



PERFORMANCE
PHILOSOPHY

NOTICING GRIEF IN THE BODY

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Context

In this time of political uncertainty, many of us are striving to create ways of being that will generate more care, compassion and equity in the collective. However, it can be hard to sustain this work when we are weighed down by untended grief. In the West, numbing or distracting ourselves when we feel discomfort or grief is very common. How can we reclaim our ability to be with grief, as part of the rhythm of our lives? I sense that we must re-learn to identify where our bodies are holding grief, to make space to be with it, when this feels supportive for us.

Once we can notice where grief is sitting within our bodies, we can choose how to respond. This is a practice, not a one-time event. Grief is not limited to the death of a loved one; we can grieve the loss of our homelands, the loss of former versions of ourselves or the pain of war and state violence. Untended grief can linger, smothering our creative capacity and ability to vision, until we give it space to be acknowledged. This exercise may support you to touch into grief that might be present in your body. After the practice, you can decide how you want to be in relationship to what arises.

Lineage

This exercise is inspired by Embodied Social Change workshops that I developed using partner work and body awareness practices to explore socially engaged topics. My approach to embodiment work is rooted in mindfulness, The Resilience Toolkit, Generative Somatics and the politicized somatics space more broadly. To access rituals to tend grief, you can read my book, *Tending Grief: Embodied Rituals for Holding Our Sorrow and Growing Cultures of Care in Community* (Barton 2024).

Exercise

- 1) Find a comfortable position, such as being seated or lying down.
- 2) Play the audio recording (10 minutes).
→ This will guide you through an embodied resourcing practice and guided meditation.
- 3) After listening to the recording, you are invited to journal or draw for five to ten minutes to reflect on anything you noticed during the practice.



 **Camille Barton - Noticing Grief in the Body**
Performance Philosophy

Listen: <https://soundcloud.com/performancephilosophy/barton-noticing-grief>

Works Cited

Barton, Camille Sapara. 2024. *Tending Grief: Embodied Rituals for Holding Our Sorrow and Growing Cultures of Care in Community*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Biography

I'm a Social Imagineer, multidisciplinary artist and somatic practitioner, dedicated to co-creating networks of care and liveable futures. I work across the realms of embodied social justice, grief, harm reduction and the cultural sector. Rooted in Black feminism, ecology and harm reduction, I use creativity, alongside embodied practices, to create culture change in fields ranging from psychedelic assisted therapy to arts education. I am certified in the Resilience Toolkit—an embodiment framework to navigate stress, increase resilience and grow our collective capacity to change the conditions that create systemic harm.

In 2022, I launched the GEN Grief Toolkit—a collection of embodied grief rituals to support personal and community grief work. I am currently based in Amsterdam, working as the Director of Ecologies of Transformation, a temporary master's programme at Sandberg Institute (Amsterdam), that researches how art making and embodiment can create social change.

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