



Still Becoming; The RISE Companion Guide

A gentle guide for the sacred first steps of widowhood



OVERVIEW:

This companion guide was created to meet widows in the raw, sacred space of early grief—with honesty, grace, and hope. Whether you're days into loss or finding your footing again years later, Still Becoming offers truth-filled support for your next breath, next step, next yes.

It's not a workbook to complete. It's a companion to carry. A place to feel seen, understood, and reminded: You are not invisible. You are still becoming.

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Welcome Letter - From Connie's heart to yours: an invitation into sacred solidarity and honest hope.

Reflection: Widowhood Is Not Your Identity - A devotion reminding you that this role does not define you.

What to Expect in the First Year - Gentle truths, permission slips, and trauma-informed validation.

Introduction to RISE - A framework to reclaim resilience, intention, strength and empowerment.

Breath Prayers + Scriptures - When you don't have words, let these be enough.

Reflection Page - Journal prompts to name what's true without needing to fix it.

Daily Anchors - Small rhythms to ground you in grief.

WHO'S IT FOR:

Widows in early days or long seasons of grief

Churches, friends, and caregivers supporting a widow

Small groups or counselors offering grief resources rooted in faith and compassion



WidowRISE

WELCOME LETTER



Dear Brave One,

If you're holding this guide, it means your world has changed. Probably suddenly. Probably painfully. And not in a way you ever wanted.

I wish I could look you in the eyes right now and say, "I know." Not because I know your exact story, but because I know the weight of waking up one day and realizing the person you loved is no longer here. I know the ache of trying to remember how to breathe when everything feels upside down.

Widowhood is a sacred assignment—one we never signed up for. One we didn't choose, didn't want, and don't like. But one we now carry.

Here's what I want you to know:

You are not broken.

You are not invisible.

You are not alone.

And widow is not your identity—it's your reality.

There is still purpose here.

There is still healing.

There is still becoming.

This guide isn't a fix. It's a companion.

A gentle place to land.

A starting point for the journey you didn't want but are now walking—
with courage you might not even recognize yet.

I created WidowRISE to remind you that even in the midst of pain, there is possibility.

That grief doesn't shrink—we grow around it.

That you are still becoming.

I'm with you in spirit and in story.

Connie

Widowhood is Not Your Identity



A Reflection for the Journey

Widow.

It's a word that now applies to you—but it does not define you.

It may feel like the loudest label in the room. It shows up on paperwork, at the funeral home, in whispered conversations.

But here's the truth: widowhood is not your identity. It is your reality. A heavy, sacred, heartbreaking reality. But it is not all of who you are.

You are still the woman you were before.
Still the one God created with purpose.
Still beloved. Still called. Still seen.

Grief is now part of your story—but it's not your whole story.
Yes, you carry loss.
But you also carry love.
You carry resilience.
You carry the breath of God in your lungs.

And even now—you are still becoming.

You may not feel strong today. That's okay.
You don't need to feel brave to be brave.
You're here. You showed up. That matters.

Let this moment be a reminder:
You are more than your loss.
You are more than your loneliness.
You are more than this title.

"You are not defined by what you've lost, but by Who holds you now."

Take a breath. You're still becoming. And you are not alone.

What to Expect in the First Year



Gentle Truths for the Journey Ahead

There is no map for this. No step-by-step manual for how to walk through the ache of losing your person. But there are some things I wish someone had told me in those early days. You may not experience all of these. You may experience them in a completely different order. That's okay. Grief isn't linear—and neither is healing.

Here's what many widows experience in the first year:



Grief comes in waves.

You might feel "okay" one moment and undone the next. This is normal. The waves don't mean you're doing it wrong. They mean you loved deeply.



Brain fog is real.

Your memory may feel cloudy. Concentration may feel impossible. You're not imagining it. This is how the body and brain process trauma.



Energy levels will shift.

You might feel exhausted after doing small things. Don't measure your day by productivity—measure it by grace.



People will surprise you.

Some friends will disappear. Others will show up in unexpected, beautiful ways. Give space for both.



Questions will linger.

You may ask "Why?" a thousand times. You may wonder what's normal. You may not feel God like you used to. That's okay. He's still near.



There is no timeline.

Grief doesn't follow a calendar. There's no gold star for "moving on." There is only moving through—at your own sacred pace.



Permission Slips for Your Heart

You have permission to:

- Cancel plans
- Say no without explanation
- Cry in public
- Laugh without guilt
- Ask for help
- Rest
- Be exactly where you are

You are grieving something precious. You are not falling apart—you are honoring your loss.

Introduction to RISE



A Framework for Becoming in the Wake of Loss

RISE is not about perfection.

It's not a checklist or a finish line.

It's a gentle, grace-filled way of naming what's already inside you—and helping you reclaim it, one breath at a time.

This framework is here to remind you that you are still here. Still loved. Still becoming.

Each word is an invitation. A guidepost. A whisper of truth for the days you can't find your own.

R – Resilient

Resilience doesn't mean you're unshaken.

It means you are still standing. Even if you're wobbly. Even if you're barely getting by.

Resilience is rising with the pain, not in spite of it.

Reflection: "Where have I seen resilience in myself—no matter how small?"

I – Intentional

In a season where everything feels out of your control, intention gives you a foothold.

You don't have to plan your whole life. Just choose your next breath, your next step, your next yes.

Reflection: "What small choice can I make today that honors where I am?"

S – Strong

Strength looks different now.

Sometimes it's asking for help.

Sometimes it's crying in the shower.

Sometimes it's just getting out of bed.

Your strength is sacred—whatever it looks like today.

Reflection: "What does strength look like for me right now?"

E – Empowered

Empowerment isn't about having it all together.

It's about remembering:

You still have a voice.

You still have value.

You still have purpose.

Reflection: "Where might God be inviting me to trust Him again?"

RISE is not a linear journey. Some days you may feel all four. Other days, none at all. That's okay.

Let this framework meet you right where you are—and walk with you as you continue becoming.

Breath Prayers & Scriptures



When You Don't Have the Words, Let These Be Enough

In grief, even breathing can feel hard.

These short prayers are designed to match your inhale and exhale—helping your body and spirit reconnect when everything feels disconnected.

You don't have to pray long prayers to be heard.

You don't have to feel strong to be held.

God is near—even here.



Breath Prayers

Inhale: God is near.

Exhale: I am not alone.

Inhale: This is too heavy.

Exhale: But I am held.

Inhale: Grief is not weakness.

Exhale: It is love enduring.

Inhale: I am still here.

Exhale: I will rise.



Scriptures to Anchor Your Soul

Psalms 34:18

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Isaiah 43:2

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you."

Romans 8:26

"The Spirit helps us in our weakness... He intercedes for us through wordless groans."

Lamentations 3:22-23

"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed... His mercies are new every morning."

Let these breath prayers and scriptures meet you right where you are. Speak them aloud. Whisper them. Write them down. Let them be a rhythm of rest when the world feels loud.

Reflection Page



A Space to Be Honest—with Yourself and with God

There is no wrong way to grieve. No timeline. No checklist.
This page is not for “figuring it out.” It’s for telling the truth.
No edits. No expectations. Just honesty.

Use this space to name what’s real for you today—whether it’s one word or a flood of emotion.
Your story matters. Your voice matters. And God can handle it all.



Journal Prompts

- What hurts the most right now?
- What brings me even a sliver of peace or comfort?
- What feels confusing, overwhelming, or unfair?
- What do I wish people understood about my grief?
- Where have I seen glimpses of hope—or beauty—in the midst of the ache?
- What is one prayer I don’t know how to pray, but want to offer anyway?



OPTIONAL: Breath Check-in

Close your eyes. Breathe in.
Say to yourself: “This is hard.”
Exhale: “And I am not alone.”
Then pick up your pen. Let your heart speak.

Daily Anchors



Tiny Rhythms to Help You Come Back to Yourself

In the fog of grief, even the smallest decisions can feel overwhelming. These daily anchors are not about productivity—they are about presence. Little habits to ground you when everything feels unsteady.

You don't have to do them all. You don't have to do them every day. Just return to one when you feel lost, scattered, or stuck.



Light a Candle.

Choose a time—morning or evening—to light a candle in remembrance. Let the flame be a symbol of your love, your loss, and your continued becoming. Say their name aloud if you want. Speak a prayer. Or sit in silence.



Speak One Truth Aloud.

Find a phrase that steadies you. Keep it visible—on a mirror, a notecard, your phone screen.

Here are a few to choose from:

"I am not alone."

"I can do today."

"Grief is not a sign of weakness."

"God is still with me."

Saying truth aloud helps re-center both your body and your spirit



Drink Water. Breathe Deep. Pause.

Grief takes a toll on your physical body. Hydration, deep breathing, and even a 3-minute pause can offer more healing than you realize. Set a reminder if you need to.

Sometimes caring for yourself is the bravest thing you can do.



WidowRISE

WIDOWED, NOT INVISIBLE.

