

While love is an essential ingredient to a good, happy, and healthy relationship, it is not enough.

For a lasting relationship we need to know and understand our partner's family background as well as their history of previous relationships.

We will then be better able to evaluate if indeed this person is the right one.



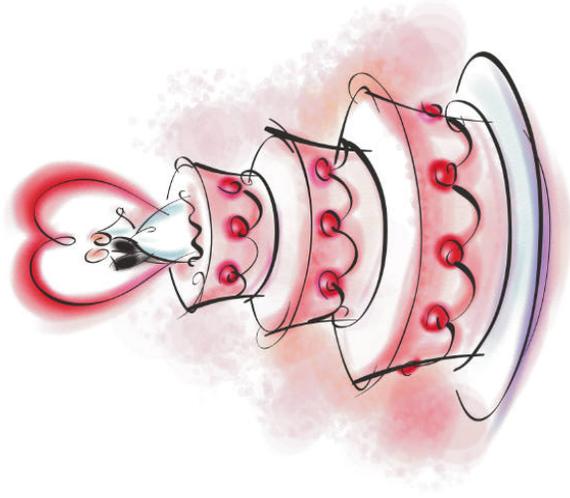
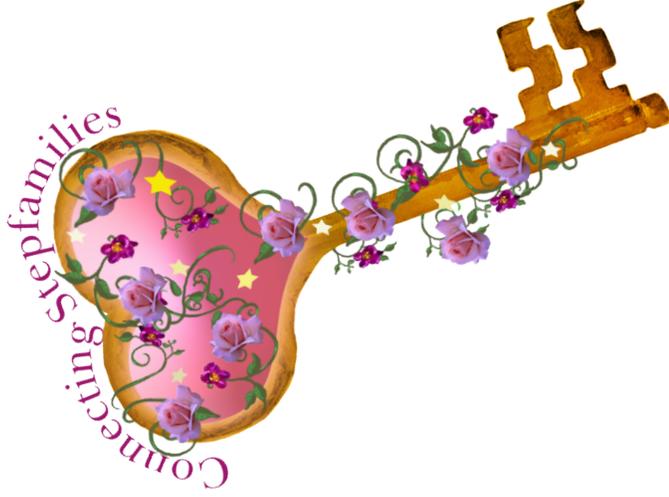
For further information regarding individual appointments and/or groups and workshops, please contact

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Remarriage Points To Ponder

By Yaffa Balsam, M.A., MFT



The decision to remarry is one of the most difficult choices you face in your life. Often times, it is more complex than the decision to marry for the first time.

For many people, the single parent family phase is challenging and frequently lonely. They hope (unrealistically) that the love they share with their partner will be enough to make the stepfamily successful.

More than half of remarried couples end up divorcing. Unfortunately, they skip the educational part of how to maximize the chances for a successful stepfamily.

Whether you are a single parent considering looking for a life partner or are in a relationship already, please take the time to process this checklist. Don't ignore the red flags. They will not go away until and unless you address them.

Please share this list with your partner. Pay attention to what s/he says as well as to what is not said that perhaps you wish to hear. Go over this exercise with a good friend and ask for objective feedback.



Background Information

Understanding your potential partner's family history will help you comprehend how s/he developed certain beliefs, opinions, and feelings about life in general and about marriage in particular. We don't grow up in a vacuum. Our surroundings greatly impact our perception of who we are and what other people mean to us.

It is important to ask your partner:

1. Did her/his parents divorce?
2. How many years were they married?
3. Was there coparenting if they were divorced?
4. Did they remarry?
5. What kind of messages was your partner given about the absent parent by the custodial parent?
6. How was your partner affected by their home life?
7. What is your partner's vision of the future, i.e. goals, hopes, and wishes, both personal and professional?



Are you like-minded on ...

- Parenting issues, i.e., discipline of biological and step-children? Yes No
- Money management, i.e., combining finances or keeping them separate and who controls the money? Yes No
- Spiritual beliefs/practices? Yes No
- A couple's relationship, i.e., emotional and physical intimacy, nurturing the relationship? Yes No
- Wellness, i.e., emotional and physical practices such as therapy, exercising? Yes No
- Community involvement, i.e., volunteer, environment? Yes No
- Individual time away from each other, i.e., separate friendships and recreational activities? Yes No

Past relationships and behaviors

People's past relationships may tell you much about what you might encounter from them in the future. Therefore, please pay careful attention to what they include as well as to what they exclude from their story.

1. Has s/he ever been married? If yes, how many times and how long were the marriages?
2. Why and how did the marriage(s) end? Was there infidelity? If so, by whom? What might have led up to it?
3. How does your partner talk about his/her ex-spouse(s)?
4. If there were children involved, what kind of a relationship is maintained with them?
5. Was there any substance abuse involved?



What was your partner's communication style in previous relationships?

1. Were feelings expressed in a respectful way?
2. How were conflicts resolved? Were they dealt with in a constructive way?
3. How were conflicts resolved? Were they dealt with in a constructive way?
4. Was there any verbal and/or physical abuse?
5. Were conflicts ignored and/or denied?