

Best Friends and the Search for Love



By Patricia Bubash, Ed.S., LPC for [Hope After Divorce](#)

“He is my best friend.” These words came from the lips of a wife. It isn’t the first time I have heard a wife say this about her other half, but it is the first time that I really thought about the impact of a “best friend” relationship in a marriage – and even more impacting, in a remarriage.

Statistics show that most divorced men and women are still desirous of finding a lifelong partner. More than half of first-time divorced spouses choose to walk down the aisle again. We really don’t need to read the statistics; observation is enough. The overwhelming number of dating

sites, divorce support groups, and friends trying to “set” single friends up easily convinces us.

Research will show we indeed live in a couples’ society. Most people feel the need to have a partner, a companion, a person to share interests, socialization, and good and bad situations – a soul mate. Finding that someone special is a desire shared among the single. We are inundated via all modes of communication – television, radio, written word, and personal conversations – with the necessity of “being in love.” Unhappily for the love-seeker, many of their hopes for the real thing are relationships founded “in lust” rather than “in love.”

Related Link: [Daniel Radcliffe Says Girlfriend Erin Darke Is “Definitely” His Best Friend](#)

An author friend, Pam Evans, is an expert on finding love. Her problem wasn’t finding love but *keeping* it! As a self-proclaimed “multiple marrier,” she is familiar with the search for a soul mate, a replacement for a previous spouse. In her book *Ring ExChange*, she shares her misdirected view of what was important in a relationship. It was this perception that led to her four failed marriages. A good thing for the readers of her book, she didn’t give up easily.

A lesson from her book coincides with my premise to find a best friend first. If the new love meets her criteria, then chances are high that a soul mate will follow. She provides these words of wisdom: “When two individuals approach a relationship first in the spirit of friendship, then true bonding leading to the deepest unconditional love, where affection, respect, compassion, sensuality, and kindness join together, can develop.” I reread this lengthy quote several times to really “get” the depth of it. But, once I did, I heartedly agreed with her “friendship first” suggestion.

We know, typically, a physical attraction is usually the

“first” connector for two people looking for a serious, long-term relationship with the end result being marriage. Through our own personal experiences or those of friends, we know that physical attraction is short-lived. No matter how gorgeous or how handsome, if our choice is based on exterior qualities rather than best friend qualities, our relationship will soon end, and a new search will begin again.

Related Link: [Can Love Be Better the Second Time Around?](#)

A close friend who has a PhD in counseling with many years of private practice and is also one of the divorced who is “searching” shared some personal and professional insights: “In the past, I found myself trying to be who my date wanted me to be. I found myself trying to please, to make him happy. In doing that, I wasn’t making me happy, and I was being dishonest.”

I think in our anticipation of making up for the loss of our marriage, our need for finding love again, a replacement for that lost love, we aren’t always true to “me.” First, I believe it is essential to be a best friend to yourself. Then, find that “best friend” who will be a true love.

Returning to this “best friend first then love” theory, ask yourself this question: “What qualities or virtues do I need in deciding that someone has achieved best friend status with me?” For me, it is the following:

1. Be supportive and honest. I don’t want someone to agree with me just because disagreeing might hurt my feelings.
2. Be willing to listen to me *without* giving advice. My view of advice: “Fools never heed it, and wise men don’t need it.” So skip the advice, just listen.
3. Let me know about the spinach between my teeth!
4. Encourage me in my goals.

When you find that someone who fills these four (my best friend) criteria, I believe you have found someone worthy of being your partner. Also worth thinking about: Don't rush it! Best friends tend to evolve over time, but once in place, they last forever. One day, you will be repeating the words of the woman whom I interviewed: "He is my best friend."

For more information about Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).



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Can Love Be Better the Second Time Around?



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Yes, it can! This answer is according to the couples that I interviewed for my book, *Successful Second Marriages*. What prompted a book about second marriages? The failure of my own second marriage and my admiration for remarrieds who found success in this second chance love – success in spite of the negative numbers for second marriages. Statistics approximate that half of first marriages end in divorce. For second timers, the odds for staying together get even tougher: Two-thirds of those taking the plunge a second time don't make it. With odds like these, it is surprising that more than half of those first-time exes remarry...but they do! We are a nation in love with love.

Related Link: [A Hole in My Heart](#)

So yes, love *can* be better the second time around if we do some self-introspection, a little homework. When we're met with failure while attempting a new project, a recipe, school work, or a job, we question what we did wrong. We don't want to repeat our mistake and fail again. This mindset should also be true for a marriage. Whatever happened in our first union, we did make some contribution to the demise of that marriage. Maybe not to the extent of our ex-spouse, but we were half of the doomed duo.

Love can even be better the second time around with the same former spouse if needed relationship work is done by both parties together as a team. Take two celebrity couples in the news for possibly getting back together again: Hilary Duff and Mike Comrie as well as Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin. Good for them! There truly is hope for couples to work together to strengthen their relationship and be happier and better than they ever imagined they could be. Owning up to the individual part we play in the relationships we are in is what matters most. We can only be fully responsible for ourselves and how we choose to participate in our marriages.

Family/marriage therapist Mary Duparri has observed a certain pattern with clients who have found love again. Their comments relay their total lack of responsibility for their failed first marriage. They say, "Now, I have found the right person. I choose the wrong person before. I shouldn't have married him (or her) in the first place, but this time, I have the right one!" The therapist expressed her dismay that her clients do not accept any personal liability for the previous marriage and do not look into what went wrong so mistakes would not be repeated. Instead, they conclude it was simply the *wrong* person. Now, this new love is the *right* person – a perfect match. Problem solved.

A pleasant change for DuParri would have been to have the

couples I interviewed as her clients. These nine pairs had done their homework before committing to another relationship. As much as they all agreed that after their divorce they hoped for another relationship, they also, very vehemently, stated, "I never want to go through another divorce!" They were going to do everything in their power to make number two a success. The tagline on my book reads "Inspiring, Encouraging, and Hopeful" – words descriptive of the couples interviewed. Every time I left a home, I felt humbled and gratified for our conversations. I knew that I needed to be more attentive to my own marriage (yes, I've been in a third-time-is-charm marriage for the past 24 years). I found myself aspiring to have a relationship similar to that of the couples I was talking with.

Related Link: [Second \(and Third\) Marriages: Destined for Divorce?](#)

Their stories were the catalyst, a personal goal to write the book. In terms of my own personal understanding of what went wrong with my second marriage, how had I contributed to the failure of it? And what was the formula for success the second time around?

1. Know yourself. Before you say "I do" again, know what you really want in a marriage. Are you looking for companionship, security, credibility, a family? What are you willing to contribute? Do some introspection. I was impressed with the number of individuals I interviewed who did just this – spent some time alone, getting to know themselves better versus rushing to become a twosome again. Taking time out for a little constructive self-awareness leads to a better relationship when that true love comes along.

2. Discuss finances. I know this was a problem in my second marriage. I owned the home we shared, earned more money, and had job security. This is especially important when each person has children. Decide who is responsible for what

expenses and have this clearly determined before you become a married couple.

3. Don't expect love and acceptance from their kids! Many a troubled, disappointed parent has come to my office to bemoan, "I have found the love of my life, and my children are being horrible" or "I don't know what is the matter with them. I have finally found my soulmate." Well, you may be in love, but your children are not. They have another parent, so give them time. Don't rush them to acceptance of this "wonderful" new husband or wife.

Related Link: [Maggie Scarf Breaks Down Unique Family Dynamics in "The Remarriage Blueprint"](#)

These two celebrity couples – Duff and Comrie and Paltrow and Martin – show us that there is hope and promise for the possibility of working harder together to build a stronger foundation for our relationship, marriage, and family. Good for them – we are cheering them both on!

I learned much more than these three tips from my wonderful second timers. Love can be better the second time around when we don't rush to action (marry again too quickly), do some introspection, clarify financial responsibility, give kids time to adjust to the new person, and read *Successful Second Marriages!*

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Helping Your Child Through a Divorce





By Patricia Bubash, M.ed, LPC for [Hope After Divorce](#)

In spite of the naysayers who were telling me to not bother spending money to see *Jersey Boys*, I decided to go see the matinee (it was cheaper, of course). And I was glad that I ignored the unfavorable critics. I thought it was an excellent movie: good acting, touching story of poor boys making it big, and music that had everyone clapping, tapping their feet, and enjoying songs from their youth. I anticipate seeing it at least another two times and even buying the DVD when it comes out.

So where does my delight with *Jersey Boys* fit into a site devoted to helping those who are divorced or contemplating the end of their marriage? Not to give away any of the story, but I need to explain how my movie going experience and divorce corresponds.

Growing up, Frankie Valli lived in a low social economic neighborhood, the tough streets of New Jersey. Through determination, grit, drive, and connections, he achieves success and recognition in the entertainment world. And, not

so different from the regular guy who must make a living by working overtime and traveling, his career takes over his family time. From the all too common divorce stories, we know the toll that work takes on a marriage. The mother of his three daughters, his first true love, throws Frankie out.

Related Link: [6 Things Women Should Never Do in a Divorce](#)

Just before he packs his two suitcases and departs the family home, Frankie puts his youngest daughter to bed. She asks him to sing to her (oh, how special would that be – a dad who sounded like Frankie Valli to sing you to sleep!). As he is singing, she interrupts him to ask, “Do you like me?”

Watching this scene, I felt a tug in my chest. I experienced flashbacks from conversations with former counseling clients, students, and my own daughters, who all shared similar deep feelings to me as I listened to their familiar, anguished words. Like my students and my kids, there was genuine confusion and puzzlement over *why* dad would no longer be living with them. Did he really have to go? And did they do something to cause him to be mad – mad enough to leave?

Young children often internalize that they are the reason for mom and dad divorcing – you know, the failed math grade, the disciplinary action for talking in class, squabbling with another student, or fighting too much with a sibling. It’s this idea that, “Had I been a better kid, they wouldn’t be divorcing.” The adults are so involved in their own dynamics, focusing on the logistics of getting out of the marriage, that the children’s interpretation of the why goes overlooked.

International star and actress Jennifer Lopez and her husband, singer Marc Anthony, went through a divorce with young twins. They have seemed to be amicable and respectful in their new co-parenting roles, keeping their focus on their beautiful children. You may become divorced from one another, but you

will always be your children's parents together. These ex-spouses set a good example for all divorced parents on how to be respectful in the essential role each parent plays in the lives of their children, both equally important. Lopez recently ended her relationship with longtime boyfriend and dancer Casper Smart. Hopefully, she was able to gently communicate and share this decision with her son and daughter, as it would have been a loss of another relationship for them as well.

When this beautiful child in *Jersey Boys* asked her dad if he liked her, I knew the why of that question. Could it be that her dad really didn't like her and that she was the cause of it? Of course, Frankie assured his beautiful daughter that he loved her. And then he was gone. For many dads and moms who become so involved with work, after divorce, it is often said, "Not only did they divorce their ex but the children as well." It's an adult decision, but it's the kids who struggle most with a new family composition. They are commonly not ever asked what they want, which is the real tragedy in parents divorcing. Why shouldn't our children be asked what they want and what they think? They should at least be heard so parents can take into account knowing how their very own children feel about them dissolving their family.

Related Link: [To Move or Not to Move? Why This Decision is Tough on Kids](#)

As a former educator, school counselor, family advocate, and, most credible of all, a divorced parent, I feel comfortable offering the following suggestions:

- Together, assure your children, "We may no longer want to be together, but we will always love you." You can never remind them of this truth enough. Your children need to feel secure in the continued love of both parents.
- Be honest. If divorce is imminent, then don't give your

children the false hope that you might be together again. Explain the changes: visitation, sharing of holidays, and any possible moves into a new home or school.

– Encourage them to talk with you and truthfully answer their questions.

– Let the school know the situation. Many times, a teacher has come to me with a student acting out, and we discover that the family is going through divorce. Knowing this helps the school in helping the child – thus, the reason for school counselors.

– Don't talk negatively about your ex-spouse in front of your children or even to others when your children might hear your conversation. Speaking despairingly of the other parent (even if it is true!) is like shooting an arrow in your child's heart.

Related Link: [What Now? Transitioning From Married to Single](#)

Divorce changes our lives and that of our children. It is one of the most difficult and emotional situations for a family to experience. Fortunately, we have resources like Hope After Divorce and Divorce Support Center. And through these resources, we find hope for the future. Our children also need to have hope for better times ahead, and as their parents, we are responsible for providing this hope.

(And go see *Jersey Boys* – it's definitely worth the money and your time!)

To find out more about Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).



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A Hole in My Heart





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A June wedding invite came in the mail for my husband and me this week. Ahhh, I think June is still the month for weddings, although I have read that October is quickly matching it for the month chosen by brides.

I met the groom-to-be a couple of years ago at a film festival where the documentary produced by him was being previewed. Dan and the other two creators of the film *Give a Damn* had decided in their mid-twenties to travel to one of the poorest countries in Africa. This film was to bring awareness to the world, to encourage those who saw the film to be proactive, to become involved in whatever manner they chose to be involved.

The three filmmakers would make their way from the Midwest to Europe feeding themselves on only \$1.25 a day for each. When they could, they hitchhiked; flights to Europe and Africa came out of fundraising money. Once there, they shared lodging, food, living arrangements with the poorest of poor, constantly filming, telling a story for the world. I watched in amazement, awe, and great respect what they had documented,

their immersion into extreme poverty.

At an age when most young adults are just beginning their careers, these three chose to live in uncomfortable, unpleasant, inconvenient, and even horrific circumstances and conditions. I wanted to hear more of their story, so I arranged to have breakfast with the two who were available. Dan arrived before David, and as we chatted, we discovered that he had attended a school where I had counseled part-time. He told me that he had also attended Rainbows, a divorce group for kids within the school. It was a program that all the counselors in the district utilized.

He went on to share that he was an only child, and in the fifth grade, his parents divorced. Not an unusual story, but what has transformed a first time meeting, a casual relationship, into an ongoing friendship, a wedding invite, is Dan's following words: "I was very close to my mother, and when she divorced my dad, she just left, went away. It left a hole in my heart."

Although Gwyneth Paltrow has been getting a lot of publicity with her "conscious uncoupling" approach to divorcing when children are involved, it does not take away the pain and sadness that kids feel when their parents breakup. They have feelings too, and their feelings are often not considered nor are their voices heard.

Related Link: [The REAL Reason that Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin Split](#)

I have listened to many children's stories, wiped their tears, and reminded them that "things would get better" as they coped with their parents' divorce. Dan's words reached such an emotional cord with me. Before me sat a young man who had been part of an extraordinary project, was way past fifth grade, did not know me, and had shared something so personal.

I felt that I had been gifted with his openness. He went on to

tell me that he had participated in counseling beyond the Rainbows into his adult years. He had found his niche through church and his church friends. They were his support and his family.

Finding a faith, friends, a church family, and a cause had been Dan's personal "hope after divorce." I have always been bothered by adults who express that kids are resilient, that they will be just fine with the divorce, remarriage, or blending families. No matter what age, children are emotionally affected by the end of family composition as they have known it. It shakes their sense of security and stability.

They often fear that one parent will no longer be in their life. They worry that they will have to move, lose their friends, will have to change schools, and like Dan, feel a hole in their heart.

Related Link: [To Move or Not to Move? Why This Decision Is Tough on Kids](#)

I have often reflected back on our conversation, as a counselor and a divorced mother. I wondered if my kids were in conversation with Dan, would they share the same feeling of loss at the time of my divorce from their dad? What I do know is that I am so grateful for my relationship with Dan and for the compliment of an invitation to his wedding. I think Dan is quickly – and effectively – filling the hole in his heart.

The sharing time I had with Dan really did touch my heart so deeply. He is marrying a young woman who has a child – and I think he will be good at filling her little boy's heart.

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