

# The Five Gates of Grief <sup>1</sup>

Francis Weller describes *five gates* — ways grief enters our lives:

## 1. Everything we love, we will lose.

“Grief is the cost of loving. Every person, animal, and place we cherish will one day be lost to us.”

## 2. The places that never received love.

“We grieve the unlived life — the parts of ourselves denied, abandoned, or forgotten.”

## 3. The sorrows of the world.

“We carry in our bones the grief of the world — forests burning, oceans rising, children in hunger.”

## 4. What we expected but did not receive.

“We grieve the love and attention that never came — from parents, culture, or God.”

## 5. Ancestral grief.

“Our ancestors’ unresolved sorrows are woven into our cells. To heal, we must feel what they could not.”

### Reflection:

These gates are maps of both personal and collective suffering. Grieving consciously through them helps release what is frozen in the body and restore vitality to the heart.

Storytelling in small groups or personal reflection. One by one, each person shares their answer to the first prompt below. Then go to the next prompt and so forth. A person can pass.

- 1) **Share about one of The Five Gates of Grief that caught your attention. Say more...**
- 2) **Tell about a time of grief and loss in your life. What happened? What did you learn?**
- 3) **Share about your family grief: of your grandparents, parents, siblings, children, relatives, and ancestors.** How does your ancestral grief show up in your life? How do you heal this intergenerational grief?

Check out and download more small group storytelling reflections and prompts at:

<https://lifesjourney.us/storytelling-in-small-groups-menu/>

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Weller, *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*, using ChatGPT to summarize, October 2025.