2020 has been something, huh? Because of all of the things, we are thrilled to be sharing this guest post from Bernadette Pleasant, the founder of The Emotional Institute, an online resource and educational center that offers courses, workshops, and interactive experiences that provide pathways to cultivate emotional wellbeing and gain insights that bring about a balanced mind/body connection. Bernadette has spent a lifetime exploring celebrations of the mind and body, from sensual dance to somatic healing. As a woman of color who comes from an esteemed tradition of natural healers, she is recognized as a leader in the mind-body wellness realm. We had Bernadette on our podcast last year and let me just say that it’s an episode you definitely don’t want to miss (and if you heard it already, it’s worth another listen!). Get it here. Now, read on for the one ritual Bernadette says we all need to do to not only help deal with all of the stress of 2020, but also how to help us heal our own past wounds so that we can all find true, authentic joy in our lives (even amidst of all of what’s happening). Gosh knows we all need that! Grief has always been an essential emotion of humanity, in every place and every time. Yet for many of us, there has been an upswell in grief during these trying times. Grief, always there below the surface, has now broken through the veil to the forefront of our consciousness. Many have experienced the quintessential grief of losing a loved one during this time. We are also struggling with the loss of personal freedom, loneliness, racism, worry of infection, unemployment and business loss — the list is endless. Frustration compounds grief as many people feel helpless and don’t know how they can make a meaningful difference. Fear, hate, and grief fills the body. There is so much that needs airing, that needs to be felt, heard, seen, and moved through. In response to the events of 2020, we have created the Grief Ritual. This virtual practice (sign up for it here — it’s free and ongoing) brings us together to hold space for one another as we move through the emotions we are experiencing, from new sorrows triggered by recent events to old grief that is coming to the surface. Whether grief is fresh and raw or has been smoldering for decades, whether it is interpersonal or existential, ecological or ancestral, the Grief Ritual facilitates its expression and release. Healing begins in community. This embodied, somatic work invites you to access and express emotion in a supportive community. It gives you the safe space to release grief, sorrow, anger, fear, and numbness — a cathartic and deeply transformative experience.