

5 TIPS TO SURVIVE CHRISTMAS AS A WIDOW

A GUIDE FOR WIDOWS TO NAVIGATE THE
SEASON WITH STRENGTH AND GRACE



www.mywidowstoolbox.com



INTRODUCTION

The holiday season can be one of the hardest times of the year for someone who has lost a loved one.

While everyone else is celebrating, it's normal to feel a mix of emotions – from dread to loneliness to even guilt for not wanting to 'be festive.'

This guide is here to help you find your way through the season with compassion, practical tips, and the permission to do things your way.



Welcome

Hi, I'm Tara, I am a mother of two neurodiverse children who found herself widowed, by Cancer, during the challenging times of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. When our lives seemed to spiral out of control, I realised I had to upgrade my skills to navigate the storm.

Coaching helped our family find perspective, self-trust and confidence, to live widowhood our way.

I left my life as a Bank Manager, trained as a professional certified coach, and now I get to help families, like yours, navigate grieving and rebuild confidence each day.

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"You may not
control all the
events that happen
to you,
but you can decide
not to be reduced
by them."

MAYA ANGELOU

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1. Setting Realistic Expectations for Yourself

Holidays don't have to mean plastering on a smile for everyone else's benefit, but a smile will make you feel good.

You might struggle to remember what "normal" is, but for many it's all they can cling to, because it's a break from the big emotions.

It's okay to feel fragile, sad, or downright angry.

Letting go of what's expected can feel like a breath of fresh air, especially because everyone will be wanting to do the same. Unless you've been a widow before, you can't know how this works.

Friendly Tip

Set one or two realistic goals for yourself this season. These aren't for anyone else – they're for you.

Maybe your goal is just to go for a walk on Christmas morning. These little goals give you permission to be exactly where you are, not where others expect you to be.



2. Creating Safe Boundaries with Family & Friends

Keep in mind that your extended family are grieving too. It will be clumsy, messy and they might be trying to be staunch, but inside they'll be hurting or embarrassed. They may think they're comforting you, but their words can feel like salt in a wound.

Remind them you have a stronger more intimate bond to work through than they do.

ou're allowed to set boundaries without guilt.

Friendly Tip

Prepare simple, honest phrases that you can use if someone's requests or questions start to feel too intrusive.

E.g. "I'd love to come, and just leave early if we need to."

Or, "Thank you for inviting us; I'm still figuring out what feels right this year."

These scripts aren't for justifying yourself; they're for honouring family's needs and managing your energy.



3. Finding Moments of Peace Amid the Chaos

Unfortunately, the world doesn't stop spinning just because you're grieving.

People's laughter, the festive music – it can all feel grating, Our nervous systems are overwhelmed.

Creating moments of calm is essential to keep your head above water.

Grab a few minutes of peace every hour as it can be a lifeline, grounding you when the outside world feels too loud.

Friendly Tip

Create small, personal rituals that bring you back to yourself.

Light a candle in the evening, go for a solo drive with music that soothes you, or sit quietly with a hot cup of tea.

Let these rituals be a form of reclaiming your space, a place where you don't need to perform or explain your feelings.



4. Staying True to Your Own Healing Process

Grief doesn't care about the holiday season, and healing isn't something that fits into a holiday schedule. Our body is in charge now.

Some days you might feel okay, even hopeful, and then it might hit you again like a wave out of nowhere. That's okay.

Your grief and your healing are yours, and nobody else can tell you how long it should take or what it should look like (including a certain impatient inner critic).

Friendly Tip

Surround yourself with reminders that it's okay to be exactly where you are.

Set up comforting objects or mementos in your home that feel grounding.

Keep a favourite blanket nearby, or put up a photo that brings peace rather than pain. These small reminders can serve as anchors, helping you stay connected to your own needs.



5. Creating Small Moments of Joy for Yourself and Your Children

Creating new traditions might feel impossible, especially when the past still feels close. But it might be only a small tweak, rather than ditching things all together.

But joy doesn't need to be loud or grand to be real.

Small, gentle moments with your children can add up, bringing a sense of connection that doesn't require forgetting or "moving on."

These little pockets of joy don't replace what was lost – they simply honour the love that remains.

Friendly Tip

Find low-key, no-pressure activities that you and your kids can share.

It might be baking something simple together, going for a drive to see holiday lights, or having a cosy movie night.

Let these moments be quiet but intentional, a way of building a new sense of togetherness without forcing anyone to feel a certain way.



SUMMARY

Each of these sections is designed to help you reclaim your space, find your voice, and remember that you are allowed to have boundaries and small moments of joy, even during the holidays.

I trust this guide has enabled you and the kids to keep the holidays as a positive space, where you can celebrate the love and strength, you still have together.

When you are ready to build on these steps and take your healing to the next level, my coaching program is available as a supportive step, in rebuilding a life with intention and resilience.



YOUR NEXT STEPS...



Thank you!

Book your complimentary

Rediscover Call

HERE

Let's begin your

transformation.



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www.mywidowstoolbox.com

SERVICES OFFERED

MY WIDOWS TOOLBOX

As a certified coach, it is my pleasure to offer tailored coaching options, to support you and your family.

Coaching is designed to empower you to make the changes that you want to see in your life. Whilst structure can keep us to task, some days our mind needs us to venture deep, and that's OK! How long can you afford not to?



HIGHLIGHTS

- *All sessions are confidential but can be recorded if you want to refer back.*
- *Sessions are 60 minutes long, though there is always flexibility.*
- *All sessions receive a follow-up summary to help you track your growth.*



PACKAGE OPTIONS

3 Session Package **\$299**

Customised 1:1 sessions are for individual help on any topic, over 3- 6 weeks,

12 Week Program **\$1997**

Step by step program, 1:1 via Zoom; self paced work books, direct email access; 1x widowhood strategy session; 3 bonuses





Thank You

LET US STAY IN TOUCH

I trust this has brought awareness to the more foundational aspects of how you find your confidence and more aspects you can control.

My sincerest condolences to you and your family, for this loss.

I look forward to supporting you in the future.



TARA WERDER

"I help widows rediscover confidence."



5. Creating Small Moments of Joy for Yourself and Your Children. Exercise:-

Sit down with your kids and brainstorm one or two small things you could do together over the holiday season. Let them come up with ideas. It's ok to be the "fun parent" occasionally

Write them down, and pick a day to do one.

Focus on enjoying the moment rather than capturing a perfect holiday.

Reflect on the connection and warmth afterward, and note how it felt to create a shared memory, even in the midst of grief.

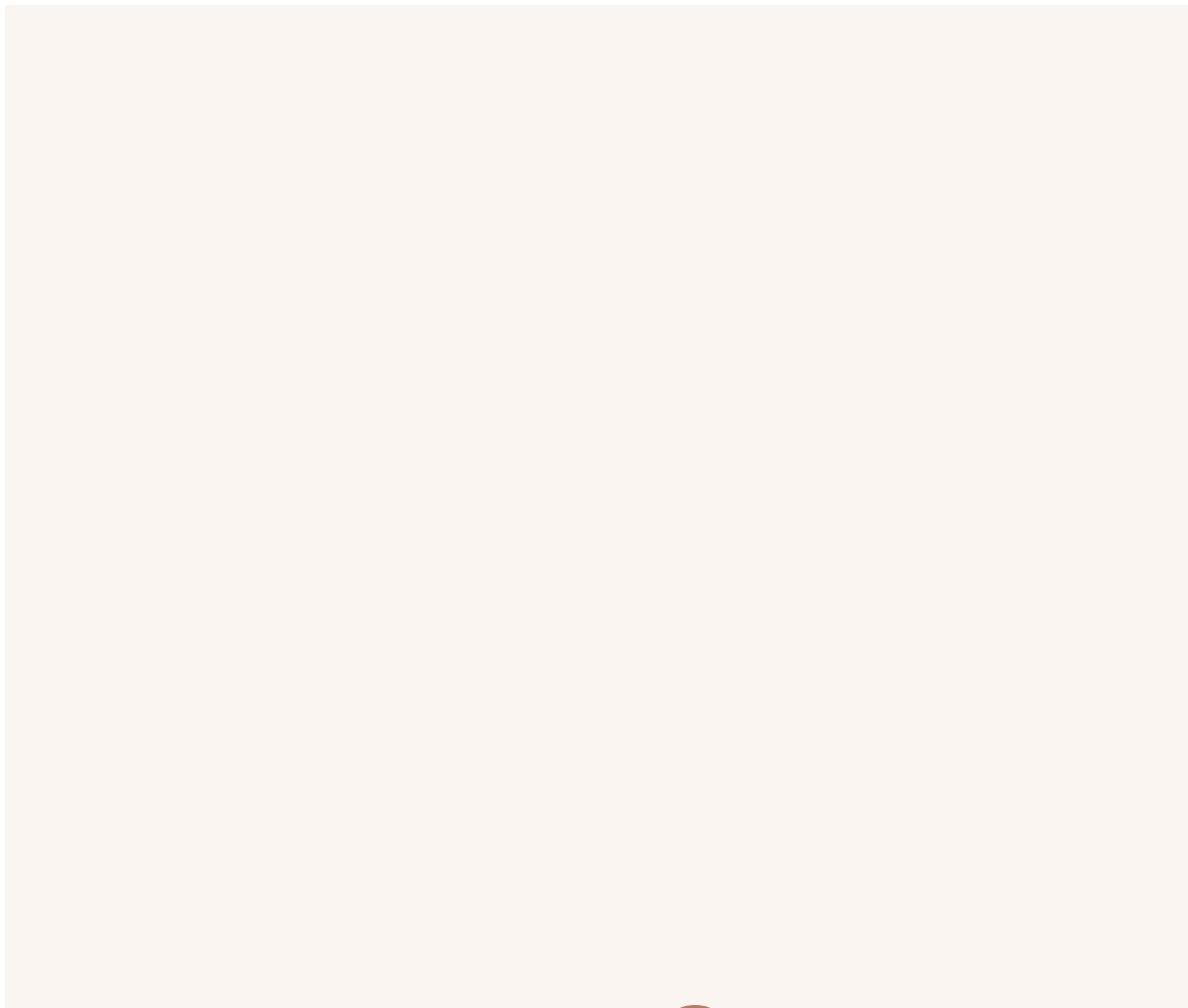
4. Staying True to Your Own Healing Process

Exercise :-

Choose a small object that feels meaningful – it could be a piece of jewellery, a smooth stone, or even a photo. Hold it in your hand and think about a memory of strength or calm associated with it.

This object can become a symbol of resilience, a way to ground yourself when emotions feel overwhelming.

Keep it with you through the season as a reminder that healing is personal and allowed to take time.



3. Finding Moments of Peace Amid the Chaos

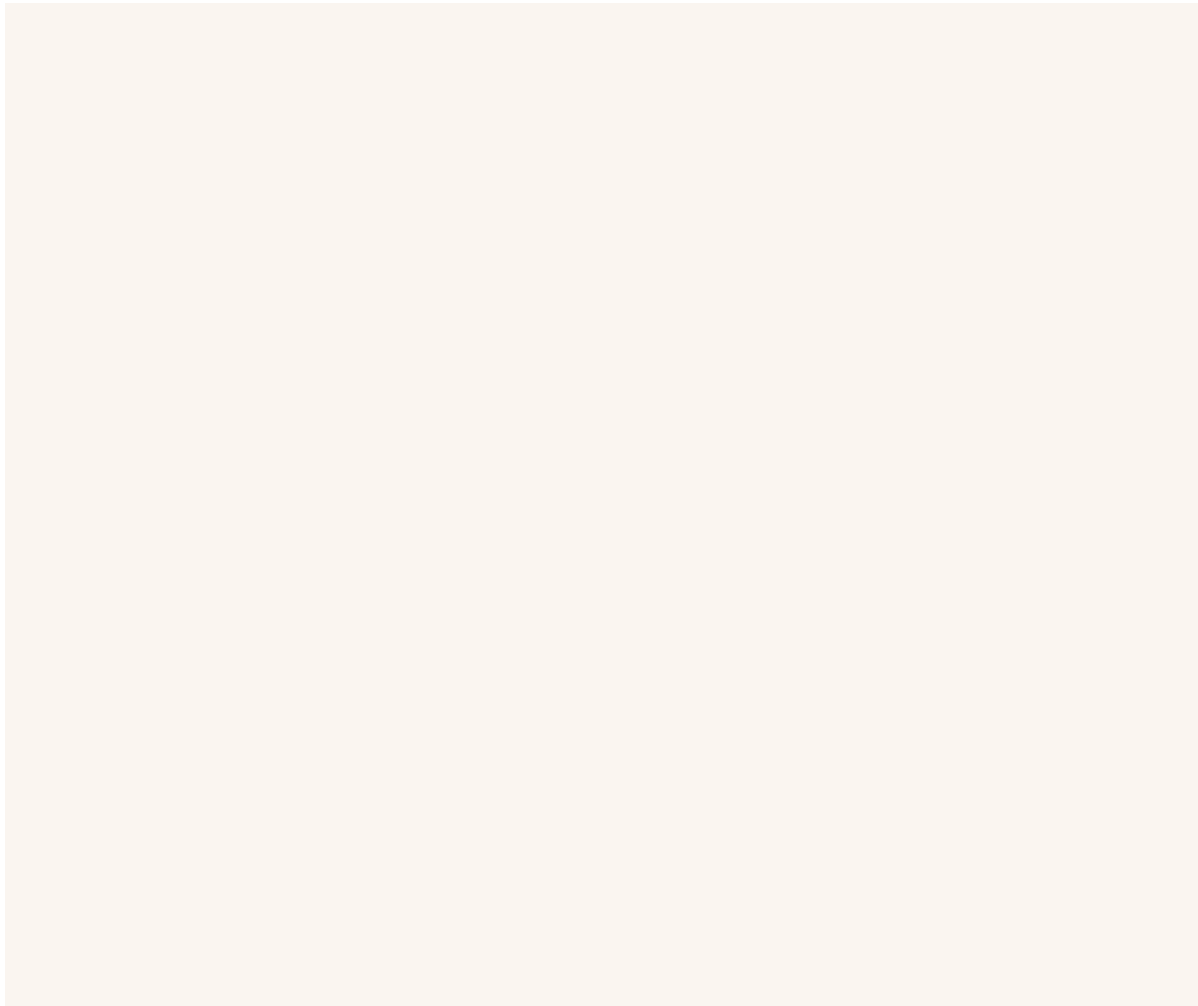
Exercise :-

Pick one simple ritual – lighting a candle, going for a short walk, or playing a comforting song – and commit to doing it every day for a week.

After each ritual, take a deep breath and reflect on a small moment of calm or clarity you felt.

Write it down in a notebook.

Even if it's tiny, this collection of peaceful moments can remind you that calm can still be reached anytime, even on the hardest days.



1. Setting Realistic Expectations for Yourself

Exercise :-

Grab a piece of paper and *write down three things you don't want to do this holiday season.*

Now, flip the paper over and write one or *two things you would genuinely like to experience* – even if they're as simple as enjoying a quiet morning with coffee.

Keep this list close as a reminder that you're allowed to prioritize yourself.

2. Creating Safe Boundaries with Family & Friends Exercise :-

Take a moment to visualise an “ideal” boundary for the holiday season. Close your eyes and think of a scenario where you felt at peace, where nobody pushed you beyond what felt comfortable.

Write down one clear boundary you want to hold onto this season, like “I have choice to attend this event,” or “I can stay as long as I need to.”

This exercise reinforces that you have control over your interactions. You manage you, not them.

