# Workbook 7: The Void - A Companion for Emptiness

## Being With Nothing: A Guide Through Sacred Emptiness

**For souls who’ve lost all meaning and can’t find their way back**

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## Welcome to the Void

### You Are Here

**Nothing matters.**

Not in a philosophical way.

In a visceral, embodied, undeniable way.

The things that used to mean something—

Your work. Your relationships. Your purpose. Your spiritual path. Even your suffering.

—All of it feels empty.

**Flat.**

**Meaningless.**

**Void.**

### This is Not a Problem

**You haven’t:** - Failed at spiritual practice - Lost your way - Broken yourself - Gone backwards - Done something wrong

**You’ve arrived at the void.**

**And the void is sacred.**

### What This Workbook Offers

**Not:** - Ways to escape the void - Techniques to fill the emptiness - Strategies to “fix” this - Spiritual bypassing (“just be grateful!”) - Positive thinking

**But:** - Understanding what’s happening - Practices for being with nothing - Discernment (void vs. depression) - Permission to stay empty - Companionship in the darkness - Trust that this serves

## What the Void Actually Is

### The Experience

**The void feels like:** - Nothing has meaning - Flat, empty, hollow - No motivation or desire - Colors are muted - Food has no taste - Music doesn’t move you - Relationships feel distant - “What’s the point?” - Existential emptiness - Can’t remember why you cared about anything - Even suffering feels pointless

**Physical sensations:** - Heaviness in chest or whole body - Fatigue (but not sleepy) - Difficulty moving - Everything takes effort - Numbness - Hollow feeling in belly or heart - Breathing feels mechanical

**Mental state:** - No thoughts (or very few) - Can’t plan or imagine future - Memory of caring, but can’t access the feeling - Watching life happen, not participating - “I don’t know” to every question

### What It’s Not

**The void is NOT:** - A mood - A phase to push through - Something to overcome - Laziness - Giving up - Depression (though related) - Spiritual failure

### What It IS

**The void is:** - A stage of transformation - The death of the old self - Sacred emptiness - The fertile darkness - Where meaning goes to die before being reborn - The space between who you were and who you’re becoming - Dissolution - The great letting go

**Ancient traditions call it:** - The Dark Night of the Soul (St. John of the Cross) - Bardo (Tibetan Buddhism) - The Nigredo (Alchemy) - The Abyss (Mysticism) - The Great Emptiness (Zen)

**You’re not the first. You won’t be the last.**

## Void vs. Depression

### They Look Similar

**Both include:** - Lack of motivation - Flatness - Loss of pleasure - Difficulty functioning - Emptiness - “What’s the point?”

**But they’re different.**

### Clinical Depression

**Features:** - Usually has identifiable triggers (trauma, loss, chemical imbalance) - Negative thought loops (“I’m worthless,” “Nothing will ever get better”) - Self-hatred or self-criticism - Desire to escape (through sleep, substances, death) - Heaviness that feels like burden - Brain fog, confusion - Often benefits from medication/therapy

**Energy:** - Collapsed - Weighted down - “I can’t” - Feels like being trapped

### Sacred Void

**Features:** - Often follows spiritual opening, ceremony, or rupture - Absence of thought (not negative thoughts—just empty) - No self to hate (the self has dissolved) - Not trying to escape—just… nothing - Emptiness that feels like space (not burden) - Clarity in the nothingness - Medication might not help (and might feel wrong)

**Energy:** - Hollow - Spacious - “Why would I?” - Feels like being untethered

### The Key Difference

**Depression says:** “Everything is terrible. I am broken. Nothing will ever be okay.”

**The void says:** “…”

**(Nothing. The void doesn’t speak. It’s just empty.)**

### Can You Have Both?

**Yes.**

The void can trigger depression.

Depression can open into the void.

They can coexist.

**You might need:** - Therapy for depression - Space for the void - Medical support AND spiritual companionship - Both at once

**This isn’t either/or.**

## The Stages of Void Experience

### Stage 1: The Drop

**What happens:** - Sudden or gradual loss of meaning - “I don’t care about anything” - Confusion (“What’s wrong with me?”) - Trying to care (but can’t) - Panic or anxiety

**Duration:** Days to weeks

**What helps:** - Stop trying to care - Let it be empty - Rest

### Stage 2: The Resistance

**What happens:** - Trying to fill the void - Seeking meaning desperately - New projects, relationships, practices - “Maybe if I just…” - Frustration that nothing works - Spiritual bypassing attempts

**Duration:** Weeks to months

**What helps:** - Notice you’re resisting - Feel the fear beneath resistance - Stop trying to fill it - Let it stay empty

### Stage 3: The Collapse

**What happens:** - Giving up trying - Surrendering to emptiness - Can’t function normally - Need to rest/withdraw - Everything feels impossible - “I don’t know”

**Duration:** Weeks to months

**What helps:** - Rest without guilt - Minimal obligations - Support from others - Permission to not know

### Stage 4: The Dwelling

**What happens:** - Living in the void - Functioning (barely) but empty - Going through motions - Familiar with nothingness - Not fighting it anymore - Just… being empty

**Duration:** Months (sometimes longer)

**What helps:** - Daily practices that don’t require meaning - Rhythm and routine - Being witnessed - Trusting the process

### Stage 5: The Glimmers

**What happens:** - Brief moments of aliveness - Quickly fade back to void - “Was that something?” - Hope (then emptiness again) - Frustration at the teasing

**Duration:** Weeks to months (comes and goes)

**What helps:** - Don’t grasp at glimmers - Let them come and go - Trust they’ll return - Stay with the void between

### Stage 6: The Emergence

**What happens:** - Meaning returns (different meaning) - Life feels real again (but changed) - Colors brighter - You care (but differently) - Purpose emerges (not forced)

**Duration:** Gradual, ongoing

**What helps:** - Don’t rush it - Let new meaning emerge slowly - Different from before - Trust what’s true now

## Why You’re Here

### Common Pathways to the Void

**1. Post-Ceremony/Medicine Work** - Especially Bufo, Ayahuasca, high-dose psilocybin - You dissolved completely - Coming back to “normal” feels impossible - Old life feels meaningless after seeing truth

**2. Spiritual Awakening/Rupture** - Identity dissolved - Everything you believed shattered - Can’t go back to who you were - New self hasn’t formed yet

**3. Major Loss or Grief** - Death, divorce, illness, betrayal - Lost what gave life meaning - Can’t imagine caring about anything again

**4. Burnout/Exhaustion** - Gave everything to work, family, causes - Nothing left - Can’t remember why you cared - Complete depletion

**5. Dark Night of the Soul** - Spiritual practice led here - All constructs fell away - Left with nothing - Not a mistake—it’s the path

**6. Existential Crisis** - Suddenly saw meaninglessness of it all - Can’t unsee it - Everything feels like performance - “What’s the point?”

### What the Void Reveals

**The void shows you:** - What you built on false ground - What you did for others’ approval - What you pretended mattered - What you performed - What wasn’t actually yours - What needs to die

**It strips away:** - Fake meaning - Borrowed purpose - Inherited values - Conditioning - Performance - The old self

**So that what remains is:** - Real - True - Yours - Unshakeable - From essence

**The void is a refining fire.**

**Everything burns.**

**What emerges is gold.**

## What Dies in the Void

### The Death Inventory

**What dies in the void:**

**Identity:** - Who you thought you were - Your roles - Your story - Your personality (or parts of it) - Your self-concept

**Meaning:** - What you thought mattered - Your purpose (the old one) - Your goals - Your dreams - Your “why”

**Relationships:** - Connections built on performance - Friendships based on old self - Relationships that can’t hold the void - Codependent bonds - Surface connections

**Practices:** - Spiritual practices that were performance - Meditation that was striving - Self-improvement projects - “Becoming better” efforts

**Beliefs:** - What you inherited - What you never questioned - What you thought was true - What kept you safe - What gave you hope

**Desires:** - What you thought you wanted - Ambition - Striving - Achievement - Even healing

### Grieving What Dies

**You’re allowed to grieve:** - The person you were - The life that felt meaningful - The certainty you had - The hope you held - The future you imagined

**This is loss.**

**Even if it needed to die.**

**Even if it was false.**

**Grief is appropriate.**

## The Temptation to Fill It

### The Panic of Emptiness

**When the void opens:**

Your mind panics.

“This can’t be right. Fix it. Fill it. Escape.”

**Common escape attempts:**

**1. New Relationships** - “Maybe if I find the right person…” - Seeking someone to fill the void - Desperate connection - Codependency

**2. New Projects** - “Maybe if I start this business/book/practice…” - Manic doing - Productivity as avoidance - Busy-ness covering emptiness

**3. Spiritual Seeking** - “Maybe if I do this practice/ceremony/retreat…” - Chasing peak experiences - More teachers, more modalities - Trying to fill with spirituality

**4. Substances** - Alcohol, drugs, food, sex - Numbing the emptiness - Temporary relief - Deeper void after

**5. Positive Thinking** - “Just be grateful!” - “Focus on the good!” - Spiritual bypassing - Denying what’s real

**6. Going Back** - Trying to return to old life - Pretending you’re fine - Performing normalcy - Forcing meaning

### Why They Don’t Work

**Because:**

The void isn’t a problem to solve.

It’s a passage to move through.

**Filling it:** - Delays the process - Prolongs the suffering - Misses the gift - Keeps you stuck

**The only way out is through.**

### The Practice of Not Filling

**This is counterintuitive.**

**This is hard.**

**But:**

**Let it be empty.**

**Don’t try to:** - Make it mean something - Fill it with activity - Escape into seeking - Bypass with positivity - Force new purpose

**Just:** - Be empty - Sit with nothing - Let the void be void

**This is the practice.**

## Practices for Being With Emptiness

### The Void Sit

**Daily practice (10-30 minutes):**

Sit.

Don’t meditate.

Don’t focus on breath.

Don’t try to be present.

**Just sit in the emptiness.**

Feel the void.

Feel the nothing.

Feel the meaninglessness.

**Don’t try to change it.**

**Don’t try to transcend it.**

**Don’t try to fill it with awareness or presence or anything.**

**Just be empty.**

**Instructions:** 1. Sit comfortably 2. Close eyes or soft gaze 3. Feel the emptiness inside 4. Let it be empty 5. When mind tries to make meaning, notice, return to emptiness 6. Sit until timer ends 7. Continue with day

**This builds capacity for nothingness.**

### The Nothingness Walk

**Daily (15-30 minutes):**

Walk slowly.

Nowhere to go.

Nothing to do.

No intention.

**Feel:** - Your feet on earth - Your body moving - The emptiness inside

**Don’t:** - Try to enjoy nature - Practice gratitude - Make it meaningful - Fill it with mindfulness

**Just walk empty.**

### The Void Journal

**When words come (not forced):**

Today the void feels...  
  
What wants to die today is...  
  
What I'm trying to fill it with is...  
  
If I let it be empty, I fear...  
  
The void is teaching me...

**Don’t force answers.**

**Write only what’s true.**

**“I don’t know” is a valid answer.**

### The Emptiness Breath

**Throughout day (when you remember):**

**Breathe in:** Empty

**Breathe out:** Empty

**Feel:** The nothing inside

**Don’t try to fill it with breath or energy.**

**Just breathe emptiness.**

### The Meaningless Ritual

**Choose one simple act daily:**

* Make tea
* Light a candle
* Wash your hands
* Fold a blanket

**Do it with full attention.**

**But don’t make it meaningful.**

**Don’t assign it purpose.**

**Just do it.**

**Empty action.**

**This is Zen.**

## Daily Rituals for Void Navigation

### Morning (When You Can)

**Minimum (5 min):** 1. Feel feet on floor 2. Notice the emptiness 3. Say aloud: “Today I have nothing. Today I am nothing. This is okay.” 4. Continue

**If you have energy (15 min):** 1. Void sit (10 min) 2. Simple movement (shake, stretch) 3. One meaningless act (make tea) 4. Face the day

### Throughout Day

**Grounding (when needed):** - Hand on heart: “Empty. Empty. Empty.” - Feet on earth: Feel the void, feel the ground - Cold water on face: Shock into presence (even if empty)

**When functioning:** - Do what needs doing (don’t add meaning) - Work, eat, move (without purpose) - Go through motions (it’s okay)

**When you can’t:** - Rest without guilt - Lie down - Stare - Be

### Evening (If Possible)

**Release (5-10 min):** 1. Shake body (release the day) 2. Emptiness breath (3 min) 3. Say aloud: “I survived another day in the void.” 4. Rest

**Journal (if words come):** - One sentence about the day - Or nothing - Both fine

### Weekly

**If you can:** - One longer void sit (30-60 min) - Walk in nature (empty walk) - Be witnessed by someone safe

**If you can’t:** - Just survive - That’s enough

## Relationship to Nothingness

### The Void as Companion

**Instead of enemy:**

What if the void is: - Teacher - Ally - Sacred darkness - Womb of rebirth - Necessary death

**What if:**

The void isn’t what’s wrong.

The void is what’s clearing the way.

### Dialoguing With Emptiness

**When you’re ready (not forced):**

**Ask the void:**

“What do you want from me?”

(Listen. Wait. Don’t force answers.)

“What are you showing me?”

(Sit with the not-knowing.)

“What needs to die?”

(Feel what arises.)

“What are you protecting me from?”

(The void might be mercy.)

**The void might answer.**

**Or it might stay silent.**

**Both are teaching.**

### Befriending Nothing

**Practice:**

Instead of: “I hate this emptiness.”

Try: “The void is here. I see you.”

Instead of: “When will this end?”

Try: “Void, what do you need me to know?”

Instead of: “I’m broken.”

Try: “I’m in the bardo. This is sacred.”

**Shift from resistance to relationship.**

## Sacred Despair vs. Clinical Depression

### When It’s Sacred Despair

**Signs:** - Follows spiritual opening or loss - Emptiness more than heaviness - No negative thought loops (just… nothing) - Able to function (barely, but yes) - Sense that this is serving something - Moments of clarity in the void - No desire to harm self (just no desire at all)

**What helps:** - Space and time - Being witnessed - Spiritual companionship - Practices for the void - Trust in the process

**What doesn’t:** - Trying to fix it - Positive thinking - Forcing meaning - Medication (may or may not help)

### When It’s Clinical Depression

**Signs:** - Self-hatred or worthlessness - Suicidal thoughts or planning - Can’t function at all (not just unmotivated—unable) - Brain fog, confusion, can’t think - Physical symptoms (sleep/appetite changes) - No sense of purpose or teaching - Feels like being trapped in darkness

**What helps:** - Therapy - Medication (when appropriate) - Medical support - Crisis intervention if needed - Treating chemical imbalance

**This is medical. Get help.**

### When It’s Both

**You might have:** - Sacred void (spiritual process) - AND clinical depression (medical condition)

**Both need attention:** - Therapy + medication for depression - Space + witnessing for void - Medical care + spiritual support

**Not either/or.**

**Both/and.**

### Red Flags: Seek Help Immediately

**If you’re experiencing:** - Suicidal thoughts with plan - Intent to harm yourself - Inability to care for basic needs (eating, hygiene) for extended time - Psychotic symptoms (hallucinations, delusions) - Complete isolation for weeks - Self-harm urges

**Call:** - Crisis line: 988 (US) - Therapist - Trusted friend/family - Emergency services

**The void is sacred.**

**But safety comes first.**

## When the Void Needs Witness

### You Don’t Have to Do This Alone

**The void is isolating.**

**By nature.**

**But:**

Being witnessed in the void is powerful.

**Find someone who can:** - Sit with you in the emptiness - Not try to fix you - Not fill the silence - Not spiritual bypass - Just be present to your nothingness

**This might be:** - Therapist trained in spiritual emergence - Spiritual guide who knows the void - Friend who’s been through it - Circle of others in the darkness - Mentor who can hold the space

**Not:** - Someone who’ll try to cheer you up - Someone who’ll give you solutions - Someone uncomfortable with darkness - Someone who’ll make it about them

### What to Say When You Need Support

**Try:**

“I’m in the void. Everything feels meaningless. I don’t need you to fix it. I just need you to know I’m here.”

“I can’t explain what this is. But I need someone to witness that I’m not okay, and that’s okay.”

“Can you just sit with me? I don’t need words. I just need presence.”

### Void Circles

**If possible, find or create:**

A circle of others in the void.

**Meet weekly or monthly.**

**Structure:** - Sit together in silence (10-20 min) - Share (if you want): “The void this week…” - Witness each other - No fixing, no advice - Just: “I see you. I’m here too.”

**This is powerful medicine.**

## What Emerges From Nothing

### The Paradox

**From the void:** - Something emerges - But not what you expect - Not what you planned - Not what you tried to create

**What emerges is:** - Unforced - True - Yours - From essence - Unshakeable

### Signs of Emergence

**You might notice:** - Brief moments of aliveness - Caring about something (small, unexpected) - Feeling drawn to something new - Energy returning (in spurts) - Color returning to the world - Curiosity (tiny) - Movement toward something

**Don’t grasp.**

**Let it come naturally.**

### What the New Looks Like

**After the void:**

Life doesn’t return to “normal.”

**Because:** - You’re different - Your values are different - What matters is different - How you relate is different

**The new might be:** - Simpler - Slower - Less ambitious - More present - Less performing - More real

**It won’t look like “success.”**

**It will feel like truth.**

## Integration Timeline

### Months 1-3: In the Depths

**What’s happening:** - Acute void - Everything meaningless - Barely functioning - Intense emptiness

**Focus:** - Survive - Rest - Don’t make big decisions - Be witnessed

### Months 4-6: Learning to Live Here

**What’s happening:** - Void is familiar now - Still empty but less acute - Functioning (going through motions) - Accepting this is where you are

**Focus:** - Daily practices - Rhythm and routine - Small connection - Trust the process

### Months 7-12: Glimmers Begin

**What’s happening:** - Moments of aliveness (brief) - Fade back to void - Hope and frustration - Slow shifts

**Focus:** - Don’t grasp at glimmers - Stay with the void between - Let emergence happen - Patient presence

### Year 2+: Slow Emergence

**What’s happening:** - Meaning returns (different) - Life feels real (changed) - Purpose emerges (unforced) - New self forming

**Focus:** - Let new life emerge slowly - Don’t rush back to doing - Trust what’s true now - Live from essence

**Timeline varies wildly.**

**Some: months.**

**Some: years.**

**Trust your process.**

## Living With the Void

### The Void Doesn’t Fully Leave

**Even after emergence:**

The void remains.

**Not as constant state.**

**But as:** - Portal you can return to - Teacher you revisit - Reminder of what’s real - Touchstone for truth

**When meaning feels false:**

Return to the void.

**When you’re performing:**

Touch the emptiness.

**When you’re lost:**

The void clarifies.

### The Gift

**The void gives:** - Discernment (real vs. false) - Freedom from performance - Unshakeable ground (nothing) - Clarity about what matters - Death of the false self - Birth of the true

**It’s brutal.**

**It’s necessary.**

**It’s sacred.**

## Resources & Support

### Books

* *The Dark Night of the Soul* by St. John of the Cross
* *When Things Fall Apart* by Pema Chödrön
* *The Wild Edge of Sorrow* by Francis Weller
* *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* by Chögyam Trungpa

### Support

**Crisis:** - 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (US) - Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

**Integration:** - Spiritual Emergence Network - Fireside Project (psychedelic crisis support)

**Therapy:** - Find spiritual emergence therapist - Somatic therapist - Depth psychologist

## Final Words

### You Are Not Alone

**Thousands have walked this path.**

**The mystics.** **The seekers.** **The ones who died before they died.**

**You are in sacred company.**

### This Serves

**Even when it feels like:** - Punishment - Mistake - Failure - Brokenness

**It’s not.**

**This is:** - Initiation - Refinement - Death and rebirth - The path

### Trust the Void

**It knows what it’s doing.**

**Even when you don’t.**

**Let it be empty.**

**Let it take what needs to go.**

**Let it teach you nothingness.**

**What emerges will be real.**

**This workbook is part of the Astral Refined Offerings 2025 course materials.**

For support in the void: [astralamat@gmail.com](mailto:astralamat@gmail.com)

**May you find peace in the emptiness.** **May you trust the darkness.** **May you emerge when ready.**

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*End of Workbook 7*