

THE GRIEF MEDICINE COLLECTION

Functional & Naturopathic Medicine

for the newly widowed



DR. MICHELE BURKLUND, ND

Care for the body carrying your grief.

...Because your
Healing
Matters too



The mind and body are deeply related... and grief has profound effects on the body



Grief not just as an emotional or psychological process, but as a whole-body stress response with measurable physiological impacts

Your entire physiological system is reacting to your loss

Your body is in fight or flight, or freeze (shock) mode

Cortisol (your stress hormone goes up)

Grief brain (brain fog, memory loss)

Immune dysfunction (getting sick often)

Inflammation

Blood pressure

Microbiome



Awareness Itself Begins Healing

- Resting is healing
- Crying is healing
- Saying "no" is healing
- 30 seconds of breathwork is healing





Let Emotions Flow

Suppressing feelings adds stress to the body...



Crying, writing, talking, or even just sitting with emotions is part of healing.



Some find comfort in rituals—lighting a candle, journaling, or visiting a meaningful place.

Balancing Melatonin and Cortisol for Better Sleep During Grief

Dark, cool, quiet room

Turn off Wi-Fi / airplane mode

No screens before bed (or use blue-light glasses)

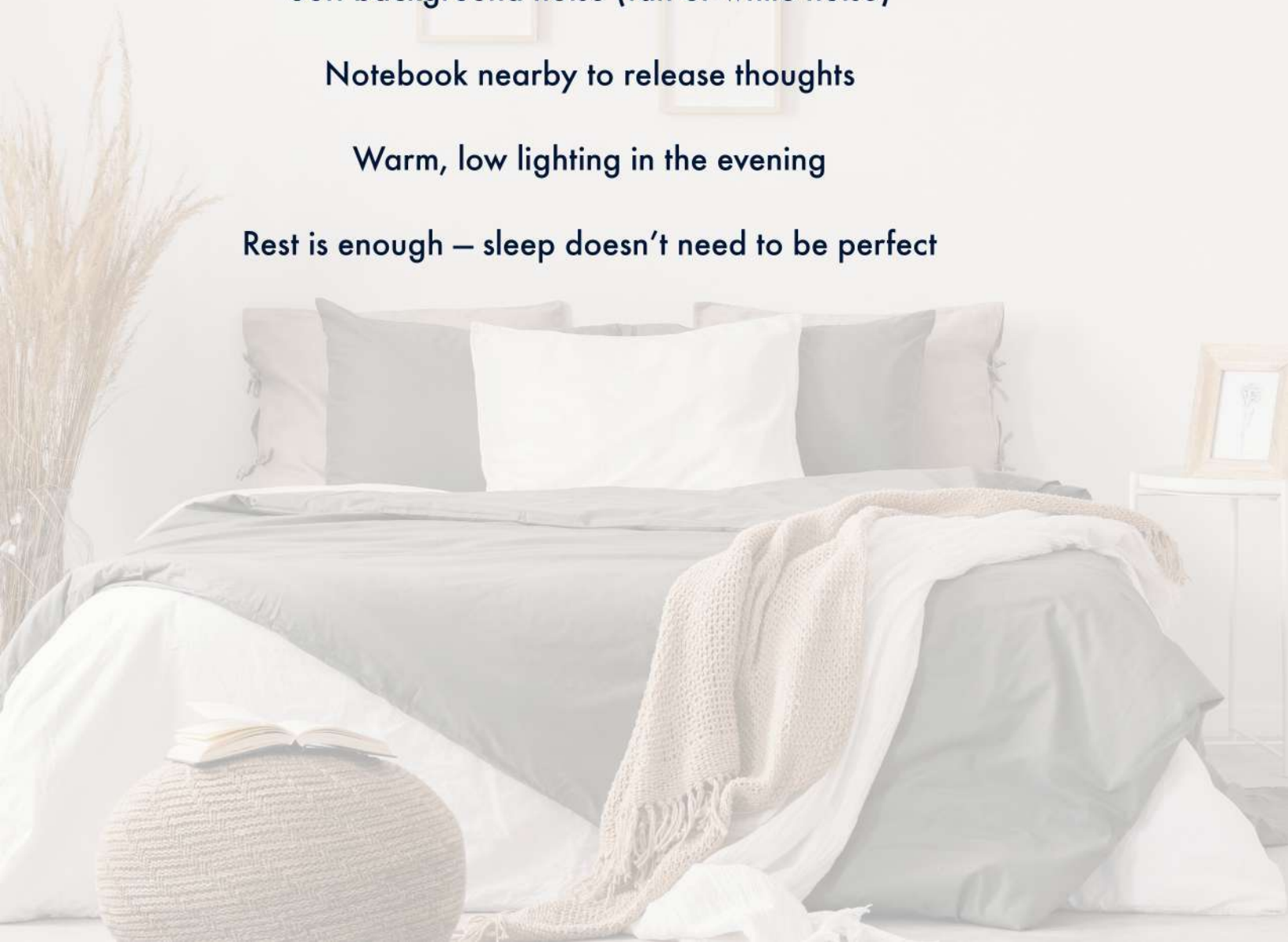
Phone out of the bedroom

Soft background noise (fan or white noise)

Notebook nearby to release thoughts

Warm, low lighting in the evening

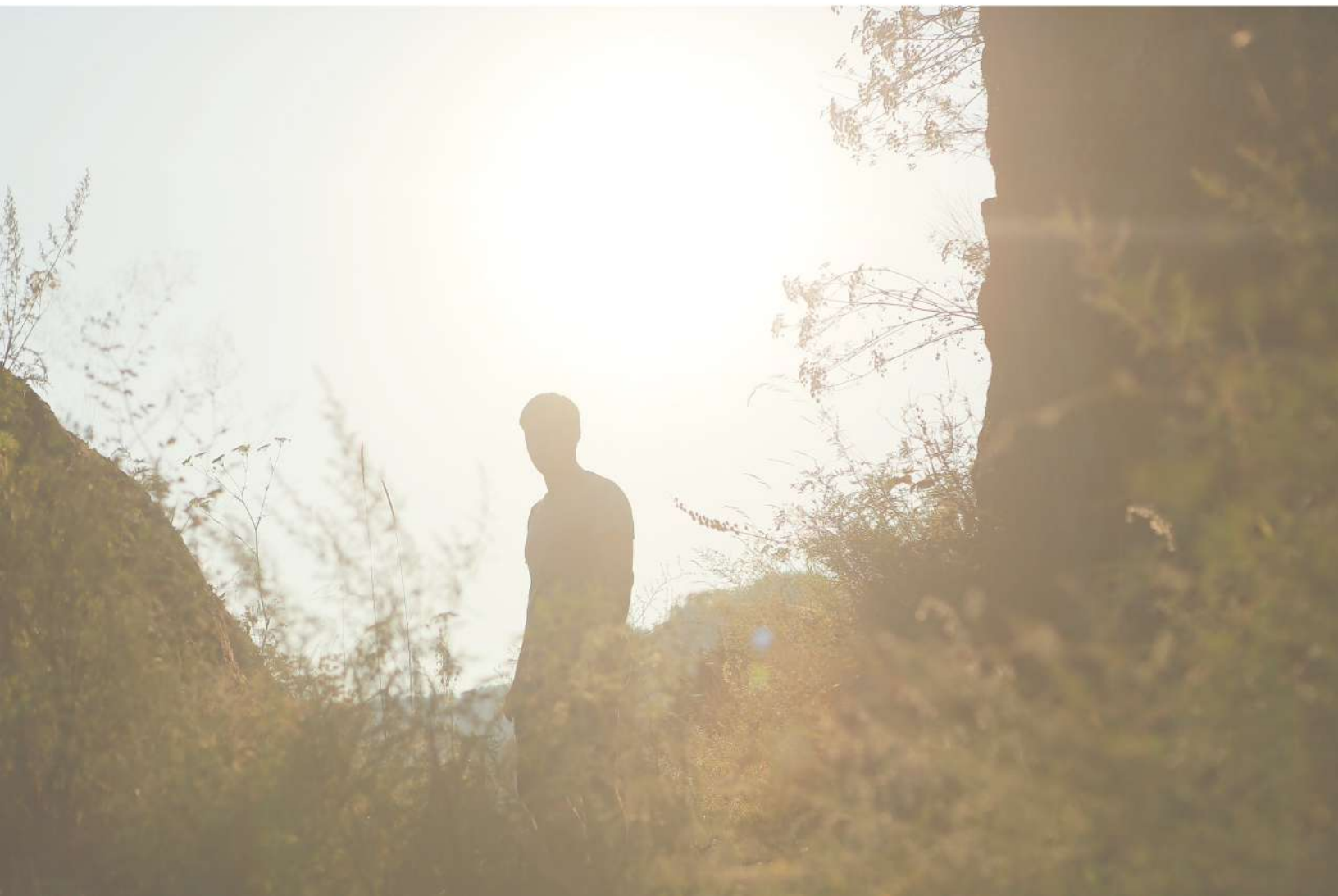
Rest is enough — sleep doesn't need to be perfect



Morning Sun

One of the most impactful things you can do for your energy, hormones, mood, and sleep is to step outside and let natural sunlight hit your eyes and skin for 5–15 minutes immediately after waking.

Morning sunlight tells your brain that it's daytime, resets your circadian rhythm, boosts serotonin, and helps your body produce melatonin later at night — making it easier to fall asleep and wake with more energy the next day.



Go Barefoot

Going barefoot — often called “earthing” or “grounding” — can naturally lower cortisol and calm the nervous system.

When the bare skin of your feet touches the earth (grass, soil, sand), your body absorbs a flow of negatively charged electrons from the ground. These electrons have been shown to reduce inflammation, lower stress hormones like cortisol, and shift the body out of “fight-or-flight” and into a calmer, more regulated state.

For the widowed, whose bodies often stay stuck in survival mode for months or even years after loss, grounding can offer something deeper than just relaxation — it creates a sense of safety, presence, and reconnection. Even a few minutes of standing barefoot in the grass or on the earth can:

soften anxiety and overthinking

regulate heart rate and soothe the nervous system

decrease cortisol and reduce inflammation in the body

gently anchor you back into your body, into right now, when grief pulls you into the past

It’s a simple practice — but for a nervous system holding profound loss, feeling the earth directly can be surprisingly powerful medicine.

Easy & Practical Foods

Bone broth or miso soup (buy it premade)

Smoothie with protein powder, collagen, nut butter, and Greek yogurt

Avocado mashed on sourdough bread with olive oil

Hard boiled eggs

Salmon patty (frozen) or beef with steamed (precut) veggies

Store bought roasted chicken



*Try not to worry about
"perfect" eating, focus on
simple, nourishing foods
you can manage.*

Orienting



If breathing feels hard — don't force it.
Instead, let your eyes slowly scan the room around you.

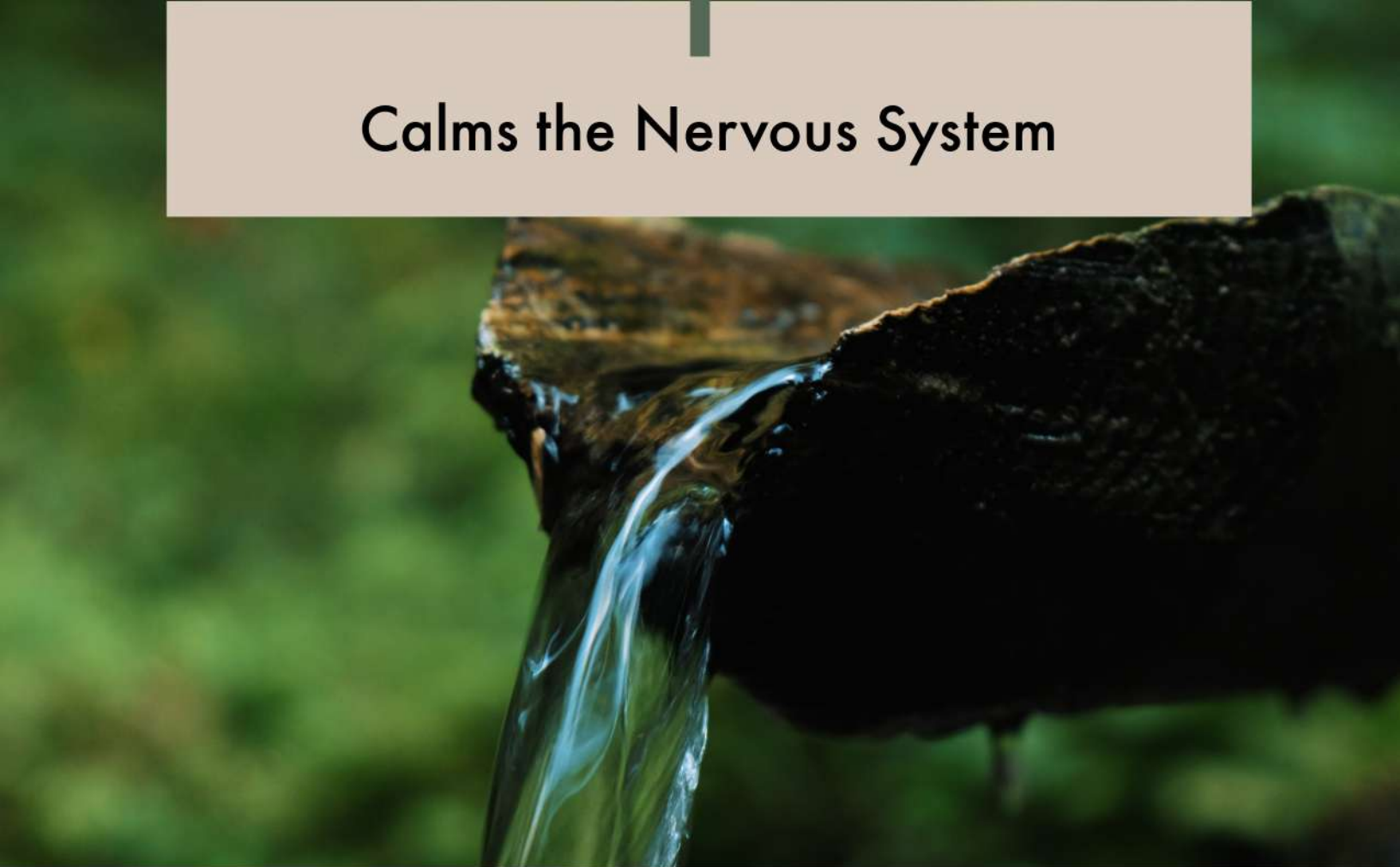
Gently notice:

- colors • textures
- light and shadow

No need to judge or think — just look.

As your eyes take in your surroundings, your nervous system begins to settle — and your breath will naturally follow.

Calms the Nervous System



When panic or overwhelm hits ...this calms your nervous system in seconds.

It works by activating the dive reflex, a built-in emergency calming switch that instantly lowers heart rate and shifts your body into safety mode.

3 Ways to Activate It

Fastest reset:

- Gently dunk your face (not hands) into very cold water for 10–20 seconds.

Softer option:

- Hold a cool, damp cloth over your eyes, cheeks, and nose bridge for 30+ seconds.
- Breathe slowly through your nose.

No water needed:

- Cup both palms over your eyes and cheekbones, blocking all light.
- Apply gentle pressure.
- Inhale 4 – exhale 8 – pause.

Candle Gazing



Sit upright in a dark room

Place a lit candle at eye level about 2–3 ft in front of you.

Stare at the flame's core — the bright blue point at the center.

Let all attention rest only on that flame

...not analyzing it, just seeing. When thoughts come, gently return to the flame.

Start with 3–5 minutes total. Build slowly.

Grief Tea

Ingredients

1 part oatstraw

1 part lemon balm

½ part holy basil

½ part chamomile

Steep for at least 10 minutes to get the full comfort from the herbs.
Drink warm, maybe with a touch of honey.

Botanical Properties

Oatstraw – deeply nourishing, like comfort food for the nerves.

Chamomile – soft, soothing, especially if tears come easily.

Holy Basil (Tulsi) – uplifting and heart-soothing.

Lemon Balm – calming, gently uplifting.



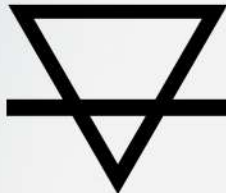


I'm Dr. Michele Burklund, a naturopathic physician and functional grief specialist...and I became a widow at 38. I know firsthand how grief affects the body: it raises stress hormones, disrupts sleep, causes "grief brain," and completely drains your energy.

Drawing from both my personal experience and my medical background, I gently guide widows in restoring their energy, supporting their health, and rebuilding resilience. My work focuses on practical, compassionate tools that help women move out of overwhelm and toward renewed strength and vitality.

in health
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