



## Men Are Fixers - Give them Solutions

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Give a man a problem, and he will immediately begin thinking of solutions. You know, fixes. If the solution doesn't work, he'll apply another. It's what men do; it's part of each man's DNA.

When a man is widowed, among the things he will likely see as being broken is his life as he previously knew it. His mental rolodex will be in a state of continually spinning, desperately hoping it will stop when an ideal solution card tees itself up. Widowers are confused, adrift. Some will feel as though they need to be decisive. After all, they are men, and men fix things. Still, others will become impulsive, eager to make decisions so they can check off items on their mental tasks list.

Conflicting his need to fix what ails him are two additional embedded views: 1) men don't cry (or show emotion), and 2) men seldom ask for help. In each case, it may suggest he is less of a man. We all recognize such views are not held by everyone, but many men believe it to be true.

Understanding a widower's need to fix what's broken, his state of confusion, and his reluctance to ask for help provides funeral home staff with an opportunity to exceed a client's service expectations. They are also likely to enjoy future referrals from those who learn of the funeral home's efforts to serve their clients better.

Providers eager to differentiate their funeral home from all others may wish to consider implementing a few of the following enhancements to their standard operating fare.

1. Establish written guidelines for all who may have contact with widowed clients, then ensure all staff members comply with their execution.
2. Assign one person to be the principal contact for all matters about each widower client. Assign a second staff member to serve as the backup.
3. Ask the client if there is a family member whom they can work with on routine topics so they can avoid troubling him on such matters.
  - a. If a person is named, always have him/her present when meeting with your widowed client.
4. Should the client make an ill-advised decision, review the decision with the appointed

representative, as the client widower may not be thinking clearly and may not fully appreciate his choice's downside. Remember, widowers, feel by making decisions; they will be fixing what is broken - themselves.

5. Avoid any miscommunications or changes to previously promised services. Widowers do not handle changes or disappointments very well.
6. Understand that many widowed men may be taking an anti-depressant prescribed by their doctor. In such a state, they may not even recall agreeing to anything or having signed any agreements or consent forms—another good reason to have a third party or representative present when decisions are needed.
7. Develop a checklist containing a wide range of questions and potential concerns the widower client may have at present or are likely to develop, then review the list with your client. Help your clients identify and then apply "cost-effective fixes" to what concerns them
8. To the extent possible, take ownership of your client's concerns.

During my 38 years in finance, I encouraged clients to bring me their problems and concerns. When they did, I explained to them how *"I now own your problem. Your job is to not worry about the problem unless I advise you to do so."* You may wish to offer the same level of assurance to your widowed clients.

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Herb Knoll is a retired banking executive, an advocate for Widowers, professional speaker, and author of the breakout book, [The Widower's Journey](#). Available at [Amazon.com](#) in paperback and all digital formats. Herb is the founder of the *Widower's Support Network* ([WidowersSupportNetwork.com](#)), featuring the [Widowers Support Network – Members Only](#), a private Facebook group page for men only, and a second Facebook page, which is open to the general public at [Widowers Support Network](#). Herb also produces the [Widower's Journey Podcast](#), which is available on all Podcast outlets. Contact Herb at [herb@WidowersSupportNetwork.com](mailto:herb@WidowersSupportNetwork.com).