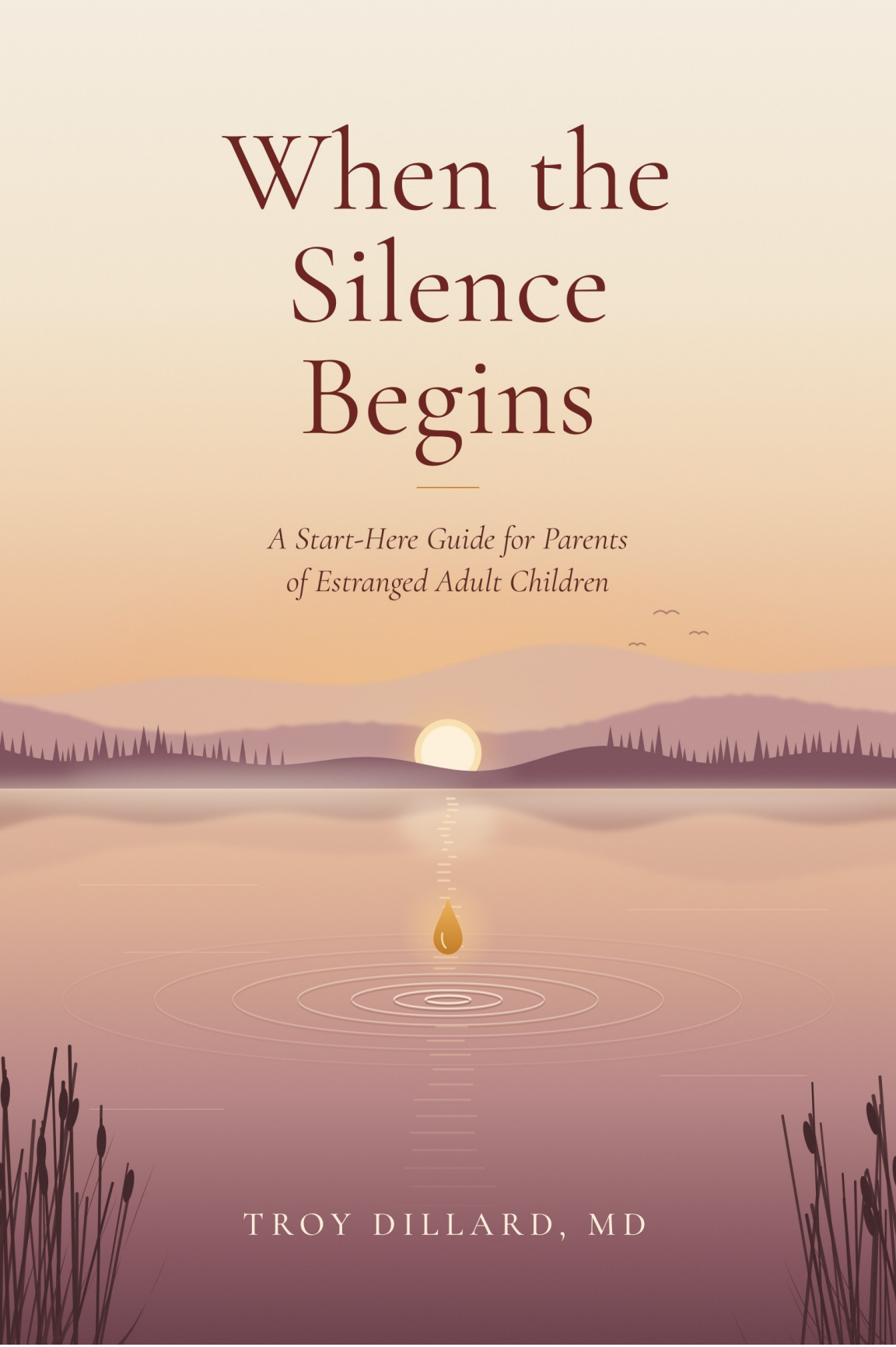
When the Silence Begins

A Start-Here Guide for Parents of Estranged Adult Children



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enlightenedestrangement.com

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Before You Begin

If you are holding this booklet, something has probably gone quiet in your life that you never expected to go quiet. A phone that used to ring. A name that used to appear on your screen. A voice you haven't heard in weeks. Maybe there was a hard conversation, a letter, a message asking you to stay away. Maybe there was nothing at all, only a slow fading that you can now see for what it is.

However it began, I am so sorry you are here.

I wrote these pages for parents in the early days, the first weeks and months, when the ground is still moving and it is hard to know what to do with your hands, your thoughts, or your heart. This is not a book about how to fix things. I don't think anyone can promise that, and I would be wary of anyone who does. It is a small book about how to get through the next hour, and then the next day, without making things harder for yourself or for your child.

I am a physician, and I have practiced Buddhist meditation for many years. I am also a parent who knows this silence from the inside. I won't tell my own story here, because it isn't only mine to tell. I mention it so you know that these pages come from someone who has sat where you are sitting, and who has needed every practice in them.

You don't need to be a Buddhist to use this booklet. You don't need to believe anything at all. The practices here are simple ways of paying attention, breathing, and being kind to yourself. They have helped people of many faiths and of none.

A word of care. This booklet is not therapy, and it is not a substitute for medical or mental health care. If your grief begins to feel unbearable, or if

you have thoughts of harming yourself, please reach out right away. In the United States you can call or text 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at any hour. If you are elsewhere, your doctor or local emergency services can help you find support. Reaching out is not a failure of practice. It is practice.

Using These Pages

There are ten short chapters here. They follow the same path as the free *Sitting with the Silence* email course, so if you are receiving those emails, you can read one chapter alongside each day's message. If you found this booklet on its own, that is fine too.

You might read one chapter a day, slowly, and try the practice at the end before moving on. Or you might read the whole thing in one sitting and then come back to whatever chapter you need. Some mornings you may only manage a paragraph. That is enough.

Each chapter ends with a short practice. Several of them have spoken versions you can listen to; you'll find those on the website listed at the back of this booklet. Sometimes it helps to have a voice keep you company when your own mind is too loud.

If you keep a notebook, have it nearby. A few chapters offer a question or two to write about. There are no right answers. The point is only to give what you are carrying a place to land outside of your own body for a while.

CHAPTER ONE

The Ground Has Moved

In the first days, many parents describe a strange double feeling. Part of you is going about your life, answering email, buying groceries, nodding at a neighbor. Another part of you is standing very still in a room you can't leave, waiting for the phone.

If that is how it feels for you, nothing is wrong with you. This is what shock looks like from the inside. The mind is trying to take in something it has no place for yet. A child, the one you held, the one you worried over, has stepped back from you. There is no ritual for this. No casseroles arrive. Friends may not know what to say, and some will say the wrong thing.

You may notice a flood of questions. *What did I do? What did they hear? Who turned them against me? Is this my fault? Will they ever come back?* These questions are natural, and they deserve care. For now, though, I want to gently suggest that you don't have to answer any of them today. They will still be there tomorrow. Most of them won't give way to more thinking, however late you stay up with them.

What you can do today is smaller and more possible. You can notice that you are breathing. You can notice where your feet are. You can put a hand somewhere on your body that feels like it could use some company. You can let yourself be someone who is going through something very hard.

In the Buddhist tradition there is a teaching that all of us, at some point, are separated from people we love. It isn't offered as a threat or as gloom. It is offered as a kind of honesty, a recognition that this sorrow belongs to the human family and not only to you. When you feel most alone with

this, it may help a little to remember how many other parents are awake tonight, feeling what you feel.

Practice: Landing

Sit or lie down somewhere you won't be disturbed for five minutes. Let your eyes close, or rest them on the floor in front of you.

Feel the places where your body is being held up: the chair, the bed, the floor. Let the ground do some of the work.

Now simply notice three things. One sound you can hear. One sensation in your body. One breath, from the start of the inhale to the end of the exhale.

Then say quietly, in your own words, something like: *This is a hard moment. I am here for it.*

That is the whole practice. You may come back to it as many times a day as you need.

CHAPTER TWO

Pause Before You Reach

Of everything in this booklet, this chapter may matter most in the early days.

When a child pulls away, almost every parent feels a powerful urge to reach toward them. To call, to text, to write the long letter that will finally explain everything. To show up at the door. To ask a sibling or a grandparent to pass along a message. To post something online that they might see. The urge can feel like love itself, and in a way it is. It comes from the same place that once made you run toward a crying toddler.

And yet, in the early days, this reaching often makes things worse. A message sent in pain usually carries that pain with it, even when we try to hide it. A child who has asked for space may experience repeated contact as proof that their request isn't being heard. A defense of yourself, however reasonable, may land as one more reason to stay away. Many parents look back and wish they had waited.

So the invitation here is simple, though it isn't easy: **for now, pause.** Not forever. Not as punishment, and not as a strategy to win. Just long enough for your nervous system to settle, for the first wave to pass, and for you to be able to act from your wisest self rather than your most frightened one.

If your child has asked for no contact, the kindest thing may be to honor that for the time being, even when every cell in you wants to do otherwise. Honoring a boundary you don't agree with is one of the hardest forms of love there is.

You might find it helpful to make yourself a small promise: *I will not send anything to my child while I am upset. I will wait at least a full day, and I will read it again with fresh eyes.* Some parents give the draft to a trusted friend first. Some write the letter in a notebook and never send it at all. The writing can still help, because it gives the words somewhere to go.

It also helps to notice the moment the urge arises. There is usually a rush in the chest, a quickening of the breath, a sense that you *must* do something now. That rush is not a command. It is a wave, and waves crest and fall if you give them a little time.

Practice: Hand on the Phone

The next time you feel the pull to reach out, whether to call, text, email, or post, stop with your hand resting on the phone or the keyboard.

Take three slow breaths, letting each exhale be a little longer than the inhale.

Ask yourself gently: *What am I feeling right now?* Name it if you can. Fear. Loneliness. Anger. Longing.

Then ask: *What do I most need in this moment?* Very often the answer is comfort, not contact. See if you can offer yourself some of that comfort first: a hand on the heart, a walk outside, a call to a friend who can listen.

If, after a day has passed, you still feel that a message is right, Chapter Eight offers some guidance on how to send it with care.

CHAPTER THREE

When the Body Is on Fire

Grief and fear don't only live in our thoughts. They live in our bodies.

In my medical work I see every day how much the body carries. When something threatening happens, especially a threat to a bond we depend on, the body responds as if we were in physical danger. The heart speeds up. Breathing gets shallow and high in the chest. Muscles tighten. Sleep becomes thin and broken. Digestion changes. The mind narrows and starts scanning for what went wrong and what might go wrong next.

This is not weakness. It is an old and loyal alarm system, doing exactly what it was built to do. The trouble is that it can't tell the difference between a predator and a silent phone. It keeps sounding the alarm long after there is anything useful to do about it.

One of the kindest things you can do in the early days is to help the alarm settle. Not by arguing with it, and not by forcing yourself to feel calm, but by giving the body some simple signals that, right now, in this room, you are safe enough.

A few of the most reliable signals are also the simplest:

- **A longer exhale.** When the out-breath is longer than the in-breath, the body begins to shift toward rest. You don't need to count precisely. Just let the breath out a little slower than it came in.
- **Something solid at your back.** Sit with your back against a wall or a sturdy chair and let it hold you. The body reads support as safety.

- **Warmth and touch.** A hand on your chest or your belly, a warm cup held in both hands, a blanket around the shoulders. The body understands warmth before it understands words.
- **Movement.** A slow walk, especially outdoors, can help move some of the charge through the body. So can stretching or simply shaking out your hands.
- **The basics.** Water, food, and whatever sleep you can manage. These sound obvious, but in the first weeks they are often the first things to go.

If your sleep, appetite, or mood stay badly disrupted for more than a couple of weeks, please talk with your doctor. Grief can affect our health in real ways, and you deserve care for that too.

Practice: The Settling Breath

Sit comfortably and let your hands rest in your lap or on your belly.

Breathe in gently through the nose, without forcing it. Then let the breath out slowly through softly parted lips, the way you might blow across a cup of tea to cool it. Let the out-breath take its time.

Continue for two or three minutes. If your mind wanders to your child, to the past, or to what might happen, that's all right. Notice where it went, and kindly bring it back to the feeling of the breath leaving the body.

When you finish, sit for a moment and notice whether anything has shifted, even slightly. You don't need it to be dramatic. A small softening is plenty.

CHAPTER FOUR

Letting the Wave Come

There is a kind of grief that comes with estrangement that doesn't have a name in most languages. The person you are grieving is still alive. They may live across town. You may see photos of them online. You may hear news of them through others. And still, they are not here.

Because there is no clear loss, there is often no permission to grieve. We tell ourselves it is temporary, that it will blow over, that we shouldn't make too much of it. Sometimes that is true. But in the meantime, the sorrow is real, and it tends to grow heavier when we refuse to feel it.

You may find that the feelings come in waves. Sadness, then anger, then a terrible longing, then numbness, then guilt, then anger again. Some days you will feel almost fine, and then a song on the car radio will undo you. This is not a sign of going backward. It is how grief moves.

The Buddhist teachers I have learned from often speak of making room. Instead of fighting a feeling, or drowning in it, we can try to give it space. Think of the ocean on a rough day. The waves on the surface are real, and they can be enormous. A little way down, the water is deep and quiet, and it holds every one of those waves.

You are not only your grief. There is something in you that can notice the grief, that can hold it, that can sit beside it. That noticing presence is always available, even on the worst days. You don't have to create it. You only have to rest in it for a moment.

Practice: Making Room

When a wave of feeling rises, pause and turn toward it.

Name it. Silently say what is here, as simply as you can. *Sadness. Anger. Fear. Missing her. Missing him.* Naming a feeling softly, without judgment, often takes a little of the heat out of it.

Feel it. Notice where the feeling lives in your body. A tightness in the throat. A heaviness in the chest. A knot in the stomach. Let your attention rest there gently, the way you might rest your hand on a sleeping child's back.

Let it be. You don't have to fix the feeling or make it go away. See if you can let it be exactly as it is for a few breaths. You might say, *It's okay to feel this. This belongs.*

Then, when you are ready, widen your attention to include the room around you, the sounds, the light, the ground. The feeling is still here, and so is everything else.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Stories We Add

The Buddha once offered a teaching that many people find helpful in hard times. When we are struck by a painful experience, he said, it is like being struck by an arrow. The pain is real and unavoidable. But then, so often, we shoot ourselves with a second arrow. And sometimes a third and a fourth.

The first arrow, for an estranged parent, is the loss itself: the silence, the absence, the ache of missing your child.

The second arrows are the stories we add. *I am a terrible parent. I ruined everything. Nobody will ever understand. I will die alone. They are cruel and ungrateful. Everyone is judging me. If I had only done this one thing differently.* Each of these thoughts may feel like the truth when it arrives. Each one adds its own sting to a wound that is already deep.

I don't share this to suggest that your pain is your own fault, or that you should simply think more positive thoughts. That isn't the teaching at all. The first arrow hurts, and it deserves our tenderness. The point is only that we can learn to notice when we have picked up a second arrow, and, little by little, set it down.

You might notice that the second arrows tend to come in two flavors. Some point inward, toward blame and shame. Others point outward, toward anger at your child, your former partner, their spouse, a therapist, the culture. Both kinds can feel like protection. Both kinds tend to keep the wound open.

When you catch a second arrow, there is no need to scold yourself for it. Just notice, *Ah, here is a story.* You might even say silently, *second arrow,*

and come back to the plain feeling underneath. Very often what is underneath is simpler and softer: *I miss my child. I am scared. I am sad.* Those feelings are easier to hold than the stories, because they are true and they ask for nothing but care.

Practice: Two Columns

Take out a notebook. Draw a line down the middle of a page.

On the left side, write a few words about the first arrow, the plain fact of what has happened. Keep it short and simple. *My son hasn't spoken to me in six weeks.*

On the right side, write down the second arrows you've noticed: the thoughts, judgments, and predictions that come along with it. Write them as they come, without editing.

Then read the right side slowly. For each one, ask gently: *Do I know this is true? Is this helping me right now?*

You don't have to argue with the thoughts or replace them. Just let yourself see that they are thoughts. Then return to the left side, the simple truth, and place a hand on your heart. *This is what hurts. I can be kind to the one who is hurting.*

CHAPTER SIX

Kindness Toward the One Who Is Hurting

If a dear friend came to you and said that their child had stopped speaking to them, I suspect you would know what to do. You would sit with them. You would let them cry. You might make tea. You would not tell them they were a failure, or that they deserved this, or that they should pull themselves together.

Most of us find it far harder to offer ourselves that same kindness.

Estranged parents often carry an enormous weight of self-judgment. Some of it may point to real things we wish we had done differently. We will come to that, gently, near the end of this booklet. But much of it in the early days is simply pain turned inward, a way the mind tries to make sense of something that feels senseless. *If it's my fault, at least I can understand it.*

Self-compassion is not the same as letting yourself off the hook. It is not pretending you were perfect. It is the simple recognition that you are a human being who is suffering, and that suffering deserves care, whoever it belongs to.

In Buddhist practice, we sometimes speak of the wish that all beings be free from suffering. It is a beautiful wish. But it is worth remembering that *all beings* includes the one reading these words. You are not outside the circle of your own compassion.

You may notice resistance when you try this. A voice that says, *I don't deserve kindness right now,* or *This is self-indulgent.* If that voice comes,

you can be kind to it too. It is usually a frightened part of you, trying in its own way to keep you safe.

Practice: The Friend's Voice

Think back to the friend at the start of this chapter, and how you would speak to them. Let one hand rest somewhere on your body that feels soothing, and borrow that voice for yourself.

Breathe slowly. Then offer yourself a few simple phrases, silently or aloud. You might use these, or find your own words:

> *May I be gentle with myself.*
> *May I hold this pain with tenderness.*
> *May I remember that I am not alone.*
> *May I find some peace, even here.*

Say them slowly, letting each one land before moving to the next. If the words feel hollow, keep going anyway, the way you might keep talking softly to a frightened animal until it settles. The meaning often catches up later.

When you're ready, you might extend the same wishes to your child, wherever they are right now. *May you be well. May you be at peace.* Only do this if it feels true. If it doesn't yet, there is no rush.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Not Knowing

One of the hardest parts of estrangement, especially early on, is not knowing. You may not know exactly why your child has stepped away. You may not know how long it will last. You may not know what they are telling others, or what they are feeling, or whether they think of you at all.

The mind does not like not knowing. It will rush to fill the empty space with explanations, and those explanations are rarely gentle. We imagine conversations we weren't part of. We assign motives. We replay old scenes, searching for the moment it all went wrong. We read meaning into a single sentence of an old text message.

The Zen tradition has a lovely phrase for a different way of meeting the unknown: *don't-know mind.* It means resting, as best we can, in the openness of not knowing, without grasping for a story to make the uncertainty go away. It isn't ignorance. It is a kind of honesty and humility. *I don't know what my child is feeling. I don't know what will happen. I can be here anyway.*

This matters, because the stories we tell in the early days can quietly harden into conclusions. If we decide our child is cruel, or brainwashed, or simply ungrateful, it becomes very hard to stay open to who they actually are. If we decide we are a monster, it becomes hard to stay open to who *we* actually are. Not knowing leaves room for both of you to be more than the worst moment between you.

You may genuinely want to understand what happened, and that wish is good. Understanding often comes, but it tends to come slowly, and usually not through rumination. It comes through listening, through

time, through the softening of our own defenses. For now, it may be enough to hold your questions loosely, the way you would hold a small bird.

Practice: Resting in Not Knowing

Sit quietly and settle into a few slow breaths.

Bring to mind one question about your situation that keeps circling in your mind. Let it be there. Then, rather than trying to answer it, simply say to yourself: *I don't know.*

Notice what happens in your body when you say those words. You may feel a flash of anxiety. You may also notice, beneath it, a small sense of relief, a loosening, as though you've been allowed to put something heavy down for a moment.

Rest in that loosening for a few breaths. Let the mind be wide and open, like a clear sky with nothing particular in it. If a story starts to form, notice it, and come back again to *I don't know.*

CHAPTER EIGHT

If You Do Reach Out

There may come a time when you feel it would be right to send a message to your child. Perhaps it has been some weeks. Perhaps there is a birthday or a holiday coming. Perhaps you simply want them to know the door is open.

Before you write, I'd invite you to check on two things. First, has your child asked you not to contact them? If so, it may be wisest to honor that for now, and to let your love take other forms, such as practice, prayer, or simply holding them in your heart. Second, are you settled enough to write from a calm place? If you are still flooded, it may be worth waiting a little longer, and returning to the practices in Chapters Two and Three.

If you do decide to write, there is an old teaching about wise speech that can be a helpful guide. Before we speak, we can ask: *Is it true? Is it kind? Is it helpful? Is this the right time?* A message that passes through those four gates is far more likely to be received with an open heart.

In practice, this usually means a few simple things:

- **Keep it short.** A few sentences are almost always better than a few pages. A long letter, however loving, can feel overwhelming to someone who has asked for distance.
- **Leave out the defense.** This may be the hardest part. It is very natural to want to explain, correct the record, or share your side. In the early days, these explanations often land as arguments, and they tend to close doors rather than open them.
- **Ask for nothing.** Try not to ask for a reply, a meeting, or a decision. A message with no request in it is easier to receive.

- **Let love be plain.** You don't need beautiful words. Simple, warm, and sincere is enough.
- **Mind the timing.** Avoid sending messages late at night, after a drink, or right after an emotional trigger.

Here are a few examples, just to give a sense of the tone. Please use your own words.

> *"I've been thinking of you. I love you, and I respect that you need some space right now. I'm here whenever you're ready, with no pressure."*
>
> *"Happy birthday. I hope this year brings you good things. Thinking of you with love."*
>
> *"I've heard what you said, and I'm taking it seriously. I'm not going to ask anything of you right now. I just want you to know I love you."*

After you send a message, try to let it go. Your child may not reply, or may reply in a way that hurts. That doesn't necessarily mean the message was wrong. It means your child is somewhere in their own process, and the timing belongs to them as well as to you.

Practice: The Four Gates

Before sending any message, read it slowly, out loud if you can. Then pause after each of these questions:

Is it true?
Is it kind?
Is it helpful?
Is this the right time?

If any part of the message doesn't pass a gate, consider removing it. Then set it aside for a day and read it once more before you send it. If you are unsure, it is usually wiser to wait.

CHAPTER NINE

Caring for the Life You Still Have

When a child steps away, it can feel as though your whole life has narrowed to that one absence. Everything else can seem gray and beside the point.

It is understandable. And it is worth remembering, gently, that you still have a life. You have a body that needs care. You may have a partner, other children, grandchildren, friends, work, a community, a garden, a dog who still wants to be walked. These things are not a betrayal of your grief. They are part of what will carry you through it.

In the early days, many parents pull away from others. Shame is a big part of this. There can be a fear of being judged, or of being asked questions you can't answer. It can feel easier to hide. But isolation tends to make grief heavier, and it gives the second arrows more room to fly.

You don't have to tell everyone what is happening. But it may help a great deal to tell one or two trusted people. Choose someone who can listen without rushing to fix things or take sides. If no one like that comes to mind, a counselor, a spiritual teacher, a support group, or a group of other estranged parents can be a lifeline. Many parents describe the first time they sat in a room with others who understood as the moment they began to breathe again.

Some other ways to tend your life during this time:

- Keep a few small routines, even if they feel mechanical. A morning walk. A cup of tea at the same time each afternoon. A short sit before bed.

- Spend time in nature when you can. Trees and water have their own way of steadying us.
- Limit time spent checking your child's social media. It almost always stirs more pain than it eases.
- Allow yourself moments of pleasure without guilt. Laughing at a movie or enjoying a meal doesn't mean you love your child any less.
- Watch your use of alcohol or other ways of numbing out. They can feel like relief in the moment and tend to make the next morning harder.

Practice: Three Good Things

At the end of each day, before sleep, bring to mind three things that were good, kind, or beautiful. They can be very small. The warmth of a shower. A text from a friend. A bird at the window.

You might write them in your notebook. Let yourself really feel each one for a breath or two.

This isn't about denying the pain. It is about remembering that the pain is not the only thing that is true. Both the loss and the goodness can live in the same heart.

CHAPTER TEN

Looking Deeply

In time, often after the first waves have settled a little, many parents begin to feel ready for a different kind of question. Not *Why is this happening to me?* but *What can I learn here? What might I see that I haven't been able to see before?*

This is what the Buddhist tradition calls looking deeply. It means turning toward our situation with curiosity and honesty, without flinching from the hard parts, and without collapsing into blame.

There are two easy places to land when we begin to look. One is to decide that it was all our child's doing, and that we bear no responsibility at all. The other is to decide that it was all our doing, that we are the villain of the story and our child is right about everything. Both of these can feel strangely comfortable, because they are simple. And both of them are usually too simple to be true.

The middle way, which is at the heart of the Buddha's teaching, asks something harder and more freeing. It asks us to look at our part with clear eyes and an open heart. Most of us, if we are honest, can find things we wish we had done differently. Words we can't take back. Times we didn't listen. Patterns we inherited from our own parents and passed along without meaning to. Seeing these things clearly can hurt. It can also be the beginning of real change, and sometimes, in time, of real repair.

At the same time, looking deeply means seeing that your child's choices belong to them, and that many causes and conditions came together to bring you both here. Not all of those causes were yours. Some go back generations. Some live in your child's own history, struggles, relationships,

and growth. You can take full responsibility for your part while still recognizing that it was never the whole.

You don't have to rush this. Looking deeply is not a task to complete. It is a way of being with your life, a willingness to keep learning, especially when it's hard. It is also an act of love, because the parent who is willing to look honestly at themselves is often the parent a child can someday come back to.

The great contemplative traditions also point to something beneath all our looking. Behind every thought and feeling, every wave of grief and every story, there is an awareness that is simply present. Open, clear, and warm. It has been with you through every moment of your life, including this one. It is not damaged by what has happened. When you rest there, even for a breath, you may find a kind of peace that doesn't depend on how things turn out.

Practice: Looking With Kind Eyes

This practice is best done when you are feeling relatively steady. If you feel overwhelmed at any point, stop and return to the Settling Breath or The Friend's Voice.

Sit quietly and settle with a few slow breaths. Place a hand on your heart.

Then, in your notebook, gently explore these questions. Take your time. You may want to return to them over many weeks.

- *What might my child have been trying to tell me, in words or in actions, that I may not have been able to hear?*
- *Is there anything I wish I had done differently? Can I hold that with kindness, the way I would for someone I love?*
- *What patterns from my own upbringing might have shaped the way I parented?*

- *What am I learning about myself through this?*

When you finish, close your notebook and sit for a moment longer. Let your attention rest in the simple awareness that has been watching all of this, open and quiet. Then offer one last wish, for yourself and for your child: *May we both be free from suffering. May we both find our way.*

A Ten-Minute Daily Practice

If you'd like a simple daily rhythm, you might try this. It weaves together several of the practices in this booklet. Morning works well for many people, but any time you can protect is fine.

1. **Land (1 minute).** Sit comfortably and let the chair hold you. Notice one sound, one sensation, one breath.
2. **Settle (3 minutes).** Breathe slowly, letting each out-breath be a little longer than the in-breath.
3. **Turn toward what is here (2 minutes).** Name whatever feeling is present. Find where it lives in the body. Let it be.
4. **Offer kindness (2 minutes).** Place a hand on your heart and offer yourself a few kind phrases. If it feels right, extend them to your child.
5. **Rest (2 minutes).** Let go of any technique. Simply sit, aware and open, letting thoughts and feelings rise and settle like waves on deep water.

Close by taking one more breath and silently setting an intention for the day. *Today, may I meet whatever comes with patience and care.*

Words to Return To

On the hardest days you may not have the energy for a whole practice. These short lines are meant to be carried with you. You might write one on a card and keep it in your pocket, or tape it near the place where you most often reach for your phone.

This is a hard moment. I am here for it.
The urge is a wave. Let it crest and pass.
Breathe out a little longer.
Second arrow. Set it down.
I don't know, and I can be here anyway.
May I be gentle with the one who is hurting.
Is it true? Is it kind? Is it helpful? Is it time?
Love can wait without giving up.

Where to Go From Here

This booklet is only a beginning. If it has been of some help, there are a few places you might go next.

The *Sitting with the Silence* email course. If you aren't already receiving it, this free ten-day course walks through the same path as this booklet, one short message a day, with a practice for each day. [Link to sign-up page]

Guided audio meditations. Spoken versions of several practices in this booklet are available free. [Link to audio page / Insight Timer]

Enlightened Estrangement. For parents who want to go deeper, my full-length book offers a more complete path through estrangement, grounded in Buddhist teaching and contemplative practice. [Availability and link]

The parents sangha. A gathering of estranged parents who meet to practice together and support one another. [Details and link]

One-on-one contemplative mentoring. For parents who would like individual support, I offer private sessions by video. [Link]

You can find all of these at **enlightenedestrangement.com**.

Please also remember that there are many good counselors and therapists who understand family estrangement well. Contemplative practice and professional care work beautifully together.

Dedication

May whatever goodness has come from these pages
not be counted as mine,
but belong to the teachings and the teachers who carried them,
and to every parent who has sat awake in the silence.

May all parents who are separated from their children
find comfort, clarity, and peace.

May all children who have stepped away
be safe, be well, and be free from suffering.

And where it is possible,
may hearts that have closed
slowly open again.