



Family and Caregiver Education

BEREAVEMENT

Remarriage?

By Rabbi Earl A. Grollman

“I never thought I would ever write this letter. After my husband died three years ago, I became infuriated whenever anyone even mentioned the possibility of dating or remarriage. I have since gone out, but I have not yet met Mr. Right. If I should ever meet that person, I do believe I might consider a proposal. In that eventuality, what are my considerations?”

Remarriage is an increasingly common phenomenon today. Each year more than one million adults decide to re-enter the state of “holy matrimony.” One in every four marriages involves someone who has been married before. It is estimated that 70 million remarried people live in the United States and Canada.

You might ask yourself the following questions:

Why do you want to remarry? What are your shared interests? Is there companionship and mutual respect? Are you able to discuss openly the possible areas of disharmony? Are there religious interests that could create complications? Who will be living where—in his place or yours? Have you examined financial security? Do you love this person so much that you don’t want to live without him?

Is there a healthy separation from your deceased husband so there will not be unresolved feelings of guilt because you might think you have abandoned him for someone new? Will your family accept your partner? In her study of more than 2,000 remarried people, sociologist Jessie Bernard asserted that family members’ approval was the single most significant factor in determining the success or failure of the marriage.

There may be problems in forming a new family when children from former marriages are involved. Sixty percent of remarried couples bring children with them. Those who will live in blended households may underestimate the complexity of the situation. They may fail to understand the steps necessary to facilitate the integration of their new roles as stepparents and the creation of adaptations with the families of their former spouses.

Remarriage is not a guarantee of future happiness. You should remarry for the right reasons. You are wise to consider remarriage from a preventive perspective. If the right person does come along, understand that he will never be the same as your deceased husband, but he will be loved and admired for his uniqueness. In this healthy remarried life, you will be loved and admired for your uniqueness.

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