

# MOURNING IS THE WORK

Art and Ritual-Based Practices for Educators to  
Metabolize Grief

**Oriana Ides, MA. APCC. PPS & Noor Jones-Bey, PhD.**



## Gate of Grief: EVERYTHING WE LOVE, WE WILL LOSE

### Losing someone or something we love

- Loss of those who depart this Earth before us; our parents, spouse, children, friends
- Loss of home, beloved animals, places you have loved
- Loss from illness or injury; treasured skills capacities
- Loss of a life dream





## PAUSE AND REFLECT

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What about **loss** is feeling profound to you?

What are we noticing about ***your ability to metabolize loss*** in this moment?



# DESCANSOS

“Descansos are symbols that mark a death. Right there, right on that spot, someone’s journey in life halted unexpectedly...something happened there that altered that person’s life and the lives of other persons forever”.

- **Clarissa Pinkola Estes, PhD**

# PRACTICE

## Guiding Question:

Where are the places that must be remembered, must be loved and laid to rest?

1. Make a timeline of your life on one big sheet of paper.
2. Mark with a cross the places, starting with infancy all the way to the present where parts and pieces of yourself and your life has died.

TWO YEARS ON  
THE *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER LIST  
THE MILLION-COPY BESTSELLER

## Women Who Run With the Wolves

Myths and Stories  
of the Wild Woman  
Archetype



Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Ph.D.

"A deeply spiritual book...She honors what is tough, smart, and untamed in women. She venerates the female soul."  
—*The Washington Post Book World*

# PRACTICE

## *Mapping Our Journey*



- Mark where there were roads not taken, paths that were cut off, ambushes, betrayals, and deaths.
- Honor the places that should have been mourned or still need to be mourned.
- Note “forgotten” for what you senses but hasn’t come to the surface.
- Note “forgiven” over things you have for the most part released.



## PAIR SHARE

1. What did you notice while making your *descansos*?
2. In “laying a thing to rest”, what might you have more space for?
3. What gestures of love will you now offer yourself in response to your journey?

## IN HER WORDS



“Be gentle with yourself and make the descansos, the resting places for the aspects of yourself that were on their way to somewhere but never arrived.

Descansos mark the death sites, the dark times, but they are also love notes to your suffering. They are transformative.

There is a lot to be said for pinning things to the earth so they don't follow us around. There is a lot to be said for laying them to rest. ”