

Warrioress Widow

When you think of widows, do you think of them as a warrioress? I believe this must depend on exactly how you define a warrioress. So, for explanation's sake, let me explore a definition that fits our idea in hopes you'll agree.

'Warrioress Widow' By Definition:

- Rises to the occasion and challenge
- Is ready for action
- Down to earth
- Very willful
- Sticks it out until she succeeds
- Has a cause to serve
- Faces life on the front line with trusted comrades
- Strongly values courage and loyalty
- Upholds what is 'right' and defeats 'wrong'

Positive and Negative Roles of the Warrioress Widow:

- In the positive role, persuasion, a Warrior is forceful and effective without being overbearing. In other words, respectfully persuasive, courageous and protective.
- In the negative role, coercion, the Warrior descends into intimidation and brute oppression. The ends justify the means, and any approach that gets results may be perceived as useful, no matter how unpleasant it is for others.

Well Known Movies that show the Warrioress Widow Positive Role Model:

- **Avatar**
 - Mo'at, Neytiri's mother and spiritual leader of the Na'vi on Pandora becomes widowed after an attack on the Omaticayan clan. Her mate, Eytukan, who is their leader, dies in the attack. Mo'at takes over the clan and leads them into the future using her intuition and wisdom gained from the Tree of Souls. Her decisions save everyone.

- **Hunger Games**
 - Katniss Everdeen emerges from obscurity as a girl barely surviving to keep her family from starving to the unlikely heroine and leader of a revolution. Her mother, Mrs. Everdeen becomes widowed when Katniss is 11. She goes into a catatonic depression leaving Katniss as sole provider for the family. When Katniss leaves for the Hunger Games Mrs. Everdeen rises up and begins to care for her younger daughter Prim. Mrs. Everdeen is a healer, the daughter of an apothecary and later uses this skill to help Katniss and those hurt in District 12.
- **Gone with the Wind**
 - "Fiddle-dee-dee! War, war, war; this war talk's spoiling all the fun at every party this spring. I got so bored I could scream. Besides... there isn't going to be any war." From a spoiled Southern Belle to a phoenix-like creature Scarlett O'Hara transformed herself into a woman who survived a terrible conflict. Becoming a war widow, she found her unique identity and true love with Rhett Butler. The rest is history and an epic movie viewed by millions.

Ways you know you are facing a Warriress Widow:

- "Don't mess with me!"
- "Come and see if you can do it better!"
- "This scares me, but I'm going to take three deep breaths; one for the past, one for the present, one for the future....then go anyway!"

The Strong Mindset:

What Warriress Widows Don't Do.

1. Waste Time Feeling Sorry for Themselves.

You don't see mentally strong widows feeling sorry for their circumstances or dwelling on the way they've been mistreated by life after experiencing the loss of their loved one. They learn to take responsibility for their thoughts, emotions and outcomes, and they have an inherent understanding of the fact that life is not fair. It certainly hasn't been for them! They are able to emerge from trying circumstances with self-awareness and gratitude. When a situation turns out badly, they respond with phrases like 'Geez', 'Oh well', or perhaps 'Next'.

2. Give Away Their Power.

Mentally strong Warrior Widows avoid giving others the power to make them feel inferior or bad. They understand they are in control of their actions, thoughts and emotions. They know their strength is in their ability to manage the way they respond. They also ask for forgiveness from themselves when they fail to meet their own standards.

3. Shy Away from Change.

Mentally strong Warrior Widows embrace change and welcome challenge... even when exhausted and tired of it all. Their biggest 'fear', if they have one, is not of the unknown, but of becoming complacent, stagnant and boring to others. Maybe, so much so, that no one will love them again. An environment of change and even uncertainty can energize a mentally strong Warrior Widow and bring out her best over time.

4. Waste Energy on Things They Can't Control.

Mentally strong Warrior Widows don't complain (much) about stupid comments people make, overwhelming bills, lack of support or especially about other people, as they recognize that all of these factors are generally beyond their control. In a bad situation, they recognize that the one thing they can always control is their own response and attitude, and they use these attributes well (and often in the first few years, getting better day by day).

5. Worry About Pleasing or Teasing Others.

Know any people pleasing or teasing people? Or, conversely, people who go out of their way to dis-please others as a way of reinforcing an image of strength? Neither position is a good one. A mentally strong Warrior Widow strives to be kind and fair and to please others where appropriate, but is unafraid to speak up. Find your voice. They are able to withstand the possibility that someone will get upset and will navigate the situation, wherever possible, with grace.

6. Fear Taking Calculated Risks.

A mentally strong person is willing to take calculated risks. This is a different thing entirely than jumping headlong into foolish risks (which we especially don't recommend within the first and maybe the second year of being widowed). With mental discipline, a Warrior Widow will weigh the risks and benefits thoroughly, she will fully assess the potential downsides and even the worst-case scenarios before she takes action. Take your time calculating the options because in its effort to protect us from the intense pain of grief the brain may have "widow fog" which causes us to forget things, be slower to react and make us feel disjointed and out of sorts.

7. Dwell on the Past.

I'm reading your thoughts... 'Define Dwell, will you?' There is strength in acknowledging the past and especially in acknowledging the things learned from past experiences—but a mentally strong Warrior Widow is able to avoid miring their mental energy in past disappointments or in fantasies of the "glory days" gone by. They invest the majority of their energy in creating an optimal present and future.

8. Make the Same Mistakes Over and Over.

We all know the definition of insanity, right? It's when we take the same actions again and again while hoping for a different and better outcome than we've gotten before. A mentally strong Warrior Widow accepts full responsibility for past behavior and is willing to learn from mistakes. Research shows that the ability to be self-reflective in an accurate and productive way is one of the greatest strengths of spectacularly successful Warrior Widows.

9. Resenting Other People's Happiness.

It takes strength of character to feel genuine joy and excitement for another widow's happiness. Mentally strong Warrior Widows have this ability. They don't become jealous or resentful when others go back to school, find love again, have a bigger bank account, more opportunities or more helpful friends and family (although they may take notes on what the Warrior Widow did well). They find inspiration and hope in the

success of another. They are willing to work hard for their own chances at happiness and find peace with that, without relying on blame, shame or shortcuts.

10. Give Up After Failure.

Every failure is a chance to improve. So go ahead, make a mistake. Even the greatest, happiest and healthiest Warrior Widows are willing to admit that their early efforts invariably brought many failures. Mentally strong Warrior Widows are willing to fail again and again, if necessary, as long as the learning experience from every 'failure' can bring them closer to their ultimate desired goals. Have you figured out what those are yet?

11. Fear Alone Time.

Mentally strong Warrior Widows enjoy and even treasure the time they spend alone. They use their downtime to reflect, to plan, and to be productive. Most importantly, they don't depend on others to shore up their happiness and moods. They can be happy with others, and they can also be happy alone.

12. Feel the World Owes Them Anything.

Particularly in the current economy, everyone, especially Warrior Widows at every level are gaining the realization that the world does not owe them a salary, a benefits package and a comfortable life, regardless of their preparation and schooling. Mentally strong Warrior Widows enter the world prepared to work and succeed on their merits, at every stage of the game.

13. Expect Immediate Results.

Whether it's a workout plan, a nutritional regimen, going back to school or starting a business, mentally strong Warrior Widows are "in it for the long haul". They know better than to expect immediate results (although secretly day dream about them). They apply their energy and time in measured doses and they celebrate each milestone and increment of happiness on the way. They have "staying power." They keep promises to their late husbands to genuinely find happiness and to love again. And they understand that genuine changes take time.

14. Say 'Yes' When They Should Say 'No'

Remember, being a Warrior Widow will mean the journey will be riddled with alone-ness at times. When you blaze a trail. Pioneer. Lead a pack. You are essential - the one looking forward and cannot see those following behind you. It is your intuition that is forthright in your heart and mind. It is not until others 'get it' that you will see them by your side standing strong beside you, reassuring you in your choices. There is a resistance that is normal in this 'forward' position of being a Warrior Widow. Recognize its presence.

15. Back Down from Glitches and Road Blocks.

When the Warrior Widow is rebirthing herself, she cannot stop the glitches that will fumble her step. You'll find yourself asking 'what is taking so long?' and yet, you will carry through to the end. Clear some space, get ahead of the game and reduce your speed enough to walk around the tough spots.

Do you have mental strength like a Warrior Widow? Are there elements on this list you need more of? With many thanks to all my mentors I would like to reinforce my own abilities further in each of these areas today. How about you?

Traits of an emerging 'Warriress Widow' in you:

- 1-
- 2-
- 3-

Warriress Widow Quotes To Ponder

W- Work of Art
A- Achiever
R- Resilient
R- Radical
I- Independent
O- Organized
R- Resourceful
E- Energetic
E- Eager
S- Strong

"Even in times of trauma, we try to maintain a sense of normality until we no longer can. That, my friends, is called surviving. Not healing. We never become whole again ... we are survivors. If you are here today... You are a survivor. But those of us who have made it through hell and are still standing? We bear a different name: warriors." - Lori Goodwin

"Women, if the soul of the nation is to be saved, I believe that you must become its soul" - Coretta Scott King

"Let life surprise you" - Madame Veuve Clicquot

"We must look at hard things truthfully" - Eleanor Roosevelt

"When your hero dies, everything he stood for does not end. Everything he stood for must continue" - Terri Irwin

"There's no formula. Keep busy with your work and your life. You can't become a professional mourner. It doesn't help you or others. Keep the person in your heart all the time. Replay the good times. Be grateful for the years you had." - Betty White

“Don’t sit down and wait for the opportunities to come. Get up and make them” - CJ Walker

“I learned the hard way that not only do you not have to be superwoman, but it’s better not to be and not to try to be. What I would like to be is just a good person- someone who tries her best and puts her best foot forward”- Cindy McCain

“Our lives will only have a meaning if each one of us can confidently say that I was able to bring five, ten, fifteen and twenty women along with me...do not climb alone” - Graca Machel

Note from the Author:

As a new widow, you may not feel equipped to feel courageous, heroic or a warrior in any way. The intensity of emotions that are felt in widowhood make this leap feel rather impossible at the onset.

For me, it took many experiences the first 6 years of my journey to see the pure warrior spirit within that was begging to be released. It was my divine right to stand in the light that was given to me at birth. It evolved over the years and to be honest, others saw it before I did. My mentors shared with me how heroic I was in the world. I was too close to it to see.

To my surprise, I began noticing it myself in my every day decisions and choices. I'm overjoyed to share with you this glimpse into what I now realize to be true.

We hope all widows will eventually feel this empowered through the mentoring and advocacy efforts at Modern Widows Club.

*Sincerely,
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