

A Widow's Awakening

By Maryanne Pope

Grief-Related Reader Testimonials

“Just finished your book – between the tears and smiles, I am overwhelmed. My last year has been an exercise in my own grief – the deaths of my marriage and my mother within hours. There is a certain kind of hurt that cannot be explained, only felt on the cellular. Your story was as close to capturing that hollow ache as anything I’ve read.”

— Elizabeth

“My mind is still racing after reading your book. It’s been 14 months since my husband died. Your raw and honest words hit home. Suddenly, I felt connected because it was real. I loved *A Widow's Awakening* because it is not one of those ABC’s of how to get over it. You tell it like it really is for many of us, even though we have a public face that hides the personal chaos churning away inside. You validated me and my struggle. I spent the whole day in bed reading it yesterday. Today I don’t feel crazy anymore. I’m starting to accept I am different than I was and I have no idea where this is going to take me...but I need to take this journey in order to find out. There were so many instances in reading your book where I wanted to scream with joy because I related to something that I haven’t dared share with anyone for fear of getting locked up.”

— Chris

“I started reading your book on Sunday and finished it Monday. The first third of your book touched me in ways I hadn’t anticipated. I cried so hard my eyes became swollen; the pain was so real. I haven’t cried that hard in a long, long time. The grief you expressed was so real to me, as I experienced my own grief in a similar way. Reading your book has been healing for me.”

— Cristy

“I am a professional with a counselling background. I had worked for a bereavement agency in the community and heard of you, as my fellow colleagues spoke highly of your book. They stated that all professional bereavement counsellors should read *A Widow's Awakening* because of the raw, honest description of grief you experienced.”

— Alison

“Just finished the book . . . loved it! I’m not a reader at all but I read the book hoping to relate to my mother’s situation of being widowed. I wanted to relate to her woman to woman rather than mother to daughter. I think your book has helped me to do this. Thanks for your honesty.”

— Heidi

“My husband was a police officer who was killed in 2010. I read your book and it got me through some really hard times. Thank you so much for writing it. Your book made me realize the feelings I’m feeling are okay...and I’m not going mad.”

— Erin

“I have been reading your book and want to say thank you. It’s so beautiful and so real, that I can’t describe it. Like you, I lived it. The love of my life was killed at work in September 2000, when he fell putting up rafters for a building. He was 52. I miss him so much and it still hurts. Your book is a wonderful gift and I treasure it – and the knowledge that someone else felt and feels the same as I do. Somehow I don’t feel so alone. Thank you.”

— Sherry

“In January, my husband’s best friend took his own life. During one my many weekly phone calls to his widow she mentioned she picked up a copy of your book, as it was recommended to her by a victim services worker who had recently attended an engagement at which you were speaking. You began as an inspiring writer...overnight you became an inspiring person and I just want to thank you for helping my friend.”

— Stacey

“After waiting for 8 years, I was not disappointed with the excruciating, painful story that unfolded on each page. The mind-numbing experience of a young woman losing her husband cannot be comprehended by someone who has not gone through this. Maryanne’s gripping, raw account of her journey, during and after this tragic time in her life is worthy of a good read. Her vulnerability in describing the events of the day of John’s death and her minute by minute survival is the closest I have encountered to being inside someone else’s skin. *A Widow’s Awakening* will give great insight to those of us who have not experienced this loss.”

—Deborah

“I just finished reading *A Widow’s Awakening* and thought it beautifully written. I was completely absorbed in every page...it was funny, sad and shocking. People can learn from the honest insight, all of the emotions that people go through when grieving the loss of a loved one.”

— Peggy

“Thank you for sharing your story and incredible journey. What struck me in particular was your search for spiritual answers to relieve the blinding emotional pain. It was great comfort to see you put into words some of the exact emotions I felt when I tragically lost my dad this year. I can see now that everyone does find their own way to heal those very raw wounds in the process of grieving.”

— Sandra

“I just finished reading your book. I enjoyed reading it and found it hard to put down. My husband is a police officer, so that alone made me interested in reading your book. The other reason is a tragedy that happened in my world this year. My brother was killed in Afghanistan 5 months ago. He was a Paramedic and when his group was ambushed by the Taliban, he was shot and killed. It has been a very rough, emotional time for me trying to deal with this and come to terms with what happened. Thank you for sharing your story through this book. It really was amazing and inspirational.”

— Carolyn

“After reading *A Widow’s Awakening*, I felt it was necessary for others to hear her story. It’s important that we learn from Maryanne and her life experiences. I’m confident that her story can be used as a tool to allow others cope with their loss.”

— *Vince*

“It was a gripping read, so intense I read it in small bits so I could absorb the information. Thank you for sharing this very personal journey...I know it will help so many people. Anyone who experiences the loss of a loved one and all of the crazy emotional roller coaster that accompanies will benefit from the knowledge that they really are not alone, and not crazy. I’ll be recommending your book to many others.”

— *Lesley*

“I just finished reading *A Widow’s Awakening*. The grief you share is very raw but also honest. Because you can share your inner voice through your story we get a chance to understand the inner turmoil and anger you felt...it’s that inner voice that must really make a huge impact on other women and men going through a similar thing. Group therapy isn’t for everyone so I think your book provides a chance for others who may choose a solitary path to know that what they are experiencing and feeling is normal.”

— *James*

“My husband passed away in 2007 at the age of 43 (massive heart attack with no warning signs). I can truly relate to a lot of what you say in your book. I’m realizing that what I am going through is normal. Good days and bad days.”

— *Gina*

“I have gone through a lot of tragedy in my life...and I felt a sense of relief when I read your book. My friend lost three significant people in her life in three years, so I bought her a copy of your book – and she tore through it as voraciously as I did and truly enjoyed it. Thanks for telling your story.”

— *Shelley*

“I have just finished reading *A Widow’s Awakening* and I had to drop you a note. I was tremendously impressed with your book. By being so honest and open in sharing your feelings and emotions surrounding this tragic event, you are helping me (and other readers) handle the losses and disappointments in our own lives. The book is a great read, interesting, funny...very human. It was very hard to put down.”

— *Nancy*

“Others were correct when they said your book was hard to put down! First and foremost, thank you for sharing your journey with me and all your readers. Your book was a moving narrative of courage – I laughed, I cried, I was enlightened. I was not surprised by your response to grief/loss; in fact your reactions seemed very fitting given how powerful the mind is. I was, however, surprised by your strength and impressed by your resolve to see the opportunity in your circumstances.”

— *Alison*

“I wanted you to know that your book was a huge help to me during my journey through grief. My husband was killed in the line of duty in August 2007. It was the most horrible time of my life and it was comforting to know that the feelings I had were not “abnormal.” I could relate to your story all too well. I have worked very hard at re-building my life for my children and for myself. I feel happy again and have been able to move forward with my life. You were a true inspiration to me and I have shared your book with other young widows I have met over the past few years.”

— *Sonja*

“We recently received two copies of *A Widow’s Awakening*. Thank you! We have served so many young families recently who have suffered the death of a spouse. I often recall things I read in your book because you have such a wonderful way of expressing yourself. I think your passion is education about safe work environments but you also have wonderful wisdom regarding grief.”

— *Crystal Bailey, Bailey’s Funeral Home*

“Wow!!! I could not put your book down! Even when my eyes were swollen shut from crying, I continued to read. After 5 years, my grief is still pretty raw but it comes in waves and tides. I had 18 months of counselling and that did not come close to the comfort I got from your book. For me, it was nice to hear someone else express the thoughts that I was thinking (Am I crazy? Is he still here somewhere? Does God really exist? Leave me alone!). I can’t tell you how much your book helped me. I laughed and I cried and I felt connected. Your book gave me hope.”

— *Brenda*

The style and content of *A Widow’s Awakening* is certainly an invaluable resource and tool for organ donor families that have suffered their own tragic loss of a loved one and made the difficult decision to honour their loved one’s wishes to donate organs and tissues. The book emotes a visceral insight that will certainly resonate with donor families. Thank you for finding the strength to write such a powerful book.”

— *Gregory Jones, Trillium Gift of Life Network*

“I really enjoyed *A Widow’s Awakening*. I found it candid and funny. I really liked the letter towards the end to the other widow and how you summarized the fact that everyone grieves differently. I think this book would be very helpful to our clients as it shows the process our brain and heart must work through during healing...also that this process is going to look different for everyone and there is no such thing as “normal.”

— *Caitlin Grisack, Victim Services, Burnaby RCMP*

“I so thank you for the acknowledgement of all those “crazy-making” parts of the journey through grief...and thank you again for putting it into a book! I now look forward to reading everything you’ve written, so you definitely have a fan here. You are an inspiration. I discussed *A Widow’s Awakening* at our grief session last evening at the hospital and now everyone wants to read the book, too.”

— *Roswitha*

“I read *A Widow’s Awakening* in 2009 after the murder of my fiancé, and I remember it was SO hard to open your book and read it because I was so afraid of what I might see and how it might relate to me. When I finished it, I felt this sense of pride...like, wow, I did it! And she did it! Your book has always stayed with me as a reminder that people do get through it. *A Widow’s Awakening* was really the only book I ever found that made me feel like I wasn’t the only one.”

— *Christine*

“I devoured your book on a trip to Tacoma this weekend. Your raw honesty mixed with your humour had me mesmerized. It is a rare find that someone is willing to put it out there. There are so many useless and frustrating books around “grief and loss.” We went through a more than shitty experience several years back and the platitudes just made it worse. I am taking your brother’s advice that ‘just because someone tells it with conviction, doesn’t mean it’s true.’ I could go on and on.”

— *Janice*

“Your book has me totally drawn in. I can really feel the love, grief and confusion, the loss of your love, the anger, the denial and realization...everything. You are an excellent writer with a great ability of recalling detail and feelings. I love the honesty of the language and the true feelings. I remember feeling some of the same things at my brother’s death, especially his funeral. The anger at all the bullshit and protocol; the regurgitated empty passages of scripture, the platitudes, the talk of lawsuits and stupid money and insurance policies and divvying things up before he was even in the ground....anyway, I totally relate.”

— *Steve*

“I have read your book and feel privileged to have been part of your very painful grief journey. You have shared your pain from the depth of your soul and that couldn’t have been easy, yet you journeyed on. There were many times my soul ached for you as my eyes teared up. I have not lost the “love of my life” and I can’t even imagine how that feels. However you have taught me that one does not forget...that it is possible to move forward with one’s life using the strengths that our loved one recognized and admired in us. Death is a multi-faceted experience and is unique to each of us. THANK YOU! *A Widow’s Awakening* will be a resource in our library so other persons who are experiencing grief can access it.”

— *Claudette B. Moquin, Manitoba Hospice*

“I recently finished reading “A Widow’s Awakening.” I was deeply moved by your journey. Thank you for being so transparent and honest with your thoughts and feelings. In 1995 my sister received a kidney from a young man who had died in an automobile accident. While our family gathered at the hospital in celebration of her chance at a new life, we were keenly aware of the family who gave the greatest gift in their greatest hour of grief and devastation. Our gratitude for the family is overwhelming and your story helped me to greater appreciate that the sacrifice they made in their darkest hour.”

— *Jayne, AB*

“*A Widow’s Awakening* is a raw look at the grieving process one goes through from a sudden tragic death. As a social worker, this book reminded me of the extent that our clients' hearts and souls will go to in order to find peace and sense in their loss. In this book, the heartbreaking journey through the death of a loved one is given a personal voice as it challenges the stages of grief and instead takes us through the rollercoaster of healing.”

— *Jody Laird, Social Worker*

“I am a professional in the community with a counselling background. I had worked for a bereavement agency in Calgary and heard of you...my fellow colleagues spoke highly of your book. They stated that all professional bereavement counsellors should read *A Widow’s Awakening* because of the raw, honest description of grief you experienced.”

— *Paula*