



LIVE BURIAL EXERCISE

Reading & Worksheet

What is Live Burial?

- Live Burial is an ancient Tantric exercise from India. It's featured in a book by Paulo Coelho called *The Pilgrimage*, and it also appears in *The Book of Secrets* by Deepak Chopra, among other sources.

Why do the Live Burial exercise?

- You'll get a poignant reminder of why you want to be alive.
- You'll become aware of your power to impact the lives around you.
- You'll rekindle your *desire* to impact the lives around you.
- It will cut through layers of bitterness and cynicism and reawaken the person who creates music.

This is a particularly powerful exercise. If you sometimes doubt why you want to do music in the first place, if it all just seems pointless sometimes, you'll get a poignant reminder of why you want to be alive. You'll get a poignant reminder that being alive is an opportunity you just can't dismiss.

You'll not only gain an awareness of your power to impact the lives around you, but you'll reawaken your desire to impact the lives of the people around you.

This exercise will put you back in touch with the kind of person you want to be. Despite any defeats or disappointments you've suffered in the past, it will cut through layers of bitterness and cynicism and put you back in touch with that person who creates music.

If you've believed in your dream, focused on it, taken action, but just haven't made the kind of progress you've always known you're capable of, quite naturally this may have made you confused and bitter, maybe even made you into someone you don't like, someone you don't want to be... this exercise will bring you back.

It will get you back on the path, believing in your dream again. And you need to get back on the path before you can start moving down it.



OK, So how do I do this exactly?

- Find a time and a place where you'll be completely undisturbed for 30 minutes.
- Pick a place with enough space to lie down comfortably on your back and where you can feel safe and at ease.
- Take a deep breath, and relax. Close your eyes.
- Imagine that you're in a coffin at your own funeral service.
- **You're alive, but nobody knows it. You can hear everything, but even if you try, you cannot move or make a sound.**
- Imagine the proceedings of the entire funeral service, including being transported to the cemetery, lowered into the ground and buried in your coffin.

The exercise will take up to 30 minutes. You don't want to be interrupted while doing this exercise, so make sure you find a time and a place where you'll be completely undisturbed for at least 30 minutes.

You'll need enough space to be able to lie down comfortably on your back. Your eyes will be closed for the duration of the exercise so pick a place where you can feel reasonably safe and at ease.

Once you close your eyes you're going to imagine being at your own funeral. You're going to imagine the entire service and burial, and the more detail you include in the proceedings, the better. You're alive in the coffin and able to hear everything going on, but you're unable to move or make a sound. After the funeral service, you're taken to the cemetery, lowered into the ground and buried alive. You're going to imagine this too.

To get the most out of this exercise, you've got to imagine with all 5 of your senses how your funeral might actually proceed, in the event you were going to be buried in a coffin. Try and use your imagination as vividly as possible. Really imagine the sounds of the voices of the people you know will be in the room. Really imagine what they are saying, the look in their eye, and what they're thinking about.

When you're ready to begin, lie down on your back, fold your hands on your chest and close your eyes as if you're already lying in the coffin. Smell the flowers and the perfume. Hear the church organ. The echo of the microphone. Smell the lemon oil wood cleaner on the pews in the church. See the black suits and dresses. See the altar. Feel the silk lining of the inside of the coffin. Hear the voices of the people present.

What are they saying? Hear the coughing and sniffing noses. Feel the motion of the hearse. Hear the swish of the shoes through the grass. Smell the earth. Hear the scraping of the shovel. Feel the rawness and uncertainty in the air. Whatever you imagine, imagine it in detail using all 5 of your senses.

Remember, for the duration of the funeral, you're alive, but no one knows it and you are unable to move



or make a sound.

What should I expect?

Here is one short example of how this exercise might unfold: [e.g. classic North American-style funeral]

You feel a bump as the hearse pulls up to the curb. You hear the click and whoosh as the back opens and then with a jerk you're lifted up into the air. You want to bang on the wood but you can't. You want to scream out "I'm alive" but no sound comes. You rock gently side to side as you are carried up the steps and down between the pews of the chapel. There's a gentle thud as you are placed on the tablet. You feel the presence of people in the room and more people entering the room. People you knew, people you have always known. Your family. Parents and children and childhood friends. Aunts and uncles. Neighbours. Everyone is there. And you can hear them all. You know where they're standing and with whom. You can hear all of their conversations. Every word spoken or whispered. The things they're saying. You hear someone asking where everyone is going for dinner after the funeral.

Now the music begins. The celebrant says some opening words and there's a reading. Ashes to ashes... dust to dust... Silence is broken by a cough. You hear footsteps approaching the lecturn and a muffled knocking as the microphone is adjusted. Now it's time for the speeches. Your mom gives a speech, you notice the tone in her voice, you can imagine her eyes and the way she's standing. She's talking about how you were when you were a child. So full of life. But you haven't been a child for quite awhile! And after your mom, your brother says a few words. Then your father. They are remembering all sorts of things. **Is it the real you they are describing?**

What are they saying about you? You try to make a sound, you try to wave, you try with all your might to lift your leg, to flutter your eyelids, anything, but you can't move. All you can do is listen. You're still alive!! Can't anybody hear you? If you could only speak, if you could only move, if you only had the chance again... what would you...

The ceremony ends. And you feel the floating sensation again as you are taken back to the hearse. You smell the faint but sharp odor of exhaust as the engine starts up. The hearse pulls away from the curb and proceeds slowly through several intersections and then stops after what seems like an eternity. There is a crowd, a commotion. You're hefted into the air and carried along. More voices. Sniffling noses and the sound of crying.

More words are spoken. You try again to call out. But you feel a bouncing sensation as the coffin is slowly lowered down. You're being buried alive! Aaarrgh!! And then, then you hear the scraping of the shovel and the dirt hits the coffin inches above your face. The sound of more dirt impacting all around you. The faint cracks of light disappear and it all becomes even blacker than before. The voices fade away and time slows down... It's quiet and dark. It smells of earth. And then, what is that? You start to feel something tickling against your leg, your back, your face. Insects and crawling bugs are beginning to creep along your body. Squirming and looking for places to burrow... And... and they're finding ways to get in.

But you're still alive! You can hardly bear it!

You strain with all your might. You cry out. You jerk in all directions in a final massive convulsion. Your legs



kicking, your arms smashing - in a frenzy - and this time, it works!

The lid explodes in a shower of wood and dirt! You sit up coughing and spluttering, dirt in your mouth and hair and down your back, you scramble and slide and clamber your way out of the hole. And at last, muscles aching, heart banging, you take in a massive gulp of air and flop on your back on the grass. Deep shuddering breaths wrack your body as you look up in trembling relief and wonder at the beauty and magnificence of the stars.

And then a hot, powerful flush of gratitude races through all of your veins all the way from your toenails to the hair on your head causing your face to glow red and your fingers to tingle. You're not dead yet!

You are alive!!!!

Next Steps

If you go the distance, you'll only need to do this exercise once. Make it your own.

- **Listen closely to what people are saying at the funeral service, including your parents.**

What are they saying about you? What are they focusing on? What are they remembering? Are they being honest? Did they really know you? Are they remembering the real you? Are they remembering someone you used to be? How does this make you feel? How do you want to be remembered? Is there something you want to say to them? What do you want for them? What will they be thinking about tomorrow?

- **Write down your reflections upon completing the exercise.**

Please write down your reflections upon completing the exercise. Your reflections can be on the exercise itself or on anything that happens during the exercise, and/or any thoughts that come to you immediately or in the days thereafter.

Go and do this. Go the distance. Find some alone time and space and have the experience of your own funeral and live burial.

No matter what, you will benefit from doing this exercise... Just do it!