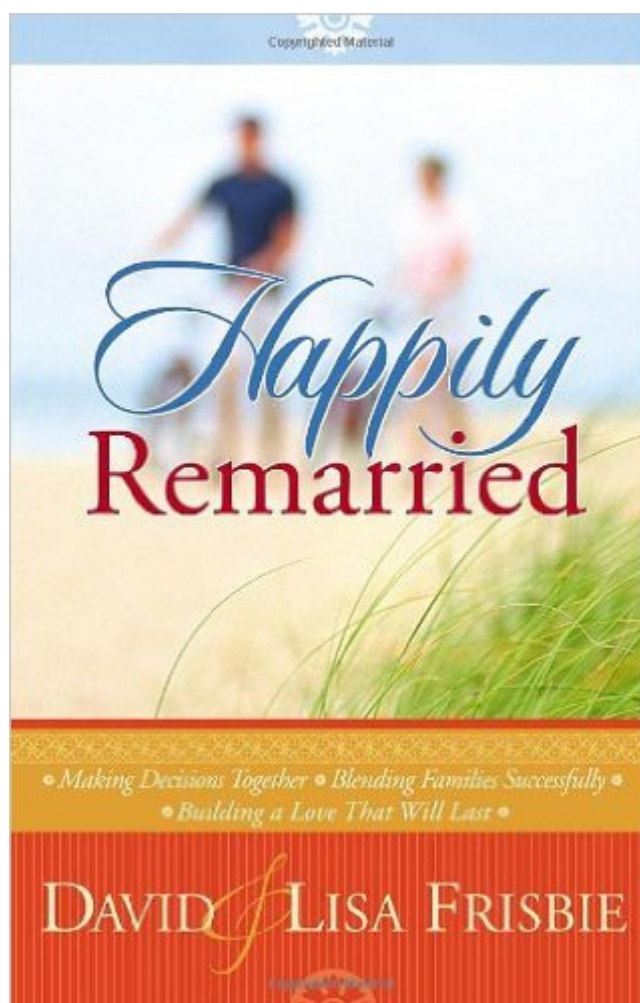


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# Happily Remarried: Making Decisions Together \* Blending Families Successfully \* Building A Love That Will Last



## Synopsis

Nearly 60 percent of remarriages end in divorce. What can people do to beat the odds? David and Lisa Frisbie share the fruits of more than 20 years of speaking, teaching, and counseling. Having talked to hundreds of couples, the authors use many real-life examples and speak with hope and humor about the challenges. They point to four key strategies to help bring long-term unity: forgive everyone, including yourself; regard remarriage as permanent and irreversible; use conflict to get better acquainted; form a spiritual connection centered on serving God. With further step-by-step marriage-saving advice about forming a new family unit and helpful discussion questions, *Happily Remarried* makes a great how-to recipe for a successful, happy remarriage.

## Book Information

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Harvest House Publishers (August 1, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0736915303

ISBN-13: 978-0736915304

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 5.6 x 0.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (23 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #948,973 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #149 in [Books > Parenting & Relationships > Family Relationships > Stepparenting & Blended Families](#) #2118 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Living > Family](#) #2518 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Living > Marriage](#)

## Customer Reviews

With nearly sixty percent of remarriages ending in divorce, it seems unlikely that any textual discussion on this tread-lightly topic could be deemed as positive. Yet authors David and Lisa Frisbie accomplish this unlikely task most successfully. Given that about 90 million people in the United States are now living in a stepfamily, divorce and remarriage are no longer "fringe" societal patterns. Divorce, even within the church, is a reality that must be reckoned with and faced head on. Surprisingly, those couples entering a second (or third, or fourth) marriage frequently exhibit some measure of extra-forgiveness than they did during their first marriages. The authors cite that with first marriages the high emotional component of physical attractiveness and romantic feelings often play an inordinate role in the formation of the relationship, whereas in the subsequent marriages

both partners appear to be more rationally based when deciding to remarry. The deeper attraction is rooted in similarity of political and religious views, life experiences, and compatible personality types. It is on this basis that the authors say a remarriage can thrive despite the high divorce statistics. Forgiveness of those who have hurt individuals in the past sets the new partners free of unwanted baggage often evidenced by anger, resentment and bitterness. Learning to forgive in the present, as couples adjust to differences in attitudes and values, also offers a sense of safety and shelter so necessary in a loving relationship. Further, embracing an attitude of personal forgiveness for past mistakes is essential. Accepting God's pardon completely allows each partner to look to the future with a solid hope instead of wallowing in regret over past errors.

I previewed this book as a potential text to use with step families in crisis. It is the third book on step families I have previewed and I must say, there's not much here. Filled with stories and anecdotes, the book is inherently readable and certainly does get a few good points across--but far too few to deal with the complexities of most step families. If your step family faces serious issues I recommend "Smart Step Family" by Ron Deal or "Step Coupling" by Susan Wisdom and Jennifer Green. You will find either of these books to be far more comprehensive and useful, although each one has its own strengths. The "Smart Step Family" is a book written from a strong Christian perspective and as such provides significant spiritual and biblical background for people of faith. "Step Coupling" approaches the step family more from a secular counseling context and therefore does not delve much into the moral or ethical aspects of the various issues facing step families. Indeed, when discussing a foundational issue like honesty or dishonesty, the "Step Coupling" book explicitly states that neither value is right and neither value is wrong. This was almost a deal-breaker for me. I suspect that even most non-religious people would struggle with the idea that all behavior is value neutral. Nevertheless, the book largely arrives at the same conclusions as its Christian counterpart--albeit from a different perspective. All in all, I think that any step family going through internal or external struggles would be well served to read both books. Both bring unique and significant insights into the challenges that step families face. The "Step Coupling" book is somewhat more earthy and easy to read, being filled with concrete examples from actual step families.

This up-beat, yet realistic guide to help people contemplating marriage again is a gold mine of practical information in a user-friendly format. The authors' four "First Principles" give marriage the opportunity to "thrive, not just survive." These can give hope to thousands, NO MATTER WHAT the

circumstances in their previous or current relationships, including religious beliefs. No rose-colored glasses mask the pain that many men, women and children experienced through the breakup of marriages, yet the stories are uplifting, not depressing--include "the setbacks and challenges, but also the successes and achievements" of many do-over couples. They feature four couples who remained married up to 54 years the second time around, ranging from a modest twosome who said, "We aren't perfect," to an internationally known politician and his wife. The authors "found the single most important thing...to guard and protect your second marriage is to deliberately focus it on serving God--but they also reach secular people as well. When BOTH partners commit themselves to keeping God first, positive things begin to happen in every other aspect of the marriage relationship." They address the gamut of emotions, including fear, anger, resentment, joy, love, while sharing their principles to: Take TIME to FOCUS on prayer, learn, serve, worship, rest and renew TOGETHER; Regard remarriage as PERMANENT and Irreversible; FORGIVE everyone, including YOURSELF; and (6 guidelines to) Use CONFLICT to get better ACQUAINTED. (my emphasis.) The seven chapters cover it all with advice and how to apply it. The workbook portion is very helpful as well.

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