

remembering
for good

wholehearted living after loss



The Workbook

Week 1: The Basics

- So if grieving and living wholeheartedly after loss is simply a process of learning, how do you feel about learning?
- Has it been easy/ hard for you?
- What does a typical “learning journey” look like for you? Do you prepare or take a crash-course at the last minute? Do you prefer learning by doing or learning by reading or learning by talking to others?
- Have you felt supported in your learning in the past or has it been a difficult, lonely or scary process?

What do you need in order to learn easily and well, and to enjoy the process? What do you specifically need from this group?

Week 1: The Basics

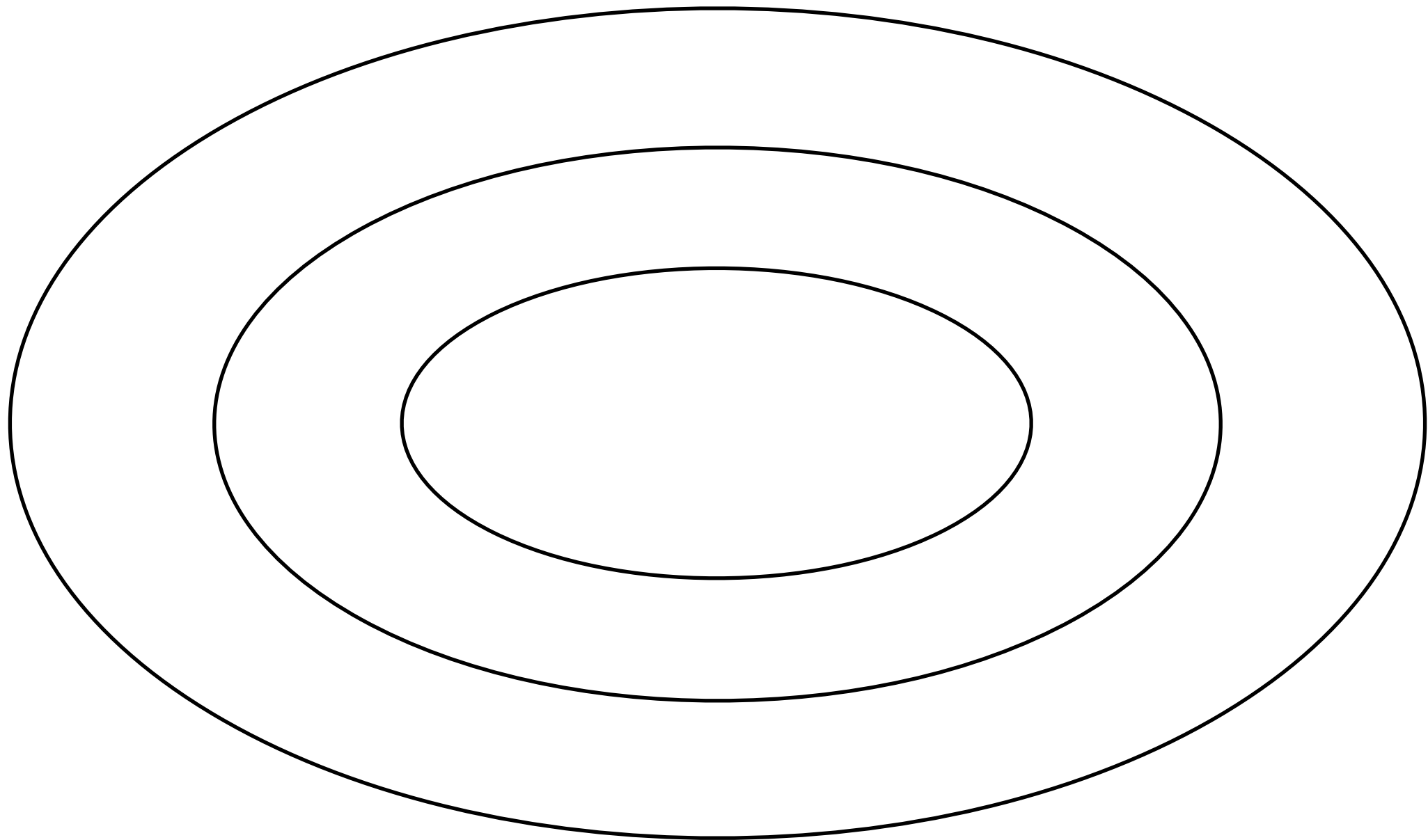
What does compassionate community mean to you? How would you like this group to demonstrate itself as a compassionate community?

Week 2: Meeting Our Losses

Introduce us to your loss... what or who have you lost? Write that in the middle circle. If you've had a series of losses then just pick one main loss for now.

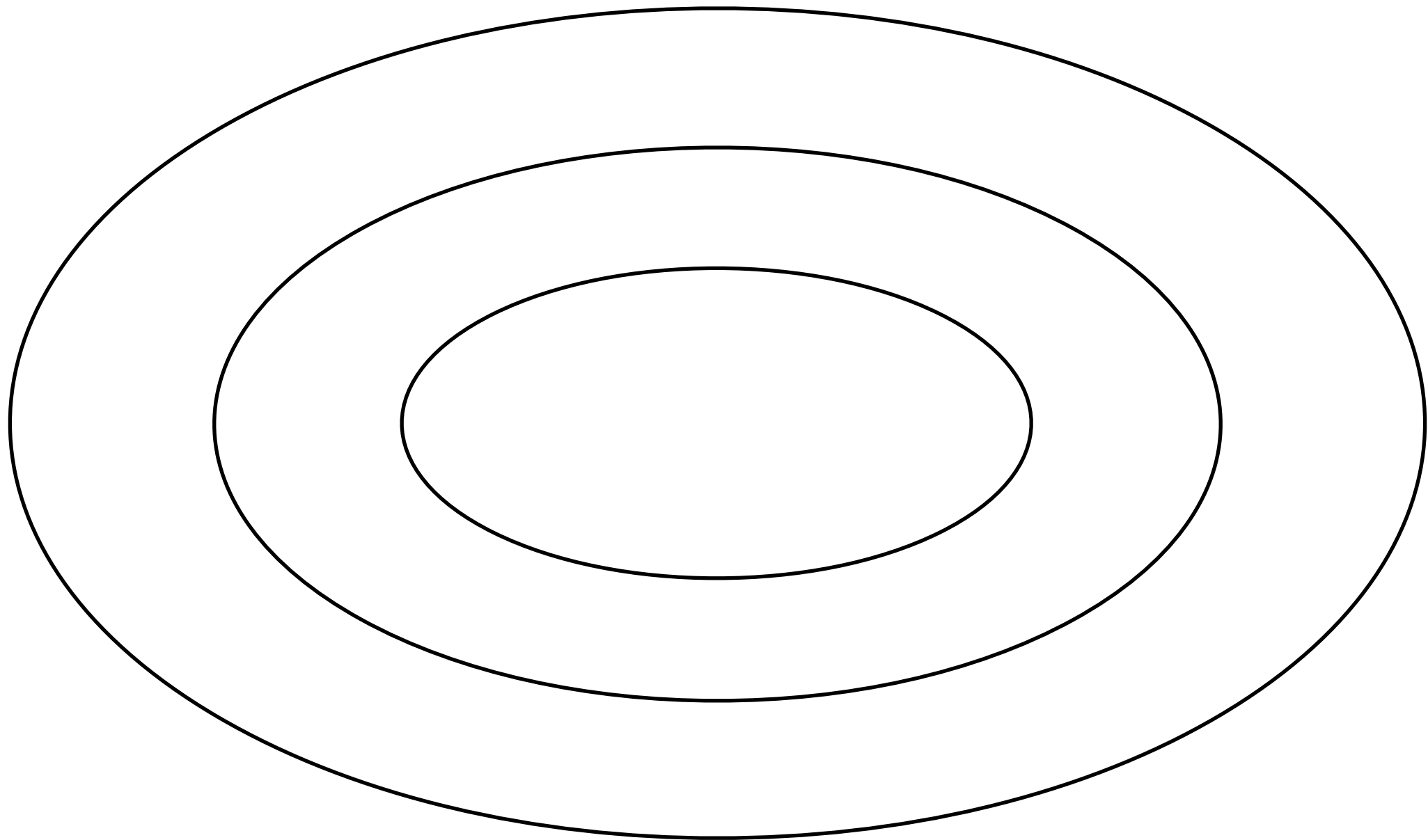
In the next circle: what have you lost because of that loss?

In the next circle: what are you afraid of losing, and where have you been "holding yourself back" because of those losses?



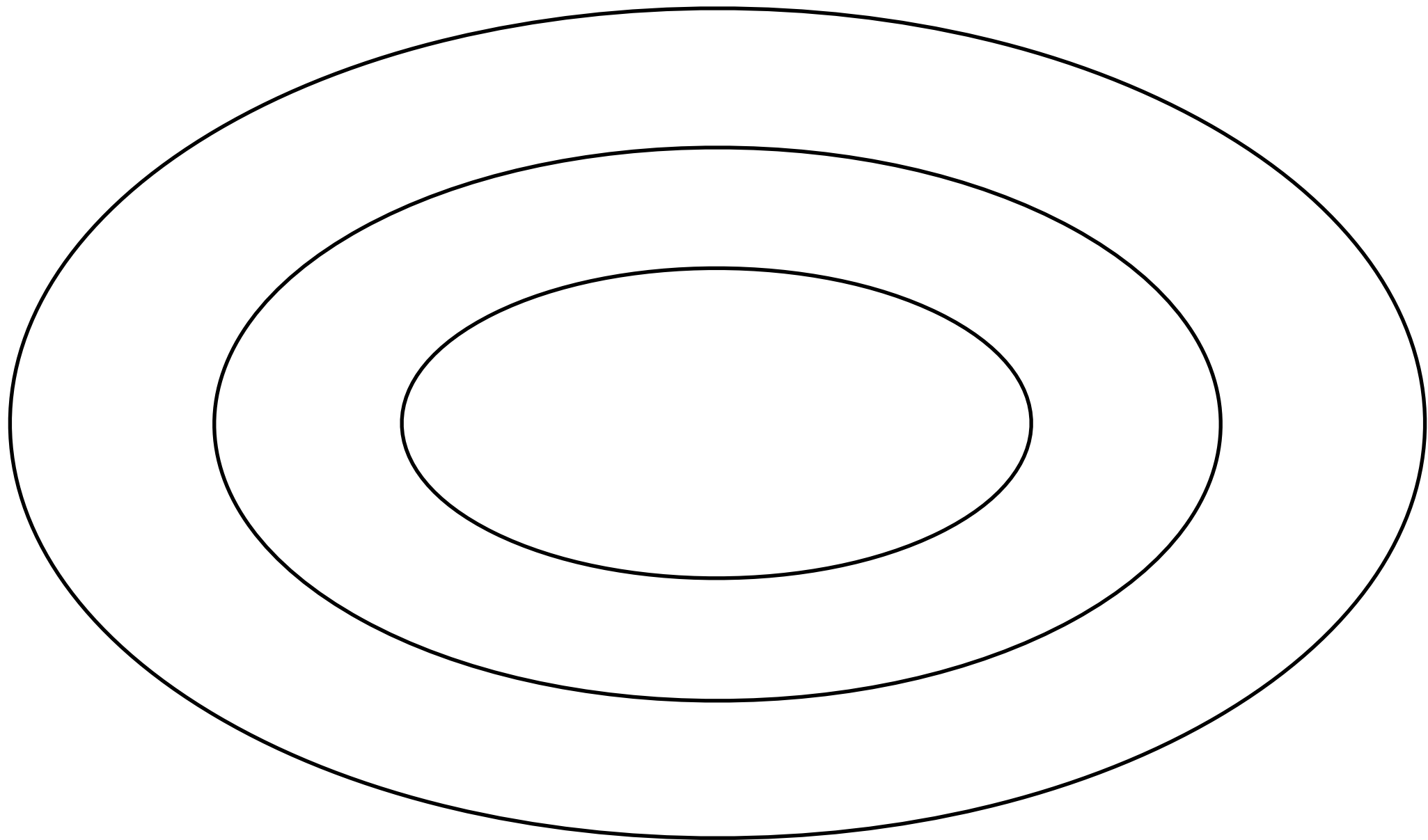
Week 2: Meeting Our Losses

Our losses can often feel harder when we've had a series of big losses over the years... use the next few pages to create a ripple of losses for each of the losses that you've lived through.



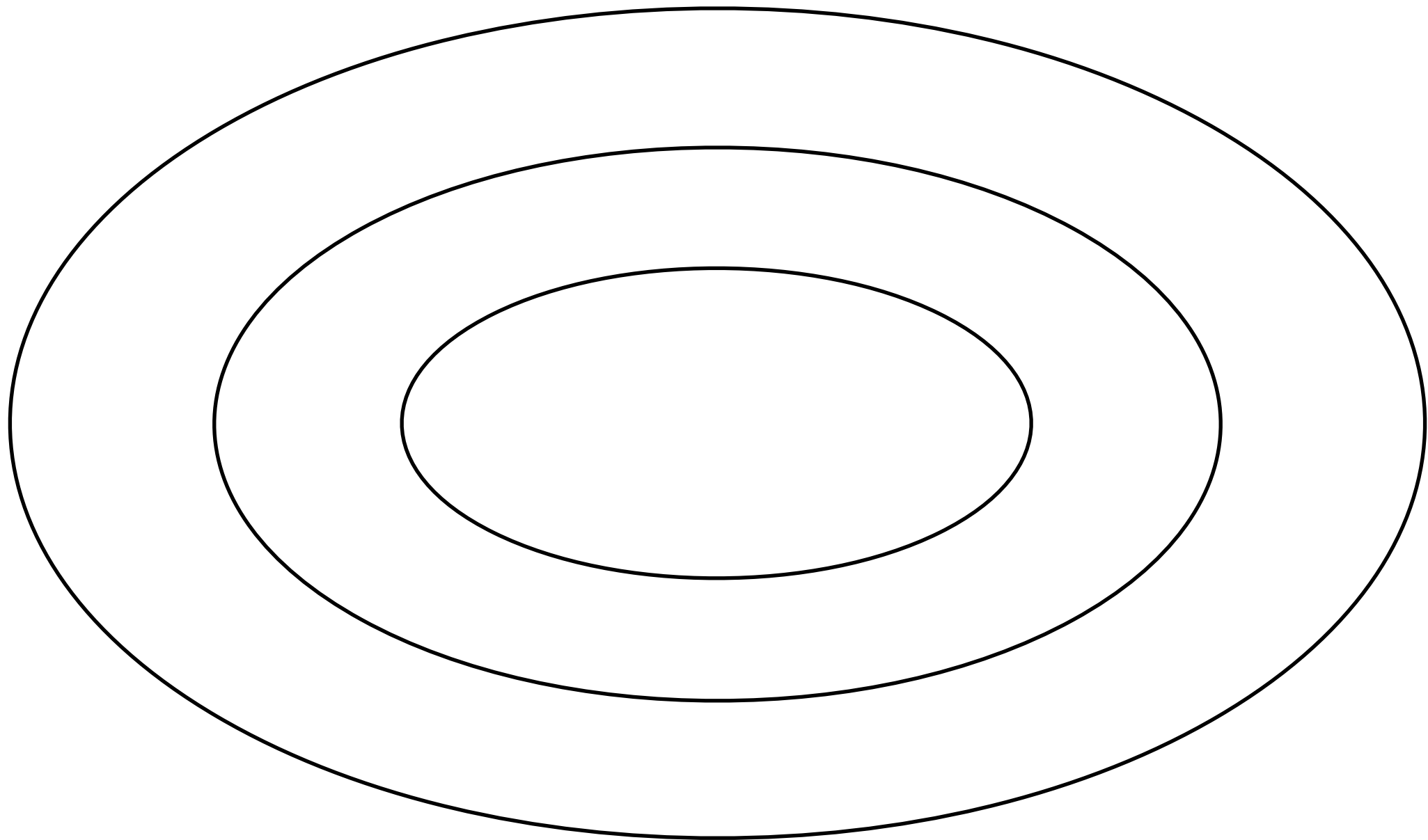
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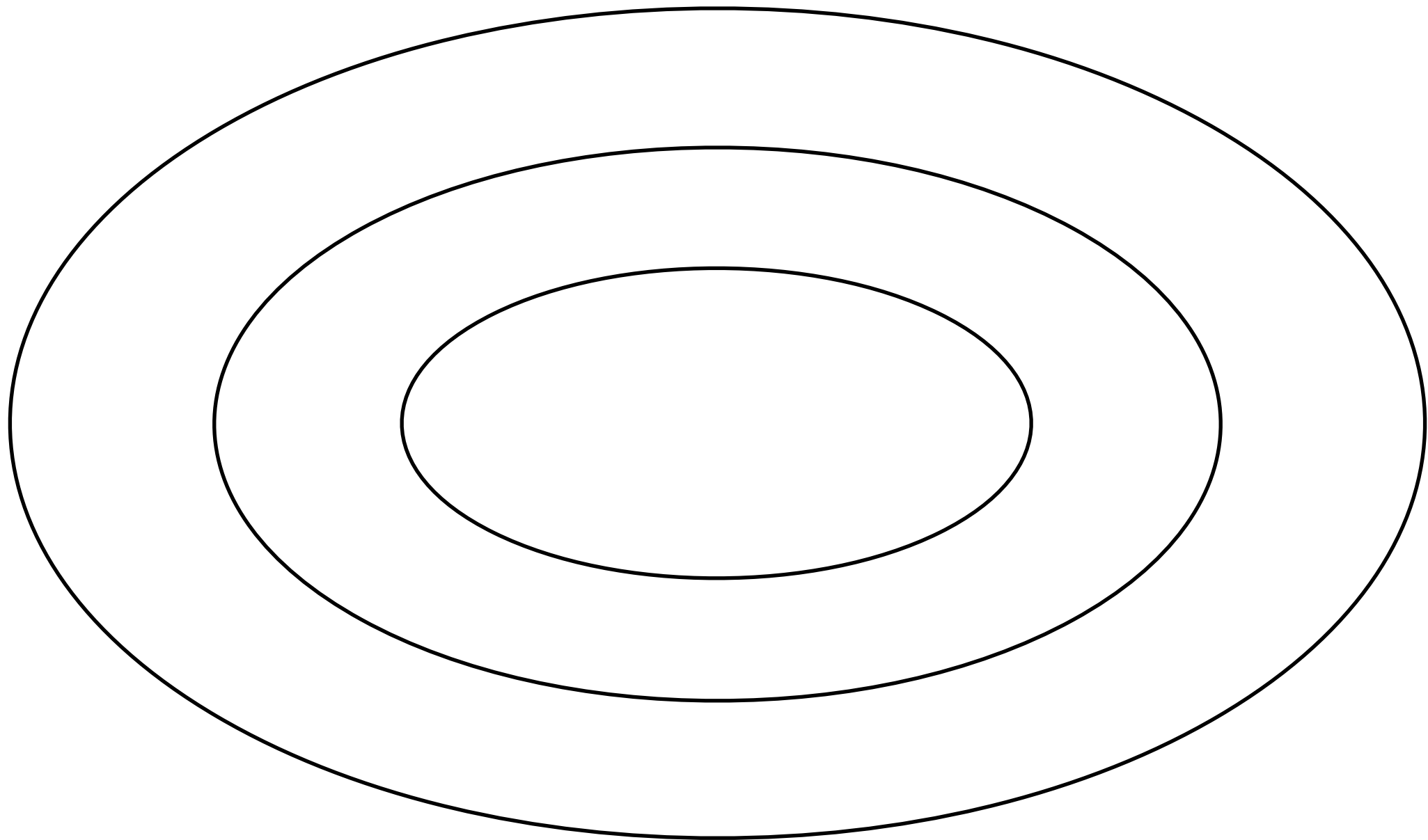
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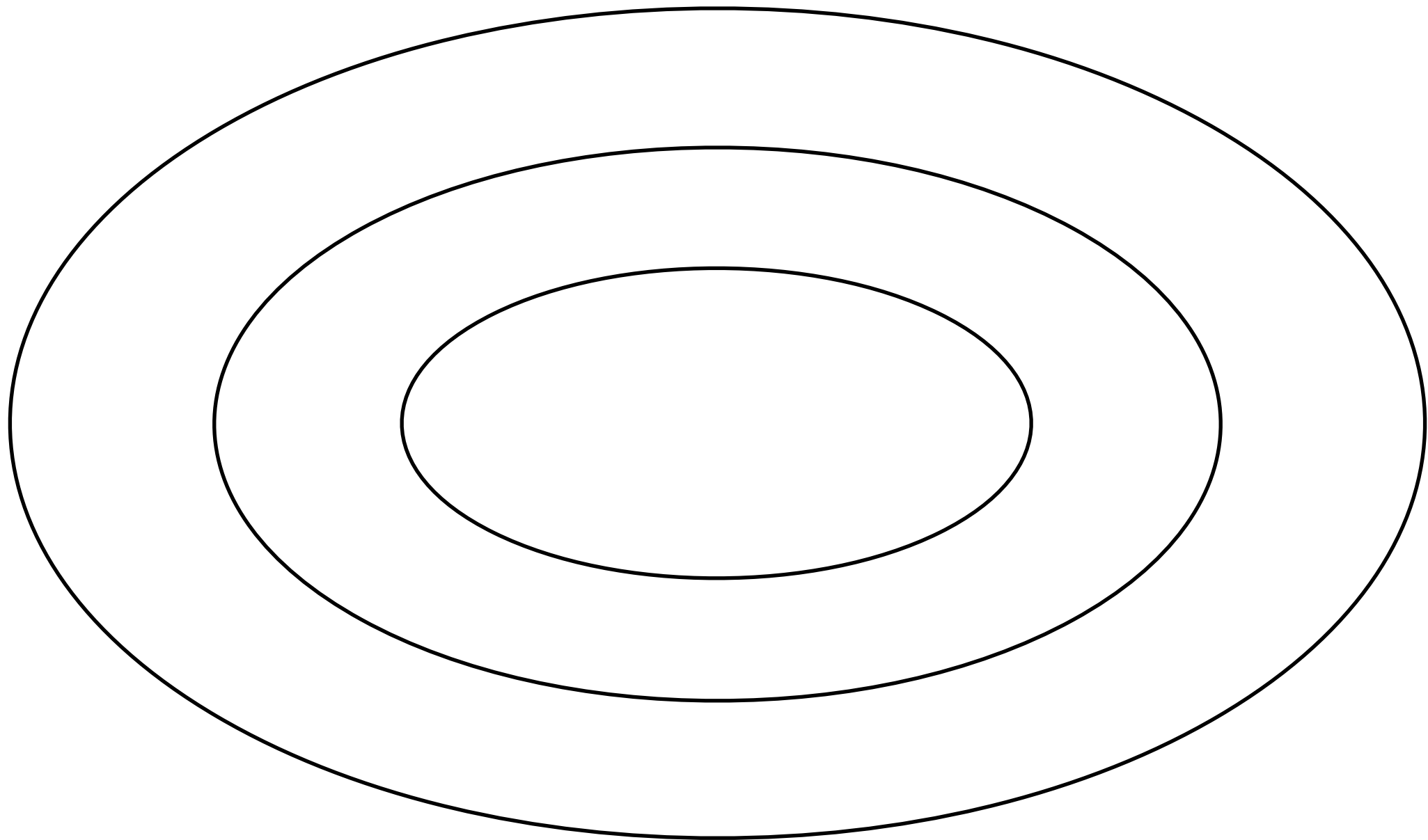
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Week 2: Meeting Our Losses

- Which losses feel like they've been invisible to others?
- Which losses feel like you've not allowed yourself permission to experience them as a loss?
- Which losses feel "high-stigma"?

Week 2: Meeting Our Losses

Relationship with Grief

- If your grief was another person with whom you have a relationship, how would you describe your relationship? Is it comfortable, awkward, familiar, conflicted, friendly, torturous? What are the qualities of your relationship?
- Do you feel any shame about your relationship with grief? What are the characteristics of your relationship with grief that you feel ashamed about? What are the characteristics of your relationship with grief that you feel proud about?
- What metaphor would you use to describe your relationship with your grief? What animal, plant, weather system, object, or experience is it like? Draw it.
- What qualities would you like to experience in your relationship with grief?
- What's your metaphor for those qualities that you'd like to experience in your relationship with grief? Draw the metaphor.

Week 3: Your Book of Grief Rules

Fill your answers in the gaps...

- 1. Normal grieving emotions are
- 2. It would not be normal to experience the following emotions when you're grieving.....
- 3. The normal amount of time for grieving the loss of a loved one who was very important to us would be
- 4. Here's what you should do to grieve well
- 5. The worst thing about grieving is
- 6. A good thing about grieving is

Week 3: Your Book of Grief Rules

- 7. When you're grieving you should never
.....
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- 8. You know that you've finished grieving/ grieved well when
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- 9. A sure sign that you're stuck or having problems with your grieving/ doing it wrong is.....
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- 10. When we're grieving, we all have a right to
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- 11. When I'm grieving, other people think
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Week 3: Your Book of Grief Rules

12. When I'm grieving, people would think I'm crazy if I

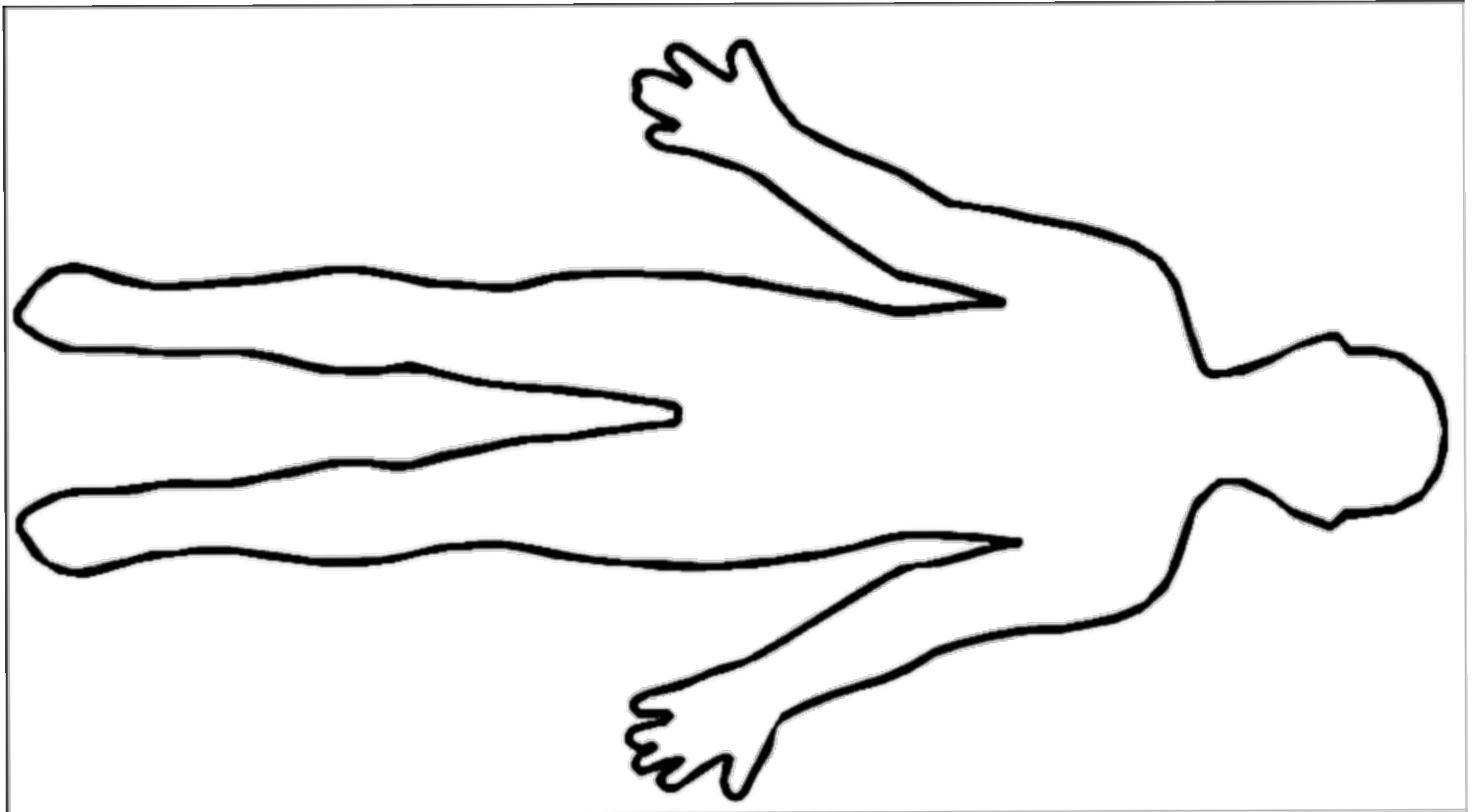
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- Was there anything surprising that you learned about yourself when you did this exercise?
- How liberating is your set of rules for grieving? How well does it let you be who you want to be and create the grieving experience you want? What are the really painful or stressful beliefs?
- Who's rules are they? Can you trace back where you first heard these rules and who told you it was so?
- Setting aside the question of whether your rules are accurate reflections of the grief process, take a moment to highlight or circle all of the rules that make you feel stressed about grief - the rules that you wish weren't true.
- Can you think of a stress-free reason to keep those rules?
- Who would you be, and what would living after loss be like for you if you didn't have those stressful rules?
- When you consider them now, is it possible that those rules aren't true? Or that there are other reflections of reality that are just as valid and offer other options?

Week 4: Grief And Your Body

Body map exercise:

Represent the sensations of stiffness, tightness, pain or grief that you notice in your body with shapes and colors, and add words too if you want. For each of the points in your body that feel tight or painful or stiff, or which are holding the grief or fear, I want you to ask yourself, "What does my body need? How can I take care of those needs?" And then draw whatever resources or gift you want to give to that part of your body over the painful/ stiff shape and color.



Week 5: Wholehearted Living

What's your description of what it would mean to "live wholeheartedly"? What would that look like for you? How would you know you're doing it? What sort of emotions would you feel? What would you spend your time doing? How would it affect your relationships? What would you want to create or contribute in the world? What would your body feel like?

Week 6: Friends & Family

Problem Ownership

1. Who owns the problem right now?

I own a problem. My partner doesn't.

Your job is to articulate the problem first:

- Describe the problem/ thing that's "wrong" with your partner's behaviour.
- How does them doing that make you feel?
- What is the meaning/ story you must be making about what their behaviour means, for you to get that feeling when they use that behaviour?
- What is the need you have that's not being fulfilled here?

Possible self-coaching angles:

- Is the meaning you're making true?
- Is there a way for you to meet your own need without expecting your partner to do that for you?
- Is there a specific request you'd like to make from your partner? How would you like them to support you to meet your needs? Be sure to phrase that as a specific behavioural request.
- Prepare your "I" statement: "I feel ... when you... because I think it means.... this is a problem for me because I think what I really need is... Would you please support me to meet my needs by..."

My partner owns a problem. I don't.

Your job is to listen so that you understand the problem from your partner's perspective and so that they feel heard.

Encourage them to speak, ask open questions, stay curious and try help your partner to find answers for the following questions:

- Describe the problem/ thing that's "wrong" with your behaviour.
- How does your doing that make them feel?
- What is the meaning/ story they must be making about what your behaviour means, for them to get that feeling when you use that behaviour?
- What is the need they have that's not being fulfilled here?

Reflect back to them what you hear/ understand (without adding your judgements/ solutions/ requests/ demands!) and check if you are understanding it correctly.

We both own a problem.

- Each of you shares your problem from your perspective and a place of ownership, and each of you listens and reflects what you hear back to check for understanding.
- Now that you both feel heard and understood, if there is still a problem, check what your highest needs are in relation to this problem... "What will having that (need) get you that's so important to you?"
- Brainstorm possible ways to meet both your needs so that it's a win-win.
- Evaluate the potential solutions and choose one to implement.
- If you can't find a suitable win-win solution to meet both your needs, then the issue is a values conflict, not a needs conflict. Your options are to either decide to love each other in spite of the values conflict or to part ways. This is not a decision you need to make quickly. Stay in the conversation, keep talking about your needs and values and see how the relationship evolves.

Week 6: Friends & Family

I own a problem. My partner doesn't.

Your job is to articulate the problem first:

Describe the problem/ thing that's "wrong" with your partner's behaviour.

How does them doing that make you feel?

What is the meaning/ story you must be making about what their behaviour means, for you to get that feeling when they use that behaviour?

What is the need you have that's not being fulfilled here?

Is the meaning you're making true?

Is there a way for you to meet your own need without expecting your partner to do that for you?

Is there a specific request you'd like to make from your partner? How would you like them to support you to meet your needs? Be sure to phrase that as a specific behavioural request.

Prepare your "I" statement: "I feel when you..... because I think it means..... This is a problem for me because I think what I really need is..... Would you please support me to meet my needs by....."

Week 6: Friends & Family

My partner owns a problem. I don't.

Your job is to listen so that you understand the problem from your partner's perspective and so that they feel heard. Encourage them to speak, ask open questions, stay curious and try help your partner to find answers for the following questions:

Describe the problem/ thing that's "wrong" with your behaviour (as you hear it, from your partner's perspective).

How does your doing that make them feel?

What is the meaning/ story they must be making about what your behaviour means, for them to get that feeling when you use that behaviour?

What is the need they have that's not being fulfilled here?

Reflect back to them what you hear/ understand (without adding your judgements/ solutions/ requests/ demands!) and check if you are understanding it correctly. "What I'm hearing is that you feel when I..... because you think it means..... This is a problem for you because I think what you really need is..... The support you're asking for, and what you want from me is....."

Have I heard you right?

Week 6: Friends & Family

We both own a problem.

Start with filling out both of the “I own a problem” and “My partner owns a problem” worksheets.

Was this a misunderstanding? Did one or both of us make up meaning that our partner didn’t intend their behaviour to mean? If so, what is the truth and meaning that you both now share, because of communicating about it?

If it was not a misunderstanding but a needs conflict, then what are each of your highest needs are in relation to this problem...“What will having that (need) get you that’s so important to you?”

Now brainstorm possible ways to meet both your needs so that it’s a win-win.

Evaluate the potential solutions and choose one to implement.

If you can’t find a suitable win-win solution to meet both your needs, then the issue is a values conflict, not a needs conflict. Your options are to either decide to love each other in spite of the values conflict or to part ways. This is not a decision you need to make quickly. Stay in the conversation, keep talking about your needs and values using the problem ownership model, and see how the relationship evolves.

Week 7: Remembering

What is a special memory you have of your loved one who died?

What were the qualities that you most admired in that person who died?

How has loving and losing changed you for good?

What's become more important to you, because of your loving and losing? And how is this coming through in the choices you're making now?

What ideas and new little joys has loving and losing inspired in you, and how do you hope to bring more life to those ideas in the next year?

Week 7: Remembering

Design a remembering ritual/ ceremony/ object/ space/ art-piece... what would you love to do?

Week 8: Your Legacy of Loss & Love

What are some of the qualities and resources that you've found within yourself over the past 8 weeks?

What are some examples of the ways that your loss has motivated you to greater compassion and service of others?

What are some qualities, ways of thinking and ways of behaving and being in the world that you hope to take with you now?

Is there anything specific that you feel drawn to do more of, because of your experiences of loving and losing and learning to love wholeheartedly again?