

Identity and Sense of Self in Widowhood

Learning to love and respect a new version of yourself.

When will I go
back to being
the self I
recognize?



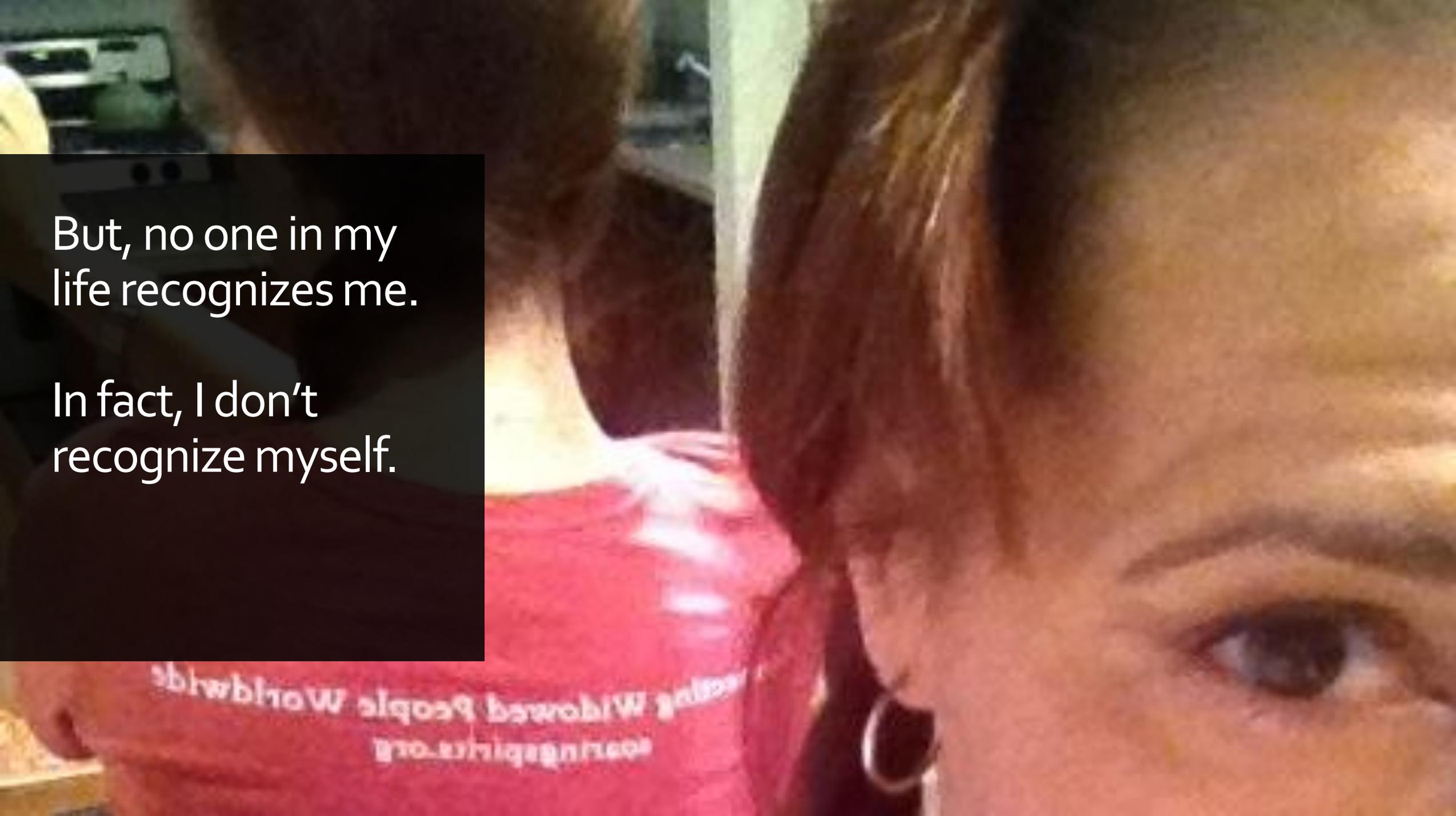
Step One: Acknowledge

You have been changed by your grief experience.

Why can't I go
back to the
person I used
to be?

You can't unknow what you know.

Both the love and the pain
associated with this experience
lives inside of you, and always will.



But, no one in my
life recognizes me.

In fact, I don't
recognize myself.

Supporting Widowed People Worldwide
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When we set returning to
'normal' as our goal, we set
ourselves up for failure.

Our work instead is to learn to respect the version of
ourselves that was born through trauma.

But I don't like
this new me.

**Changes that I may struggle
with:**

- Forgetfulness
- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Overwhelm
- Pessimism

**Changes I might not have
seen coming:**

- Loss of identity
- Lack of motivation
- Fear of connection
- Inability to commit to a future

Be	Be kind to this you.
List	List the things that this version of you has had to do that your prior self did not.
Thank	Thank yourself for showing up.
Treat	Treat yourself like you would treat your best friend.
Ask	Ask lots of questions.

How do I find myself?

What kind of questions?



How do you feel about your physical space?



What do you do out of habit? Does that habit fit you?



Are your preferences the same?



How do you feel about the way that you spend your time?



Who do you most enjoy spending time with?

What if I don't know
any of the answers?

It's okay.

If you are struggling to welcome a new version of yourself, remember that healing is not a linear process.

Progress may feel halting or uneven, and some days will be better than others. The process of rediscovering yourself is ongoing, with no finish line...healing doesn't happen on a schedule.

~Michele Neff Hernandez

Different After You: Rediscovering Yourself and Healing after Grief and Trauma

