

# Saying a Good Good-bye

By Christine Longaker

## A Simple Ritual

First, light a candle in front of a photo of the person you've lost.

If you like, you can imagine a radiant, loving presence is above you, filling the room with compassion and blessings.

Now write down three things you really want this person to know. This is especially helpful when you couldn't be with the person when he or she died, or if the death was unexpected.

Imagine your loved one is here, in front of you, and read out loud what you've written.

Consider that the person has really heard you, and then, imagine how they might respond. You may want to write this down as well, and then read it out loud – allowing yourself to take it in.

Now, take a moment to notice, without judgment, *how you are*. With kindness and compassion, be present with whatever this brought up for you.

Remember, there's no perfect way to make a ritual. It's fine to adjust whatever feels right for you.

If you like, you can conclude by listening to a meditation or piece of music, or by reading a prayer or poem.

You may wish to dedicate the blessings of this ritual for your loved one, for others you know who are struggling, and for yourself – that you might find strength, and compassion, and a positive way forward in your life.

*See below: a slightly longer ritual, guided meditations, alternate ways of communicating*

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### A Slightly Longer Ritual

First, light a candle in front of a photo of the person you've lost.

If you like, you can imagine a radiant, loving presence is above you, filling the room with compassion and blessings. You can establish a noble intention for this ritual.

Now, write down:

- Three things I received from you
- Three memories that are difficult for me
- Three things I want you to know
- What are three things that you want me to know?
- What I'd like to promise, or resolve as a positive direction of growth for the next phase of my life

Imagine your loved one is here, in front of you, and read out loud what you've written.

Consider the person has really heard you – and notice how it is for him or her.

Take a few moments to notice, without judgment, *how you are*. With kindness and compassion, be present with whatever this brought up for you.

Do a guided meditation, such as The Heart Practice, or the Essential Phowa.

You may wish to dedicate the blessings of this ritual for your loved one, for others you know who are struggling, and for yourself – that all of you might find strength, and compassion, healing of your difficulties, and a positive way forward.

Afterwards, you may want to do something physical, such as cook a nice meal, tidy up something you'd been procrastinating about, or, go outside – for example, watch a sunset, climb a hill, enjoy your garden, sit at a lake or by the ocean, walk along a river, or leave flowers or rose petals somewhere in nature.

*You can make this ritual as often as you need—and adapt it however you like.*

*Remember, although you are letting go of the former type of connection you had, you don't have to let go of your love, of the person's love, or of the memories that fill your heart with warmth and gratitude.*

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## Alternate ways of expressing what needs to be said

*The five-part love letter* – from John Gray

For more complicated difficulties, you may find it helpful to write an *Unfinished Business Dialogue*.

## Guided meditations

Establishing a Noble Intention

Heart Practice *This meditation helps heal regrets and difficult memories, as well as your grief*

Essential Phowa for Another Person *Spiritual support for those who are ill, dying and those who've died*

Cultivating Compassion