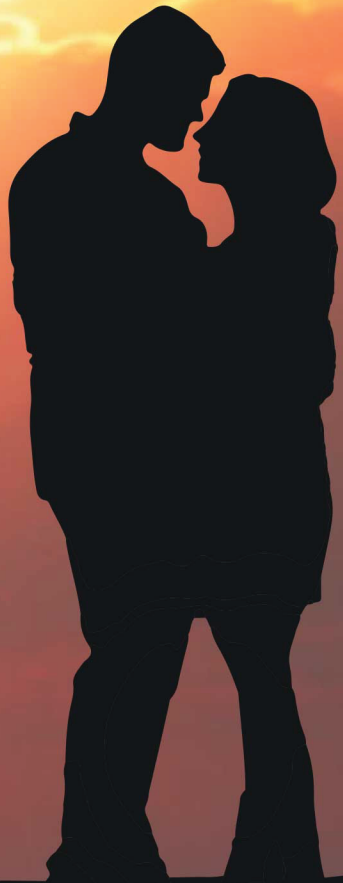
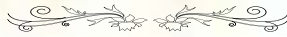


# The Dating Guide for Widows



By Mary Francis

# Relationship Baggage



This is for widows who have experienced the end of their marriage and they don't know where or how to find happiness with another love. They may have tried to date but just couldn't make it work and so they stopped trying. We all carry emotional baggage into a new relationship.

This guide explains what is going on and outlines the actions to be taken to find and sustain a new relationship. As the guide unfolds, you'll learn what those actions are and how to follow them.



*Staying tied up in our past delays our healing. Changing from wife to widow can mean a loss of identity. You were known as a married person and it's hard to acknowledge that you're now single.*

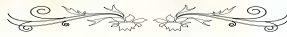
It's important to remember all the good your marriage has brought into your life. The positives - children, being loved and the fun you had together. Honor those memories, it's healing as you move forward.

We are more likely to be attractive to others when we are real, when we allow what is unique about us to shine. Allowing the unknown opens up a world of possibilities and as scary as that can be, it also opens up your life to what you really want.

When a loved one dies, dating again becomes complicated in unique ways. First, you're feeling guilty because your relationship was cherished and it's hard to imagine loving anyone else. Second, you may fear loving and losing them.

The wisest advice is that grieving "takes as long as it takes". Give it the time it needs and only you will know when you're ready to date again.

# *The Grieving Process*



We may mistakenly believe that if we truly loved someone, then we would always grieve and never want to date.

Life goes on they say, but how can it, how dare it without our loved one? To fully heal our hearts, we must give ourselves permission to be happy. Eventually, as our heart heals, we will still miss them, but the dominant feeling becomes the warmth of our memories. More tragic than any death, is to be half alive as if our life ended with theirs.

When you're hurting write out your feelings. Write out your wants, needs and wishes.

Write a letter to yourself as if it were from your late husband. Put into words the support and understanding that he would say to you. Write another letter stating what you're thankful for, what you forgive and what you plan to do in the near future.

With these insights you can get in touch with your feelings.

We often become unbalanced by nurturing others before ourselves. We are bought up with the idea that it is better to give than to receive and we forget to pay attention to our feelings, to be creative and to take time for ourselves. We need to build up our self-esteem because we are important.

If in your past relationship you were the "giver" then you were usually responsible for everyone's happiness. Before dating again, you need to become balanced in your giving and in receiving so you can receive as well as give.

Do something nice for yourself, something that will make you feel good. Stop and get an ice cream, take a long bubble-bath, develop a new hobby, get a massage or take a long walk.

Learn in time to grow through loneliness to the stage of "aloneness", where you are comfortable being by yourself. You choose to be home alone or to go out, but you don't choose based on being lonely. Instead it's based on what you want to do. When the time is right, you may choose to date, rather than needing to date to overcome loneliness.

# Enjoying The Single Life



Many widows never learned to be single as they lived at home before getting married. They spent their free time doing what their parents wanted and then what their spouse wanted.

Now is the time to develop a new interest, to find new activities that you really enjoy, because you don't have to be concerned about anyone but yourself.



Death shakes our self-awareness of who we are. If you're not Mrs. ... anymore, who are you? Before re-entry into dating you must redefine yourself.

First step is learning to be a **single** person, ready and able to face life alone. After you have rebuilt your life and learned to accept yourself as you are, then the next step is learning to love again. That growth prepares you for change so you can be ready to date.

*When we learn to accept that "it's okay to not be okay", then we begin to feel more valued.*

It's important to love yourself and to give yourself permission to love yourself as you are. Your life is in your control so feel love for yourself – that is the way life is meant to be.

It takes a great deal of inner security to handle being single. You must understand yourself better so that your viewpoint of life will be much broader. Now the question is "Do you want to stay single or do you want to date again?" The goal is to be free to choose singleness or dating and be comfortable with whatever you decide.

# Loving Again



If the center of your life is your spouse and he dies, the center is suddenly removed and that is what makes your grieving so painful. We end up sometimes feeling **unloved** and spend time looking for another love immediately to heal our wounds.

Many confuse sex and love, so in the beginning it is wiser to go easy on love relationships. Invest in friendships first until you learn to love yourself. Falling in love to overcome loneliness is not actually love. Mature love is loving another person for who he is and not for what he can do for you.

We need to be better at receiving compliments, appreciation and encouragement from men. You can't fully receive love from someone new when you're hiding part of yourself. Most of us have repressed the pain and hurt of our past.



Can Anybody Fall In True  
Love Second Time?

Love comes when you have allowed yourself to grow with the help of another. When both of you know how to give and receive you will have received "the ultimate lifetime achievement reward for love."

I've talked to many widows who have shut themselves off from having another relationship because of the pain of their loss. Their fear of being hurt again is so great they refuse to open their hearts to someone new.

It's difficult to break down that wall of protection but if we don't expose our heart to love, we end up denying our need to be cherished for who we really are. Yes, to receive love is a risk with all its drama, but we need to accept ourselves whole if we want to love again.

There is no way of avoiding grief in this life, but "*It's better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all*". Alfred Lord Tennyson

# *A New Relationship*



At this point of the guide you may feel ready to jump back into the relationship jungle but there are some other things you still need to learn so you can be a successful dater.



1. You must become aware of the need to make some changes.
2. You need to discover what your new needs are.
3. You must want to change and be willing to work on “yourself”.
4. Your first step is to trust your intuition.
5. The key is to listen and trust your internal voice.

Is your self-esteem high enough to love another person or do you feel so empty inside that you have nothing to offer except your neediness?

When grieving you're in the process of change – unstable, growing and healing. You are different today from what you were yesterday and will be different again tomorrow.

This period of change doesn't make for a good foundation, so don't move too quickly from dating into a long-term commitment.

Who are you? Take time to write out everything you know about yourself – the good, bad and ugly.

Know yourself, accept what you can't change. Examples: Family, upbringing, height, etc. and improve yourself where and when you can.