

# Grief

## and the 5-Actions Program™

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*The wound is the place where the Light enters you.*

*Rumi*

### Agenda:

- Understand grief and loss, and its relationship to addiction
- How to feel, process, and address grief without becoming overwhelmed
- Embrace an uncertain future
- Questions/discussion



# The 5-Actions Program™: Grief Videos

## Grief

module 4: video 8



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- [Download this video's worksheet](#)
- [Read Transcript](#)
- [Video of Francis Weller talking about grief and his book The Wild Edge of Sorrow](#)
- [Video – BJ Miller's TED Talk What Really Matters at the End of Life](#)
- [Video – Nora McInery's TED Talk We Don't Move On From Grief – We Move Forward With It](#)
- [Video – Jason Rosenthal's TED Talk The Journey Through Loss and Grief](#)

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## Grief Work

module 9: video 6



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# COVID-19



# Individual and Collective Loss

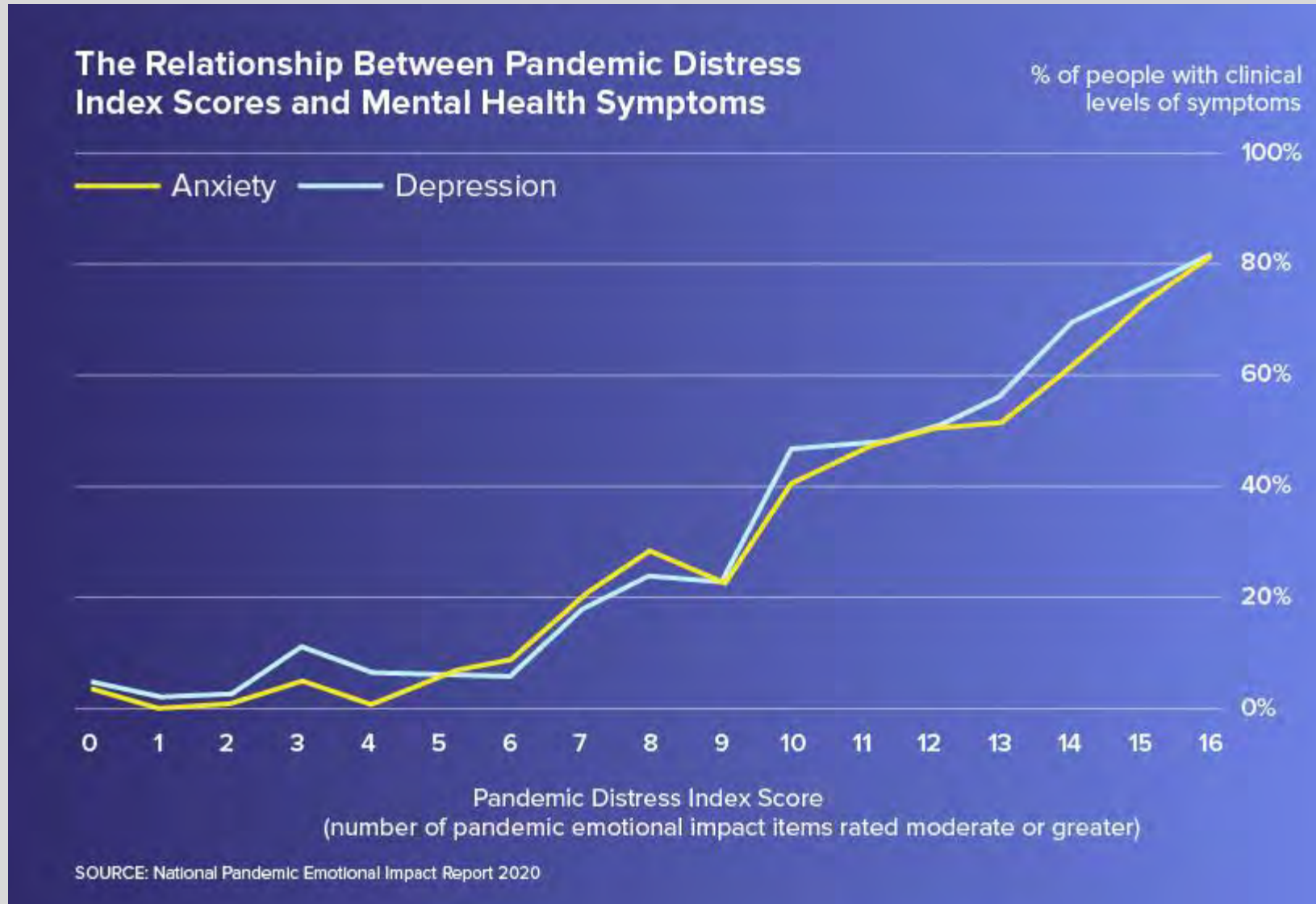


# Continuous Traumatic Stress (CTS)

- **Non-pathologizing language** and a recognition that anyone going through such stress would have symptoms
- **Real, life-threatening stress** differentiated from everyday chronic stress
- **A future-focus** rather than trauma in the past, like with PTSD
- **Threats that are largely faceless**, unpredictable, and impact society in pervasive and significant ways
- **A preoccupation with future safety** and hypervigilance around accurately assessing future risks
- **The absence of protections** from future traumatic stress, which often includes a breakdown of community, law and order, and a predictable functioning society



# Behavioral Health Toll



# COVID-19 and Addiction

FIRST OPINION

America's addiction crisis, compounded by Covid-19, requires immediate action to save lives

**Why COVID-19 is a Perfect Storm in the Addiction World**

**A tale of two epidemics: When COVID-19 and opioid addiction collide**

**COVID-19 and the opioid crisis: When a pandemic and an epidemic collide**



# From COVID-19 to a Grief Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic will be outlasted by the grief pandemic – and no one is preparing for it

The "third wave" of coronavirus may very well be its emotional toll. In the absence of a comforter in chief, it's up to all of us to fill the vacuum.



**The “third wave” of coronavirus may very well be its emotional toll, which will continue to inform our inner lives and life choices.** And it may be further complicated by so many people not having been able to tap into the communal supports that help in normal times; virtual wakes and Zoom Shivas were not necessarily how people wanted to honor their loved ones. In addition, the sheer scale of Covid-19 destruction may make some feel that their own losses and pain have been obscured — that their person has disappeared into the reported number of deaths that is growing by the minute.

Oct. 11, 2020

By Gabrielle Birkner and Rebecca Soffer,  
cofounders of Modern Loss

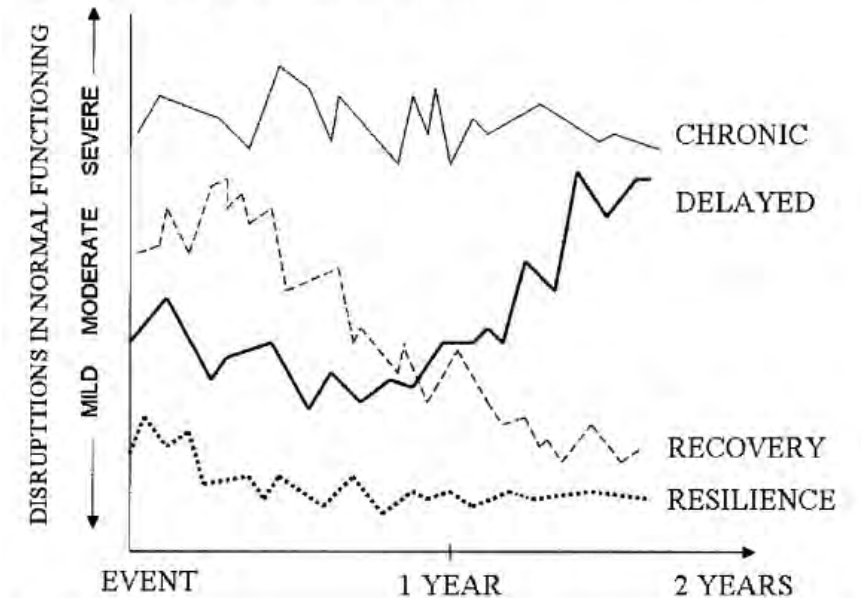


# Four Responses to COVID-19

- **Path of Resilience (66%):** Most people will experience the path of resilience, which is characterized by an ability to maintain a relatively stable level of everyday functioning in the face of the pandemic.
- **Path of Recovery (21%):** Many will take the path of recovery, experienced as a gradual return to normal functioning following the onset of more significant clinical symptoms in response to the pandemic.
- **Path of Chronic Symptoms (11%):** A third group will struggle with clinical symptoms during and after the pandemic, often leading to the diagnosis of PTSD. This group is also the most likely to have a mental health diagnosis pre-COVID-19 and benefit from early identification and intervention.
- **Path of Delayed Onset (9%):** A final group will show less clinical symptoms during the pandemic, but then struggle more in its aftermath. This group is at risk for PTSD and symptoms becoming chronic if not addressed.

**Figure 1**

*Prototypical Patterns of Disruption in Normal Functioning Across Time Following Interpersonal Loss or Potentially Traumatic Events*



Source: Bonanno, G.A. (2004) American Psychologist

# 7 Steps to Staying Healthy During a Pandemic

1. Monitor your symptoms.
2. Focus on the basics.
3. Seek help if you're not doing well.
4. Limit your consumption of pandemic-related media (and all screen time).
5. Stay connected.
6. Create.
- 7. Process your grief.**



# Understanding Grief

*Impermanence*

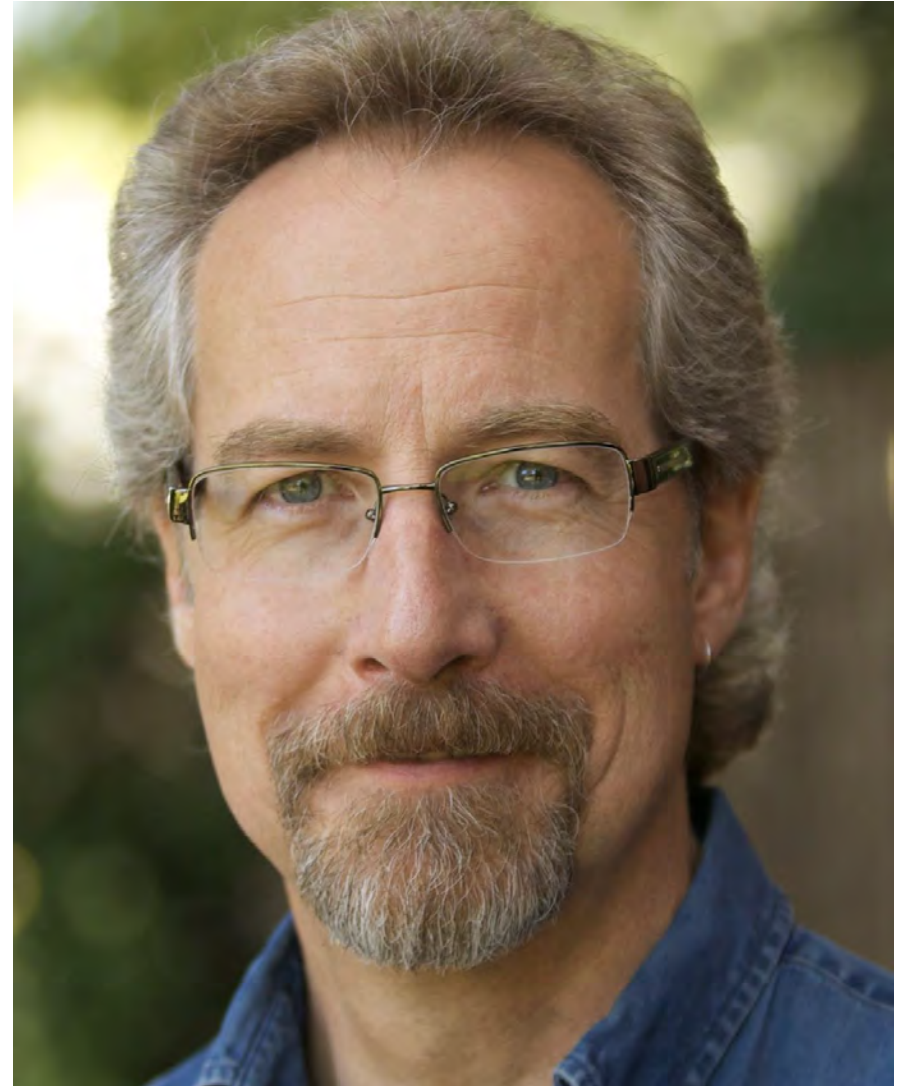


# Understanding Grief

No one escapes suffering in this life. None of us is exempt from loss, pain, illness, and death. How is it that we have so little understanding of these essential experiences? How is it that we have attempted to keep grief separated from our lives and only begrudgingly acknowledge its presence at the most obvious of times, such as at a funeral?

*Francis Weller*

*The Wild Edge of Sorrow*



## Understanding Grief: Latin word *gravis* – meaning heavy

German poet Rilke said in 1904...

“I don’t have much knowledge of grief, so this massive darkness makes me small.”

“Where there is sorrow, there is holy ground.”

Oscar Wilde



## Describing Grief

It's possible I am pushing through solid rock  
In flintlike layers, as the ore lies, alone;  
I am such a long way in I see no way through,  
and no space: everything is close to my face,  
and everything close to my face is stone.

Rilke



# How to Feel, Process, and Address Grief

- Present moment
- Feeling/Body
- No Timetable
- Community
- Solitude
- Ritual
- Two Worlds



# Present Moment: Symptoms of Grief

- **Affects**
  - Separation anxiety & longing
  - Sadness
  - Depression
  - Helplessness
  - Loneliness
  - Guilt & anger
  - Numbness
- **Cognitions**
  - Disbelief, shock, confusion
  - Meaninglessness
- **Perception**
  - Unreality, depersonalization
  - Sense of 'presence' of deceased
- **Behavioral**
  - Searching behavior
  - Social withdrawal
  - Disorganization
  - Avoidance behavior
  - Absent-minded
  - Restless over-activity
  - Treasuring objects of deceased
- **Physical symptoms**
  - Crying & tearfulness
  - Fatigue, exhaustion
  - Psychomotor agitation or retardation
  - Motor symptoms e.g., tension, restlessness
  - Autonomic symptoms
  - Hypervigilance



# Present Moment: Trauma and Mindfulness



7. Trauma 101



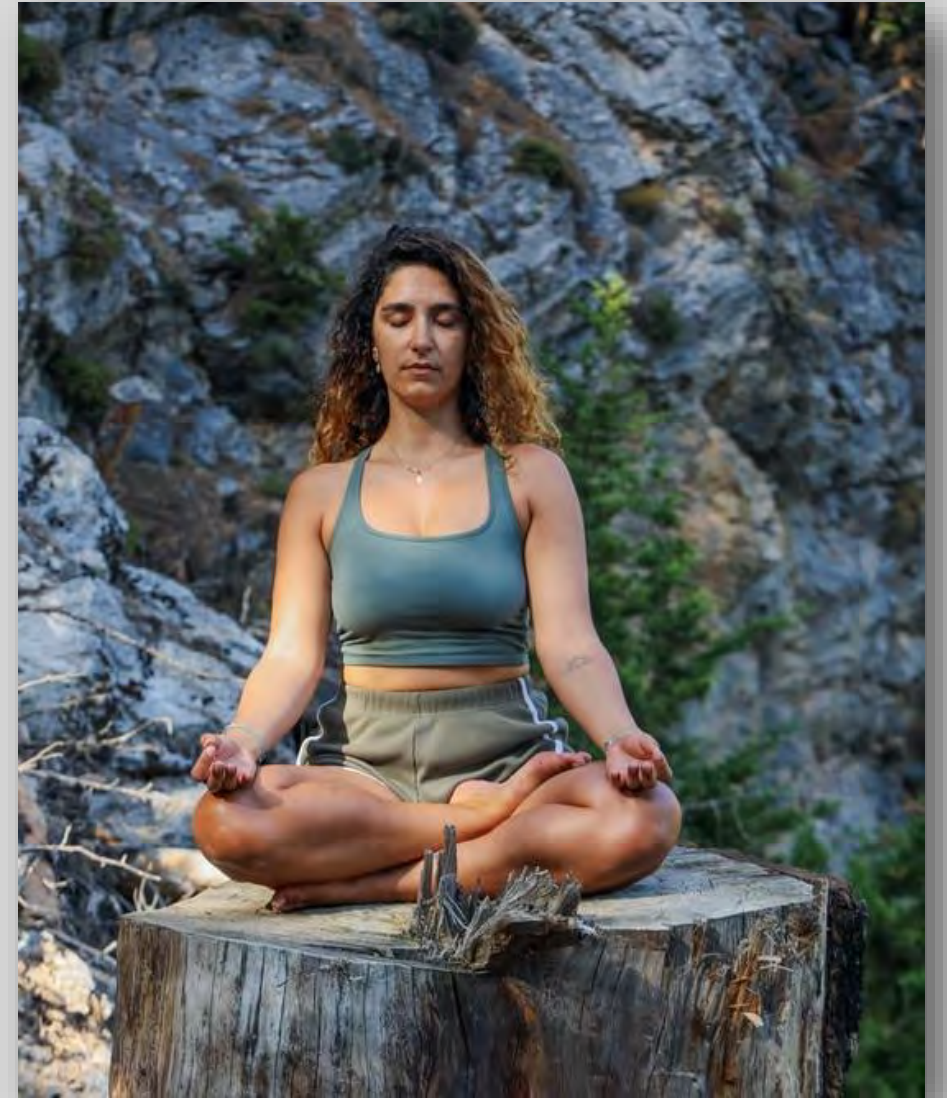
8. Flight, Flight, Freeze



9. Your Brain on Trauma

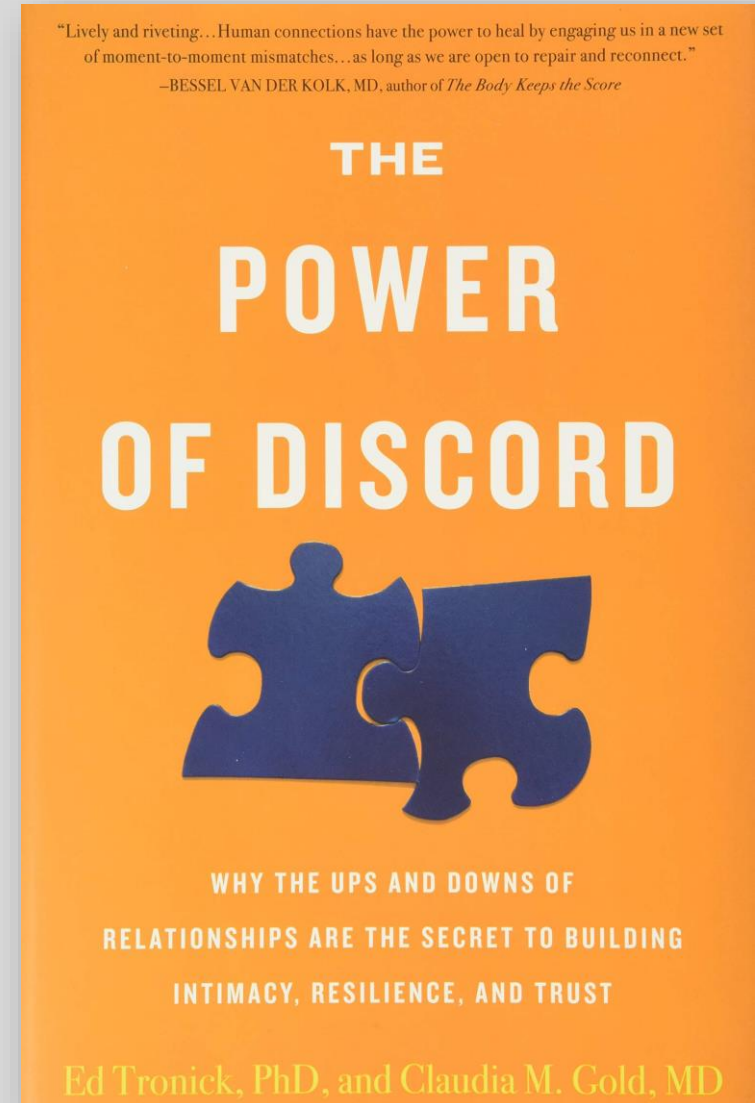


10. What You Can't Remember



# Learning to Grieve

Resilience is neither a trait you are born with nor one that you acquire in the face of catastrophe. Rather, resilience develops when you muddle through the inevitable countless mismatches that occur in relationships with people you love, beginning in early infancy.



# The 5-Actions Program: Healing Relationships

The process of being seen, understood, and accepted by an attuned, empathetic other engenders a sense of genuine self-acceptance, a feeling that we are profoundly okay. We feel safe enough, strong enough, sure enough to venture courageously into the world and develop the competencies we need to deal with life's challenges.

*Bouncing Back, Linda Graham*

# Grief and Mourning

“The distinction between grief and mourning is crucial to treatment. Many caregivers assist the bereaved with the beginning process (i.e., expressing their reactions to the loss) but not with the important latter processes (i.e., reorienting in relation to the deceased, the self, and the external world). As a result, mourners are frequently left on their own to reshape self and world after the loss of a loved one.” (p. 26)

Rando, 1993

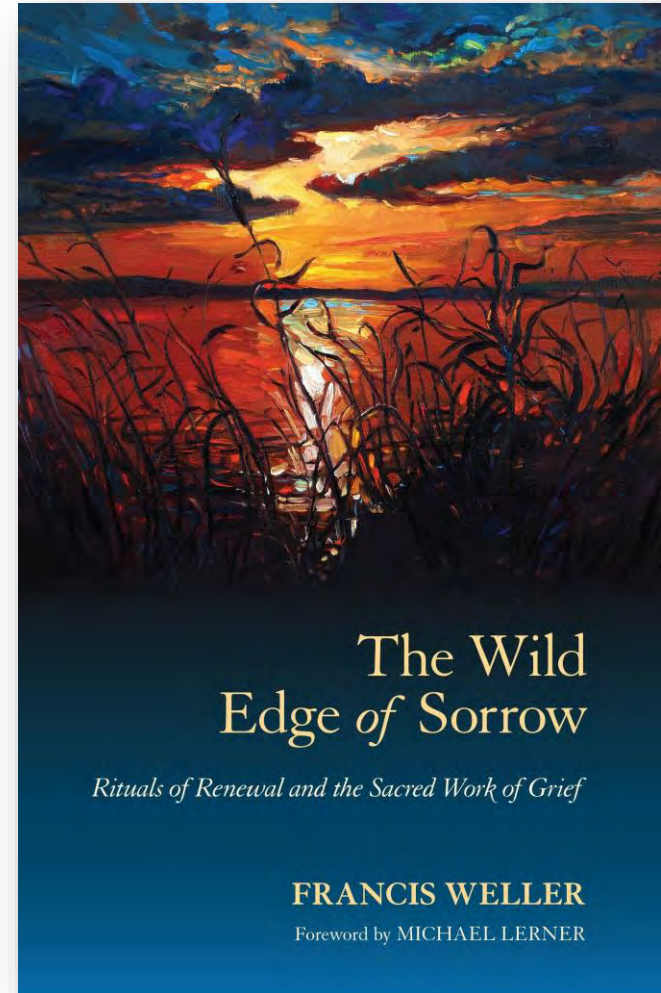


# Unfinished Business



# Five Gates of Grief

1. Everything we love, we will lose
2. The places that have not known love
3. The sorrows of the world
4. What we expected and did not receive
5. Ancestral grief



# Embracing an Uncertain Future: Two Worlds

## The Way It Is

There's a thread you follow. It goes among things that change. But it doesn't change. People wonder about what you are pursuing. You have to explain about the thread. But it is hard for others to see. While you hold it you can't get lost. Tragedies happen; people get hurt or die; and you suffer and get old. Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding. You don't ever let go of the thread.

*William Stafford*

