

**SOULand: Grief Composting Circle Basic Training in
San Luis Obispo 2018
TESTIMONIES of Trainees**

Azul brings her bundle of medicine and weaves even trainings into ritual space. A true emissary of Water, she moves fluidly through a depth of knowledge, sharing the wisdoms of her teachers as well as her own gorgeous gifts to the sacred work of grief tending: The alchemy of compost, the generative darkness, the beauty of art. I felt such gratitude for this offering and how she embodied it as both guide and participant.

Grief Compositing Circle allowed me to step into an experience of what a true village might be like. I felt held by the sacred container meticulously tended by Azul and the group. I was able to melt into the sweet holding of darkness. I now know in my bones how truly we are needed to bring our grief to each other and to the circle to be metabolized for the health of community

Kristhina Andy

My experience of the grief circle as a participant began when I received an email with the long list of items required for attendance. The original annoyance at the task quickly faded as I began to thumb through photos and collect remembrances of those I have loved, inflamed me and broken my heart. I hadn't even stepped through the door and had already begun to feel my chest alternatively swell and break with sorrow and deep gratitude for the people and things

Jon Wise

My grief composting training experience was far beyond what I had been dreaming about. It was a powerful shared learning, a strengthening of the threads that connect us, a cultural repair which we can echo out with each circle we lead together. I feel blessed to be part of a local group consciously working together to create spaces to metabolize grief so we can all show up as our biggest and brightest self.

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The grief composting circle was a rich deep weaving with the other members of my circle. This ritual to the community aspect of grieving to a whole new level as we followed the energy in the circle. The safety and non-judgemental nature of darkness created the conditions for extraordinary release of individual and communal grief. We were like instrument of grief riffing of an other. Exquisite!

Azul's Grief Composting training opened the door for me to be moved in ways that I did not anticipate. I arrived with a heart burdened by the usual mix of frustration, disillusionment and rage that I carry silently in my daily life and I left with a lightness and gentle curiosity about the gifts and opportunities that my challenges and ancestral/familial traumas have gifted me if I am able to see into them more deeply. The biggest messages

- 1- when I take my personal history less seriously and instead see it as part of the larger human story I can make peace with the world, my disappointments in humanity and my self-judgement.
- 2- I am not alone. We are all more similar than we think we are. And we are we are trying to come to terms with this human condition in ways that can be supportive to each other when we act as witnesses to each other's experiences and suffering. I now feel more connected to my community, the other individuals with whom I participated in the training, myself and my ancestors.

Thank you Azul for touching my heart and for helping me to connect with a community of likeminded searching souls. I feel inspired to continue exploring the dark places we all share in our collective human heart.

Tomas

This is a sacred space. A space of myth and archetype, remembering the soul of the earth and bringing our wounds to her for a process of alchemy.

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The ritual takes place in darkness, the darkness of deep time ancestors in caves...the container is strongly created so that, when we go into the darkness, we are held safe within the womb of earth.

Here it is safe to release, to be wild, to give over to voice, allowing the ebb and flow of emotion to wash over you and carry you through a full movement. Here your grief can flow through instead of remaining trapped inside. Here our shadows become nourishment and through our collective alchemy are re-metabolized and metamorphose into the gifts that nourish us. It is fierce work of existential importance, capable of healing not only ourselves but all the brokenness of our culture.

The earth is so hungry for this work. This is how we feed her, this is how we call back the exiled.

The ritual will leave you cleansed, with the sense of powerful tidal energies that have moved through you. The ritual will leave you spacious, with more of an ability to hold complexity and contradictions.

It won't fix anything but it will metabolize and transform your grief and call you back into your inheritance as essential member of the village.

Shante

The Grief Composting Circle is an experience of integrity, wild nature release, patience, depth, honouring, witness, knowing, wisdom. The container created facilitates safety, permission, connection, renewal to our inner and outer ecosystems and relations. I will forever cherish this circle.

Feedback for you Azul: I feel great gratitude for your coming here, your abundant sharing of your heart's knowing of ceremonial ways. The study of heart, body, mind and soul that you have walked and leads you here now is a path I bow before and offer my thanks and praise and support and love. I feel saturated with both learnings & experiences. I feel capable of continuing to learn and walk this way with our own co-creative grief rituals and GCC's that will live here. I

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appreciate the way you've delivered the material in this shortened time and also will miss the creative/eARTh aspect. You are always welcome here! I am so blessed to be woven in this sacred Golden Thread. Thank you from beginning all the way to the pluriverses and back

Having just experienced my first Grief Composting ritual with Azul, I feel moved into a place I have never quite experienced before. Not only was I able to experience my personal grief for my own loss I moved into my meta-grief, that which I feel for our culture, our children, our relationships with our water, air, soil, valleys and mountains, birds, fishes, four legged, our peace and kindness. Great longing and sorrow emerged. Loss of the sacred masculine as well as the sacred feminine. In all this loss and longing I was held in love and safety so that I could fully experience it without fear. The darkness and ritual involved added to my perception of safety and allowed me to unabashedly express myself.

Azul has the gift of a great teacher and Earth healer. One who calls out the best in other with clarity, compassion and truth telling

Seeley

I highly recommend the Grief Composting training even if you are not sure if you will hold circles in the near future.

To me this work is essential to community and in healing the generations of pain. It is not something "extra", or work without deeply rooted significance and impact. What greater gift is there to bring to our starved communities than that of renewal, transformation, release and true connection? The learning is deep, continual; a life's journey of wisdom. Let this be your start.

In many Western cultures, grief is minimised, shamed, personalised and limited. It can take much personal unlearning and relearning to feel free and comfortable in the ever flowing waters of the grief of life, but it is the most essential work – for us as individuals, our

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communities, families and future generations: there seems to me to be no greater or more necessary work. I invite you to come and see.

To Azul: I greatly appreciated the wealth of your experience and wisdom in anchoring the circles and teaching. Perhaps having the training booklet ahead of time to make notes there and more to gather the sacred items would be appreciated. It was a great learning in flow and trust. Thank you.