

# LOSING YOUR SPOUSE

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*Losing your spouse can feel like you are losing half of your life. Being a widow or widower is something we expect someday but never are prepared to face. Grieving a spouse or mate can take up to three years. Be easy with yourself during the grieving period. Learn how to take care of yourself mentally, emotionally, spiritually and financially.*



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1. **Live through the funeral then tackle your life:** Losing a partner is a drastic change in one's life. Take things moment-by-moment, day-by-day. Focus on the funeral first then on the rest of your life. Do not try to do both at once.
2. **Have someone with you:** Identify people in your life who are supportive and caring. Have these people with you when you are going through the belongings of your spouse. Going through clothing and belongings can bring out intense grief. Having a friend can help you get through the process of sorting and deciding.
3. **Get support emotionally from both family and friends:** Rely on your emotional support system. If your family and friends are not supportive find a grief therapist. It is important for you to have help mentally to get through the time after your loss and up to the next three years.
4. **Advice is needed. Financial change happens after a death:** One less person usually means less income. Your financial health is just as important as your mental and physical health. Check with an accountant to find out what your status and tax responsibilities are after a death.
5. **Take care of yourself first:** Remember your whole being during the grief process, that includes mental, physical and spiritual health. Keep eating on a regular basis, get sleep even if you have to sleep at odd times, exercise on a set schedule and find solace for your internal spiritual being.
6. **Tell people what you need:** Family and friends usually do not know how to help you – in fact they often hesitate to even talk about death. Tell people what you need for help emotionally, physically or even if you need to be left alone. You and they will be appreciative.
7. **Date on your own time:** Finding a new mate is on your own time – even choosing if you want to date again is up to you. It is okay to tell people who ask you when you are going to date again that it is something you will do on your own time. You can even tell people to stop asking you about your social life.
8. **Watch out for depression:** Grief is a normal outlet to a death. Depression is a chemical imbalance in the brain. Sometimes depression occurs during intense grieving. If you are crying for long periods of time, having difficulties with your sleeping and are gaining or losing five to ten pounds within six weeks, please consult a therapist or doctor. If you are suicidal go to the Emergency room as soon as possible or call 911.
9. **Be aware your relationship with your children is going to change:** No matter what the ages of your children, your relationship with them is going to change after the loss of your spouse.
10. **Take the time to check in with your spirituality:** It can provide support during time of deep grief. If you do not have a source of spiritual strength, spending more time with nature or going to places of comfort can help.