creativity. I also began an inquiry into why it is so difficult for the majority of people to fully commit to life. It seems to me that when we don't face our own mortality, or when we are carrying unprocessed grief and loss, it is impossible to fully experience our essential wholeness and well-being. The majority of us live in a limbo state between life and death, never fully embracing either. The resulting inner emptiness and dissatisfaction make us very susceptible to the distractions and compensations of the consumer society, and this in turn has negative consequences for planetary well-being. As a remedy for these maladies I created a second transformational programme, **The Power of Wise Choices**⁴, leading participants through a process by which they can become more aware of unconscious patterns holding them in limitation and lack, and free themselves to fully choose life, wholeness, well-being and creative service. Alongside, I wrote my book, **Whole Mind Whole World – The Power of Wise Choices**.⁵

I am convinced that having access to skills and practices for sitting with death and moving through grief and loss consciously will change individual and collective life. I truly believe, as more and more people adopt practices of conscious grieving, we will learn to live and die more consciously and our world will more easily and gracefully evolve and change for the better.

My mission is to see these resources being used as stimulus materials to bring community groups together throughout the UK and elsewhere and I would love to see and support a growing community of facilitators who are undertaking this mission. ⁵

In 2020, I've brought together two new collections of conversations: **Grieving for Our World** and **Choosing Life** and I have piloted the Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Transformational Programme and Facilitator Training.

Join the Conversation

My invitation to you is to sit with death and to bring all your awareness, intention and curiosity into this process of the dying that is happening within you as a result of living at this moment in our evolution as a species. Your sincere intention to allow the transformational process to work within, and through you, will ignite the organic, self-regulating,

natural process of renewal and knit you back fully into the living fabric of life in a new way.

The Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Transformational Programme

This programme is designed to support you to move through death, grief and loss to fully lived life and creative empowerment.

It comprises four stages:

1.The Foundation Course

Meeting weekly over eight weeks this provides an opportunity to explore some foundational understandings and skills and to develop confidence in participating in a group.

2.The Rites of Passage Sessions

These two sessions are for people who have completed the Foundation Course, or have similar experience in grief work, and are ready to explore more deeply how approaching grief and loss consciously is a spiritual path or Soul Journey. From here you can make an informed choice about moving into the longer transformational programme and facilitator training.

3.The Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Transformational Programme

This comprises:

Module One: The Essential Skills for Grieving Well

Module Two: Transforming Grief for Our World into Sacred Activism

Part One: Transforming Grief for Our World through Deep Discovery Conversations

Part Two: Embodying the Skills of Sacred Activism

These modules offer the opportunity for a deep dive within a committed intentional group which will become your sanctuary, the hearth around which you gather and the wellspring you drink from.

"I have so much gratitude for all that this course has brought to my life. It is so much more than I had first understood it to be because I hadn't realised the overwhelming importance of grief and loss and how out of touch we are with that whole, beautiful aspect of our lives. The exploring, the experiences and the conversations have been deep, complex and profoundly life-enhancing whilst the method for unlocking all of that I have found to be beautifully simple. Rose has shown me that all we need to do to ease the gentle opening of tender hearts is to offer a deeply warm welcome in a safe space. The stimulus resources and enquiry questions do the rest. Through this course I have witnessed the magic that happens when people share openly. I had a strong resistance to joining the course because I didn't feel that I had what it takes. But, through the feeling of truly belonging within such a beautifully held group, I have discovered a compassion that I didn't know I had and have succeeded in being able to put a loving arm around those insecure, not-good-enough parts of myself which has in turn freed me to live more fully and offer myself in greater service. I am a human who feels compassion and that is enough to enable me to do this work. My soul is singing!" Ele Waters.

4. The Facilitator Training Programme

This is for those of you who want to extend your facilitator skills by practicing running an introductory session plus the 8-session Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Foundation Course, with a group you bring together. The Facilitator Training module gives twelve group sessions over four months. It will take you through the Foundation Course experientially and support you to promote, facilitate and reflect on your 8 week Deep Discovery Conversation Circle. To qualify you must have completed The Essential Skills for Grieving Well.

There is a separate training group for those who wish to facilitate Transforming Grief through Deep Discovery Conversations.

For further information please go here:

<https://www.tribeintrastition.net/the-sitting-with-death-and-choosing-life-transformational-programme-overview/>

3. *Build Your Soul Sanctuary*: <https://www.tribeintrastition.net/build-your-soul-sanctuary/>
4. *The Power of Wise Choices*: <https://www.tribeintrastition.net/the-power-of-wise-choices-2/>
5. *Whole Mind Whole World – The Power of Wise Choices*:
<https://www.tribeintrastition.net/whole-mind-whole-world/>
6. To find out more about the *Sitting with Death and Choosing Life Transformational Programme and Facilitator Training* and how you can join in, please go here: <https://www.tribeintrastition.net/the-sitting-with-death-and-choosing-life-transformational-programme-overview/>
7. For the resources go here: <https://www.tribeintrastition.net/the-sitting-with-death-and-choosing-life-resources/>



