

Stephanie: Successful second marriages. This is Stay Happily Married Episode number 266.

Announcer: Welcome to Stay Happily Married, your source for weekly updates on the latest tips and advice to build a happy and healthy marriage.

Stephanie: I'm Stephanie Lockwood, and I'm your host today. Welcome to the show. How do you let go of the baggage from your past to make your second marriage a success? If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Love isn't always something that happens at first sight. The hopeless romantics of the world often have to take two, three, or even four glances before they find Mr. or Mrs. Right.

Once you've found the one that you're ready to take that second walk down the aisle with, how can you ensure that the baggage and pitfalls that unraveled your previous relationship aren't lingering and waiting to attack your second marriage? Is it possible for couples to ensure the success of their union when far more challenges stand in their way? How do you successfully integrate children and exes into this modern day nuclear family?

Author of Successful Second Marriages, Patricia Bubash has worked with couples from all over the U. S. to educate them on how to make their marriage the one that lasts. With a Master's Degree in Education with an emphasis on counseling, Patricia is a licensed professional counselor in Missouri. And it's hard to imagine how Patricia found the time to write a book when you find out her active involvement in not only her volunteer work but in the St Louis marriage counseling community.

Having been re-married before, Patricia says, "The third time is the charm" as she celebrates 25 blissful years with her husband. Welcome to the show, Patricia. I'm really glad you could join us today.

Patricia: You too. I've looked forward to this.

Stephanie: Good. I'm glad. So what first inspired you to address the topic of remarriage and write a book about the unique issues that these couples face?

Patricia: Probably my own personal relevancy to the topic. I was in a second marriage, which was not successful, which made me ponder even after many years and after coming into a third marriage, which I assume is going to be successful because we're nearing 25 years now.

Stephanie: Yeah. I say so.

Patricia: I think it's going to take. But, you know still, if you don't understand what went wrong in any kind of failure, whether it be marriage, whether it be a job, whether it be a relationship, if you don't understand the why of it, then you're going to make the same mistakes again, probably.

And then, also as a school counselor, as an educator, working with many families, I wanted to provide some kind of resource for these people who came to me and asked questions and

wondered what had happened and what would happen in a second marriage. So, it was personal relevancy and a need, I guess, as a counselor, to be helpful.

Stephanie: The divorce rate in North America, it's no secret to anyone really.

Patricia: No.

Stephanie: Do you think that there is a certain stigma attached to the idea of divorce, but then also, remarriage?

Patricia: Interesting thought there. I thought of my parents. In their generation, definitely, it was a stigma. They only people that got a divorce in their era, the '40s, were celebrities or the very wealthy. The regular person just stayed together. And then, I think, the Baby Boomers, that kind of was a group that married and stuck together until we got into the mid to late '70s, and then it was okay to get a divorce. I even hear the term now "starter marriage."

Stephanie: Starter marriage?

Patricia: The first time I heard that I thought, "Oh my goodness." I see why the term has evolved. To go back to your original question, I think there was a stigma to that until about the mid to late '70s. Then by the time the 80s came around it was nothing unusual. You just found that most of the people you were working with and most of the people that you encountered, either they were divorced or someone in their family was or a good friend. It just was not unusual. It was much more acceptable.

I think now there are a number of remarried people in second marriages that have been married now for many, many years. So it's interesting to me when I get out at conferences or workshops, or even social events, the number of people that they'll say something, and I know it's a remarriage, a second marriage. So I think, yes, there has been a stigma to that, but I don't think there is anymore.

Stephanie: So it's gone away. It's dissipated over time.

Patricia: I think it has, mm-hmm.

Stephanie: Yeah. Okay. I would say I'd have to agree I was thinking along the lines too, of the Baby Boomers, and sometimes you still have these sub-sects of groups that don't - things aren't working but they don't move on, move past, and, like you had said, "Learn from those, the mistakes or the things that went wrong" kind of from the first marriage, to learn from those.

So what are some of the unique differences that you see between people in the experience of their second marriage from their first? You said you noticed that difference.

Patricia: Well, for sure a first marriage, most of the time, not all of the time, because a lot of couples live together anymore and they have children before they marry. Brad Pitt and Angelina are probably our poster children for that. But most couples that remarry, there are children and

many times on both sides. So you're bringing children into the marriage frequently. You then have these exes, ex-spouses that don't go away. There are children. They're still going to be part of that situation.

You have additional finances because when there are children involved, then there is child support. There can be alimony, so there are additional expenses there. Then you have the situation of having visitation, each parent having to deal with that. So it's issues that you didn't have in the first marriage, most of the time. And also, another interesting piece that comes into this is usually the couple is older.

They may have aging parents, so they need to be able to care for them often. You just have more things that weren't there in a first marriage that come about from that marriage that they don't go away. They don't disappear just because you're starting a whole new life with a new person. So you bring that in to the second marriage.

Stephanie: For those situations we have the child support, those kind of difficult items that have to be dealt with when there are children involved, but it seems a lot of the times because of the children you have a lot of continuing relationships with exes and ex-spouses on both parts. Is that a detriment to relationships to always have that ex in the picture?

Patricia: It sure can be because it can create a lot of stress. It can create a lot of disagreement among the couple because the people that they've divorced still want to be part of their children's lives. You have that component. The ones that really get lost in the shuffle here are grandparents. Grandparents still want to be involved in their children's lives. Oftentimes, there is an attitude of, "I've divorced that person. I've divorced his family, too. I don't want to be part of that family any longer." You have that component as part of a divorce and a remarriage, as well.

Stephanie: There are a lot of extra factors that need to be considered, it seems, when you're looking at the situation of remarriage. This extra baggage, what effect can this have on getting any of these kinds of marriage plans even off the ground to have that motivation to say, "Yes, I do want to go back, and I do want to try this again with you"?

Patricia: Well, I'll tell you it can really sabotage your remarriage with all of the stress and the difficulty of dealing with all of these extra people and situations. I wrote an article; I may have answered what you just asked previously with the unique differences.

I wrote an article for a website "Hope after Divorce" and the article is entitled, "You May Be in Love, but Your Children Aren't." It is so true. You come into this new relationship. I can't tell you the number of parents that would come in and they were so excited because they had found this love of their life after having experienced divorce and they were in love. And this was their soul mate, and this was going to be wonderful.

All of a sudden these well-behaved, lovely, well-mannered children were wreaking havoc in this relationship. I mean, just havoc. When you decide to remarry you really need to consider these things are there. It's going to be more difficult than when it was just you as a couple with none of this, but understand that it's going to be more difficult. But that it's worth it. It's worth the

difficulty when you both really are committed to this relationship and really want to make it work.

I would find it almost funny, except the person talking to me was in such distress. They were mystified. Why these children were acting this way when they were so happy themselves, and it was going to be so wonderful. One of the couples that I interviewed in my book, lovely people, very spiritual, very community minded, loved each other. They each had two children that they brought into the marriage. These kids didn't want their parents to remarry. It didn't matter who it was. In five years' time, this couple separated four times.

Stephanie: Wow.

Patricia: Four times. Now the children are gone. They're grown up into their own world. They couldn't be happier. You would think they were in their 20s, and it was marriage for the first time. I guess what I'm saying is understand it's going to be more to deal with the second time, but just understand that and know that it is worth it.

Stephanie: Are there any tools or tactics that couples can use to make sure that they're continuously taking these key issues and these key factors into account and utilize these tools in their own relationship?

Patricia: I think one thing that's really important, and it's one of the hardest things for couples to do is take time out for themselves. First, before you even do that, you've got to prioritize and say, "This marriage is the most important thing in this relationship." We know that we each love our children, and we care about them. They're our life's blood, but this relationship has to come first. That is a really tough thing to do because you're so torn when there's children.

I keep bringing up children a lot, I guess, because in most situations that is the case, but there are couples also that don't bring children into the marriage but may have aging parents. Then, that's another something that has to be worked around and into time and whatever. Again, prioritize that this marriage is the most important thing out of all of the other things going on. Do take time, even if it's no more than taking an evening walk that you have space that's just yours together.

You make a date once a week, once a month, so many people say, "Well, with work and everything else, there is no time. I can't do that." You know what? You have to do that. Don't think of it as just something that you do as an activity. You think of it as something that has to be done, a need just like paying your car insurance or whatever because it is insurance that you're going to be able to keep this marriage together in spite of all of these things that impact it.

Stephanie: So I had another question here that I wanted to ask you, but I feel like I pretty much have my answer is that it's not always the ideal situation to - we don't go into marriage assuming that we're going to be remarried. It does sound like for those who are in that position and have figured out that things aren't working, that you're at a quite a bit of an advantage for the second marriage, for when remarrying because you have the added knowledge that comes from learning from the past, learning from the mistakes and changing them.

Patricia: Right. I think you said that perfectly.

Stephanie: To find out more about Patricia Bubash or order a copy of her book, "Successful Second Marriages," you can visit her online at [successfulecondmarriages.com](http://successfulecondmarriages.com) And be sure to keep an eye out for Patricia's upcoming release, "Marriage Blisters: Spousal Behaviors that Rub You Wrong or Raw."

Thanks so much for joining us today, and I hope you'll join us again next week. For more information about this show and any previous episodes, visit us at [stayhappilymarried.com](http://stayhappilymarried.com). I'm Stephanie Lockwood, until next time, stay happily married.

Announcer: Thank for joining us today on Stay Happily Married. If you'd like more information, please visit us on the web at [stayhappilymarried.com](http://stayhappilymarried.com). We would love to hear your feedback or comments. Please email us at [comments@stayhappilymarried.com](mailto:comments@stayhappilymarried.com) or call us at 919-256-3083. Until next time, best wishes.

[pause]

Stephanie: And is there anything else you'd like to leave, any last bits of wisdom with our listeners today?

Patricia: Oh yeah, and it was so good that you asked me that. Read my book.

Stephanie: So wise and profound. I love that.

Patricia: Well, honestly in each one of these stories there is either something about a loss of a child, the death of a child, that a couple has to deal with, aging parents, parents that have to be cared for, or the physical health of one of the partners and how they had to deal with that. There are in each one of these stories, somewhere I think you'll find something relevant to your own situation. I really do. And the book is not written as a therapeutic book. It's written as personal stories which I think we identify with much better than if it's a clinical kind of therapy.

Stephanie: Oh yes. I definitely would have to agree with that then.

Patricia: Yeah.

Stephanie: Patricia, thank you so much for taking the time and being with us on the show today.

Patricia: Oh, it was my pleasure. I've looked forward to this.