10 Secrets of Successful 2nd Marriages

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Ten strategies to make the second time a charm

As First Seen on :

The last time you said, "I do," either you or your ex-spouse "did not." Now that you are about to go down the aisle for a second time, what should you do differently so that your next "I do" turns into "I will"? What are the do's and do nots that you and your new spouse should keep in mind so that this time you keep your vows "Until death do you part"?

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1. *Do* know what went wrong in your last marriage.

Do not **go into a second marriage having no idea of why the first failed.**

Marriages Do not end because of conflicts, but because you and your ex could not completely resolve them when they came up. What were the conflicts that you and your ex could not resolve? What would you and your spouse-to-be need to do differently to work through similar problems?

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2. *Do* know what's important to you in a mate.

Do not **be clueless as to the traits you can't stand.**

What disappointed, hurt and angered you the most about your ex? What should he or she have done differently? What disappointed, hurt or angered your ex most about *you*? Ask your mate-to-be to write down the answers to similar questions, then exchange lists. Talk about how to deal with such potential problems ahead of time.

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3. *Do* know what completely turns you off in a mate.

Do not **go into a second marriage expecting love will conquer all.**

This is, thankfully, the flip side of No. 2. Make a list of the top five things that are important to you in a mate. Express them as positives rather than negatives. (For example, write, "Hear me out" rather than "Not close down when I try to talk"). Have your mate do the same.

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Exchange lists and talk about how to put -- and keep -- these things into your relationship.

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4. *Do* ask more when you do not understand.

***Do not* presume to know more than you do.**

Instead of interrupting your mate when you're in an argument, ask him or her to tell you more or to tell you in a different way, because you Do not want to misunderstand something that's so important to them. Stay away from words like "never," "always," "won't" and "I Do not care."

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5. *Do* say what you want, need, dislike and fear.

***Do not* expect your spouse to read your mind.**

Talk about these things when you are not in the heat of an argument. It is very difficult to respect each other's boundaries if you don't know what they are.

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6. *Do* recognize early signs of problems and nip them in the bud before they grow too large.

***Do not* be oblivious to red flags when they're staring you in the face.**

Before you become angry, you usually feel hurt, disappointed or frightened by something you mate has said or done. Anger is a way of covering up vulnerability. Explain your hurt, disappointment or fear, and avoid speaking from anger.

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7. *Do* anticipate and have a plan for dealing with people from your first marriage.

***Do not* assume that everyone you know will easily accept your new marriage.**

It may take some time and work for your children, friends and family to adjust to your new marital situation.

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8. *Do* regularly and formally plan time to be with your spouse.

***Do not* assume that you'll always be able to find time to be together.**

When you're in the honeymoon period of a relationship, many aspects of work, family and friendships take a backseat. After the honeymoon comes back down to Earth, however, there is a natural tendency for your love relationship to take a backseat to everything else in your

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life. By formally making and taking time to be alone with each other, you keep your relationship important.

9. *Do* be aware of how you contribute to problems.

Do not blame everything on your spouse.

The best way to get your mate to show remorse and to take some responsibility for problems is to bare your own neck and to own up to some of the problems *you've* caused. Ask him or her to point out other problems you have been causing that he or she feels you either minimize or seem to ignore. Then ask if, in the spirit of catching and correcting problems early, you can reveal what's bothering you about him or her. This may not work perfectly, but has a better chance than attacking your partner with criticism.

10. *Do* thank, compliment, apologize and tell your mate that you love him or her.

Do not expect him or her to know.

How many men have said when their wives ask them, "Do you love me?" and responded "You know I do."

"Then why do you never say it?"

Men assume showing is the same as telling and she will know it without you having to say it. It is not the same. Whether it is *I'm sorry*, *I love you* or *I miss you*, articulating your sentiments often will keep your new marriage strong. Say these things to your mate whenever you feel them. Doing so causes you to bare your neck and show the vulnerability that helps intimacy to grow.

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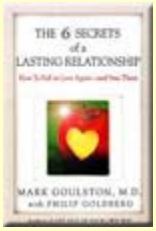

Pick up *The 6 Secrets of a Lasting Relationship,* Dr. Mark's latest book.

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