

get a grip on your guilt



GET A GRIP ON YOUR GUILT

AND LET IT GO

Man, you can be hard on yourself. It's not bad enough that your spouse died...now you're heaping all kinds of shitty guilt feelings onto your already fragile shoulders. Know what? You're not alone! It's a common occurrence in widowhood to let guilty feelings derail us. But you don't have to. Let's learn how to get a grip on your guilt so you can let it go, OK?

WHERE IS THE GUILT COMING FROM?

1

DISCOVER - WRITE YOUR THOUGHTS DOWN

Write down all the nagging thoughts you have about your guilt or about what you *think* you're doing wrong. This doesn't have to be perfect. Just get it out on paper.

2

DISSECT - ANALYZE YOUR THOUGHTS

Read and analyze what you wrote. What *other* feelings come up? Shame? Anger? Sadness? Write down what you didn't know about how those feelings are associated with guilt.

3

DECIDE- REFRAME YOUR THOUGHTS

How do you want to feel about these thoughts? What would you say to a good friend who shared these feelings with you?

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PRACTICE

IMPROVE YOUR SELF-TALK WITH THESE SUPPORTIVE AND LOVING PRACTICES

1

WRITE A LETTER FROM YOUR SPOUSE

You've acknowledged your guilty feelings. You know *why* you're feeling guilty. Now write a letter to yourself from your spouse. What would he/she say to you about your guilt? Read this letter back to yourself out loud.

2

CHOOSE THE OPPOSITE FEELING

Rewrite your guilty feelings by choosing the *exact opposite* feeling instead. For example, if you wrote "I shouldn't start dating again because it means I didn't love my husband/wife," rewrite that statement to say "I should start dating again because it means I loved my husband/wife" and then explain why (*because my husband/wife showed me what it was like to be loved unconditionally, I deserve to feel that again*). Try changing the meaning you've assigned to your guilty thoughts from negative to positive.

3

FROM GUILT TO GROWTH

This page is your chance to reflect on how far you've come. You've stared down your guilt. You've questioned it. You've reframed it. Now it's time to get clear on what you know now that you didn't know before.

2 CHOOSE THE OPPOSITE FEELING

GUILTY FEELING

THE EXACT OPPOSITE

GUILTY FEELING

THE EXACT OPPOSITE

GUILTY FEELING

THE EXACT OPPOSITE



3 FROM GUILT TO GROWTH - WHAT I KNOW NOW

ONE THING I'VE REALIZED ABOUT GUILT IS...

WHEN I FEEL GUILTY NOW I REMIND MYSELF...

WHAT I WOULD TELL ANOTHER WIDOW WHO'S FEELING THE WAY I DID...

KEEP GOING

A FEW MORE WAYS TO
RELEASE GUILT AND
SHOW YOURSELF SOME
SERIOUS COMPASSION

You've already done the heavy lifting digging into those messy thoughts, questioning where your guilt is coming from, and deciding how you want to feel instead.

That's no small thing!

But before you close the lid on this whole "guilt" situation (or toss this PDF in a drawer never to be seen again 😬), let's stretch the healing just a little further.

These next few pages will help you reflect on what you've learned, shift your self-talk even more, and actually practice what it feels like to treat yourself with the same kindness you'd give literally anyone else.

Because you deserve that too.

GUILT TRIGGERS TRACKER

If you keep bumping into guilt over and over, it's time to get curious. What's setting it off? What would it feel like to interrupt that pattern? This page helps you spot your guilt triggers so you can respond with awareness instead of spiraling into shame. Because the more you understand your guilt, the less power it has over you. Print it. Reuse it. Or keep a digital copy to fill out when the guilt gremlins pop up.

WHAT TRIGGERED THE GUILT?

WHAT DID I BELIEVE OR THINK?

WHAT CAN I REMIND MYSELF OF NEXT TIME?

7 DAYS TO SOFTER SELF-TALK

This 7-day challenge is designed to help you practice being kinder to yourself one small, doable prompt at a time.

DAY 1: TODAY I FORGIVE MYSELF FOR...

DAY 2: ONE KIND THING I CAN SAY TO MYSELF...

DAY 3: I WILL LET GO OF THE BELIEF THAT...

DAY 4: I'LL DO SOMETHING NURTURING FOR MYSELF TODAY, LIKE...

DAY 5: I WILL SAY NO TO GUILT BY SAYING YES TO...

DAY 6: IF I WERE MY BEST FRIEND, I'D TELL MYSELF...

DAY 7: I CHOOSE COMPASSION OVER PERFECTION BY...

REFRAME THAT GUILT

Guilt loves to whisper all kinds of unhelpful things in your ear. But guess what? You get to talk back. This cheat sheet gives you a head start with some common widow guilt thoughts and how to reframe them. Read them. Try them. Rewrite your own. Because when the script changes, so does the story.

GUILTY THOUGHT

I shouldn't laugh so soon

I'm moving on too quickly

I didn't do enough

I should still feel sad all the time

I shouldn't want to be happy

I shouldn't date again

If I'd done ____, maybe they'd still be here.

REFRAMED THOUGHT

Laughter doesn't mean I've forgotten. It means I'm still alive.

Moving forward doesn't erase my love—it honors it.

I did the best I could with what I knew at the time.

Grief isn't a full-time job—and healing doesn't mean I don't miss them.

Wanting to feel joy again doesn't mean I've stopped grieving.

Loving again doesn't replace them—it reflects the love we shared.

What happened wasn't my fault, even if my heart wishes it were different.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

“Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”

—MAYA ANGELOU

“And hey... knowing better doesn't mean beating yourself up about yesterday. It means being a little kinder to yourself today.”

—KIM MURRAY