

Self-care Resources for New Widows (and everyone else)

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The Rules of Grief

First Rule: No one gets to tell you the right way to grieve, that it's time to move on and find someone else, or it's too soon to go on a date.

Second Rule: The stages of grief? That only applies to one very specific thing – if *YOU* are dying of cancer. That was what it was created for. For the survivor it can be different. It is different. There are loops and twirls, and valleys and mountains. When it's time, we figure out a way to incorporate grief into our lives.

Third Rule: We all deserve to be happy; to have joy in our lives. It's okay to laugh if that is what you want to do.

Fourth Rule: You can ignore all the rules you want and make your own.

[Elephant Journal](#) has a lot of good articles on grief, widowhood, and bereavement. I published [this article](#) on Elephant Journal in January 2020. It's called *9 Ways to "Put on your Oxygen Mask" when you're Struggling through Grief*.

Here are some books I read.

Links are to [IndiBound.org](#) which supports local bookstores, except where noted.

1. [Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing After Loss](#). Pat Schwiebert, Chuck DeKlyen, Taylor Bills (Great for kids)
2. [The Year of Magical Thinking](#). Joan Didion (Her prose captures the befuddlement of grief spot on)
3. [Swallowed By A Snake: The Gift of the Masculine Side of Healing](#). Thomas R. Golden (Great for men)
4. [The Essential Rumi - Reissue: New Expanded Edition](#). Trans.: Coleman Barks (Poetry that will make your heart cry).
5. [The Other Side Of Sadness: What The New Science Of Bereavement Tells Us About Life After Loss](#). George A. Bonanno (Helps de-bunk the traditional beliefs about bereavement)
6. [A Grief Observed](#). C. S. Lewis (A bit dry, but a very honest account)
7. [The Denial Of Death](#). Ernest Becker (Academic. A heavy read. I finished about half of it. Changed my life)
8. [The Rejection Collection: Cartoons You Never Saw, and Never Will See, in The New Yorker](#). Ed.: Matthew Diffie (Raunchy, irreverent, un-PC. Sometimes that is what is needed)

9. [Everyday Emerson: The Wisdom of Ralph Waldo Emerson Paraphrased](#). (Quick read. Not grief-related, but reminds us how we are all connected. Amazon link)
10. [An Appeal To The World: The Way To Peace In A Time Of Division](#). Dalai Lama, Franz Alt (Not exactly grief related. This book made me realize we all deserve joy and happiness)

Meditation Apps

There are quite a few mediation apps available. Here are two I am familiar with.

- The [InsightTimer](#) is free, with in app purchases, and has a wide variety of meditations available. I'd start here.
- I use Sam Harris's "[Waking Up](#)" app. Harris is, admittedly an acquired taste and you have to pay for it. For me it has been transformative

Social Media and Ways to Connect with Others

[Meetup.com](#) has a number of widow, grief, and bereavement groups. Put those terms one at a time ("widow", "grief", "bereavement") to find one near you, or a virtual meetup online anywhere.

[Reddit.com](#): There are a number of sub-reddits for those so inclined. Reddit can be a strange neighborhood, but there are plenty of good-minded people there too. FYI, some people like to create a separate Gmail account just for reddit.

<https://www.reddit.com/r/widowers/>
<https://www.reddit.com/r/GriefSupport/>
<https://www.reddit.com/r/SuicideBereavement/>

[Facebook.com](#) also has a number of groups devoted to grief, widows and widowers, and so on. Most are private groups and require moderator approval to join. Here are some:

[Young Widows & Widowers](#)
[Widowed and Remarried](#)
[Grief Beyond Belief Closed Group](#)
[Non-Religious Widows / Widowers Club](#)
[The Widowed - Support Group](#) (Dark, silly, and irreverent)

[Youtube.com](#) is also a good source for lectures, channels, TED/TEDx talks, and so on. Search for terms like "widow", "grief", "bereavement" to find relevant videos.