

The Five Gates of Grief

From the work of Francis Weller in his books: "Entering the Healing Ground – Grief, Ritual and the Soul of the World" and "The Wild Edge of Sorrow"

First Gate: 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

Second Gate: The Places that have not known love

- Places in ourselves never touched by love
- Places wrapped in shame and banished
- Places lived outside of compassion, warmth and welcome
- Parts that we hate in ourselves and hold in contempt, that we deny the healing salve of community
- Outcast portions of our soul appearing as addictions, depression, anxiety and other symptoms calling for our attention.

Third Gate: The Sorrows of the World

- The losses of the world around us
- Daily diminishment of species, habitats and cultures noted in our psyches
- Sadness for the Earth (not personal but shared and communal)
- Where we experience the soul of the world

Fourth Gate: What we expected and did not receive

Things we may never realize we have lost, because we weren't born into village with full joyous welcome of our gifts

And so we carry:

- Unconscious disappointment
- Feelings of loneliness and aloneness
- Diminished experience of who we truly are

At the core of this grief is our longing to belong and longing to be longed for.

Fifth Gate: Ancestral Grief

Unacknowledged and untended sorrow of those who came before us, born of:

- Lost connection to land, language, imagination, rituals, songs, stories of their/our ancestors
- Sense of homelessness, orphaned between old and new worlds
- Experience of woundedness, loss and abandonment, where grief and shame are intermingled, residing in the psychic history of our lineage
- Collective soul grief of abuses of millions