

Just Between Us

Are you ready for remarriage?

Some 80 per cent of the divorced in our society remarry. Marriage apparently has never been more popular than it is today. The divorce rate is high. So is the remarriage rate.

Persons become disillusioned with a particular marriage. But they do try again.

Recently, people have been remarrying more quickly than in the past. The statistically "average" person who divorces remarries in about three years. Also statistically, the younger you are, the greater the chances that you will remarry. Those least likely to enter a second marriage are women in the higher age ranges.

QUESTIONS THAT people ask about remarriage include, "What are the odds on my succeeding in another marriage?"

If the question is whether one will divorce again, the statistical chances are greater that he or she will not. Most persons divorce only once.

For the remarriages that do last, the partners generally indicate to researchers that they are happier than they were in the first marriage. That's logical, because many persons are not satisfied in their second marriage tend to get out of it.

Measuring oneself against statistics, however, is not very helpful. There are unique features to each of us and our situation.

Statistics don't marry. People do.

A **BETTER** question is, "Am I ready for remarriage?"

Along with that may go the question, "Is my intended spouse ready for remarriage?" because many remarriages are a second time around for both partners.

Presumably neither you nor your intended spouse wishes to marry a bigamist, neither a legal nor an emotional bigamist. It is not very satisfying to be married to someone who is still psychologically married to another person.

Time is one of the major factors in dissolving old ties. Experts give the advice, "Take your time in remarrying." That makes sense.

Being in a hurry to remarry interferes with the completion of important tasks. One of these is the task of getting rid of the residue of the first marriage, "clearing out the ghosts" of that relationship.

We need time to work through the effects of ending the old relationship. Bereavement and grief reactions are normal and it takes time to work through all these feelings.

Along with the sense of loss that needs to be dealt with, one also has other feelings. Anger and guilt are commonly felt. These need to be understood and worked through as well as possible.

ONE NEEDS to resolve at least the major parts of the disillusionment that goes with ending a marriage.

Getting over the loss of the spouse as a person may be completed—and typically is—long before we feel ready to risk committing ourselves in another marriage. The sense of being betrayed and sometimes of having failed shakes one's confidence and sense of security.

Time alone does not resolve such feelings and doubts, but it does help in healing. And it allows opportunity for sorting out issues and feelings and making sensible decisions.

Most persons seem to need time to try life on their own before being ready to tie themselves into a new marital commitment. Some may wish to try associating with a variety of members of the opposite sex before "settling down."

That is not necessarily the same as giving ourselves the opportunity to see how we fare totally on our own for a time.

For most persons it is quite important to learn that we can "survive" alone if we have to do so. As lonely and painful as such a process may be, it gives us the security of knowing that if a second marriage does not work out, we will not have to stay in it because emotionally we cannot bear to live alone.



By
William C.
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We will not have to live scared.

JUMPING INTO a new relationship, without allowing time to sort things out and understand what happened in the old, deters one from resolving conflicts associated with the former marriage.

For example, we need to reach a stage of indifference toward the former spouse, rather than continuing to be angry or vindictive.

Impulsiveness seems to be related significantly to getting into an inappropriate first marriage. Jumping quickly into a second relationship may be essentially a continuation of the same personality tendencies.

Or it may be something else, such as an unconscious attempt to deny and avoid pain connected with the first spouse or marriage. Either way, it is not helpful.

It is possible to learn from our mistakes. We can learn and mature through experience. Both clinical observation and research support the idea that many persons do make better choices and fare better in a remarriage.

These are people who are able to give themselves adequate opportunity to learn.

(The writer is a marriage counselor and psychiatrist.)

Ask the Educator

Can retarded be 'mainstreamed'?

QUESTION: I teach 15 educable mentally impaired students (mildly retarded) in an elementary school. I believe that almost every one of my students could successfully take art, music and gym with the normal children.

My principal disagrees with me. He doesn't feel that most of the regular teachers are ready yet for a mainstreaming experience with my students.

I disagree. Some of my kids could almost keep up with grade level in selected academic areas. Some of the other teachers in my building even tell me they'd be willing to pioneer if I would like.

How can I persuade my principal to help rather than hinder me in mainstreaming?

Mrs. B. N.

ANSWER: You are on the right track. Don't lose heart. Your principal is among a dwindling minority of administrators. And thank goodness for that.

I am not surprised that some of your fellow teachers tell you privately that they are ready to try mainstreaming. After all, the educational literature repeatedly has shown the benefit of educating handicapped and normal children together repeatedly.

It isn't just the handicapped child who benefits from being with his normal age mates. The normal student learns to appreciate and tolerate human differences if proper and wise examples are set by the teaching staff.

The achievement of the handicapped student can be expected to be enhanced by mainstreaming. It is believed that this effect may be due to the improved self image which results from being part of the normal school environment rather than being totally isolated in a special education room.

CONTINUE YOUR conversations with your

principal. Reassure him that you will follow up on your students and offer advice and materials to willing regular education teachers.

Seek out your director of special education and ask his advice. Perhaps he would be willing to do some in-service training with his fellow administrators. He should be providing you with close support in this matter.

Also, remind your principal that Public Law 94-142, of 1975, the Education of the Handicapped Act, clearly mandates education in the "least restrictive

environment." This means substantial mainstreaming for all of your students unless it can be shown that it would be damaging experience for the children in question.

And finally, I'm surprised that your special student's parents have not spoken up on this issue. If they do and your administrator maintains his position, he is likely to be embarrassed.

(The writer is director of special education for a suburban school district.)



By
Joseph
Haddad

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