



The death of a loved one can be very difficult. If you find yourself in a devastating situation, consider heeding this advice:

- 1. Don't make any decisions** - As difficult as it might be to avoid decisive action, it's important that you avoid making any irreversible decisions immediately following the death of your loved one. What seems like a good idea now could come back to haunt you after a few years.
- 2. Pay your bills** - Continue to pay any bills that come directly following the death of your loved one. If a bill is specifically in your loved one's name, you may inform the source of their death and tell them it will be paid with the settlement of the estate.
- 3. Start tracking your expenses** - If you did not keep the family books or participate in the process, never fear. YES, YOU CAN! It is important to manage your money and know where money is coming in, and where it is going out.
- 4. Determine assets** - There are a few sources that are helpful in the 'finding' process: past tax returns, the human resources person at your loved ones place of work, the accountant or lawyer, and simply opening all the mail carefully. Make sure you take the time to review health insurance policies, pensions and any life insurance policies. These may have time sensitive deadlines, so it's important that you deal with them as soon as possible.
- 5. Learn about liability** - If you're the executor of the will, it's important that you understand the responsibilities associated with your role. Take time to talk to a lawyer. Failure to comply with the rules and regulations could leave you personally liable. If you have the sense that the estate may not have sufficient funds to pay all of the outstanding debts, don't wait to seek professional advice.
- 6. Talk to others** - Ask financial advice from those who've done it right. Get information from lots of sources. Get references from friends and associates about good certified financial professionals. Also, it can be very helpful to talk with other survivors about mistakes they've made and what they wish they had done differently. If you find yourself 'stuck' in the grieving process you may also want to seek out professional therapeutic counselling to see if there is a way you can find to move forward. Grief has no timelines, but it can help to have a 3rd party help you find your way through the process.
- 7. Be cautious** - Survivors, especially women can be prey for cunning salesmen, scams, and occasionally, misguided family or friends. Don't let others talk you into a decision you're not comfortable with. Trust your gut!

Source: (www.widowconnection.com, www.goldengirlfinance.com)