



Loss of a Spouse

40 Real-Life Tips for the

Newly Widowed

SABRA ROBINSON

40 Real-Life Tips for the Newly Widowed

(As told by real-life widows.)

Remembering When

I can remember when my husband took his last breath six years ago. I can remember when my husband took his last breath six years ago in his hospital bed of the Intensive Care Unit. I remember it clearly because I had to make the dreadful decision if he should continue to live without living or die. It wasn't easy. He was brain-dead and he had always told me to never allow him to be on the respirator. He would always jokingly tell me that I better pull the plug because he wouldn't want to live life as a vegetable but I knew he was serious - just like he was the day that we drove to the hospital under the nurse's desperate plea. She received the results of his brain scan - and it wasn't good. The tumor had relocated from his

stomach then to his spine and finally to his brain. The next day, I became a widow.

Honestly, I didn't accept the term. I couldn't accept the term. I refused to accept the term. But eventually, I did. I - was - a - widow. I was lost and had to rely on the church mothers, prayer and Google to help me redefine myself.

This ebook is for the new widow, whether you're 19 or 90.

I asked my online support group, [Black Women Widows Empowered - Life Support Group - A Safe Place for Widows](#), to offer advice to the newly widowed and boy did they; the responses came pouring in. So here they are - 40 real-life tips from the current widow to the newly widowed.

Real-Life Tip #1

S. Criswell - Do not let anyone alter your late spouse's arrangements. Believe me, many will try. (Widowed 3 years).

Real-Life Tip #2

A. Holmes - Journal your last thoughts together. The last words he said. Any wishes/dreams he had for you. (Widowed 5 years).

Real-Life Tip #3

T. Clemons - Do NOT allow others to tell you when, where, how and how long to grieve. This is YOUR life and YOUR journey. Only those who

have been through it can relate. (Widowed 4 years)

Real-Life Tip #4

D. Lee - Guard your finances and get them in order. DON'T LOAN MONEY! I don't care if it's children except in school or beginning college. Be discreet when handling financial business. (1.5 years as a widow).

Real-Life Tip #5

G. Blackwell - Don't make quick decisions - take your time to learn life by yourself. Although your husband played a big roll of keeping it all together, learn YOU and what YOU want and need. (1 year a widow, married 12).

Real-Life Tip #6

A. Connell - Do cry as often as you need too. There's no limit. Do - be kind to yourself, this journey is so hard. Do - ask for help and if you can try to be specific. Do - allow yourself to be okay about not cooking or only wanting to make simple meals. Don't - ever feel like you need to "be over this". You will never be over this but you will learn to live again. (7 years widowed, with my guy for 25 years, married for 19).

Real-Life Tip #7

M. Brown - Don't let others pressure you into dating again. Take your time and heal from the

loss of your husband; you'll know when you're ready to be with another man. (Widowed 4 years).

Real-Life Tip #8

L. Henderson - Hold onto God for your strength. Pray a lot. (Widowed for 11 years).

Real-Life Tip #9

M. Pannell - DO Be Easy With Yourself. LOVE YOURSELF. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. Eat, stay hydrated, talk, cry, AND LAUGH. (6 months widowed).

Real-Life Tip #10

S. James-Davis - Do consider therapy to release your thoughts on someone neutral. Do make yourself a priority. It's time to look after YOU. Do put personal items that have your husbands scent in a sealed bag to sniff when you need that familiar smell. Four years later the smell is faintly there for me. Put the items in a plastic bed comforter bag. Do not make any major decisions in the first year. Do not give anything away that belonged to him because someone asks. Do not mask your feelings even in front of children. They mimic what they see us doing. Let them know it's okay to scream cry, etc. We are only human. Please live again! (4 years, 2 months a widow).

Real-Life Tip #11

K. Foster - Live your life. Laugh when you can. Love yourself first. Try not to make any BIG decisions in the first 18 months. This is one HELL-of-a journey. Live, Laugh, Love. (Widowed 7 years, 10 months and 6 days. 8/13/2010).

Real-Life Tip #12

E. Johnson - If you can, get in a quiet place and allow God to saturate you with His love. I have been widowed almost two years August 19. Remember, you are still here for a purpose. There is something in you God can use to help others. Find out what that is and do it with all your heart - even if it is through tears!

Real-Life Tip #13

M. Pittman - It's your process and you deserve to have the moments you need to FEEL however you FEEL. I became a widow on May 9, 2010. My prayers are with you all.

Real-Life Tip #14

L. H. Dallas - If you have children, don't forget they are grieving as well. My daughter was a Freshman in college and a few years later I asked what happened to our relationship and she stated, "you tell me you love me but you act like you have nothing to live for since Daddy died." I was tied up in my own grief and thought she was fine away at school and she wasn't. (5 years widowed).

Real-Life Tip #15

C. May - Hold off on making major decisions the first year if you can. Give yourself as much time as you need to grieve. Go to grief counseling or a support group. Be kind to yourself. (Almost 7 years a widow).

Real-Life Tip #16

R. Nonye - Prepare yourself to be a widow to be envied and never a widow to be pitied. Always look good and not shabby looking so that people won't feel sorry for you. Let your Children be your priority irrespective of all odds. Always hope in God believing that tomorrow will be better than tomorrow. Though it is not an easy journey we have to

accept it with faith. (A mother of three promising kids and 13 years into widowhood).

Real-Life Tip #17

S. Ngonyama - The journey isn't a bed of roses, it's not easy. You will find people who will not be as caring anymore. (3 years widowed).

Real-Life Tip #18

S. Lee - I'm 34 yrs old and my advice is to learn what makes you happy and sad. Create a grief schedule of times and triggers. Love yourself more. (10 years widowed).

Real-Life Tip #19

Y. Richardson - Stay close to God. He is the only one who can bring you through this. It's so hard being widowed. (2 years widowed, married for 39 years, together for 42 years).

Real-Life Tip #20

L. Aimes - Even though the pain is unbearable, take care of yourself and love yourself the same way he loved you. (1-year widowed).

Real-Life Tip #21

P. Eunice - Draw your strength from the Lord alone because the journey is not an easy one. (Widowed for 13 years with three wonderful children).

Real-Life Tip #22

G. Millender - Pray continuously and do what needs to be done.

Don't worry about how you should grieve and the time frame. Don't give into the opinions of family and friends. Maintain a bond if possible with the adult children and if there's conflicting opinion, pray and move on.

Real-Life Tip #23

B. Yesufu - Pray, praise, and pamper yourself. (8 years widowed).

Real-Life Tip #24

L. Law - Take time for yourself and your children. If you are able to plan a getaway, then GO! My relationship with my girls is everything!

Real-Life Tip #25

R. Butler - Press through with as much grace as you can muster. The triggers will come and find your way through. Hold on to God's unchanging hand and know your fellow widowed sisters got you!! Much love, my sisters. (3 years widowed #alwayshiswife!).

Real-Life Tip #26

R. Bonner - Give yourself permission to grieve! I am not only a widow, but I've also worked as a

chaplain. It's so important for us to understand that grieving is a natural process of healing. We cannot brush our grief under a rug and act like it's not there - suppressing all that pain, trying to go on with life as nothing has happened, that's detrimental to our health in all aspects of our living from physically to spiritually! Take time to grieve. When we suffer a loss, that is what we are supposed to do. It's okay.

Real-Life Tip #27

Y. Peoples - Stay prayed up, grieve with grace. You are stronger than you think. Where we are weak, God is strong. He will uphold you. Praise Him in spite of your circumstances. God is close to widows and the broken-hearted. Remember to self-care. We tend to forget to take care of ourselves and most of all, love yourself enough

to know you can make through this journey. (3 years widowed).

Real-Life Tip #28

C. Pruitt - 1) Don't make any MAJOR Decisions during the first year. 2) Keep your accounts PRIVATE & SECURED (some family and friends come out of the woodwork looking for handouts). 3) Don't accept friend requests from strangers on Facebook. 4) Don't try to buy friendship from anyone. 5) Grieve on your own terms. This is your journey. 6) Find your new normal. 7) Be kind to yourself. 8) LOVE YOURSELF 9) Ignore those who may try to dictate to you how your life should now be. 10) Give yourself TIME.

Real-Life Tip #29

Adrienne - Do trust in GOD and know that HE cares for you. Do know that GOD hears your tears, your cries and knows your hurt, even your silent hurt. Do take care of yourself. Do smile and laugh and don't feel guilty about it. Do know that sometimes grief comes and goes like the waves of the ocean. Don't make major decisions in a hurry, especially that first year. (Widowed for 3 years).

Real-Life Tip #30

J. Jackson - Allow yourself to grieve. It's okay to cry, it's okay to scream and break things. It's okay to talk to your deceased spouse. Allow yourself time. Pray.

Real-Life Tip #31

P. Mason - This journey is yours, don't allow people tell you how, when or how long you are supposed to grieve. Do what is best for you. Although we all may have experienced loss and may have similar circumstances, no one feels what you feel the way you do, and you have a right to feel whatever. There will be ups downs and it will never go away. Be patient with yourself as much as possible. If you choose to date again early or late (or never), that's your business and your choice. Just keep moving. I know there are days where you may feel like you want to die (at least I did) but just keep moving. Take care of you!! (I just hit 4 years June 7).

Real-Life Tip #32

M. Michael - Remember all the good times, cry when you feel the pain, laugh when you know he would say or do something funny, and talk to him when you need to and look to the sky when you feel his presence. Know that this is a hard journey and you are not alone. Put yourself first and live life to the fullest. (Widowed 1 year, 2 mos. Married 27 years and together 31 yrs).

Real-Life Tip #33

D. Williams - Just remember, it's ok to say his name when talking to others. (11/23/18 will be 5 yrs).

Real-Life Tip #34

L. Mthombeni - Don't make major decisions too prematurely.

Real-Life Tip #35

G. Lopez - Do NOT discuss your finances with family or friends. Do NOT expect people to understand...they don't. Do NOT give any of this things away until YOU are ready. Do NOT hold back tears, God gave them to us for a reason. Be kind to yourself. This is a process. Talk to your loved one as if they were there, it really really helps. I told my husband off, I yelled at him, I told him over and over how much I loved him and how much I missed him. I had a come to Jesus with him several times. I asked his advice, I asked for his forgiveness, I

gave him my forgiveness, I talk out loud to him all the time. I swear to you he answers me somehow. Just don't do it in front of people, they think we are crazy. I will be four years in February of next year. I swear to you that he will send me my second chapter!! My husband used to do this thing to my nose and say a phrase. One night while we were laying in bed and he was talking to me he did that thing to my nose and said that phrase, gave me a kiss and hugged me tightly. That was the answer to that question.

Real-Life Tip #36

S. Washington

- *Be gentle with yourself.
- *Know that grieving is also physically and, mentally taxing.

- *Take things moment by moment.
- *It's ok to say no.
- *Pray, scream, and cry to relieve the pressure - it's healing
- *It's ok to distance yourself from people (even family) who drain you rather than support you - the added stress is not healthy for you.
- *Do reach out for help. I have a circle of friends I'll send an "I am not okay today" text to when the grief wave feels like a tsunami.
- *Celebrate and congratulate yourself for what most would consider minor. As a new widow, just getting out of the bed is MAJOR - even if you have kids. (Widowed 19 months).

Real-Life Tip #37

M. Tyler - Do NOT Google symptoms you have during your grieving period which can range

from fatigue, anxiety, to insomnia and heartburn - lots of random symptoms. *The Google* will have you thinking you have all kinds of crazy Mad Giraffe Disease and you're gonna die any minute! (LOL). Do NOT discuss your new love life with non-widowed friends and family. DO get a physical and a mental evaluation to ease your mind that you are experiencing NORMAL grief symptoms that become physical because your emotions are extreme. Go to the doctor ASAP - and let the pros do what they do best. (Remarried widow of 9 years).

Real-Life Tip #38

E. Jones - Don't forget you. Its okay to cry, (Widowed 1 year, 2 months).

Real-Life Tip #39

C. Barnes - Do not self medicate. See a doctor if something isn't right. Don't forget to eat and drink. Drink lots of water, especially if you're crying a lot. (Widowed 4 years).

Real-Life Tip #40

Well, there you have it. As a widow of six years, my additional advice (tip 40) would be to distance yourself from friends and family (including other widows) who thrust negative emotions your way. You don't need it. Treasure your sanity.

In Closing

Now that you've done reading **Loss of a Spouse: 40 Tips for the Newly Widowed**, I hope this will help enable you to obtain a deeper understanding of your journey without your husband. These valuable lessons may empower, bring you to tears or even force to you to make u-turns for the better.

Widowhood isn't easy. It's complicated at most but with the help of others who have lived day-to-day without their spouse, you can get through this.

Remember, you're not alone. Why? Because statistics say so:

- In 2016, 8% of African-American women were widowed, claiming a higher percentage for women than men (6%) for those 15 years and older.
 - *U.S. Census Bureau, African-American Community
- In 2017, about 11.64 million widows were living in the United States, claiming a much lower total for widowed men (3.28 Million).
 - *Statista.com ©2018

Marital Status				
15yrs & older	African Americans			<i>All USA</i>
	All	Men	Women	
Married	29%	32%	26%	48%
Divorced	12%	10%	13%	11%
Separated	4%	3%	4%	4%
Widowed	6%	3%	8%	6%
Never married	50%	52%	48%	34%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Note: figures are rounded and therefore may not total 100%

BlackDemographics.com



Best!

Salma

About Sabra Robinson



Baltimore native and Charlotte, North Carolina resident Sabra Robinson is the creator and founder of [Black Women Widows Empowered \(BWWE\)](#), an online and in-person nonprofit organization that empowers widows of color by offering podcast shows, blogging, published resources, Meet-ups, empowering events and online facebook support groups. She was married to the love of her life Herbert Robinson for 23 years. Their union produced four children. Sadly, Herbert succumbed to Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma in 2012.

A Morgan State University graduate, Sabra holds a General Theology Certificate from Oral Roberts University and studied at

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Sabra has also been recognized by the ABC Talent Development Program for her proposal to bring her children's book, [*Micky, Ticky, Boo! Says Hello*](#) to film and received recognition from the Mayor of Baltimore in 2017.

A project manager by day, she is also a certified Christian counselor, certified career-growth coach, and former Grief Share facilitator. Sabra is also the visionary behind the book collaboration, [*Widowed, But Not Wounded: The Hustle & Flow of 13 Resilient Black Widowed Women \(Dec 2017\)*](#). She has also proudly authored a Non-Fiction Christian Anthology, [*The Lost Sheep: How I Got Over the Hump*](#), and the children's book, *Micky, Ticky, Boo! Says Hello*. She has also contributed her

writings to blavity.com, [Hope for Widows Foundation](#), [FriendsPast](#), and [Thought Catalog](#).

Sabra also takes pleasure in focusing on her [empowerment podcast](#) where she is able to discuss various topics such as dating, grief, loss and awareness campaigns with widows and widowers of all backgrounds.

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LOSS OF A SPOUSE: 40 REAL-LIFE TIPS FOR THE NEWLY WIDOWED

A FEW TIPS INCLUDE:

- DO NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO
ALTER YOUR LATE
SPOUSE'S ARRANGEMENTS
- JOURNAL YOUR LAST
THOUGHTS OF YOU
TWO TOGETHER
- DON'T MAKE
QUICK DECISIONS