

# SACRED CONNECTIONS

## Home Funerals, Continuing Bonds, and Ritual Acts

### PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

*"Death changes the form of relationship; it does not erase the bond."*

Silent

**Name:**

**Community / tradition:**

**Date:**

Designed for selective use. Write only where the page serves you.

# HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook is intentionally generous. It is not a test, a contract, or a demand that you complete every page. Use the worksheets that match your role, your readiness, and the needs of the person or community you are serving.

**CARE NOTE:** Death planning can surface fresh grief, trauma, family conflict, or fear. Pause, skip a page, ask for support, or return later. No worksheet is more important than your well-being.

## Four ways to use the workbook

- ☐ Personal reflection: clarify your own values and continuing bonds.
- ☐ Conversation guide: complete pages with family or chosen family.
- ☐ Care planning: prepare before a crisis or expected death.
- ☐ Ritual design: shape a vigil, home funeral, remembrance practice, or altar.

## Mark your role today

- |                                                                   |                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planning for myself                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting someone who is dying       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting a grieving person             | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning for future community service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Priest / ritualist / spiritual companion | <input type="checkbox"/> Death doula or end-of-life worker     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family or chosen-family caregiver        | <input type="checkbox"/> Simply curious                        |

**IMPORTANT:** This workbook is educational and spiritual in nature. It is not medical or legal advice. Requirements for pronouncement, paperwork, transport, cooling, burial, cremation, and funeral-director involvement vary by location. Verify them locally before acting.

## My intention for using this workbook

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# CONTENTS

| SECTION | FOCUS                              | WHAT IT CONTAINS                                                                 |
|---------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I       | Opening the Circle                 | Readiness, fears, inherited messages, and personal grounding                     |
| II      | The Relationship Does Not End      | Continuing bonds, grief, and mapping a living relationship with the dead         |
| III     | Sovereignty and the Circle of Care | Consent, roles, boundaries, spiritual care, and chosen family                    |
| IV      | Begin Before the Crisis            | Documents, conversations, bedside plans, call trees, and decision-making         |
| V       | Home Funeral and Practical Care    | Local research, space, body care, supplies, disposition, and accessibility       |
| VI      | Ritual at the Threshold            | Vigils, washing, ceremony, psychopomp function, lineage, and ethical practice    |
| VII     | Continuing Bonds in Daily Life     | Altars, libations, remembrance calendars, artifacts, legacy, and difficult bonds |
| VIII    | From Reflection to Action          | A one-page master plan, thirty-day actions, resources, and notes                 |

**PRACTICAL USE:** Most worksheets are designed to stand alone. Print or share only the pages that are relevant. Keep completed medical and legal documents with the appropriate professionals and decision-makers; this workbook does not replace them.

SECTION I

# Opening the Circle

Begin with honesty rather than expertise.

*"This work begins where avoidance ends."*

## WORKSHEET 01 | OPENING THE CIRCLE

# Why Am I Here?

Name what draws you toward end-of-life work before deciding what you must do with that interest.

**What brought me to this work?**

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**What do I hope to understand, practice, repair, or offer?**

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**What would make this learning feel worthwhile?**

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**How ready do I feel to engage this subject today?**

|       |       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| [ ] 1 | [ ] 2 | [ ] 3 | [ ] 4 | [ ] 5 |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|

Not ready

Ready and grounded

## WORKSHEET 02 | OPENING THE CIRCLE

# What Am I Afraid of Getting Wrong?

Skepticism and uncertainty can be forms of ethical intelligence. Name them rather than hiding them.

☐ Causing harm☐ Breaking a law☐ Crossing a spiritual boundary☐ Appropriating a practice☐ Being overwhelmed by grief☐ Family conflict☐ Touching or seeing a dead body☐ Saying the wrong thing☐ Being judged by my community☐ Taking on too much responsibility☐ Not knowing when to call a professional☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## The fear beneath the fear

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## What information, support, or boundary would make this safer?

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## WORKSHEET 03 | OPENING THE CIRCLE

# My Inherited Messages About Death and Grief

Notice the rules you were given before choosing which ones you will keep.

**CARE NOTE:** This page may bring up family or religious pain. Complete only what feels useful.

| MESSAGE I RECEIVED | WHO / WHERE IT CAME FROM | KEEP, REVISE, OR RELEASE? |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
|                    |                          |                           |
|                    |                          |                           |
|                    |                          |                           |
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|                    |                          |                           |
|                    |                          |                           |
|                    |                          |                           |

**A new sentence I choose to live by**

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## WORKSHEET 04 | OPENING THE CIRCLE

# Grounding Before Sacred Death Work

Create a personal practice for entering and leaving emotionally charged care.

|                                                               |                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Before I begin</b><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br> | <b>When I am finished</b><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Signs that I need a pause

☐ My body feels numb or unreal

☐ I cannot focus

☐ I feel compelled to rescue or take over

☐ My own grief has become the center

☐ I am becoming angry or judgmental

☐ I am ignoring consent or boundaries

☐ I need another person present

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## People I can contact for support

| NAME | ROLE / RELATIONSHIP | CONTACT |
|------|---------------------|---------|
|      |                     |         |
|      |                     |         |
|      |                     |         |

## SECTION II

# The Relationship Does Not End

Grief may include release. It may also include learning how to hold on differently.

*"The bond may evolve without needing to be severed."*

## WORKSHEET 05 | CONTINUING BONDS

# My Continuing Bonds Inventory

Identify the ways a relationship already continues through memory, ritual, sensation, values, and ordinary life.

☐ I speak their name☐ I dream of them☐ I cook their food☐ I celebrate a date☐ I tell their stories☐ I continue work they cared about☐ I feel anger or unfinished business☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_☐ I talk to them☐ I keep photographs or objects nearby☐ I visit a grave or place☐ I feel guided by their values☐ I make offerings or pour water☐ I avoid reminders because they hurt☐ I do not experience an ongoing bond

## The bond I most want to understand

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## WORKSHEET 06 | CONTINUING BONDS

# Choose One Relationship

Use this page for a deceased beloved, ancestor, mentor, animal companion, community elder, or person of choice.

| THE PERSON / BEING | OUR RELATIONSHIP | WHEN THEY DIED (OPTIONAL) |
|--------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
|                    |                  |                           |

**What remains alive between us?**

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**What has changed?**

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**What do I wish could be spoken, witnessed, forgiven, or remembered?**

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## WORKSHEET 07 | CONTINUING BONDS

# A Relationship Map

Map the bond as it exists now, including love, conflict, silence, gratitude, responsibility, and mystery.

|                  |                         |                        |
|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| What I received  | Where they appear now   | What remains difficult |
| What I remember  | <b>THE RELATIONSHIP</b> | What I still carry     |
| What I offer now | What I want to continue | What I may release     |

What pattern do I notice?

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## WORKSHEET 08 | CONTINUING BONDS

# What Would a Healthy Bond Look Like for Me?

A continuing bond should make room for life, consent, reality, and support - not demand a single correct form.

| This bond nourishes me when... | This bond becomes difficult when... |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <br><br><br><br><br>           | <br><br><br><br><br>                |

## Practices that feel grounding rather than compulsory

☐ Speaking their name

☐ Private prayer or conversation

☐ A home altar

☐ Visiting a place

☐ Creative work

☐ Service or donation

☐ Annual observance

☐ Therapy or grief support

☐ Community ritual

☐ Taking a break from ritual

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## One boundary that will keep the practice life-giving

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## WORKSHEET 09 | CONTINUING BONDS

# Grief Without a Performance

Separate what you actually need from what other people expect grief to look like.

| OTHERS MAY EXPECT | WHAT I ACTUALLY EXPERIENCE | WHAT I NEED |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
|                   |                            |             |
|                   |                            |             |
|                   |                            |             |
|                   |                            |             |
|                   |                            |             |

## Permission I give myself

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SECTION III

# Sovereignty and the Circle of Care

The person who is dying remains the center of the work.

*"The person's voice should grow clearer as the room gets crowded."*

## WORKSHEET 10 | SOVEREIGNTY

# My End-of-Life Values Statement

Write a short statement that can guide decisions when details become uncertain.

**At the end of life, what matters most to me?**

Consider comfort, truth, privacy, relationship, autonomy, spiritual practice, place, touch, sound, and who is present.

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**Three non-negotiable values**

| 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|
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**Draft a 3-5 sentence sovereignty statement**

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**WORKSHEET 11 | CIRCLE OF CARE**

# Who Is in the Circle?

Family may mean blood, bone, culture, community, spirit, adoption, or choice.

|                           |                      |                        |
|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Medical / hospice</b>  | <b>Chosen family</b> | <b>Spiritual care</b>  |
| <b>Practical helpers</b>  | <b>DYING PERSON</b>  | <b>Decision-maker</b>  |
| <b>Children / animals</b> | <b>Community</b>     | <b>Boundary keeper</b> |

**Who is missing? Who should not be assumed to belong?**

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## WORKSHEET 12 | CIRCLE OF CARE

# Roles, Consent, and Authority

Clarity reduces conflict. No spiritual role automatically grants decision-making authority.

| PERSON | ROLE | WHAT THEY MAY DECIDE | WHAT THEY MAY NOT DECIDE |
|--------|------|----------------------|--------------------------|
|        |      |                      |                          |
|        |      |                      |                          |
|        |      |                      |                          |
|        |      |                      |                          |
|        |      |                      |                          |

**Who has final authority when the plan does not answer the question?**

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**WORKSHEET 13 | SOVEREIGNTY**

# Touch, Environment, and Presence

Translate values into sensory and relational choices.

| AREA                    | YES / PREFERRED | NO / AVOID | NOTES |
|-------------------------|-----------------|------------|-------|
| Touch                   |                 |            |       |
| Light                   |                 |            |       |
| Sound / music           |                 |            |       |
| Scent / smoke           |                 |            |       |
| Prayer / ritual         |                 |            |       |
| Photography / recording |                 |            |       |
| Visitors                |                 |            |       |
| Animals                 |                 |            |       |

## WORKSHEET 14 | CIRCLE OF CARE

# The Boundary Keeper

Choose someone who can protect the plan without becoming the center of the room.

**The boundary keeper is**

|                                                                 |                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Understands the dying person's wishes  | <input type="checkbox"/> Can say no kindly                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Will not impose their theology         | <input type="checkbox"/> Can redirect visitors                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can manage scent / photo / touch rules | <input type="checkbox"/> Knows when to call hospice or professionals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can step out when emotionally flooded  | <input type="checkbox"/> Has a backup                                |

**Words they may use when a boundary is tested**

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## WORKSHEET 15 | CIRCLE OF CARE

# What a Doula or Spiritual Companion May Offer

Define support without turning the role into authority or a sales pitch.

| Support that would be useful | Tasks or authority I do not want delegated |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <hr/>                        | <hr/>                                      |

**Credentials or lived experience that matter to me - if any**

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**Questions I would ask before inviting someone into the circle**

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## WORKSHEET 16 | SOVEREIGNTY

# Spiritual Care Preferences

Make room for specific belief, uncertainty, mixed traditions, and no belief.

| QUESTION                                        | PREFERENCE / ANSWER |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| How I understand death or the soul              |                     |
| Deities, ancestors, guides, or powers to invoke |                     |
| Traditions or symbols that belong               |                     |
| Practices or language to avoid                  |                     |
| Readings, chants, prayers, or silence           |                     |
| Who may lead or witness ritual                  |                     |
| How to respond if beliefs differ                |                     |

SECTION IV

# Begin Before the Crisis

Planning is not pessimism. It is a form of care for everyone who will have to act.

*"Simple does not mean casual."*

## WORKSHEET 17 | PREPARATION

# Essential Document Inventory

Use this as a tracking page, not as a substitute for legal or medical documents.

| DOCUMENT / INFORMATION          | EXISTS? | WHERE KEPT | WHO HAS A COPY | NEEDS ACTION |
|---------------------------------|---------|------------|----------------|--------------|
| Advance directive / living will |         |            |                |              |
| Health-care power of attorney   |         |            |                |              |
| POLST / MOLST, if appropriate   |         |            |                |              |
| HIPAA or information release    |         |            |                |              |
| Body disposition authorization  |         |            |                |              |
| Organ / tissue donation wishes  |         |            |                |              |
| Will / trust information        |         |            |                |              |
| Digital account instructions    |         |            |                |              |
| Vigil / after-death care plan   |         |            |                |              |

## WORKSHEET 18 | PREPARATION

# The Conversation I Need to Have

Plan a real conversation with the person, family, or chosen family before urgency takes over.

**Who needs to be part of the conversation?**

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**A gentle opening sentence**

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**The three most important questions**

| 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |

**What resistance do I anticipate, and how will I avoid forcing the conversation?**

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## WORKSHEET 19 | PREPARATION

# Bedside Plan

Create a brief plan for the hours or days before death.

| AREA                                       | PLAN |
|--------------------------------------------|------|
| Preferred place of care                    |      |
| Who may be present                         |      |
| Who should be called                       |      |
| Comfort, light, music, scent               |      |
| Prayer, silence, readings, touch           |      |
| Food / fluid comfort preferences           |      |
| What the dying person wants people to know |      |
| What to do if conflict arises              |      |

## WORKSHEET 20 | PREPARATION

# One-Page Vigil Charter

Post a brief version near the room so visitors do not require repeated explanations.

**This room is being held for**

| GUIDELINE                    | OUR CHOICE |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Visiting hours / capacity    |            |
| Who is welcome               |            |
| Touch and physical contact   |            |
| Photography / recording      |            |
| Scent / smoke / candles      |            |
| Food / drink / conversation  |            |
| Children / animal companions |            |
| Who answers questions        |            |
| What to do in an emergency   |            |

**A sentence visitors should hear when they enter**

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## WORKSHEET 21 | PREPARATION

# The First 6-12 Hours After Death

Translate values into a sequence. Verify local requirements before relying on this page.

| ORDER | ACTION                                                  | WHO | CONTACT / NOTES |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------|
| 1     | Pronouncement or required medical call                  |     |                 |
| 2     | Notify primary decision-maker                           |     |                 |
| 3     | Pause / closing words / silence                         |     |                 |
| 4     | Close eyes or position body, if desired and appropriate |     |                 |
| 5     | Begin cooling plan                                      |     |                 |
| 6     | Ritual washing / dressing, if chosen                    |     |                 |
| 7     | Notify close circle                                     |     |                 |
| 8     | Begin vigil / altar / room preparation                  |     |                 |
| 9     | Paperwork / transport coordination                      |     |                 |

## WORKSHEET 22 | PREPARATION

# Call Tree and Contact Sheet

Make the first calls easier by choosing who contacts whom.

| PERSON / ORGANIZATION                        | WHY / ROLE | PHONE | CALLED BY | BACKUP |
|----------------------------------------------|------------|-------|-----------|--------|
| Hospice / medical provider                   |            |       |           |        |
| Health-care agent                            |            |       |           |        |
| Funeral home / crematory / cemetery, if used |            |       |           |        |
| Death doula / spiritual companion            |            |       |           |        |
| Close family / chosen family                 |            |       |           |        |
| Community / coven / congregation             |            |       |           |        |
| Child or animal care                         |            |       |           |        |
| Transportation / practical support           |            |       |           |        |

**WORKSHEET 23 | PREPARATION**

# Decision Ladder

Create a simple way to act when stress makes every question feel urgent.

## Step 1 - Is it already in the plan?

☐ Yes: follow the plan.

☐ No: move to Step 2.

## Step 2 - Does one option clearly fit the values statement better?

☐ Yes: choose the aligned option.

☐ No: move to Step 3.

## Step 3 - Who has authority to decide?

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## Step 4 - Who facilitates a brief huddle without taking over?

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## What decisions must never be made by group pressure?

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SECTION V

# Home Funeral and Practical Care

The sacred and the practical are not opposites. Care requires both.

*"A home funeral can be family-led and still welcome professional help."*

## WORKSHEET 24 | HOME FUNERAL

# Is a Home Funeral Right for This Situation?

Explore fit without turning home care into a moral ideal.

|                                                                       |                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The dying person wants it                    | <input type="checkbox"/> The household agrees                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The space is accessible                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooling can be managed                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local requirements have been checked         | <input type="checkbox"/> The circle can share the labor                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional backup is available             | <input type="checkbox"/> Children / animals can be supported             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The plan respects neighbors or housing rules | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation is understood                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The emotional burden feels manageable        | <input type="checkbox"/> A funeral home may still be involved as desired |

## Reasons it may fit

## Reasons another setting may be kinder

## WORKSHEET 25 | HOME FUNERAL

# Local Law and Procedure Research

Complete this with current state, county, city, hospice, and disposition information.

| QUESTION                                  | ANSWER | SOURCE / CONTACT | DATE VERIFIED |
|-------------------------------------------|--------|------------------|---------------|
| Who may pronounce the death?              |        |                  |               |
| Who files the death certificate?          |        |                  |               |
| Is funeral-director involvement required? |        |                  |               |
| Rules for keeping the body at home?       |        |                  |               |
| Cooling or timing requirements?           |        |                  |               |
| Transit / disposition permit?             |        |                  |               |
| May family transport the body?            |        |                  |               |
| Home burial or zoning rules?              |        |                  |               |
| Crematory / cemetery requirements?        |        |                  |               |

WORKSHEET 26 | PRACTICAL CARE

# The Room as Sacred Container

Plan for dignity, access, temperature, movement, and ritual.

| CONSIDERATION                    | PLAN |
|----------------------------------|------|
| Room / location                  |      |
| Body placement                   |      |
| Seating and circulation          |      |
| Accessibility and mobility needs |      |
| Ventilation / temperature        |      |
| Lighting                         |      |
| Altar or memory table            |      |
| Water, towels, supplies          |      |
| Privacy from windows / visitors  |      |
| Children / animal safety         |      |

Sketch the room

## WORKSHEET 27 | PRACTICAL CARE

# Supplies and Cooling Research

Record the actual plan provided by qualified local guidance or providers.

| CATEGORY                      | ITEM / METHOD | SOURCE | WHO OBTAINS IT | NOTES |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--------|----------------|-------|
| Cooling                       |               |        |                |       |
| Protective pads / linens      |               |        |                |       |
| Washing supplies              |               |        |                |       |
| Clothing / shroud             |               |        |                |       |
| Gloves or protective supplies |               |        |                |       |
| Candles / safe lighting       |               |        |                |       |
| Flowers / herbs / scent       |               |        |                |       |
| Transport / vessel            |               |        |                |       |
| Paperwork folder              |               |        |                |       |

**SAFETY:** Do not rely on generic quantities or timing from a conference handout. Use local professional guidance for body cooling, infectious-disease precautions, and transport requirements.

## WORKSHEET 28 | PRACTICAL CARE

# Ritual Washing and Dressing Plan

Choose who participates, what consent means, and how dignity will be protected.

| QUESTION                               | PLAN |
|----------------------------------------|------|
| Who has permission to participate?     |      |
| Who leads the practical care?          |      |
| Who leads or speaks ritual?            |      |
| What areas of the body will be washed? |      |
| What clothing or shroud is chosen?     |      |
| What words, song, prayer, or silence?  |      |
| What scents or oils are welcome?       |      |
| What must be avoided?                  |      |
| How will privacy be protected?         |      |

## WORKSHEET 29 | PRACTICAL CARE

# The Vessel as a Final Offering

Design a shroud, casket, basket, urn, or other locally permitted vessel.

☐ Simple cloth shroud☐ Handmade or decorated shroud☐ Wood casket☐ Wicker / natural-fiber vessel☐ Cremation container☐ Urn☐ Provider-supplied vessel☐ Other locally permitted option**Materials, colors, symbols, texts, herbs, stitching, or objects**

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**Who may contribute, and how?**

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**Sketch or design notes**

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## WORKSHEET 30 | PRACTICAL CARE

# Disposition and Transport Plan

Hold ecological, spiritual, financial, and legal values together.

| OPTION                                     | INTEREST / DECISION | PROVIDER / LOCATION | COST / QUESTIONS |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Conventional burial                        |                     |                     |                  |
| Green burial                               |                     |                     |                  |
| Flame cremation                            |                     |                     |                  |
| Alkaline hydrolysis, where available       |                     |                     |                  |
| Natural organic reduction, where available |                     |                     |                  |
| Home burial, where permitted               |                     |                     |                  |
| Donation / other lawful option             |                     |                     |                  |

## Transportation responsibility and permit plan

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## WORKSHEET 31 | PRACTICAL CARE

# Children and Young People

Offer truth, choice, and a place in the circle without forcing participation.

| CHILD / YOUNG PERSON | AGE / NEEDS | WHAT THEY WANT TO KNOW | OPTIONAL ROLE | SUPPORT PERSON |
|----------------------|-------------|------------------------|---------------|----------------|
|                      |             |                        |               |                |
|                      |             |                        |               |                |
|                      |             |                        |               |                |

☐ Use clear words such as died / dead

☐ Answer only the question asked

☐ Offer choices, not obligations

☐ Explain what the body may look or feel like

☐ Allow leaving and returning

☐ Provide art, song, flowers, stones, or candles

☐ Expect grief to come in ripples

☐ Arrange a trusted adult just for them

## Words I will use

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## WORKSHEET 32 | PRACTICAL CARE

# Accessibility and Inclusion

Design death care around actual bodies, communication needs, identities, and relationships.

☐ Wheelchair / mobility access

☐ Low vision / lighting

☐ Communication or cognitive access

☐ Scent-free needs

☐ Language / interpreter needs

☐ Pronouns and correct naming

☐ Financial limitations

☐ Remote participation

☐ Seating and fatigue needs

☐ Deaf / hard-of-hearing access

☐ Sensory sensitivity

☐ Food / allergy considerations

☐ Chosen-family recognition

☐ Religious trauma considerations

☐ Transportation / parking

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Specific accommodations and who will arrange them

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SECTION VI

# Ritual at the Threshold

Small, truthful acts become ritual when they are carried with attention.

*"A vigil is not a performance. It is shared attention around a threshold."*

**WORKSHEET 33 | RITUAL DESIGN**

# Ritual Intention

Name the purpose before selecting tools, deities, songs, or beautiful language.

**This ritual exists to...**

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**The person or relationship at the center is...**

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**Participants should leave feeling or knowing...**

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**The ritual must not become...**

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WORKSHEET 34 | RITUAL DESIGN

# Vigil Flow

Build a flexible sequence that can breathe with grief and circumstance.

| MOVEMENT                      | WHAT HAPPENS | WHO HOLDS IT | ESTIMATED TIME |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Arrival / settling            |              |              |                |
| Opening the space             |              |              |                |
| Silence / presence            |              |              |                |
| Story / song / reading        |              |              |                |
| Care of the body, if included |              |              |                |
| Offerings / libation          |              |              |                |
| Names / remembrances          |              |              |                |
| Closing / release of the room |              |              |                |

Where may the flow change or stop entirely?

## WORKSHEET 35 | RITUAL DESIGN

# The Psychopomp as a Ritual Function

Explore accompaniment without assuming a title, cosmology, or authority.

- |                                                     |                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Literal spiritual guide    | <input type="checkbox"/> Deity or sacred being        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ancestor or beloved dead   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mortal ritual companion      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archetype of accompaniment | <input type="checkbox"/> Poetic language for presence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not part of this rite      |                                                       |

**What does accompaniment mean in this tradition or family?**

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**What words or actions open the path?**

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**What closes the liminal space?**

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## WORKSHEET 36 | RITUAL DESIGN

# Sound, Story, and Silence

Choose what serves the person rather than filling every quiet moment.

| ELEMENT              | CHOICE | WHO OFFERS IT | WHEN |
|----------------------|--------|---------------|------|
| Opening words        |        |               |      |
| Prayer / invocation  |        |               |      |
| Reading              |        |               |      |
| Song / chant / music |        |               |      |
| Story circle prompt  |        |               |      |
| Shared silence       |        |               |      |
| Closing words        |        |               |      |

## A silence I do not need to rescue

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WORKSHEET 37 | RITUAL ETHICS

# Lineage, Culture, and Permission

Practice from relationship and responsibility, not from a spiritual marketplace.

| PRACTICE / SYMBOL | MY RELATIONSHIP TO IT | SOURCE / TEACHER | PERMISSION / CONTEXT | KEEP, LEARN, OR RELEASE |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
|                   |                       |                  |                      |                         |
|                   |                       |                  |                      |                         |
|                   |                       |                  |                      |                         |
|                   |                       |                  |                      |                         |
|                   |                       |                  |                      |                         |

What can I offer from my own lineage, practice, community, or lived relationship?

**ETHICAL PRACTICE:** Naming another culture's ritual in a presentation is not the same as being authorized to reproduce it. When uncertain, learn, credit, ask, compensate teachers, or choose a practice rooted in your own relationships.

## WORKSHEET 38 | RITUAL DESIGN

# Libation: We Pour Water

Design a simple act of relationship through water, naming, gratitude, and presence.

| ELEMENT                               | MY CHOICE |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Who or what receives the libation?    |           |
| Where will water be poured or placed? |           |
| What words or names are spoken?       |           |
| What vessel is used?                  |           |
| What happens to the water afterward?  |           |
| Who may participate?                  |           |
| How is the act opened and closed?     |           |

## Words I might use

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**WORKSHEET 39 | RITUAL ETHICS**

# Learning from Kispum Without Flattening It

Receive the example as an invitation to depth, not as a generic ritual template.

**What about this practice speaks to me?**

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**What belongs specifically to Silent's reconstructionist practice and should not be treated as universal?**

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**What practice of tending the dead already exists in my own lineage, household, community, or chosen tradition?**

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**What do I need to study before acting?**

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WORKSHEET 40 | RITUAL DESIGN

# Closing the Vigil

A threshold should be closed as deliberately as it is opened.

| QUESTION                                                | PLAN |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------|
| What signals that the vigil is ending?                  |      |
| Who speaks the closing words?                           |      |
| What happens to candles, water, offerings, and flowers? |      |
| How is the body or vessel prepared for the next step?   |      |
| How are participants grounded before leaving?           |      |
| Who remains for practical cleanup?                      |      |
| What follow-up care is offered?                         |      |

Closing words or gesture

SECTION VII

# Continuing Bonds in Daily Life

The ritual does not have to end when the room is cleared.

*"Relationship stays embodied when memory becomes an act."*

WORKSHEET 41 | CONTINUING BONDS

# Design a Home Altar or Memory Place

An altar may be devotional, relational, symbolic, temporary, secular, or unnecessary.

| ELEMENT                             | CHOICE / MEANING |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Location                            |                  |
| Photograph or image                 |                  |
| Water / libation vessel             |                  |
| Candle or safe light                |                  |
| Objects / artifacts                 |                  |
| Flowers / plants / food             |                  |
| Names / written words               |                  |
| Care schedule                       |                  |
| Boundaries for visitors / household |                  |

Sketch the space

## WORKSHEET 42 | CONTINUING BONDS

# A Remembrance Calendar

Choose a rhythm that supports relationship without becoming an obligation.

| DATE / RHYTHM              | WHO / WHAT IS REMEMBERED | PRACTICE | WHO PARTICIPATES |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Birthday / death day       |                          |          |                  |
| Dark Moon / lunar rhythm   |                          |          |                  |
| Seasonal festival          |                          |          |                  |
| Family or community date   |                          |          |                  |
| Monthly practice           |                          |          |                  |
| Annual pilgrimage or visit |                          |          |                  |
| Spontaneous remembrance    |                          |          |                  |

## WORKSHEET 43 | CONTINUING BONDS

# Artifacts and Stories

Objects matter because relationship gathers around them - not because every object must be preserved.

| OBJECT / STORY | WHY IT MATTERS | WHERE IT WILL LIVE | WHO SHOULD KNOW |
|----------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
|                |                |                    |                 |
|                |                |                    |                 |
|                |                |                    |                 |
|                |                |                    |                 |
|                |                |                    |                 |
|                |                |                    |                 |

**What may be released, donated, shared, or photographed instead of kept?**

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**WORKSHEET 44 | CONTINUING BONDS**

# Meals, Music, and Ordinary Life

Continuing bonds often live best in repeated, ordinary acts.

| MEMORY / PRACTICE           | WHEN | WHAT I WILL DO | WHO MAY JOIN |
|-----------------------------|------|----------------|--------------|
| Recipe or favorite food     |      |                |              |
| Song or playlist            |      |                |              |
| Place or walk               |      |                |              |
| Joke, phrase, or story      |      |                |              |
| Craft, game, or hobby       |      |                |              |
| Service, donation, or cause |      |                |              |

**One act they would cheer**


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## WORKSHEET 45 | CONTINUING BONDS

# Living Legacy

Choose a value to embody rather than trying to preserve a person unchanged.

**A quality, teaching, or courage I received from them**

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**Where this value is needed now**

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| SMALL ACT | MONTHLY PRACTICE | LONGER COMMITMENT |
|-----------|------------------|-------------------|
|           |                  |                   |

**How I will tell the story of why this matters**

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## WORKSHEET 46 | CONTINUING BONDS

# Digital Remembrance and Digital Assets

Plan both the emotional and administrative life of online material.

| AREA                                     | DECISION / ACTION | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Social media memorialization or deletion |                   |                    |
| Photos / cloud storage                   |                   |                    |
| Email and messages                       |                   |                    |
| Websites / domains / publications        |                   |                    |
| Password manager / account access        |                   |                    |
| Online communities to notify             |                   |                    |
| Digital memorial or archive              |                   |                    |
| Privacy and consent boundaries           |                   |                    |

## WORKSHEET 47 | CONTINUING BONDS

# Ambivalent, Harmful, or Unfinished Bonds

A continuing bond does not require idealization, forgiveness, contact, or ritual closeness.

**CARE NOTE:** Use support from a therapist, spiritual director, grief counselor, or trusted person when the relationship involved abuse, trauma, coercion, or danger.

| What was real or meaningful | What was harmful or cannot be reconciled |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <hr/>                       | <hr/>                                    |

**The distance or boundary I need now**

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**A form of remembrance that does not betray me**

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**What I am not required to forgive, explain, or carry**

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## WORKSHEET 48 | CONTINUING BONDS

# Community Remembrance Gathering

Design a gathering that distributes care rather than turning grief into a performance.

| ELEMENT                              | PLAN |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| Purpose                              |      |
| Who is invited                       |      |
| Accessibility / remote participation |      |
| Opening and agreements               |      |
| Stories / names / music              |      |
| Food or shared offering              |      |
| Children / chosen family roles       |      |
| Closing and follow-up                |      |
| Who handles practical tasks          |      |

SECTION VIII

# From Reflection to Action

Carry only what is useful. Make the next step small enough to be real.

*"Write one name. Remember one gift. Ask how you will continue the bond."*

## WORKSHEET 49 | ACTION

# The One-Page Master Plan

Bring the essential choices onto one page and share it with the appropriate people.

| CATEGORY                      | ESSENTIAL ANSWER |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| The person / plan is for      |                  |
| Primary decision-maker        |                  |
| Backup decision-maker         |                  |
| Primary spokesperson          |                  |
| Boundary keeper               |                  |
| What matters most             |                  |
| Where care should happen      |                  |
| Who is welcome / not welcome  |                  |
| Spiritual and ritual wishes   |                  |
| First calls after death       |                  |
| After-death care choice       |                  |
| Disposition plan              |                  |
| Where documents are kept      |                  |
| One continuing-bonds practice |                  |

## WORKSHEET 50 | ACTION

# My Next 30 Days

Move from a meaningful workshop to a few completed actions.

| ACTION                                  | BY WHEN | WHO / SUPPORT | DONE |
|-----------------------------------------|---------|---------------|------|
| Have one conversation                   |         |               | [ ]  |
| Verify one local requirement            |         |               | [ ]  |
| Locate or update one document           |         |               | [ ]  |
| Choose a decision-maker / backup        |         |               | [ ]  |
| Write a values statement                |         |               | [ ]  |
| Create or tend one remembrance practice |         |               | [ ]  |
| Share the relevant pages                |         |               | [ ]  |
| Other:                                  |         |               | [ ]  |

## The smallest action I can take within 48 hours

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## WORKSHEET 51 | ACTION

# Questions for Local Professionals

Use these questions with hospice, medical providers, funeral homes, cemeteries, crematories, attorneys, or home-funeral guides.

|                                                                                  |                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> What requirements apply in this county and state?       | <input type="checkbox"/> Who handles pronouncement and the death certificate?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What may the family legally do themselves?              | <input type="checkbox"/> What services can be purchased individually?          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What is the itemized price?                             | <input type="checkbox"/> What happens if death occurs at home?                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What cooling or timing guidance do you provide?         | <input type="checkbox"/> What permits are needed for transport or disposition? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can chosen family participate and receive information?  | <input type="checkbox"/> What accessibility accommodations are available?      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What practices or items are prohibited by the facility? | <input type="checkbox"/> Who is the after-hours contact?                       |

## Notes from conversations

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## WORKSHEET 52 | RESOURCES

# Resource and Referral Page

Keep official sources, local contacts, books, teachers, and community referrals in one place.

**National Home Funeral Alliance** <https://www.homefuneralalliance.org/>

Home-funeral education, directories, and state-specific starting points.

**Funeral Consumers Alliance** <https://funerals.org/>

Consumer education, local affiliates, price and planning information.

**Federal Trade Commission - Funeral Rule** <https://www.ftc.gov/legal-library/browse/rules/funeral-industry-practices-rule>

Federal consumer protections when purchasing funeral goods and services.

**International End of Life Doula Association** <https://inelda.org/>

End-of-life doula education and practitioner information.

**To Keep Silent** <https://www.tokeepsilent.me/>

Silent's writing and resources on sacred work, grief, ritual, and presence.

## Local and community resources

| RESOURCE / PERSON | ROLE | CONTACT / LINK | NOTES |
|-------------------|------|----------------|-------|
|                   |      |                |       |
|                   |      |                |       |
|                   |      |                |       |
|                   |      |                |       |

Use this page for images, floor plans, prayers, names, symbols, questions, or anything that does not yet have a category.

# THE RELATIONSHIP DOES NOT END.

*Death changes the form of relationship; it does not erase the bond.*

**Write one name.**

**Remember one gift.**

**Choose one way to continue the bond.**

Silent | [ToKeepSilent.me](https://ToKeepSilent.me)