

TALKING POINTS

## Surprising Findings from the National Survey of Couples Creating Stepfamilies

### *The Remarriage Checkup*

by Ron L. Deal, MMFT, and David H. Olson, PhD

**1. Our research reveals that a positive response to these ten items predicts a highly satisfactory relationship with over 90% accuracy.**

- A partner's moodiness is not an issue in the relationship.
- Each person feels understood by their partner.
- Couples are able to resolve their differences.
- Couples enjoy many of the same leisure activities.
- Couples are creative in how they handle differences.
- Couples agree on how to spend money.
- Affection is used fairly and sexuality is healthy.
- Partners are not overly involved or influenced by their families or previous partners.
- Couples have worked out parent and stepparent responsibilities and roles.
- Each partner feels close to the other.

**2. The number one relationship problem for remarried couples is dealing with complex stepfamily issues.**

Making the differences between first marriages and remarriages undeniable, our research reveals that an astonishing 7 of the top 12 stumbling blocks for remarriage couples are related to a past relationship breakup (e.g., divorce) or to the complications of being a stepfamily.

**3. The remarriage divorce rate is between 10-25% higher than first marriages. Why does that occur?**

Fear and jealousy account for a lot of it and predict with 93% accuracy whether couples have a close, intimate remarriage or a struggling, unhappy one.

**4. Jealousy is a problem for one-third of all remarried couples.**

**5. Most couples agree that children put an additional stress on a remarriage.**

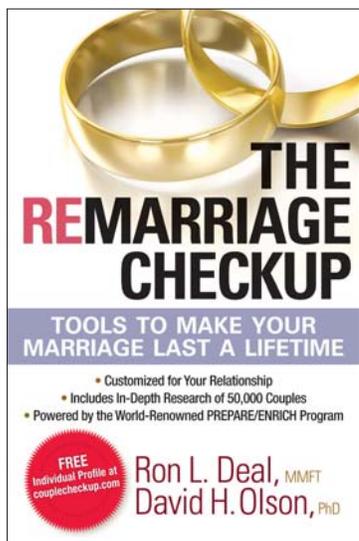
Eighty-five percent of couples believe that the children will put additional stress on the relationship—and they're right!

**6. Our study reveals that the single most important predictor of successful remarriage is the acceptance of and satisfaction with your partner's personality.**

**7. People don't know their partner as intimately as they think.**

When trying to predict the satisfaction level of their partner, couples are wrong 75% of the time.

*Continued on next page*



***The Remarriage Checkup***

by Ron L. Deal, MMFT and David H. Olson, PhD  
ISBN: 978-0-7642-0758-7  
Hardcover; \$22.99; 256 pp.  
Release Date: January 2010

**“This book is a must-read  
for any remarried couple.  
It includes the tools needed  
to create and maintain a  
wonderful remarriage.”**

**—From the Foreword by  
Evelyn Husband Thompson,  
Widow of Space Shuttle  
Columbia Commander Rick  
Husband, now remarried  
to Bill Thompson**

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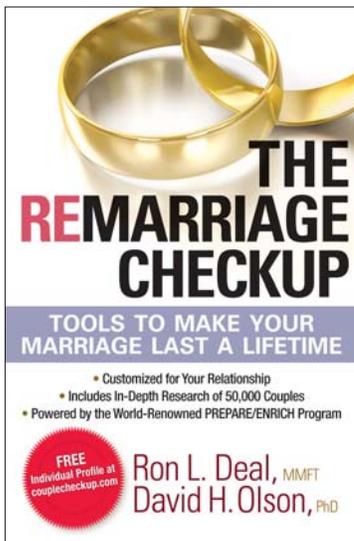
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**8. Newly married stepparents often feel duped.**

Dating partners tend not to favor their children until after the wedding.

**9. A relationship based solely on sex is in trouble.**

Sex only accounts for about 13% of what contributes to a healthy, intimate relationship in remarriage (and 10% in first marriage).

**10. People marry because they fall in love with a person, but they often divorce because of the complications of the stepfamily.**

Eighty-eight percent of individuals expected difficulty related to having a stepfamily and 86% thought having children from previous relationships would add stress to their marriage—and they are right. It does.

**11. Nearly half (46%) of unhappy partners feel left out when their spouse spends time with their children.**

The majority of partners in healthy couples, by contrast, do not (82%).

**12. How long couples with children date prior to the wedding is not as important to their long-term success as how well they prepare for parenting and stepparenting challenges.**

Unhealthy couples are about twice as likely to have not adequately discussed how they will raise the children together.

**13. Two-thirds of all remarried couples have financial issues that are tied to their past relationships.**

Debts, bills, and settlements are among the top relationship issues for remarried couples.

**14. When money concerns—especially those related to child support, alimony, or child care expenses for stepchildren—are paired with jealousy, remarried couples have even more struggles.**

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