

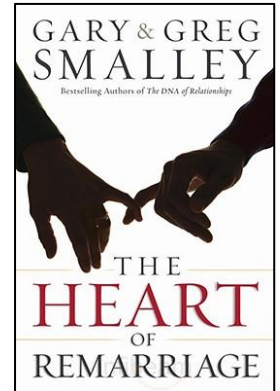
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UNDERSTANDING THE HEART ISSUES OF REMARRIAGE

Drs. Gary and Greg Smalley Advise on the Matters of the Heart Concerning
Remarriage, Blended Families and Stepfamilies

Branson, MO: Following a divorce or death of a spouse, many people spend years moving on from their past and exploring the single life. After a few years, many divorced people do eventually decide to get remarried. But too often, couples that remarry are unprepared for the challenges they'll face dealing with a new marriage, a stepfamily and overcoming previous marital issues. Experts say it can take a person five to seven years to fully recover from divorce, yet most people remarry within four years of their divorce. Entering into remarriage too quickly after a divorce can lead to unforeseen regret and trouble (DivorceCare/Steve Grissom).



Unfortunately, the rate of divorce among couples in their second marriage is even higher than couples in their first marriage. In *The Heart of Remarriage*, Drs. Gary and Greg Smalley partner with remarried couple Dan and Marci Cretsinger, who share their remarriage challenges, to offer this marriage-changing idea: No matter what circumstances or challenges a remarried couple and their stepfamily face, the solution starts in their hearts.

Drs. Gary and Greg Smalley believe all matters concerning remarriage begin with the heart, and reaffirm that despite the pain of divorce or the death of a spouse, couples can find a thriving and fulfilling marriage. “We wrote this book because we want remarriages to be healthy and thrive. Once couples improve the level of peace, joy and satisfaction in their remarriage, they will have the ability to manage every remarriage challenge they face,” says Dr. Greg Smalley.

The Heart of Remarriage takes a unique approach to success in remarriage by going straight to the heart, helping couples heal from the inside out rather than offering surface suggestions that may change circumstances, but not lives. Topics include:

- **Understand the Heart for Remarriage:** Get over the loss of your previous marriage, identify your issues in your previous marriage and correct them. Open your heart to remarriage and set boundaries with your ex-spouse.
- **Six Positive Experiences for Remarried Couples:** A renewed and stronger commitment in a spouse, avoid repeat marital mistakes, greater appreciation for the spouse and an opportunity to rebuild trust.
- **Create Emotional Safety in Your Remarriage:** Protect your spouse's emotions, making your marriage top priority over other relationships, recognize your spouse's value, care for your heart by listing lessons learned from a painful past.
- **Protect Your Remarriage from Heart Darts:** Target areas include financial pressure for child-support, conflict with former spouse or within the family, legal battles, busy schedules, unresolved feelings from your previous marriage or verbal and emotional attacks from your ex-spouse.
- **Manage a Stepfamily/Blended Family:** Understand parenting responsibility, relationship bonding and discipline in the family, give your stepfamily time to adjust and learn to deal with insecurity or favoritism within a stepfamily.

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Dr. Gary and Greg Smalley believe that couples considering divorce based on financial difficulties need to reconsider. “If money is one of the primary reasons couples site for splitting, why do they think things will get better if they create two households that now have to divide the same money pot? In remarriage after divorce, everyone’s slice of the income ‘pie’ often gets smaller.”

The Heart of Remarriage delves into the tough, but rewarding role as a stepparent. “The more a mom or stepmom tries to push a stepfamily or blended family together, the more likely it is that they’ll resist her efforts and refuse to forge a bond,” says Greg Smalley. “Stepdads need to play a vital role in parenting, even disciplining stepchildren. Being a dad and stepdad is a huge responsibility and privilege, guaranteed to bring you some of the deepest heartaches, but also the greatest joys.”

Dr. Gary Smalley advice to couples wondering if their remarriage will last, “You can have a successful second marriage, it just takes work. Another divorce is only going to make things even more difficult and more painful. Don’t give up and work hard at becoming more loving and caring toward your spouse and children.”

In *The Heart of Remarriage* remarried couples will learn how to examine their own hearts and heal them from the hurts of the past, so that they can create a remarriage and stepfamily filled with love, security and safety.

Each chapter includes questions and actions for couples that include “Heart Monitors,” “Heart Protectors” and “Heart Healers.” *The Heart of Remarriage* includes ideas on creating a marriage mission statement and a remarriage quiz to assess the strength of your remarriage.

The Heart of Remarriage by Gary & Greg Smalley Hardcover: 256 pages Publisher: Regal (July 13, 2010)
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GARY SMALLEY is president and founder of the Smalley Relationship Center, which presents conferences nationwide and provides resources for families and family churches. He is recognized as a leader in family-marriage counseling and his books include *The Blessing, The Two Sides of Love, The Language of Love, From Anger to Intimacy* and *As Long As We Both Shall Live*. Gary has been a guest on numerous national TV shows, including *The Oprah Winfrey Show, Larry King Live* and *NBC’s The Today Show*.

GREG SMALLEY has a passion to help premarital and married couples learn how to enjoy a lifetime together. Dr. Smalley is the Director of Marriage Ministries for the Center for Relationship Enrichment on the campus of John Brown University, and assistant professor of marriage and family studies. Dr. Smalley is the author or co-author of 10 books including *Before You Plan Your Wedding, Plan Your Marriage, The DNA of Relationships for Couples, The Marriage You’ve Always Dreamed Of, Winning Your Wife Back, and Winning Your Husband Back*. Greg and his wife Erin, along with their two daughters, Taylor and Maddy, and son, Garrison, live in Siloam Springs, Arkansas.

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Notable Quotes from *The Heart of Remarriage*:

“Often, the pastor isn’t sure how to give the advice or the blessing for remarriage. After all, praising the two for remaining sexually pure before the union doesn’t exactly fit, and talking about how the marriage will change when children enter the picture usually doesn’t apply. (Been there, done that.) Finances are muddled with child support coming and going, and simple suggestions for better communication hardly cover the sticky circumstances remarried couples will face, with former spouses who create chaos and children who may hate their stepparent.” p. 8

“The bottom line is that when people say no longer feel love for their spouse, the problem isn’t a lack of love. God is love, and His is always available (a never-ending wellspring). God’s love is like air - it’s all around us. You don’t even have to be a ‘Christian’ for God’s love to flow through you (although it certainly helps). p. 24

“With that kind of raw pain, why would anyone want to remarry? Because hearts, even wounded and broken ones, were created to be loved. We long for acceptance, companionship, and connection because God designed us that way. But when battered hearts come together, they can remain partially closed, tentative about loving fully, afraid to expose themselves to the possibility of that intense pain again.” p. 33

“When you give your spouse access to your heart, there’s no guarantee how your mate will behave, what he or she will say or how your spouse will use what he or she learns about you. If trust has been broken before, allowing yourself to engage in that level of intimacy again takes a tremendous amount of heart work. But the benefits of a truly open and intimate remarriage are numerous.” p. 88

“Emotional safety is the bedrock of a close, open, intimate marital relationship. In this kind of secure environment, the couple wants to stay in love and harmony and feel very protected, rather than vulnerable, with each other. Emotional safety will help you create a climate in which you can build an open relationship that will grow and flourish. It will help you and your spouse feel cherished, honored, and fully alive.” p. 91

“You operate from your emotions, and they can positively or negatively charge the atmosphere in your home. Therefore, the condition of your heart is vital to the success of your remarriage. When your heart tries to shut down because of hurt or anger (past or present), everyone in your family will suffer. A remarried wife must carefully guard her heart, because a wife that is shut down can shut down her family’s hearts too.” p. 152

“Your kids may not live in your home for much time, but they still need you to be clued in to what is happening in their daily lives. When their original family ended, they lost enough. Don’t let them lose their connection to you. If you don’t insist on actively parenting them after divorce and if you drop into the “visitor” category, by their adolescent and teen years your kids will be well aware that you are not part of the parenting plan.” p. 167

“*Biological parents MUST be the ones to administer discipline.* This might feel backward, but it’s your best chance for success. That doesn’t mean that stepparents play no part in raising the children; it just means that they are largely silent partners in front of the kids at first.” p. 207

“Stepchildren need their stepparent to pursue their hearts, even if they are pushing the stepparent away. The stepparent that wins his stepchildren’s hearts listens well, mentors, befriends, and lets the kids set the pace of their relationship.” p. 208

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Suggested Interview Questions for *The Heart of Remarriage*:

1. Could you explain why a successful remarriage must have open hearts? What are some reasons people shut down their hearts?
2. What are some reasons couples seem to rush into remarriage? How can a couple be sure they're ready for remarriage?
3. What is your advice to couples considering remarriage concerning healing their past?
4. You write that a remarriage can actually be helpful to someone who has lost hope in finding love. Could you explain?
5. What are the two vital beliefs concerning conflict and loving and serving others in a remarriage?
6. How can a marriage impact spiritual beliefs and our relationship with God?
7. What are "Heart Darts" or areas that need to be protected in a remarriage?
8. You write the key to creating safety in marriage is through attitude and action. How is this done?
9. What are some of the challenges for men and women regarding their hearts in remarriage?
10. Why do you believe the marriage relationship should be priority over any other relationship?
11. What should men know about their responsibility as a stepparent? What should they expect?
12. What is your advice to moms who are trying to bring closeness to a stepfamily?
13. How can parents and stepparents meet the heart needs of children in stepfamilies?
14. Who should be the primary decision maker and disciplinarian in the stepfamily?
15. What are some unsuspecting ways a former spouse can interfere with a remarriage? How can these situations be prevented?