

Remarrying quickly — out of pan into fire?

By Ann Lowe
Staff Reporter

As divorce rates climb, more people are finding love the second — or third — or fourth — time around. But counselors say it's a good idea to wait before saying "I do" again.

Of 18,450 Nebraska marriages in 1983, 28 percent were remarriages for the husbands, wives or both, Department of Health statistics show. Remarriages accounted for 37 percent of the 6,172 divorces granted the same year.

In some cases, remarriage weakens religious ties. The Roman Catholic church does not allow remarriage after divorce, said Father Joseph A. Mroczkowski of St. John's Catholic Church. Marriage outside the church may be legal, but is not considered valid in the church, Mroczkowski said. And although remarried couples may attend weekly Mass, they may not receive communion, nor any other sacrament, he said.

Sometimes commitment to the church is enough to keep couples from remarrying, Mroczkowski said. Others choose to marry and leave the church.

"The church does not excommunicate them. They excommunicate themselves," Mroczkowski said.

Other sects have looser rules. The Rev. Stanley Ecklund, pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, said divorced people may marry in his church — but he insists that a second wedding be smaller and simpler than a first wedding would be.

Ecklund also advises couples to wait "a reasonable amount of time" before trying marriage again.

How long to wait depends on age and situation. But most people need time to recognize and resolve the problems that hurt their first marriages. Carrying hard feelings and personal problems into a new marriage will only cripple the new relationship, he said.

Ecklund also suggests a waiting period for couples who remarry after death of a spouse. People who remarry quickly often are trying to replace lost husbands and wives, he said. This often leads to disappointment when new partners don't turn out to be the same, he said.

Lincoln psychologist Thomas Korn agrees that couples should wait before marrying again. Second marriages too soon after divorce "being on shaky ground, and often they don't work too well," Korn said.

Korn said people ages 20 to 30 should wait at least one year — maybe two — before marrying again. People 40 and older usually can adjust to second marriages sooner because they generally are more independent, he said.

Problems often multiply when children are involved, Korn said. Youngsters want Mom and Dad to get back together, and they are likely to resent an intruder. Korn said he recommends family counseling — if only to assure the families that resentment is normal and can be resolved.

Despite the hurdles, "a lot of second marriages are great," Korn said. But as a marriage counselor, he sees more that aren't so good. Some break up. In others, troubled couples stay together to avoid the pain of another "failure," he said.

"The idea of a second divorce is hard on a lot of people," Korn said.

Second wedding: 'Intimate is best'

If you are getting remarried, you may wonder about the rules of etiquette for your second wedding. Tradition says an "en-core wedding" should be smaller and simpler than the first. But with a little imagination, it can be every bit as special, said Joyce Jacobs, owner-manager of J'Marie's Bridal Shoppe.

Here's some advice from the experts: How soon? Elizabeth L. Post, author of "The New Emily Post's Etiquette," says a widow should wait at least a year after her husband's death before remarrying.

"This is simply a matter of showing respect for his memory," Post says. "She is at least mentally in mourning."

A divorced woman, however, may announce her engagement as soon as her divorce is final. She should not wear an engagement ring before the divorce is legal, Post says.

What size wedding? Intimate is best — in most cases, Post advises. But if you eloped or had a small wedding the first time, it's okay to go all out on the second wedding.

Often couples who want to include many friends settle for small ceremonies and then have large receptions, Jacobs said.

A white dress is fine. But Jacobs said most second-time brides choose off-white or colored dresses that are simpler than traditional bridal gowns. The bride should not wear a veil, since it symbolizes virginity, Post says.

If one or both of you have been married before, you probably have tableware and most other household items you need. So guests need not bring gifts to a second wedding.

In case your friends don't know this rule, it's nice to request "no gifts" on the corner of your invitations, Jacobs said. But close friends probably will give presents anyway, and of course, you should accept them.



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Pranksters . . .

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A "shivaree" is another wedding prank popular in small towns. When the newlyweds are off on their honeymoon, friends of the two "terrorize" the house — tearing the labels off all the canned goods, putting Saran Wrap over the toilet seat, and putting Rice Krispies in the bed.

At one shivaree, those involved waited until the couple got home from their honeymoon, grabbed the newlyweds, stripped them down to their underwear, tied them up and wheeled them down "Main Street" in wheel barrows.

Wait, there's more. Wedding pranks don't stop with shivarees. Newlyweds' cars also commonly fall victim to pranksters. Some of the more common pranks include:

— Writing "just married" with shaving cream on the windows;

— Stuffing the car with wadded-up newspapers;

— And setting the car up on cement blocks.

Some folks are more creative. People once attached a sign to a North and South Dakota-bound honeymoon car that read: "Hot Springs tonight, Deadwood tomorrow."

Kathy Kuta, a senior from Silver Creek, said people in her town sometimes put pepper in the car's air conditioner and plaster soggy cereal on the car.

Albrecht said someone played the "potato up the exhaust pipe" trick on her brother when he got married. The potato traps the exhaust in the car, and the engine dies, keeping the newlyweds from zipping off to their long-awaited honeymoon paradise destination.

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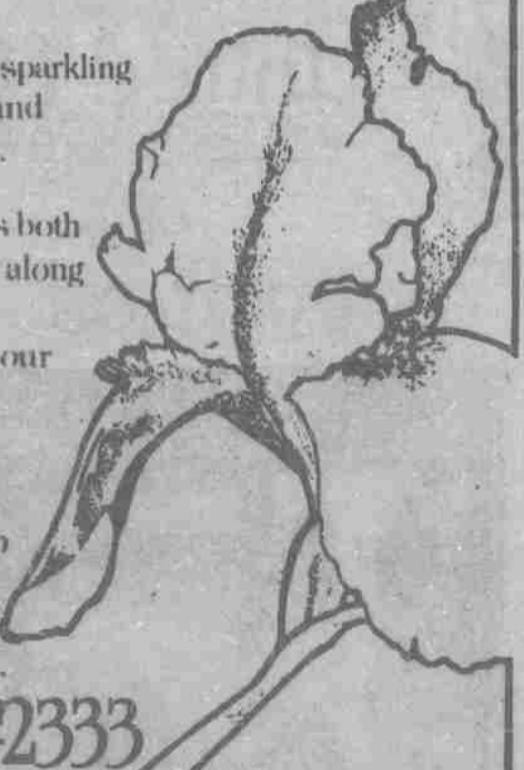
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