

DEATH WELLNESS: YOUR REQUIEM RETREAT

During a deathcare event, I asked shroud maker and end-of-life navigator Dina Stander what nourishing advice she might give to a younger version of herself. She explained that, as a child, whenever she felt stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed, she would visit a special place in her mind's eye that brought comfort. It was a warm, welcoming egg-shaped hub lined with soft fur. Her words of advice to her younger self? *Keep visiting the egg! Travel there as much as you need!*

What if you were to build such a place for yourself—an internal center for contemplation and reassurance? A place where you could whine, mourn, even curse the fates when wrestling with what it means to be mortal. A place housed in the recesses of your mind you could visit when bewildered by big questions, like “why?” and “what for?” Somewhere to feel gently held in a cocoon of safety.

YOUR REQUIEM RETREAT

Requiem (Latin) for “rest”

What might your requiem retreat—your inner refuge—look like if you were to dream one into creation? Take some quiet moments to envision all the details of this special sanctuary within your imagination. You might listen to relaxing music and close your eyes for this exercise. Respond to the following prompts, allowing your mind to produce whatever it wishes (realistic or fantastical).

EXERCISE

My requiem retreat looks like...

Feels like...

Sounds like...

My sanctuary is...

REFLECTIONS

How was that to create your requiem retreat? What finishing touches might you add to ensure it's inviting and accessible? Whenever you feel overwhelmed during death wellness practices (or due to stressful life matters), you can visit this space with a soft agenda that allows for the following:

- 1) Time and space for uninhibited venting and lamenting
- 2) A restful pause
- 3) A recentering of self
- 4) A recommitment to living fully

After expressing heavy emotion within your center, you can then decide how to transform it for good. One option could be an additional visualization. Within your requiem retreat, you might picture yourself releasing stifled emotion as you exhale. You can picture the air you release nourishing plant life within your sanctuary. Then, the plants can convert it into fresh, oxygen-rich air for you to breathe in return, reminding you: Life and death are never far apart.