

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR ME?

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### ***Dating, re-marriage and the kids***

Statistically, 75% of single parents will re-marry. Another statistic is that 60% of these marriages will themselves fail within two years – *75% if it is a third marriage (includes long-term cohabitation) for either of you!* The toll this takes on your kids is devastating to their ability to have successful marriages of their own.

**Good news!:** Once you know how this dynamic works, you will know how to avoid causing upset in your “Home of Honor” that not only keeps the kids from harm, but also gives you a real chance at a permanent and healthy relationship. There *is* a future out there for you if you seek it with your eyes wide open. Here are some tips that can help you understand this difficult issue.

#### The Kids

*When will we be ready to “move on”?* On average, you will be ready to have a meaningful relationship in about two years. The kids, however, usually take longer. Depending on their ages and the extent of the emotional damage they may have suffered during the breakup of “Mom n’ Dad”, it can take three to five years for them to be able to handle seeing you start dating.

*Why do the kids seem to be so upset or hostile to my meeting someone new?* You may meet the “right person” who will make your household a much better place for you and the children. He or she might be “the perfect choice” and you would be right in assuming this is a real gain for your family. But, looking at things through the kids’ eyes, *it is another loss*. Remember, they have already lost “Mom’n’Dad”. Now you want them to share *you* with someone else? Great.

*How soon should I introduce someone I’m seeing to my kids?* We often jump the gun in this area. It is a legitimate concern to want to know how the person you’re interested in interacts with your kids. You think they may be right for you, but how about the kids? The two most common problems that arise seem to be that you can best find out how someone will be with *your* kids by closely observing them with *other* kids – especially their own. Remember, during courtship we all put our best foot forward. You want to be sure that “Peter Pan” doesn’t turn into “Captain Hook” a year into your marriage. The other problem is that the kids have a “Mom’n’Dad” shaped hole in their hearts. They are likely try filling that void by attaching themselves to whomever you think enough of to bring into the home environment. “Mom’n’Dad” becomes “Mom’n’Bill”. They then have to detach themselves when that relationship doesn’t pan out. Then its “Mom’n’Danny”. Attach - detach. “Mom’n’Fred”. Attach – detach. And so it goes. Eventually, they become like Velcro that has been used a lot. They no longer have the ability to attach to *anyone* - *even the person they eventually marry!* This is the “divorce gene”, isn’t it?