

# GRIEF RITUAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

## Course description and Outline

**April 11 – 14, 2019**

**Begin:** Thursday afternoon, 3:30. **End:** Sunday by 1:00.

**Cost:** \$875.00 includes 3 nights lodging, 9 meals, and training program.

Commuter rate: \$725.00 includes 3 lunches and 3 dinners and training program.

**Location:** Mercy Center, Burlingame, CA (15 minutes from San Francisco International Airport)

Ritual is an ancient language, a cadence rooted deep in our ancestral lineage. It is a language older than words and is uttered in nearly every living culture. Ritual was the means by which communities addressed the inevitable experiences that arise in the course of a lifetime: birth and death, initiation and healing, community and world renewal. We are creatures of ritual. We discover meaning and uncover our wider, entangled lives in the context of ritual process. Without potent and ongoing rituals, however, we lose a sense of the connective tissue that binds the individual to community, affirms the link between the human and more-than-human worlds, and sustains the note that is struck between the human and the sacred.

This training emerges from over twenty years of experimentation in the territory of ritual process. It is an immersion in the direct application of ritual to the various conditions our communities will face. While our focus will be on grief rituals, the core elements of this training can extend to wider circumstances.

In a time of cultural and environmental trauma, we must revision practices of communal recalibration. Rituals were the means by which the village would re-regulate itself following any form of traumatic encounter. Recalling this “unforgotten wisdom” that resides at the core of our psychic lives, is central to finding our way through the whitewater of these times.

During our time together, we will offer teachings and experiential work that will provide context and guidance on how to navigate the intense terrain that is ushered in by ritual space. Themes will include:

1. The cultural context around grief and loss
  - Obstacles to grief work
  - Heroic ideal
  - Individualism and the Cult of Specialness
  - Domestication
  
2. The Five Gates of Grief
  - The many trails of grief
  - An Apprenticeship with Sorrow
  - Love and Grief
  - The long walk with grief
  
3. Entering the Healing Ground: The Architecture of Ritual
  - The Invisible World
  - Invocations
  - Shrines, Beauty and the Sacred
  - Etiquette for Ritual Space
  - Vertical/horizontal dimensions
  - Intensity/heat
  - The purpose of ritual

- Communitas
  - Communal regulating systems
4. Building the Container
    - Cultivating Village Mind
    - Working with deep emotional states
    - Courting the Vulnerable Heart
    - Attunement to the Group Soul
    - Derangement/ Liminal States
    - Group dynamics
    - Core agreements
  5. Dimensions of Leadership
    - Regulation and community work
    - Our own inner work with wounds/shadow
    - Recognizing fragmented/child states in the room
    - Authority/power/shadow
    - Protecting the circle while honoring the individual
    - The leader's relationship to the wider/wilder world as source of power
    - Acknowledging our own fear, vulnerability, outcasts
    - Tending our own sorrows
    - Ripening into the Work
  6. Grief Ritual Structure
    - The format for the grief ritual weekend
    - Welcoming what arrives at the door
    - Presenting the Material to participants
    - Writing practice/composting/loosening the ground
    - Potentiating the shrine
    - Integration/Protecting what was touched in ritual space
    - The ritual isn't over till it's over

We will utilize singing, poetry, dyad work, ritual, group process, the deep imagination, and the collective wisdom that will gather in this healing circle.