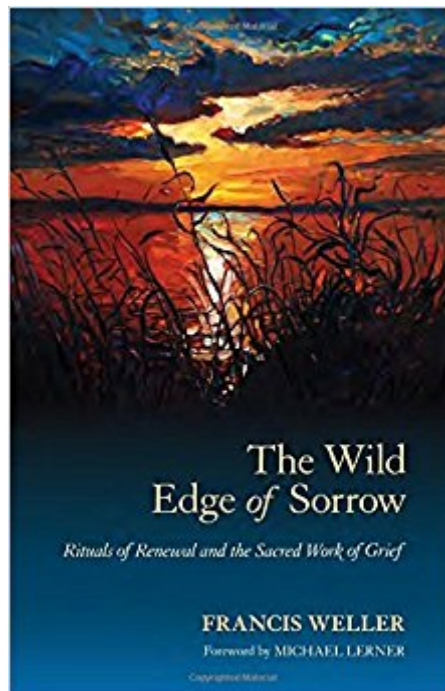




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The Wild Edge Of Sorrow: Rituals Of Renewal And The Sacred Work Of Grief



Synopsis

Noted psychotherapist Francis Weller provides an essential guide for navigating the deep waters of sorrow and loss in this lyrical yet practical handbook for mastering the art of grieving. Describing how Western patterns of amnesia and anesthesia affect our capacity to cope with personal and collective sorrows, Weller reveals the new vitality we may encounter when we welcome, rather than fear, the pain of loss. Through moving personal stories, poetry, and insightful reflections he leads us into the central energy of sorrow, and to the profound healing and heightened communion with each other and our planet that reside alongside it. *The Wild Edge of Sorrow* explains that grief has always been communal and illustrates how we need the healing touch of others, an atmosphere of compassion, and the comfort of ritual in order to fully metabolize our grief. Weller describes how we often hide our pain from the world, wrapping it in a secret mantle of shame. This causes sorrow to linger unexpressed in our bodies, weighing us down and pulling us into the territory of depression and death. We have come to fear grief and feel too alone to face an encounter with the powerful energies of sorrow. Those who work with people in grief, who have experienced the loss of a loved one, who mourn the ongoing destruction of our planet, or who suffer the accumulated traumas of a lifetime will appreciate the discussion of obstacles to successful grief work such as privatized pain, lack of communal rituals, a pervasive feeling of fear, and a culturally restrictive range of emotion. Weller highlights the intimate bond between grief and gratitude, sorrow and intimacy. In addition to showing us that the greatest gifts are often hidden in the things we avoid, he offers powerful tools and rituals and a list of resources to help us transform grief into a force that allows us to live and love more fully.

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Customer Reviews

“In *The Wild Edge of Sorrow* Francis Weller offers his readers a breath-taking and dramatic journey of inner discovery into personal pain resolution, planetary healing, and soul development. It is an essential publication—one that offers precious guidance and insight for those who are strong enough, as well as mature enough, to probe and challenge the darkness.”

—*Spirituality Today*

“The Wild Edge of Sorrow marries uncommon compassion with clear-eyed discernment in its invitation to the reader to become a soul activist in a soul-devouring culture. It is a comprehensive manual for conscious grieving and opening to the unprecedented joy and passion that result from embracing our sorrow.”

—Carolyn Baker, PhD, author of *Love in the Age of Ecological Apocalypse* and *Collapsing Consciously*

“The Wild Edge of Sorrow is extraordinary, and explores the ongoing pain of separation from community and nature that we all feel. Reading Weller’s book, I’ve realized that we have a lot of unprocessed grief to share. This book will be a gift to many.”

—Charles Eisenstein, author of *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know is Possible*

“Weller guides us into the difficult geography of sorrow and helps us find our way back to our souls. He brings much-needed medicine to a culture that relies upon distraction and anesthesia to cope with the daily losses that surround us.”

—Malidoma Somfô, author of *The Healing Wisdom of Africa: Finding Life Purpose Through Nature, Ritual, and Community*

“This book rings a shivering bell of hope: that, when lifted by ritual and fellowship, the moist ground of grief actually contains a treasury of gifts that are our ancestral birthright. A delightful wisdom shines through every page of *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*.”

—Martin Shaw, author of *A Branch From The Lightning Tree*

“This book is not only a map to navigate some of the most tender and difficult regions of the psyche, but a work of literary art.”

—Kim Rosen, author of *Saved by a Poem: The Transformative Power of Words*

“Quite possibly the best guidebook ever crafted on the art of grieving, this volume is also a brilliant and poetic handbook for becoming fully human, more exquisitely alive, and more able to contribute to cultural change. *The Wild Edge of Sorrow* invites us into the very heart of sorrow, profound healing, and a deepened communion with each other and Earth.”

—Bill Plotkin, author of *Wild Mind: A Field Guide to the Human Psyche* and *Soulcraft: Crossing into the Mysteries of Nature and Psyche*

“This book is a work of beauty: beauty in its language, its poetic sensibility, in its

deep insights into the nature of loss and its effect on the human soul. Weller's book is, finally, a healing balm. It shows how our tears may be the redemptive waters we have needed for so long." —Roger Housden, author of *Ten Poems to Say Goodbye*

"Francis Weller's book, *The Wild Edge of Sorrow* is so deeply honest, insightful, and hopeful. His style of writing and speaking is poetic, and yet one feels as though they are in conversation with a neighbor. Should you purchase the book, read it with a pen by your side. You'll want to underline and remember the rich prose on every page." —Marianna Cacciatore, author of *Being There for Someone in Grief*

"The warmth of Weller's voice and his beautiful language, will speak directly to your soul, in a way your soul has longed to feel embraced. His words will open your heart to receive your own most tender and vulnerable feelings as a gift to be cherished as they may bring forth a new depth of connection to the soul of the world." —Dr. Risa Kaparo, author of *Awakening Somatic Intelligence*

FRANCIS WELLER, MFT, is a psychotherapist, writer, and soul activist. A master of synthesizing diverse streams of thought from psychology, anthropology, mythology, alchemy, indigenous cultures, and poetic traditions, he has introduced the healing work of ritual to thousands of people. The core of his work is creating pathways to reclaiming our indigenous soul, what psychologist Carl Jung called the "unforgotten wisdom" that resides in the heart of the psyche. To further his work, he founded and currently directs WisdomBridge, an organization offering educational programs that seek to integrate the wisdom from traditional cultures with the insights and knowledge gathered from western cultures.

I am a bereaved Mom, having tragically and unexpectedly lost my 23 month old son Hunter about 4 years ago. I have read A LOT of books on grief, dying, sorrow and loss, and *The Wild Edge of Sorrow* is among the best of the best. Weller's language is poetic, and his offering is really quite unique. He touches on all the many ways we all carry grief, with most of our grief and sorrow deemed unacceptable or unworthy by our society...and the ramifications of these dismissals....and why we need to change....In Chapter 2 he references a retreat he held where there was a grief shrine and ritual, I was touched so deeply at my core by the description I wept and wept, for I had always hoped something like this existed - a place and a community where I could express my broken heart, wailing and weeping with wild abandon from that place inside that is drowning in sadness, but nonetheless remains mostly muffled....This man is doing amazing work! We need to honor our grief, every single one of us. Please read this book and heed its call.

Two years after losing my mum, six years after losing my little brother, nine years after losing the older of my two younger brothers, from a million mini losses & traumas to the big and very present one in my life (my marriage), this book found its way into my hands. And into my heart. I've been studying it. Digesting it. Living it. Honoring it, since I've opened it, a few weeks ago. It is a soul medicine, life changing, heart opening book. Francis Weller has written a masterpiece on the sacred work of grief. As he points out, we live in a grief-phobic, death-fearing society. But I have news for you that you already know: Only a broken heart is capable of great love. He addresses not only our individual grief and sadness, but our communal and ancestral pain. As we live in these painful times, I found deep comfort in his words. It's full of gem after gem articulated with haunting beauty. A few cases in point -1. "There is some strange intimacy between grief and aliveness, some sacred exchange between what seems unbearable and what is most exquisitely alive."2. "Grief and love are sisters, woven together from the beginning. Their kinship reminds us that there is no love that does not contain loss and no loss that is not a reminder of the love we carry for what we once held close."3. "Grief is subversive, undermining the quiet agreement to behave and be in control of our emotions. It is an act of protest that declares our refusal to live numb and small. There is something feral about grief, something essentially outside the ordained and sanctioned behaviors of our culture. Because of that, grief is necessary to the vitality of the soul. Contrary to our fears, grief is suffused with life-force.... It is not a state of deadness or emotional flatness. Grief is alive, wild, untamed and cannot be domesticated. It resists the demands to remain passive and still. We move in jangled, unsettled, and riotous ways when grief takes hold of us. It is truly an emotion that rises from the soul."And my absolute favorite: "Those who undertake the full journey into their grief come back carrying medicine for the world." "Hell yes!" Grief dares us to love once more.

• Terry Tempest Williams

In this exquisite book Francis Weller gives us insight and wisdom on how to navigate some of the most difficult aspects of our lives. As humans, we cannot escape suffering; to be alive is to experience loss in one form or another. Our society is saturated with grief and yet we are gravely lacking practices and places to process and express the sorrows that we carry. Weller reminds us that grief was never meant to be experienced in isolation and recommends that we find ways to share our heartache and sorrows in community with others. With a kind and compassionate voice, he asks us to have faith in the restorative power of ritual and to trust that in giving our grief the expression it deserves we will be guided out of the darkness and back into a world where we can

fully experience the magnificence and beauty of our lives.

Really beautiful book about a difficult subject that is not dealt with well in our modern society. In a world filled to the brim with "numbing agents" like drugs, alcohol, sugar, anger, etc., this book feels like a little pool of solace and clarity. Weller's writing really brings out the beauty in sorrow and clears the waters for us to dive in and deal with it. I would recommend it to anyone who has ever lost a loved one, or a dream they had to give up, or a beloved pet...so pretty much everyone!

I am 41 years old and suffered from a ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm in November of 2015. I was searching for help in dealing with this traumatic experience and have been trying to find the right word to explain my feelings about this trauma. I just purchased this book a couple of weeks ago and have read it twice, It brings me comfort. The words are poetic and profound. I'm thankful to have found this book in helping with my recovery,

This is an amazingly clear, inspiring, wise, and helpful book that opens us to the sorrows in our lives without being debilitated by them. Frances has performed a remarkable service in helping us understand and relate to life's unavoidable sorrows in a way that can lead to personal transformation--and even social transformation. Each page of this easy-to-read book has a soulful depth to it. Read this book, and you are likely to awaken to a deeper aspect of your being and feel a deeper connection with yourself, others, and life itself.

I highly recommend this book for anyone who recognizes that we live in a death phobic and grief phobic culture, and learning to grieve our losses in its many facets is an essential God given capacity and right that is an essential part of being whole. Most of us have to unlearn our conditioning around grief, and essentially discover that not only can we survive our heart-break, but the losses that break our heart open - clear the space for more love to move to us and through us than we ever imagined. Francis is a clear, wise and compassionate guide for this journey deeper into the heart of Life.

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