

Building a Relationship with a New Partner

After Divorce

by

Roslyn Agnes Hanna

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Dr. Vance Peavy, Supervisor  
(Department of Psychological Foundations)

Dr. Rey Carr, Departmental Member  
(Department of Psychological Foundations)

Dr. Marcia Hills, Outside Member  
(School of Nursing)

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University of Victoria

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#### ABSTRACT

This study investigated, from a phenomenological perspective, formerly married individuals' experience of building a relationship with a new partner. Six participants revealed their experience of this process through an indepth interview. Participants reported five major areas where problems arose in the new relationship. These areas were: past relationships, commitment, marriage, parenting and rewards and costs of being in the relationship.

Participants were still sensitive and self-protecting when interacting with ex-spouses or when interacting with new partners in ways that reminded them of their ex-spouse. Participants were mistrustful of commitment as a guarantee for the relationship to continue. Commitment emerged as a concept that was built on trustworthy action rather than commitment evolving into trust. Marriage had very negative connotations for all participants. There was an interest in traditional marriage for specific advantages but participants in this study did not feel there were many psychological benefits to marriage. Parenting and stepparenting were issues for participants and basically revolved around being

uncomfortable with their role and wanting to withdraw. Participants in this study expended a great deal of energy on assessing the balance of the rewards and costs of being in the relation. Attention to this aspect of the relationship emerged from the separation and/or divorce where bargaining and dividing the spoils of the marriage is such a consuming and emotional ordeal. Very few participants were truly satisfied with the division of assets from the previous marriage.

The study concludes with suggestions for counsellors and for future research.

[REDACTED]

Dr. Vance Peavy, Supervisor (Department of Psychological Foundations)

[REDACTED]

Dr. Rey Carr, Departmental Member (Department of Psychological Foundations)

[REDACTED]

Dr. Marcia Hills, Outside Member (Department of Nursing)

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## CHAPTER ONE

### PURPOSE AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The impetus for this study arose from my experiences as a counsellor in an agency which provided counselling and support services for adults and children who were trying to cope with separation and divorce. At the time, I was co-leader of a group of three women and six men who wanted assistance in order to resolve issues related to separation. All the participants in this group expressed the devastating pain each of them was experiencing as a result of terminating their relationship. A common sentiment was an expression of hopelessness about the future and pessimism about ever getting into another serious relationship. I thought about the many friends I had who had been divorced and who had since remarried and wondered how many of them must have uttered the same despairing words. However, it did not seem to me that my friends or other people were giving up on committed relationships leading to marriage. If they had, then remarriage and even marriage would be a declining phenomenon. But this is not the case. Even though there was one divorce for every two marriages in British Columbia in 1988, the rate does not necessarily indicate a disillusionment with marriage since close to 30% of marriages in the same year involved at least one or both

partners who had been married or widowed previously. Giles-Sims and Crosbie-Burnett (1989) report that 75% of women remarry and the rate for men is even higher. Time between divorce and remarriage averages about three years.

The risk of divorce increases for subsequent marriages. The divorce rate for remarried couples is even higher than for first marriages (Byrd and Smith, 1988; Ellis, 1984). Some researchers attribute the higher divorce rate to incomplete mourning of the first marriage (Visher, 1982) and/or maladjustment to the second marriage (Garfield, 1982; Isaacs, 1982). Post divorce adjustment and blended family adjustment are two critical issues that affect the future of the remarried couple.

According to Shaver, Hazan and Bradshaw (1988) the potential for success in first marriages is influenced by factors in the bonding period or courtship period before marriage. Rodgers and Conrad (1986) report this period is characterized by increased intimacy, interdependence and commitment. Israelstam (1989) defines intimacy as a couple's ability to sustain sufficient closeness to satisfy caregiving needs and sufficient distance to satisfy each other's need for personal growth. Singh and Khullar (1989) broadly define commitment as a pledge to continue involvement. Interdependence is defined by Webster (1968) as mutual dependence.

The prominent areas of marriage and family life research in the last decade have been in the areas of family

violence, stepparenting, sex roles, divorce, remarriage and marital quality. These are all a part of the many changes occurring in society. Amongst these, the concept of married life has changed from the traditional notion of a single, lifetime spouse to a marriage-divorce-remarriage sequence. One of the consequences is that remarriage has become a familiar experience. But, as noted previously, the success of remarried couples is even less secure than for first marriages. A couple's interactions before remarriage might be the source of success/failure factors in the subsequent marriages as well as first marriages. However, while courtship before first marriages has been studied, little is known about this period of committing to another relationship for remarriage.

Research related to this issue will be reviewed in the next section. It will be noted that hermeneutics and phenomenology have not been the favoured methodology in researching family life despite their suitability for understanding the lived experience. For these reasons I decided to conduct a study which would focus directly on how formerly married individuals experience building a relationship with a new partner after divorce.

My basic research question is, what is the meaning of the lived experience of building a relationship with a new partner after divorce? The study will explore the obvious issues, relations with the ex-spouse, children, and extended

families but from a subjective perspective.

The main purpose of this study is to explicate or unfold the particular elements of the experience of building a new relationship from the view of formerly married individuals to discover the strains and stresses on the relationship which may contribute to disintegration. A secondary purpose is to educate couples and counsellors about the nature of the most significant issues with which these couples are dealing to facilitate preparation and intervention for potential crises in the relationship.

Qualitative research of this nature will provide a clearer understanding of the perceptions of couples forming new family commitments. Family and Marriage Counsellors tend to look upon marital history from a marriage-divorce-remarriage perspective ignoring the bonding process (Giles-Sims and Crosbie-Burnett, 1989). This study will make a potential contribution to a broader understanding of the relevant issues for individuals in this phase of their lives and will reveal vital aspects of developing new relationships that need further research.

Such findings will provide information about the personal and interpersonal interactions of formerly married individuals that build or weaken healthy relationships . This knowledge is paramount before counselling intervention strategies can be designed to emancipate those whose lives are locked into oppressive structures. Furthermore, knowledge of the process of forming new relationships for

the formerly married is fundamental to understanding behavioral norms which will help to stabilize developing relationships and provide the kinds of information for couples and families to control their own futures. These detailed inventories of the couples reality may reveal forces that will direct the future course of the remarried family or of the institution of marriage.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Introduction

A search of the literature encompassed examining research on the formation of relationships for remarriage and theory and clinical work related to this. Studies on the process couples experience leading to commitment for remarriage were limited to survey reports. Direct research was not discovered. Therefore, this review relies heavily on research from forming relationships in first marriages; referred to in the literature as courtship. Although, this literature may not shed much light directly on divorced individuals, combined with the abundant information from demographic survey studies, the beginnings of a profile of the divorced individual forming a new relationship emerges.

This review begins with an examination of attachment theory and styles of attachment which are laid in early childhood and which develop according to the developmental life cycle of the individual and the circumstances of personal life. The experiences in early life and the circumstances of personal development largely determine the type of mate an individual will choose for marriage. The next section is mate selection which is a highly complex process for marriage and remarriage. Finally, there is a brief summary to consolidate the information presented.

### Developmental Aspects

Attachment patterns are developed in early childhood and span the life time. These patterns determine the course of interpersonal relationships later in life (Israelstam, 1989). Patterns of intimacy, interdependence and commitment are founded in childhood relationships with significant others. Ainsworth's theory of styles of attachment (1978) is based on observations of child/parent interactions. People were found to experience attachment in three major styles:

1. Secure: the individual finds it relatively easy to be close and is not concerned with abandonment;
2. Anxious/ambivalent: the individual is reluctant to be close, worries that the partner will leave; and
3. Avoidant: the individual is uncomfortable being close, finds it difficult to trust others and gets nervous when anyone gets too close.

Israelstam (1989) claims that individuals create internal representations of their external system which means that individuals develop fairly fixed belief systems about themselves and others in relationships based on their significant experiences with significant others. Beliefs are not only cognitive in this paradigm they are affective, behavioral and physiological all interconnected and interdependent. The internal belief system develops over a life time but is most intense in childhood.

Shaver and Hazen (1987) conclude,

A troubled attachment history can interfere with communication, problem-solving, sexual relations, and mutual confiding and care-giving. (p.121)

Although early childhood experience has a profound effect on interpersonal development (Bowlby, 1979) a person is not destined to live with unfulfilling relationships for life. Shaver and Hazan reported that individuals who experienced severely disturbed child/parent relations during childhood can establish secure relationships with their children and spouse by transforming the attachment-style through a therapeutic relationship.

A therapeutic relationship does not need to involve a counsellor but incorporates the same qualities of a counsellor/client relationship. It is based on shared respect, empathy, challenge and genuineness. A therapeutic relationship is a helping relationship and varies according to the needs of the individuals (Egan,1986).

Although Shaver and Hazan did not examine divorce as it relates to attachment-style, they did find that less secure individuals experienced chronic loneliness either in or out of relationships and less satisfaction with their mates. These negative experiences increase the risk of divorce. Furthermore, Shaver and Hazan related loneliness to low self-esteem and this has a negative effect on mate selection as will be discussed later.

Goldberg (1982) holds a similar point of view regarding

relationships. We unconsciously choose a mate who will replace a parent or significant other and help us act out unresolved childhood issues. Initially we may recognize the familiar trait and resist feeling attracted to the individual. Furthermore, he claims that the personality characteristics that were most attractive initially become most irritating eventually. According to Goldberg (1982) the individual is destined to repeat the same process in subsequent relationships until the issues from childhood are resolved or until the individual is more aware of their role in creating the dissatisfaction in the relationship.

Each individual carries with them the belief systems, unfinished childhood issues, a multitude of needs and expectations into a relationship. It would be an oversimplification to assume that mate selection occurs according to the fit of all these intrapsychic and interpersonal variables. There are also nonpsychological variables such as timing, economics, proximity, similarity that influence the selection of a marriage partner (Goldberg,1982).

Courting behavior begins in adolescence and may be the time when individuals start to come to terms with their childhood issues through new relationships. Adolescence is seen as a developmental phase in which the individual matures physiologically, psychologically and socially, moving from experimentation with relationships with the opposite sex and occasionally with the same sex to forming

and investing in an exclusive, permanent, coital relationship in marriage. (Leonard, 1980; Huntington, 1982). Leonard (1980) views each relationship as practice, the acquisition of interpersonal skills. With each new relationship comes the concern of where it will lead and with getting married or seeking to form a new improved attachment. For a large portion of the population marriage does not provide them with the form of attachment they desire or a sense of well-being so that some choose to divorce.

Kvanli (1987) found that divorce was a time of considerable self exploration and maturation. Personal change may show up as a change in behavior. Participants in Kvanli's (1987) study reflected on the sense of maturity with which they chose to enter another committed relationship. In a survey of literature Dreman, Orr, and Aldor (1989) report that mothers who are forced to assume exclusive responsibility for their families after divorce, experience a heightened sense of competence that they did not experience in marriage. Using Gilligan's (1982) ethic of care theory, Byrd (1988) showed that women advanced in levels of care and responsibility from their decision to marry the first time to their decision to remarry. Roberts and Price (1986) found that after divorce most people reported that their expectations for a relationship had changed. They were more willing to work on better

communication and improved understanding between themselves and their spouse. Many were willing to learn new role patterns and assume more responsibility for the relationship.

### Process of Mate Selection

Length of the period of developing a primary relationship is a crucial component of mate selection since its primary purpose is getting to know the potential mate. If the friendship process is short-circuited, for example by early marriage, it is unlikely that the couple will exchange the information necessary to reveal basic similarities and differences (Byrne and Murnen, 1985). Murstein (1970) found success of developing a lasting relationship in young never-married adults was highly related to similarities (homogamy) between individuals in physical attractiveness, values, sex drive and neuroticism. Similar values, beliefs and personality disposition evoke positive feelings, whereas, dissimilarity evokes dissatisfaction and conflict. People like each other to the extent that they evoke positive feelings in each other (Byrne and Murnen, 1985). The amount of caring and support experienced within one's relationship determines the quality of that relationship (James and Johnson, 1987). The greater the differences between two people the more likely they are to engage in conflict (Dean and Gurak, 1978).

There tends to be less homogamy in remarriages (Dean

and Gurak, 1978). This may be due to the decreased availability of appropriate mates or the selection criteria of individuals. People who are attracted to individuals very unlike themselves will likely enter unstable marriages. Some people may be prone to enter unstable marriages so that neither the first nor the second is a learning experience (Dean, Gilligan, Gurak and Douglas, 1978). Dean and Gurak (1978) found that twice-wed women experience low homogamy in both the first and second marriage. This may be due to their particular pattern of mate selection, conception of marriage and perhaps the presence of children.

Mate selection is influenced by exchanges of intrinsic and extrinsic gratifications (Scanzoni et al, 1989). What each partner can potentially offer a relationship, such as, education, income, attractiveness, quality of care and so on, affects the person's position in the market for a mate. For example, divorced women with high incomes were found to delay marriage (Norton and Glick, 1976 cited in Roberts and Price 1986). They have more opportunity to be selective in a smaller more heterogenous pool of potential mates. Women with more formal education tend to marry men closer to their own age (Dean and Gurak 1978). Finally the divorced tend to marry the divorced which may have to do with the availability of potential partners. Having previous experience with marriage may or may not be viewed as an asset.

As was mentioned in the previous section, mate selection is affected by self-esteem. Persons with low self-esteem were less selective in their interpersonal choices and may settle for persons low in marital assets (Daniel, 1985) and high in liabilities. Subsequently they would experience less satisfaction with their fiancé (Murstein, 1970). In contrast, high self-esteem is related to the likelihood of remarriage within three to four years following separation (Spanier and Furstenberg, 1982). High self-acceptance increases the likelihood of being more selective, thereby having more acceptance of the potential partner, seeing him or her as more similar and thus continuing the relationship.

Couples usually form committed relationships because of the intimate and loving feelings that have developed between them but they can be propelled to marriage by non-intimate factors (Cate, 1979). Single mothers may be looking for dads for their children and single dads may be looking for moms for theirs. Financial and emotional strain of trying to run a family alone as well as expectations of family and friends and social values play a role in the process of developing a relationship with a new partner. The extent of this outside influence for formerly married couples is unknown.

Two studies on courtship in first marriages, had couples recall and graph changes in their commitment to marriage to show the development of bonding. Cate, Huston and Nesselroade (1986) investigated interpersonal and psychological processes and found that rapid progression to

commitment and marriage was associated with relatively little conflict in the relationship and involved older couples. A slow, rocky movement to commitment was related to more conflict, ambivalence about the relationship and was more typical of younger couples. Surra (1985) found an increase in interdependence in activities with an increase in commitment to marriage. James and Johnson (1987) in a review of literature on social interdependence in marital satisfaction in second marriages found that cooperation has a powerful impact on relationships. They concluded:

Cooperation, compared with competitive and individualistic experiences, has been found to promote more positive interpersonal relationships, greater social support, higher self-esteem, more accurate communication, higher levels of trust, more prosocial behavior, more accurate perspective taking, and greater achievement and success. (p.288).

Incomplete mourning of the ex-spouse interferes with commitment to a new partner and may be subconscious (Hunt,1966). A substantial number of individuals remain attached to their ex-spouse but according to Kitson (1982) this may be distorted by the additional burdens of single life which may induce a strong desire for the return of the old set-up rather than for the ex-spouse. There is a tendency for attachment to the ex-spouse to be viewed as pathological rather than positive and genuine caring.

### Summary of the Literature Review

Attachment styles are established in early childhood in relationships with significant care-givers. Adults tend to recreate the emotional experience of their family of origin in their adult relationships. Coming to terms with unresolved childhood issues can be a gradual maturing process extending through adolescence into adulthood. People tend to engage in activities for personal growth during times of extreme stress. Such a time is the termination of a marriage and some people claim to have experienced a positive change in themselves before they enter a subsequent relationship. Furthermore, the new relationship can support continued healing and considerable personal development.

The most important element in maintaining a relationship is liking each other which is directly related to how well people know each other, how much time they have spent together and how well they like themselves.

Formerly married individuals may not have the opportunity to select a partner similar to themselves, may be preoccupied with financial strain, overwhelmed by workload or unable to let go of the ex-spouse emotionally, and feel burdened by the social values and needs of others.

The purpose of this study is to examine the particular elements of the experience of developing a subsequent relationship after divorce through the personal accounts of

people currently experiencing this process.

## CHAPTER TWO

### METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach used in this research has been adapted from Colazzi (1978) and is broadly termed, phenomenological. When developing the research approach several methodological decisions were made. The first of these concerned the basic form in which the data would be collected. Von Eckartsberg has written extensively about phenomenological methods. He does not distinguish whether the original data is a participants written protocol or transcriptions from a personal interview (von Eckartsberg 1972). Recently, van Manen (1990) has reported that it is easier for participants to talk than to write about an experience. Consequently, all initial data in this study was obtained through a personal interview.

Questions which were used to guide the research of developing new relationships after divorce inquire about the essence of the phenomenon. Guiding questions form part of the method used in this research as recommended by von Eckartsberg (1986).

Phenomenological reduction or bracketing one's assumptions about the matter being studied is advocated by von Eckartsberg (1986) and has been followed in this study. This enables the researcher to be more open and present to all the meanings revealed by the participants.

Making sense of the data is developed through reflecting on themes that emerge from the transcriptions.

Themes capture some aspect of the lived experience of the phenomenon being studied. Van Manen uses a metaphor to describe the meaning of a theme, "they are knots in the webs of our experiences... stars that make up the universes of meaning we live through. By the light of these themes we can navigate and explore such universes" (p.90).

Once the themes have been identified by the researcher in the interview transcriptions, they may then be referred to in follow-up interviews with participants. This becomes a collaborative attempt to interpret the significance of the preliminary themes (Van Manen 1990; Colazzi 1978). In this study participants were asked to read summary accounts of their previous interview as a starting point to further sharing about the nature of being in courtship. These themes form the structure of the phenomenological text.

### Procedure

The analytic procedure used in this study includes the following steps:

1. The experience of building a new relationship after divorce as described by the participants was recorded on audio-tape. This constituted the material for the subsequent interpretation of meaning (Kvale, 1983).
2. Analysis involved extracting phrases or sentences pertinent to the essence of the phenomena and categorizing them by meaning. This was done by

listening to the tapes, transcribing them and listing statements that form themes.

3. A summary of the description of each participant was written using their own words whenever possible and carefully following their own meaning. Participants were presented with the summary to examine and to make additional statements to clarify, correct or expand the meaning the experience has for them.
4. Common themes in an individual's experience and across participants was noted.
5. Consolidation of themes forms the final stage of the analysis. These themes emerge from the content of the descriptions; they are not imposed from the literature (Colazzi 1978) but involve the research questions.
6. A second search of the research literature focusses on the additional issues identified in this study and they are used to expand understanding of the findings.

## PARTICIPANTS

### Criteria Used to Select Participants

Individuals in the process of forming a committed relationship were invited by word of mouth or through acquaintances to participate in the study. Two men and four women were selected based on the following criteria:

1. The individual lives separately from their previous marital spouse.
2. The individual is presently in the process of forming a

committed relationship which is evident by their cohabitation. Kvanli (1987) Blanc (1987) Watson (1983) claim that marriage is unlikely unless a couple has been cohabiting.

3. There are children of one partner or the other living with the participant as the presence of children is most unlike first marriages.

### Participant's Personal Information

Personal information such as age, length of previous marriage, number of children, length of new relationship and employment status are described, however real identities are protected. For example, I do not divulge where the study took place, names, how I came to know the participants or any distinguishing personal characteristics.

The interviews began with a period of establishing rapport and comfort between myself and the participant and absolute assurance of confidentiality. Focussing questions were used to initiate an in-depth discussion of their experience and to help them reflect. The interview involved empathic responding, probing, reflection and rephrasing, and clarifying concerns.

## PILOT STUDY

I conducted a pilot study with a friend who is in the midst of developing a new relationship after divorce to clarify my assumptions about this phenomenon for this study.

The interview took place in her home and was audio-taped. We spent the first few minutes just getting comfortable with each other and reviewing the purpose of the study. The interview lasted just over an hour. Analysis of the information involved listening to the audio-tape three times, transcribing text and organizing areas with similar meaning that determined themes. The results of this interview confirmed some of my assumptions about the study mentioned in the following section.

The meaning the new relationship held for her was as an experience of growing up and finding herself, not just falling in love with another but also with herself. An unforeseen theme that emerged from this study was the notion that getting married was a sure way to break up the relationship. For example, when I inquired if she was planning to marry, she replied, "This union is too special to be called marriage."

## ASSUMPTIONS

In some cases, phenomenological inquiry requires that personal presuppositions about the phenomenon be made known at the onset. As a counsellor I believe that people are

very capable of describing their personal experiences. Very articulate individuals can provide in-depth accounts of their daily lives building extensive understanding of their personal experience. Interviewing individuals directly involved in developing a new relationship for remarriage is a valuable tool for understanding this phenomenon. What may interfere with the research is that I believe that second relationships are more complicated and difficult to describe, this I need to bracket.

Based on my own experience with relationships and that of my friends and my familiarity with the literature, my assumptions about building a new relationship for remarriage are similar to what I have presented in the review of the literature: mainly that individuals tend to recreate the familiar emotional environment of their childhood and these learned attitudes and beliefs determine their perceptions and behaviors in interpersonal relationships. In order to create a different relationship one must step out of the familiar, and risk the unknown, to restructure the beliefs and attitudes. Although the participants will not put it in these words, they will say that one of their main aims in the new relationship will be to do it differently, not to repeat their past mistakes and they will have doubts about their ability to do this. Most participants will have examined their marriage over and over looking for the source of their break-up and perhaps their role in it.

For some of the participants in this study, their new

relationship will be described as healing in that it allows them to grow in the same way that a therapeutic relationship may be healing (Rogers, 1967). For this reason they will feel better able to communicate their needs and solve problems relating to their relationship and, therefore, feel better about themselves.

Based on the pilot study and my own experience I think that participants will have very rigid ideas about the type of person their ex-spouse is now, this may be part of rationalizing and accepting the separation or divorce. They will also express sadness, compassion and a desire for friendship with their ex-spouse, even though friendship may not be possible at this time.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

This research is limited by time, not only in terms of time spent with the participants as they live through the process of forming a new relationship but also in terms of historical time. Results are valid only for the participants of the study. However, the detailed experience provided by the participants will begin to establish an inventory of interactions, concerns and expectations to aid counsellors and other couples who need information on normative behaviors.

## CHAPTER THREE

## SUMMARY OF STATEMENTS BY PARTICIPANTS

To understand motives, feelings, and attitudes and to reveal the commonalities that may exist between individuals, this chapter will present a summary of the interview data collected from each of the participants. The presentation is not chronological, but organized into thematic topics which emerged from the interviews. Each participant reviewed the summary and collaborated with the researcher in the interpretation.

At the beginning of each summary I briefly describe my impression of the participant.

## SUMMARY OF STATEMENT BY JANE

Jane is a professional woman in her early forties who has been on her own for close to a decade. She is attractive warm and charismatic. She and Ben met just over a year ago and combined households recently. Their cohabitation includes Jane's daughter Liz who is attending her last year of high school. Jane's son married this summer and Ben's eleven and fifteen year old boys live with his ex-wife in another province.

In the early years after her separation, Jane was determined to parent her two young children without the interference of anyone else except occasionally their father. She felt it was too much of a hassle to negotiate different points of view on parenting. Even with her ex-

husband "I felt I had to train him to be a parent...so I set up my life to attend to parental responsibilities, to avoid spousal responsibilities and to have fun." For nine years she dabbled in relationships with men who would make few demands on her. She describes it as a time of learning communication skills, how to cope with and avoid manipulative, game playing relationships and a time of learning to feel more confident.

A few months before Jane met Ben, she had terminated a two year relationship with Tom. The union had been unsatisfactory for some time. A number of factors conspired to support Jane to open herself up to a more fulfilling kind of relationship. These included her daughter's growing maturity and independence, a personal growth workshop, a number of books, and an overwhelming feeling of being ready. Being ready for Jane was really coming to terms with her parsimonious nature. She had long ago recognized her critical nature and how powerful it was in creating just what she did not want. She meant to put into practice a completely different philosophy in her life..."Generosity of Spirit."

This period in Jane's life marks a fairly major change in attitude, expectations and intentions regarding relationships. She "felt really ready for a fully emotional relationship". In looking back on the relationship with Tom she feels "it was a kind of preparation for the kind of relationship I wanted."

The relationship with Ben progressed very quickly from casual dating to spending weekends together. Within the first four months they had decided they would live together as soon as Jane's daughter, Liz completed high school which would be in less than a year. However, these practical plans were suddenly altered when the couple purchased a house which meant joining households several months earlier than anticipated.

The pace of these major changes threw Jane into a panic. She became aware of old repressed fears around her marriage. A feeling of entrapment enveloped her. The house was not as nice as the one she had envisioned herself buying, it was sickeningly like the one she had lived in when she was married, she was unsure of how to protect her money which made up the down payment, she worried about Liz, and in her terror she backed away from signing the realty papers. "I wanted to live with Ben but not in that house at that time. I had so many emotions, I was so muddled. Ben just hung in there with me. His decision was clear and firm and from the heart. He didn't push me." They spent many hours together sharing their concerns. Through Bens careful and gentle support Jane was able to resolve her confusion and panic.

Jane realized she "didn't have to live in a tacky house with a tacky man," that he was a different person than her first husband and brought qualities to the relationship that

her ex-husband had lacked. Ben had carpentry skills and energy to put into improvements, he had good taste in decorating and he offered long needed support with Jane's teenage daughter.

After Ben and Jane had moved in together a particular incident prompted Jane to have jealous feelings. She wondered with considerable distaste whether she felt more possessive, insecure, dependent, or all of those as a result of the marriage-like set-up. She realized she needed to understand and clarify her expectations of Ben in situations that were potentially jealousy provoking. In an effort to gain empathy from Ben she had asked him to imagine himself in her position. From there they were able to express their own vulnerability around issues of jealousy. Jane's distress had reminded him of his ex-wife's possessive and overly jealous nature. Ben's behavior had reminded Jane of her ex-husband's flirtatious behavior with other women. Both were triggered by old painful memories.

Jane's greatest concern in this relationship is "letting go of the concerns." She wants to be positive and easy going. However she tends to worry about everything and fantasizes the worst. Her worrisome nature interferes with being intimate because although she wants an open and expressive relationship she has a difficult time maintaining her boundaries. Once she became aware of Ben's vulnerability, his feelings of inadequacy around career issues and his children they became a source of concern for

her. She felt responsible in the same way that she felt responsible for her ex-husband's inadequacies in her first marriage. For Jane worries are resolved through hard work, ambition and high powered energy. However, Ben tends to be more laid back by nature. Although criticism would have been Jane's usual reaction she realized that secretly she admired his easy going ways and wanted to be more like him. She also knew that her critical style was destructive to herself and the relationship and that she did not need to take on his personal problems. "I need to let him sort out his own financial issues."

Attractiveness was not so important to Jane, "I was more attracted to his warmth than his looks at first...the biggest initial attraction was that he was very social". He met all of Jane's friends and was very comfortable and made others feel at ease. He had gone through his own counseling and had a sense of awareness and inner peace that Jane found very attractive. "When I'm coming unstrung he's calm and says, well come and tell me about it." He's sensitive, playful, fun, smart and has a curiosity about life that is very exciting.

Regarding Ben's children, Jane has strong emotional feelings about his lack of physical involvement. She identifies with Ben's ex-wife and admits this may be due to her own experience as a single mother.

Access to his children has been extremely difficult

for Ben since his separation. He is eager to have his sons visit and this is a concern for Jane. When she and "Ben talked about what our worst attributes were, he said his was handling money and I said mine was handling other people's kids". The worst scenario for Jane is to be living alone quietly with Ben after Liz has moved out and then have his two sons show up on the doorstep.

Ben is good to Jane's teenage daughter and Jane can imagine reciprocating with Ben's children. She believes that in the long run it is important to be open and inclusive to the extent that they spend holidays together but she is not interested in having them move in permanently. She values the possibility of extended family gatherings with grand children from both Ben's and her own children.

Jane's teenage daughter, Liz, and Ben are making adjustments necessary to live together comfortably. Liz prefers to live with Ben more than without him but finds it strange and, as yet, not completely comfortable. Jane sees the situation as generally good for Liz. Jane recognizes that she needs to let them work things out and not feel obliged to intervene but she finds she feels torn between them when there is conflict and upset with Ben when he withdraws from a conflict with Liz.

The experience of bonding with Ben was enhanced by a number of shared experiences, the most powerful being their very pleasurable sexual relationship, his ability to express love so generously and be affectionate, their shared social

and physical activities, shared humor and the sense of fun being together.

The thought of getting married literally takes "my breath away...part of it is pleasurable excitement and part is heavy duty fear because it is so hard to get out of legally...if I can live with him and make it work than that is good enough for me. Marriage has such negative connotations to me."

It was very difficult for Jane to define what commitment meant to her. She could only equate it with the feeling of responsibility she felt for her children, a responsibility she was tired of. She thought that commitment to Ben and to their relationship "is more pleasurable, the responsibility is to be cognizant that he is important in my life so that I'll make decisions that benefit the relationship." Commitment is a behavior, "I don't know how to define it as much as I know how to do it."

Jane was unsure of what the relationship means in her life. It "feels lighter, more playful, life is more fun, I have someone to play with, I look forward with anticipation to the neat things we will do together, that's a big shift, to have someone to share my life with. Life isn't so serious." She still plans to continue with activities that may not interest Ben and believes they can work this out.

The themes that run through Jane's statement surround her negative experiences in her first marriage and

difficulty with stepparenting roles.

The themes around her first marriage begin with the recognition and desire to change her critical style of relating which seems to arise from fantasies of negative outcomes. She is aware of the destructive force of this behavior and its insidious presence in the relationship with her new partner, but she seems to be able to maintain a more positive outlook.

Entrapment and responsibility come up as major negative experiences of her past marriage. This was triggered by getting into a more permanent relationship represented by the shared purchase of a house.

Paralleling entrapment is Jane's fear of being dependent, possessive and insecure which arose after she and Ben had moved in together. These were also negative self-images that she recalls from her first marriage.

Fear of marriage was a theme that seems to be connected to the past experiences described previously. Fear of entrapment in marriage was a concern because marriage is so difficult to get out of legally.

Difficulties between Jane's new partner, Ben, and Jane's teenage daughter, Liz, created a feeling of being torn between them. She realized that Ben and Liz should sort out the conflicts between them and she was upset when Ben withdrew from confrontations with Liz. She felt unsupported by this behavior. Finally Jane is unwilling to take on the role of stepparent.

## SUMMARY STATEMENT BY HARRY

Harry has been involved in body massage for over a decade. He participates in training workshops regularly and has become highly regarded in his field. As well as his practice Harry teaches martial arts and operates a small business with his son. He and Sally have been living together for a year. Sally has a daughter who is ten and resides with them. Harry has an older son who is on his own.

When Harry met Sally his life was in a major transition. He had just finished a series of training courses related to his work and was starting another business which was expanding rapidly; his second marriage had recently been terminated and he was in the process of ending a brief relationship.

Harry had not spent much time on his own between relationships. For the sake of his new relationship with Sally, he believed it was important to take time to, "put the ghosts to rest. It's really hard on both parties to put up with the old shit, probably end up doing it anyway but at least you get rid of the conscious stuff."

To subjugate himself in the relationship was for Harry a familiar pattern he learned from his mother. "At one point I thought if I were capable, I would be defying my mother." By playing a "martyr" he could maintain a good image of himself. "I wanted to look good." The image he had of himself and his wife was of the "wild woman, passive man". This image had a strong influence on what Harry did.

Harry took on a number of roles as a by product of his "martyr" image that in time he deeply resented.

One of these resented roles was, "support[ing] my partner financially without an equal trade off. She retrained for 5 years and the first time she made money was the week after we split up." However the worst scarring surrounds her verbal abuse and physical threats. He did not clearly declare his personal boundaries concerning his physical and emotional space and allowed himself to be emotionally violated. All his martial arts training was neutralized by the role of martyr. "I still have some anger...directed at myself...for staying in an abusive relationship for longer than I should have. The scarring is deep." This lack of clarity of personal boundaries shows up in other areas of Harry's relationship with his ex-wife and new partner and in his sense of personal direction.

Harry's main concern in this relationship is his personal development, "staying an equal in the relationship, remembering who I am and what I want to do. If I can maintain that, then I can maintain the relationship, otherwise I am heavily into the external mirror and trying to do what Sally wants me to do. It just does not work. I'm sucky and clingy, I'm not strong."

Harry needs to be aware of his own needs in the relationship. What works for him is to examine each situation for what it is. This reduces the emotional charge

so that he is able to respond creatively rather than react defensively and thereby feel empowered rather than powerless. "Look at results...do I like it or not, what do I want to do about it...There are only results and an option to look at them. It takes the power out of it."

Harry is aware of the difficulty he has in being clear about who and what is triggering disturbing emotional reactions. Some situations stimulate guilt and dread for Harry even though they are neutral to Sally. For example, hugging some women friends after an evening out together was perfectly normal to Sally but Harry felt guilty for hugging another woman and in dread of the violent reaction he usually got from his ex-wife.

It's still very easy for Sally to inadvertently push Harry's buttons although less so as he becomes more confident. He is still surprised at the power of some of the past issues. The intensity is the same as if time stood still. Sometimes it's just a word like "stupid" which goes back to extremely negative encounters with his second wife and even back to his mother and the role of helpless boy she expected him to play.

After two years with Sally these triggers are less sensitive to going off; they are losing their power. Harry is taking small calculated steps in his personal development and in his relationship with Sally. For him these are risks, but they are calculated and controlled. One of Harry's needs is to feel that he has some control.

One of the ways Harry has achieved control over his life is through commitments. Shortly after Sally and Harry began dating, they made short term commitments to each other. At first these involved meeting for dinner and spending certain evenings together. At the end of the commitment date they would negotiate the terms for another commitment which gradually included more serious matters, the biggest one being fidelity.

The short term commitments seem to have had a powerful effect on Harry's life. For the first time he is making a promise that he knows he is able to keep. He is able to live true to his word. "My experience is that there is no such thing as a long term guarantee, I don't believe that exists, so what I'm looking for is how long can I guarantee for, I'd prefer not to be a liar, "forever" would be a lie, because I have some very good evidence that says I won't." Harry has been married twice.

At the end of the commitment period Harry and Sally negotiate the terms for the next commitment period. For example, "how you are going to be in the relationship, what is acceptable, what works?" They set limits rather than goals, "who will do cooking, cleaning and that kind of thing."

Their commitment periods have extended from a week to three months and the longest presently in effect is a ten month period. Harry admits to having trouble with this

longer period. "I perform better under pressure. About half way through this ten month commitment, I got very complacent and had to be called back, I don't want the complacency, let's keep a little excitement, god maybe she won't commit in June. We're planning something for December....but maybe. It makes me hear her, whereas, if it was forever, yah you're upset and you'll probably be upset tomorrow. It clears it, cleans things up."

The "clearing" or "cleaning" Harry refers to is best described as attending to the details of the relationship and each others needs. For example, Harry and Sally delve into situations that have been concerns for one or the other and reveal their feelings and thoughts to each other. This is also what Harry calls processing and fits with their shared definition of commitment which includes' "be[ing] present for and support[ing] each other, sexual fidelity and learn about each other's lives." Until very recently Harry had an aversion to being in the process. "If there is something going on we can go through the process of understanding it or we can just change it, I just want the results and tell me in 5 minutes or less...In December I found myself being content to go through the process. It may be that what ends the relationship is the end of the process, hey I've got you all figured out." It would also indicate the end of commitment as defined previously.

Harry needed to be very clear about fidelity with Sally and they spent time defining what that meant. "For me there

was a lot of confusion because of my last relationship about what qualified as sexual fidelity. I would probably have stepped over the bounds by being here with you" (being with the researcher). "To be friendly with another woman was wrong, so it has taken me a long time to get clear that I can have female friends."

Defining fidelity was very exciting for Harry, it is something he knows he can live with "rather than having a great blur, a rule that is not clear". This lack of clarity of what constituted fidelity meant that his wife never quite approved of his behavior around other women. Because of this he "felt guarded constantly and had phenomenal levels of guilt and anger."

Harry refers to his ex-wife's boundaries as very confining even though they were unclear, a blur. In contrast Harry and Sally have specifically defined the behaviors that constitute fidelity and Harry feels unconfined and free to have friendships with other women. Around Sally he is able to be open rather than guarded and defensive. He is free from the anxiety of guilt and anger. This is evident in his ability to ask for what he wants.

Harry has discovered an even greater source of security in the written contract. "We wrote contracts and signed them." Even though Sally was saying the same things that she wrote, Harry found it easier to believe when it was on paper.

Sally has asked Harry to support her while she goes back to school, Harry considers a written contract outlining the pay back period, whether they are in or out of relationship. He is able to discuss what it is he will get out of this kind of arrangement rather than recoil defensively in recollection of the years he supported his ex-wife, or perhaps worse, repeat the same behaviors, that is, subjugate himself and agree to something he is ambiguous about.

Defining commitment has revealed to Harry that his past relationships lacked commitment. He explains "when you get into these things 'forever', it's like getting into Astronomy, the mind doesn't grasp the numbers, there's a finite limit that the mind can grasp. 'Forever', I couldn't grasp, so I was holding out because I couldn't grasp the openendedness of it, not specific enough, hard to commit to a fantasy". Harry was resentful of the lie of being "committed forever". "I'd find ways to damage the relationship."

Harry's lack of true commitment in his married life parallels his lack of personal boundaries and perhaps his sense of purpose in life at that time. As these areas of Harry's life become more tightly defined, more committed, his life also becomes more exciting.

Harry is exploring. He is "playing with [his] maleness, before I would look for a woman, bond with her and let her take care of me, now I'm only willing to bond with a

male, it's very exciting." Harry saw a counsellor recently and chose to work with a man. He is actively setting up support outside the relationship he has with Sally especially with other men.

Harry has also started to take more control over his work and holiday schedule. Rather than let a slump period allow him to feel down and worried he now will schedule a holiday. He can anticipate leaving his clients at a time when they are less needy without feeling panicky about his business.

For Harry the purpose of his life now is to pursue his personal development, "learning more about myself is very important to me and learning more about Sally. I feel I'm starting at a minus quantity in that department, and that's what really makes the relationship work." Sally is the kind of woman "who is not letting me be less than I am." She will not neglect things that need attention, nor will she let Harry be ineffective or unclear in his communication. Harry refers to her as "you can't hide from me Sally." Sally is a big factor behind Harry's movement towards the truth.

Sally's daughter is troubled by the relationship she has with her father who lives in another city. Harry perceives that she is sizing him up as a potential substitute and that she feels uncomfortable with the process. She is as outspoken and poignant as her mother, something Harry has difficulty with. "Sometimes I withdraw from her, I just

don't want to deal with her, she is very articulate and she calls me on stuff, a 10 year old saying you can't do that to me. I'm willing to work through it but a part of me wants to say, 'you're a kid and you'll listen to me, now shut up,' I have to be present with that and listen to her." Harry has found that they get things sorted out most satisfactorily when Sally stays out of the discussion.

In summary the themes that occur in Harry's statement begin with his lack of personal boundaries that he realizes began with his mother and reached a high point in the relationship with his second wife where he takes on the role of martyr. In this relationship he subjugates his needs and wants to gain his exwives approval and eventually experiences intense resentment and anger. These intense emotions flare up in situations with Sally that remind Harry of the past but he is gradually learning to relate in a different way. A tool that has enabled Harry to feel more secure is short-term-commitments, concise and limited agreements. Through his interpersonal interactions with Sally, Harry has learned about freedom to pursue his own personal development. Finally his experience as a new partner in a household with a young child is difficult, he tends to withdraw but he is very empathetic and realizes that he needs to work out his relationship through direct interaction with the child not through the child's mother.

## SUMMARY OF THE STATEMENT BY RON

Ron is a warm and out going businessman. Six years ago he separated from his wife and children and moved from the prairies to the coast. He had been living with Sue for a few months at the time of this interview. In analyzing the interview with Ron a number of themes recur which will be described in this summary .

Ron is clear that the power of his past experiences strongly influence his perceptions, attitudes, emotions and behaviors in his relationship with Sue. One of the most enduring and potent past experiences was the marriage and subsequent separation from Karen and his two children about 8 years ago. It was a difficult and painful ordeal for the family, one Ron is still recovering from. Old disturbing emotions appear in his interactions with Sue that he recognizes are not related to Sue at all but a carry over from his marriage.

Near the end of his marriage to Karen, Ron experienced a personal crisis that affected all areas of his life, his marriage, his financial integrity through employment, and his sense of competency as a man, a husband and a father. A number of factors contributed to Ron's situation. One of these was his abhorrence of confrontation, something that developed when he was a child. This attitude blocked Ron from asking for what he wanted and needed. In his interactions with his wife he "would think about it a lot privately but I had trouble verbalizing it, until in the end

I would lose my cool and shout a lot."

Part of avoiding confrontation was to avoid rejection but instead he just felt unappreciated. "I would tend to empathize or please my wife as much as I could, I'd do whatever I could for her, and in the end it was never enough." He began to resent the demands Karen made on him sexually, he felt pressure to perform according to her needs but rather than deal with it directly he resorted to withdrawing. It became a major issue between them. "I think I would go to a lot of lengths to please her and eventually my honesty got the better of me and inside I couldn't find it within myself to please her anymore...finally I said fuck you I'm not staying here and putting up with this anymore."

Leaving did not resolve the tensions between him and Karen. At the time of his separation he was laid off from his job. "There was a period of not having enough money to support the children as much as I wanted to and Karen wanted me to." Another factor that contributed to the crisis was Ron's feeling of guilt and shame over his inability to provide support and care for his wife and children. "Partly because of the crisis I was going through I wasn't always in a fit state to organize it, to see my kids, not in a good emotional state to do that." Ron seemed to be overwhelmed by the responsibilities of being a father and husband and could see no way to meet them. This sense of inadequacy still invades Ron's self image. He still feels "guilty whenever I

talk with her"." There is also a sense of not doing enough for his children, "I keep up the contact but I could probably do a lot better."

There was a sense of responsibility for the pain Karen was experiencing. "When I saw the pain in her I felt responsible for that and there was the pain of being separated from my children." Ron went for counselling shortly after the separation from Karen and the children. He "wanted to deal with it and somehow get through with it as quickly as I could". However there was a sense of incompleteness around the therapy. It "feels unfinished, not like a book, when I think back on the therapy I think well I didn't really finish that..." He has this same feeling about the separation, a sense of doubt about it being a clean break. "I feel...would it have worked out if I had done something different, could I have done it better, could I have separated better, its like going back to therapy because we never did work through it, the separation, it was too painful at the time for both of us." The guilt reminds him of its incompleteness.

Ron's sense of fragility was tested in a brief relationship with a woman who he thought was the "true love of his life." Within six months of living together he "realised it was not the right relationship to be in and after a year I left, moved out." He questioned his ability to make sound judgements regarding relationships, "I hadn't worked through it all [the marriage] and I wasn't capable of

making the right decision at the time so it failed."

This lack of confidence in his ability to make reasonable judgements about a potential partner was echoed in the intitial stages of meeting Sue. "I was wondering am I going to make another complete fool of myself or could this work." Meeting Sue was unlike meeting other woman. It was calm and relaxed. "Not a great deal of emotion...which I have actually heard from other people can happen."

Until meeting Sue he had spent most of two and a half years living alone and focusing his energy on a new business. Being alone allowed him the time to get to know himself and to like his own company, he didn't want to give it up. Being alone was a rest for Ron, "the rest didn't encourage me to rush into something but it had the opposite effect, you have your own life, your own center, do you want to give this up, the answer was no." Eventually Ron realized he had more to gain in a relationship with Sue than to lose. "When I think about it I don't think I had to give up very much, I had to give up my total independence but I was quite prepared to do that, I wouldn't be in this relationship now, nor feel it was doing so well if I felt I had given up a lot."

They are cautious about getting to know each other, they discuss their fears about the future. For Ron the relationship has evolved slowly compared with other relationships he has been in. "The big thing about Sue is

that I was not attracted by one thing...but if it would be one thing I think it would be her honest playfulness, her down to earth sense of fun, coupled with a strong sense of reality and sensibleness." The most powerful bonding aspect of their relationship is for Ron their mutual and reciprocated joy in each others affection. "It comes back to the fact that Sue wants to do it as much as I do and thats what makes it so strong, not one sided." There is a feeling of mutual acceptance and connection. "It is very easy, we are both amazed by it, I can get up in the morning and come home in the evening and feel totally relaxed about coming into the presence of Sue. I've never felt that before...not having to worry about how I look, what I say, not having to say the right things, not having to be jumped on for something or other. I do feel very accepted."

There are two major concerns for Ron in his present life that relate to his past experiences. One is financial responsibility and the second is confronting uncomfortable issues.

Ron is very sensitive to doubting his ability to be competent financially and recognizes how easily past feelings of failure and inadequacy are triggered especially by Sue who is very good at handling finances. He can make his financial commitments every month to his children's support and to his share of living expenses but he has a nagging feeling this is not enough and he does feel unsuccessful. There is a sense of not making enough, having

enough, giving enough but the scale by which Ron judges this is unclear.

The second issue involves his fear of confrontation. One of Ron's major concerns about living with Sue and her daughter is the interactions with her daughter. "That's a concern that comes up every day. We are just coping with that, get through that period, we deal with it as much as we can; if we dealt with it any more I think there would be a lot more tension around the house and I don't think any of us really want that, so there's a lot of acceptance going on putting up with it..."

There is also a risk that Sue will collude with Ron in avoiding confrontation although she has encouraged him to be more outspoken with her daughter. "We are quite good at avoiding it all; occasionally we speak up and today Sue told me she really likes it when I speak up and tell her [teenaged daughter] how I feel about her [behavior], when I do; things are great, I would say 50% of the time I do bring it out." Sue will also let Ron sort out difficulties with Sue's daughter without interfering.

What Ron believes about the stress and tension of dealing with Sue's daughter is that it does not interfere with his and Sue's relationship. "It's nothing that threatens the relationship whatsoever, there's absolutely no question about that; Sue and I often come back to this point and we know that no matter how difficult this is, it really has

nothing to do with our relationship and it won't affect it in any way..."

Regardless of the concerns Ron is very excited about the prospects of marriage, in fact it has always been a positive goal for him. "...in other relationships I always come around to the idea of marriage. It means success in life, it means I'll have a higher social level, degree of acceptance with my fellow persons, it means I can go to my parents and they will be more proud of me than they are now, all kinds of irrational things. It was always something I knew I'd get into even after divorce." Sue and Ron have discussed the idea frequently, "I think that's what is exciting for me, in talking about it and planning it it becomes another dimension to our relationship and actually a few years ago I would never have thought that dimension would be possible. It's the commitment, that's the word really."

For Ron commitment is honesty, reliability, consistency, and staying open to discuss what is going on. "There has to be a very strong component [of commitment] for it [a relationship] to work well. It implies a long term relationship. He admits that the "discussions are more a phase of getting to know each other and feeling out the territory, we may not do it." What is clear for Ron is that it will not be a traditional marriage ceremony but he is unclear how it will be different. Neither he nor Sue is comfortable with many of the vows of traditional marriages,

"but we are very comfortable with the idea of living together for the rest of our lives, we expect to be, we take it for granted, it's that sort of firm, [yet] we both know we cannot promise anything like that..."

The courtship with Sue "feels like the one that I have been working towards for most of my life...it brings together a lot of aspects of my life..." It has a sense of completeness about it and although "courtship would be meaningful with other women, it felt like the best thing in the world," there is a sense of "moving forward in time" with Sue.

A summary of the themes that emerged in the interview with Ron begin with his recollections of his marriage and the feelings of inadequacy that resulted. His fear of confrontation and feeling helpless to provide financial and physical support for his children further his sense of inadequacy and show up in his new relationship with Sue. The difference now is his awareness of his vulnerability.

These past experiences of failure with marriage have taken their toll on Ron's confidence to create the kind of relationship he wants. Nevertheless, relating to Sue has been a positive and rewarding experience of mutual acceptance. Commitment to this relationship is the experience of inner expansion.

Finally Ron finds his role with Sue's teenage daughter difficult to define and often a negative experience.

## SUMMARY OF THE STATEMENT BY MEG

Meg is an attractive, out-of-doors, active woman in her early forties who has recently undergone retraining for a career change. She is a professional woman with two school age children.

After Meg's second marriage ended she spent a lot of time with other single women. She remembers this time as the "most healing relationships she had ever experienced". They were intimate, fun, honest and open. In retrospect she believes that these close bonds with women formed the template of the kind of emotional closeness she wanted with a man, a partner.

Meg felt she needed to learn about relationships, "I had some unreasonable expectations about men that I would meet for a few hours and I had a lot of unreasonable expectations of myself too... "I read about relationships all the time, everything I could get my hands on. I think that was a very big part of finding out what it was I wanted and learning how to deal with things. I think I'm quite well informed at this point."

The initial part of the relationship with Luke was very scary and exciting because of the uncertainty of what would happen next. "In a way that uncertainty brought out all my insecurities and neurotic patterns...I sought the support of my woman friends to get through these issues rather than try to explain them to him. I thought it would be too heavy and I had read enough to know that they had nothing to do with

him...the big issue for me was feeling abandoned which I was sure was happening whenever I felt the least bit unloveable".

Meg realized that in some ways her partner was not "ready to be involved with someone else...there was a lot of guilt about the way he had left his wife (he had had an affair) and his own unfinished grief" (over leaving his children) but she still felt confident that a positive and healthy relationship could develop. "I sort of thought, well I can be there and he'll heal and I can deal with that I figured".

Luke's visits gradually extended to overnights, then weekends and although he kept his apartment, he was living with Meg and her two children. Eventually, "I recognized it [the apartment] as a kind of safety thing for him which actually didn't bother me much for a while. I did let him know that I saw it as his back door and it represented his ambivalence".

In the past, this kind of challenge would have been very scary for Meg who tended to remain silent about issues that were potential conflicts. "Silence is a jail sentence. I am determined to be true to myself and my partner...I speak up about how I see things and my sense of things and when something is said that jolts me in some way or that stirs me up emotionally, I am able to deal with it, I don't close down and say I'm confused or it will go away."

Meg equates this kind of attendance to the relationship as a big part of commitment. "Commitment is an intension. It is active rather than passive. It is being alert to the possible burrs in the interactions and having the guts to look and deal with those things".

For Meg intimacy is created in "getting to know each other, with all our warts and beauty, both sides, and being there for each other at times when we are feeling insecure and lonesome and unloveable and unworthy. I think I do that with him".

Commitment involves tremendous energy towards learning about oneself in interactions and towards making a relationship work. Sometimes when Luke feels "insecure about our relationship, I feel bored by the mood that prevails around it." The boredom is more accurately the resistance to having to attend to him. "The other side of it is that I recognize that I'm not so secure either, at times I'm quite insecure, I empathize with him...He gives me a lot of his undivided attention when I need it. He is very generous and loving towards me when I am feeling weak. I realize how important this is for my sense of well-being and I want to be able to reciprocate...when he feels insecure I have to stop what I am doing and change my focus and give him energy and time that I intended to give my project. Maybe I resent this a little." Rather than admit to being resentful or selfish it is easier to label the feeling as 'boredom'.

Meg describes her feelings about marriage through an

incident that happened just over a year after she and Luke had become a couple. She had been out shopping with a friend. "It was a beautiful dress that I knew I had no place to wear and I realized could easily have been a wedding dress, it was just gorgeous, I put a deposit on this thing, I was going to buy it but in the days that followed it made me feel so panicky I couldn't cope with it so I had to go back but I kept putting it off, finally I went and took the deposit off, I felt so relieved."

During the interview she realized the analogy of the dress..."first of all it was symbolic that the marriage will be different, this dress was too traditional, it was like boxing myself in, it symbolized the same old trip and I knew then that it would be a different relationship...months later I saw Katherine Hepburn in a movie in which she portrayed a woman in her 70's marrying for the second time to a man younger than herself. They were very in love. She wore a sari. It was so unique and to me symbolized her strength. It hit me how important it is to follow my own heart."

She recalled her own marriage. The ceremony itself was more like a stage production, there were lines to memorize and moves to make, "I definitely felt that it was a performance, acting out something, sort of a ritual, but without being involved, same as taking Confirmation and Holy Communion in the church...wore white on both occasions, I

was well schooled and able to do that".

Meg admits "I do idealize the traditional 'one and only' marriage with lots of children and family home and extended family. I do idealize that...it allows me to fit into society which has a lot of advantages, but I also see that the price for this kind of relationship is very high. The alternative is not clear to me yet. However I am certain I will not enter into a traditional marriage again."

Meg blames "marriage" for such negative experiences as feeling "trapped and resentful and abandoned. I don't think he (her second husband) was there for me at all, I was just kind of trapped into this role, of playing wife and mother".

Meg and her ex-spouse had not developed a close friendship and a feeling of connectedness. She wonders if this interfered with the extent of their commitment to each other and further, she wonders if "perhaps marriage with no commitment or sense of belonging is a self-alienating experience? I lost touch with what I wanted and what was important to me, I felt flat and kind of dead inside."

The most difficult issue for Meg to deal with around her ex-spouse is the feeling of helplessness and guilt she felt about her children. "It was unbelievably painful. I have a lot of bitterness for the period when they were really young and we were first separated and they had to go to day-care instead of going to his house, and he could have accommodated them."

In the meantime Meg is enjoying what the relationship

with Luke has to offer. "Physically its very rewarding, both sexually but also the physical contact, I found myself just kind of sopping it up, this physical closeness and I was able to give that to my kids, it just made me bigger some how, fuller. It had a profound affect on how loveable I felt and how loving I felt to him and my children...we just have a wonderful time, we really enjoy each other, we laugh a lot."

Meg describes the meaning this relationship has in her life in another story. "We were watching Naddy Gann...at the end of the movie she rejoins her father, finds him in a logging camp, it is a very emotional scene, it just struck me that the four of us (Meg's two children, Meg and Luke) all have father-daughter type issues. Luke couldn't handle it, he had to leave the room, I was in tears, and the children were glued to the screen. Luke could not watch the reunion of the father and daughter, he just prays for a phone call from his children, he said, 'all I want is for them to phone me', I said I had wanted my dad to phone me. We just kind of clung to each other for a while. I realized that we had come together to offer each other consolation, fulfillment and joy in specific areas of our lives. We are each teachers and lovers. We have much to offer each other and sometimes it will be difficult to give and difficult to accept...and I thought of his children."

Meg feels insecure when it comes to dealing with

Luke's children. "At first I felt jealous about their special relationship together, I felt second best when he would do things with them and not me, it was very painful but gradually we are working things out, I don't feel so threatened by them in fact I really enjoy them." Meg does not get to spend much time with Luke's children but she realizes how important it is for them to get to know each other better.

There are things Meg doubts she would do on her own without the support of a partnership. She enjoys and appreciates it from both a practical and an emotional perspective. "It enables me to be my best."

The themes that occur in Meg's statement emerge from her desire to learn more about how she relates to men. She describes her unrealistic expectations and her neurotic patterns that she has learned to deal with in a more acceptable way. Uncertainty stimulated her neurotic thoughts and she remembers the excitement around it. Also her recognition that Luke needed time alone to heal from the effects of his own separation.

Commitment Meg realized was being present for the other person. This meant recognizing her own resistance to being there.

She recalled the painful and negative experience of marriage as a sense of entrapment in a performance that she did not direct. She recalled the painful feelings around her ex-husband's negligence with her children.

Another theme that arose was that she was both attracted to and repulsed by traditional marriage. She was attracted to the family structure and the advantages in society but she was wary of the cost of such a system.

The meaning of being in a relationship for Meg was to enhance each other's personal growth and sense of well-being.

Finally Meg admitted to jealousy and hurt feelings around Luke's children. She also expressed an interest in spending more time getting to know them.

## SUMMARY OF THE STATEMENT BY JUDY

Judy is in her late thirties, a mother of young boys and has recently returned to University for professional retraining. She was born and raised in a foreign country. She has been in a relationship with Paul for six years. Judy met Paul a year after she separated from her husband after a ten year marriage. She had two preschool children and held a job. The interview with Judy revealed the following themes.

In the first year of their dating, Judy and Paul lived in different cities, they saw each other on weekends on a very casual basis. Judy had the sense that Paul "seemed somewhat different than other men she had known." Judy had been frustrated with her job and the lack of variety in school programs where she lived so she moved her family to the same city Paul lived in. After the move there was no excuse not to be together but future plans had not been openly discussed other than to spend the summer travelling together. It seemed practical to store Judy's belongings in Paul's place until after the holiday. Judy remained in Paul's house after the holiday with her children and never did look for her own apartment. Still a future plan was not openly discussed.

Judy refers to her six year relationship with Paul as "like married, we didn't get the license" at the same time she admits how uncertain it is and how hard it has been to cope with that. "it hasn't been smooth, it's been kind of up

and down, we didn't quite know if we were here to stay and it's never been that clear".

At first she saw Paul as "very loose and not firm on anything" and now she realizes that "the two of us take things as they come and we have very strong individual lives". They have very broad boundaries, neither is threatened by extended periods of separation. "We give each other a lot of space, that is something we didn't even have to discuss, it's part of our philosophy or values, it's just like that, to me it's really natural for him to go away and I don't know when he will come back, I don't even make a big deal out of it."

Judy grew up in another culture and claims to be unfamiliar with the expectations and parameters of marriage in the North American culture and yet throughout the interview she was able to describe them very well. What she holds as cultural confusion may in essence be her own personal confusion and fears about marriage. "I don't really understand it, it seems really binding, doesn't seem nice, it seems to be contradictory to my values of what a relationship should be, like I think a relationship should be free, and supportive and an on-going process, and marriage kind of puts it in a, well, you are with your wife until the day you die, it seems really stifling, not that I'm hoping he goes off with someone else, but just putting it out like this makes it seem so permanent, nothing is

permanent, I don't feel that life is permanent."

Perhaps [confining] is a better word for [permanent] in this context because Judy understands both that she cannot meet all the needs of her partner and how much she enjoys having a permanent and on going relationship. "There's something I really cherish about making love to the same person over and over again, you have this intimacy, total lack of inhibition, and he knows you."

For Judy traditional marriage stifles and contradicts what she values most in her relationship. It seems to limit behavior to a defined set of expectations and roles rather than allow individuals to develop in their own way. Judy "worr[ies] that marriage might spoil things rather than make them better".

Although Judy is fearful of marriage, there are aspects of it that she does desire. For example, the kind of security offered in a partnership. "It seems we have already decided, it's not a spoken decision, to try to make it work...I think I would prefer to draw a contract perhaps with a lawyer at some point, have a little ceremony for fun but not really register it, not as a marriage."

Marriage is very important to her children, "the younger one especially, he doesn't consider Paul as part of the family unless we are married. He feels very strongly about that, I have pointed out, look your dad and I were married and we didn't stay together, for the younger one it really means a lot...of course we talk about having another

child and if we do, then what do we do, and I still feel that I don't want to get married."

Judy's aversion to marriage is the result of a number of personal experiences. One is the bitterness of her own divorce and another is that she learned from her mother that marriage is a practical arrangement. As a result she seems to be trying to set up a new kind of relationship. One that incorporates the practical arrangement in the form of a legal contract providing for an equal exchange of benefits for both parties and care for the children. This provides both Judy and Paul with protection should the relationship cease to be mutually beneficial and they decide to live apart. Creating a balance between the practical arrangement and the more nebulous need of emotional fulfillment is the struggle that Judy faces now. She acknowledges her need for commitment, intimacy, support, and companionship which she recognizes enhance her development as an interacting caring person.

Judy is aware of the benefits of the relationship from both a practical and an emotional perspective and she can be very objective in her view of them. "I gain a lot of financial support from Paul, I don't know where I would be financially without him...He has a wonderful sense of humor and he makes me laugh, it's great, he's extremely generous and kind, he's very smart, so I get all of those things from him which I really value. He's very insightful with my

children, he has been really wonderful with my kids, absolutely incredible...he can be a friend and he can be a father figure for me which I probably need more than I should, he's good that way, he has a very calming effect. I gain a lot from the relationship that way, I don't gain a lot from the relationship in terms of manual work, house cleaning, day to day stuff is all on me and I do resent it a lot but it does balance out, you always have to pay something, I don't think you find someone who's absolutely perfect in everything."

Commitment to Judy is a moment to moment intension towards another person evident in specific actions rather than promises. "Paul has been there through all sorts of events and hassels and problems with me, I think that shows commitment, I can look at the commitment backwards but I can't look at it forwards." To be committed "means that you are there for the other person, to support each other and to stand beside them even when they are horrible and unattractive and having a lot of problems, it basically means a very strong sense of responsibility and honesty." It is not just a cognitive intention, it comes from the heart. "If your heart is not in it anymore then you have to stop the idea of being committed to that person because it is not working anymore."

Judy's advice to other couples involved in relationships after marriage is "to take a really good look

at what went wrong in the first one, and then find out where you were and what you want from a relationship". Although Judy believes it is important to take time to work out personal problems before getting involved in a new relationship, she has done more work on herself in the relationship with Paul than she would ever have done on her own. "I went through a transition period when I separated from my first marriage, I came out from a depression, moving towards who I was again, it's like I lost it and I was getting it back and it seems that that sense has stayed with me, um and it's consistently staying with me more so with Paul than in any other relationship that I have had...He supports me a lot and he also just lets me be. He really encourages me to express myself and to communicate my emotions, much more than I'm use to, usually people say men don't talk much but it's the opposite, he's the one who says let's talk, let's talk, I've done a lot more exploration in the last six years than I have ever."


Paul is very supportive of Judy's sense of well-being. He makes her question some of the irrational ideas she has about who she is. "I do have this idea of myself as not being an intellectual, just a simple person. Paul always says well what does it mean to be intellectual, so he doesn't agree with me on that one and he is definitely supporting me to feel good about my mind".

Judy's main concern is staying involved in the relationship, having the energy to do this and not to let

the rest of her life and the world distract her from this task. She focuses on communication and being present with Paul and this requires enormous amounts of energy on her part. Paul has clear expectations and supports Judy to achieve this goal. "Paul points it out to me a lot, that you've got to be present and here, so those are the kind of explorations I was doing and I don't think I would have done a lot of them if it wasn't for Paul, I think he has given me a lot of insight to work from, and sometimes it's been horrible, it hasn't been easy, so I think that's where the relationship really contributed to my emotional state."

Staying present, focussed and energized involves other forms of communication in a relationship. For Judy, sex is a way that she expresses trust and openness towards Paul. It troubles her that sex like other tasks in a relationship requires a conscious effort, a commitment of time, energy and work, it doesn't just happen. "It's something that always needs work, cause especially you know you're tired, another thing, you have to find that extra energy and time, which I'm so pressed for, it's like nurturing plants and if you don't water it and give it food it just dies".

A number of themes are contradictions that run through Judy's statement. She describes uncertainty and the lack of future plans she and Paul have in their relationship and although this is difficult for her there is a strong sense of commitment and intimacy between them as well. Both are



confident that the strength of the bond between them can sustain the freedom and loose boundaries both of them need to continue their own personal development. There is a theme of support that she gains from Paul that comes in a number of different forms from concrete to emotional. She expresses her need for support in staying present in the relationship either to communicate verbally or sexually and how difficult this is for her sometimes due to busy schedules and children.

There is a theme of balance in the exchange of benefits between them even though Paul does not help with any of the housework.

Marriage is a negative and confusing issues for her and she does not feel confident in the permanence marriage attempts to establish.

## SUMMARY OF THE STATEMENT BY LEE

Lee is an attractive and energetic obstetric nurse in her mid thirties. She and her husband separated a year and a half before this interview took place. She lives with Frank, with whom she had had a relationship ten years before, and her three year old son.

In the decade since Lee and Frank had parted company, Lee had married and had a son but she had never given up the fantasy that she and Frank would some day try again. After Lee's marriage broke up, she and Frank corresponded more frequently. Getting together was difficult since they lived on opposite coasts. Letters, phone calls and the occassional visit were not enough to be sure of their feelings. Eventually, Lee made a temporary move to Frank's city with her child for a three month trial stay. "Originally I was going to go for six weeks and then come back but my friend said just go and see what it's like. It was an easy trial in that I had the option of coming back but I never really thought I would."

A life with Frank offered Lee financial benefits she had never contemplated alone or with her ex-spouse. She had been the main financial contributor in her marriage while Frank on the other hand, was financially secure. "At first, I had a real concern about that, what is the real appeal here? Is it that I'm going to be taken care of? Well, now I am being taken care of and that's very nice but that is not the only thing."

Lee questioned her motives, she feared that the financial security was distracting her from making a sound judgement about her emotional connection. In time it became evident how much they enjoyed each other and how good their family life was.

Frank's financial and emotional support has opened up a multitude of options for Lee. She is intimidated by the responsibility of this freedom and the tremendous need to be clear about what she wants to become. "I've got to have the strength to say I'm going to stay home with my kid, and do it, there's no way that I can pretend that I'm doing that because it's too difficult to do anything else."

Lee's main concern in the relationship with Frank is their physical relationship. Lee is close to Frank in many ways but he is not her physical ideal in terms of both height and coloring, this has affected her interest in him as a sexual partner. "It's not exactly a problem but it's not a primary force for me, I don't find him as physically attractive as I would like to....we've been really open about it which has been hard but really important, it always makes us feel much stronger and closer." Although the sexual aspect of their relationship is a small part of relating to Frank she wonders if at some time she will be tempted to jeopardize the relationship for an exciting affair. She realizes that such an act would jeopardize the relationship because Frank is clear that fidelity is fundamental for a successful relationship. This is contrary to Lee's beliefs.

There is a substantial age difference between Lee and Frank. "I did worry a little bit about Frank being older and that really goes with the physical part of it too, I worry about it less now, especially now, well, I'm getting older too and now we've talked, when I look at him I don't see a young man, he's in good physical shape but I don't see a young man's body, then again I look at my own, we're all changing too." Lee wonders if loss of physical attractiveness will be easier for them as they concentrate more on developing their emotional bond.

The most important and enduring aspect of a relationship for Lee is the quality of the friendship between the partners. There is a sense of mutual admiration between Lee and Frank. As with all friendships "we are not totally focussed on each other, I see this as part of my greater life not as the greater life." This relationship is as important to her as other important things in her life such as her own health, the care of her son and her friendships.

Private time with her son and her friends is very important to Lee. She likes the arrangement of being alone periodically and although she misses Frank their reunion is frequently awkward. Being separated is stressful and there is a period of adjusting to each other again.

Frank is more willing to discuss emotional issues than Lee. She would rather let things be..."I don't want to talk

about things when I'm feeling insecure about them, or when I'm not feeling good about them, it may be a good way to monitor the relationship, if I'm finding I'm just putting off talking about emotional issues it's probably because there is something going on that I don't really want to delve into...the real emotional issues are hard on us...[for example] talking about the physical issue..."

Although Lee believes in the benefits of seeing a counsellor in times of dis-ease before a problem really becomes a crisis, she has not sought counselling for this issue. She and Frank are quite ingenious in working with it. While on holidays Frank used fake tan to enhance his skin tone and make himself and Lee feel more comfortable.

Lee's view of marriage is that there are lots of practical benefits but not many emotional ones. The particularly negative emotion that she remembers is "that trapped feeling" which is peculiar because "we all know we can get divorced again". Lee does not think marriage is necessary for security, or commitment or to insure a future together. Marriage does not make it a guarantee.

Lee would opt for a type of legal marriage that provided for the practical benefits of being a partner without the traditional promises of 'until death do us part'. Perhaps people believe in marriage vows at the ceremony even though they are swearing to something that they cannot control. "My sister's husband said in bitterness, you lied when you said your marriage vows, my

sister said I didn't lie, I guess I believed it at the time, I didn't lie, they haven't worked out that way...but so it's like swearing to something that you know can't possibly be true."

For Lee commitment needs to be well thought out, "we can't guarantee that it is going to be like this forever, so let's not even kid ourselves that because it is this way now, that it will be in five or ten years time...I guess it means really keeping at it, really working at it, really wanting it to work." Lee is more conscious of wanting this relationship to be successful than she ever was with her first partner...but she says "I don't always treat it as if it's the most important thing." There are other things of equal importance like her son and her health as mentioned before.

The themes that emerge from Lee's statement begin with the nature of the relationship she and Frank have established or re-established after a decade apart. On the one hand they have a positive, supportive and nurturing friendship and family life and on the other there is an age difference, an imbalance in attraction, and a difference in values regarding fidelity. The last three seem to be openly discussed between them and although a strain to the relationship, they are not viewed as a drain.

The themes that emerge around marriage are Lee's fear of entrapment and resistance to traditional marriage vows.

She would prefer the security of marriage but not the emotional pain that seems to accompany it.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this study, thirty themes emerged from the participants' reflections on the lived experience of forming a new relationship following divorce. In order to facilitate the discussion and analysis, the themes are organized into five categories each of which represents a general topic. These topics are: past relationships, commitment, marriage, parenting, and rewards and costs. Frequently what a participant says in one theme is relevant to more than one topic. A listing of topics and themes and their inter-relationships is presented in Figure 1. In this chapter, each of the five topics will be presented and the related themes will be described.

These themes do not represent an exhaustive portrayal of the issues which cohabiting couples following divorce might identify. However, these are inclusive of the themes presented by the participants in this study. Some of these themes are reminiscent of those referred to in the review of the literature (Chapter 1) in relation to first marriage courtship, while others are quite distinct. This matter is addressed further in Chapter 5.

## TOPICS AND THEMES

TOPICS outside PENTAGON  
THEMES inside PENTAGON

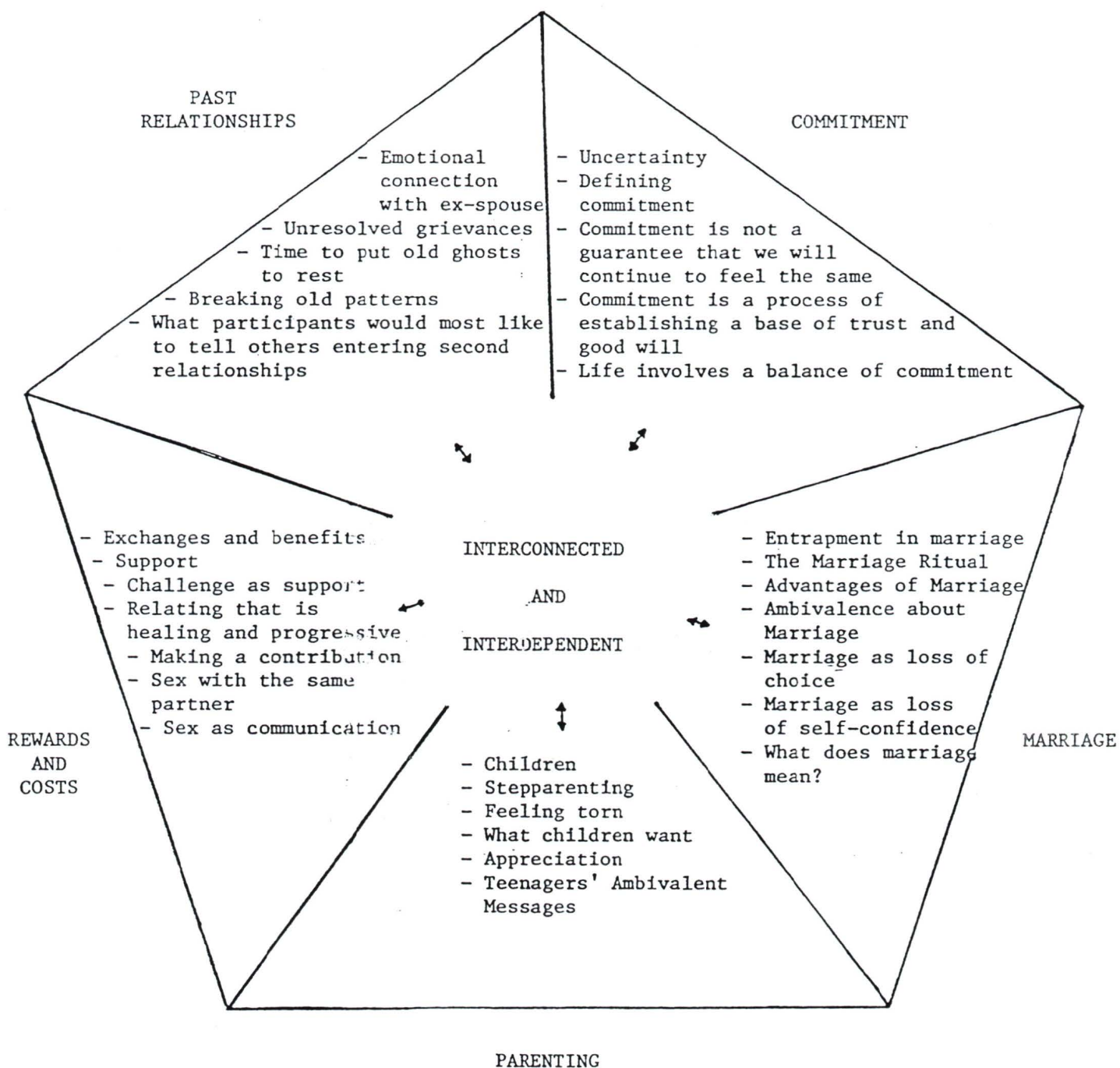


Figure 1

## PAST RELATIONSHIPS

Emotional Connection With the Ex-spouse

In this study all the participants spoke at length about their ex-spouses. Emotional connection between ex-spouses generally did not include positive regard. The emotional connection was very intense rather than neutral and was largely based on the individual's personal meaning of the marriage and breakup. Individuals who felt they had failed or that they had been used or who had been very dependent on the marriage, were more strongly connected to the ex-spouse through feelings of anger, resentment, obligation, revenge and guilt. For example, Ron was strongly reminded of his attachment to his ex-wife through his feelings of guilt which came up whenever he talked to her. With the guilt came feelings of doubt about whether the marriage had to end, feelings that were not based on genuine feelings of love but emerged from self-doubt. "Would it have worked out if I had done something different?" Partners may cope with the separation from their spouse but not from their children or their sense of obligation. "There was a feeling of responsibility, there was that pain of being separated from my children and from someone I felt responsible for and when I saw the pain in her I felt responsible for that too."

Interactions with the ex-spouses evoked a wide variety of emotions from tenderness and caring to bitterness and pain. Three participants still had moments of ambivalence

towards their ex-spouse where the tenderness, caring and hurt were more conscious. Meg explained, "I had a dream that he died and I felt so sad about not only losing him but because he had not called for me. In the dream there was clearly an opportunity for him to call for me."

By far the most common bitter feelings toward the ex-spouse surrounded the children of the marriage. There was a tendency to blame the ex-spouse for painful memories about children. Meg recalled that, "I have a lot of bitterness for him for the period when the kids were really young and we were first separated. They had to go to daycare instead of going to his house, and he could have accommodated them. He knows he can get at me through them. I felt helpless to make it better for them and guilty for going to work."

Jane said, "I'm angry because he didn't maintain a good relationship with me around the kids. We had worked really hard to do that for four years and then his second wife came on the scene and the whole thing collapsed."

Ron expressed his bitterness in these terms, "Why had I not paid her more money over the last ten years? I have more freedom than her, I can go off and do what I want and she gets stuck with the kids and resentment on my part that she gets to have the kids."

The bitterness was also in two cases self-directed for the waste and self-abuse of enduring an unfulfilling or humiliating relationship as well as directed towards the ex-

spouse for their role in the disappointment.

All participants described how they had developed protective psychological barriers between themselves and their ex-spouses and communicated this with a display of distance and hostile civility. Subsequently, there was also a tendency to look at the ex-spouse as rigid and unchanging.

Judy was, "really surprised to see that after six or seven years he is still the same, hasn't changed his outlook at all, he's like a stone wall."

Objectifying the ex-partner also made it easier to live with and rationalize the separation. For example Ron was, "constantly reminded of why I left her, it's just there all the time, whenever I talk with her."

Only Lee remained friends with her ex-spouse. She was unguarded when she talked about her ex-husband. "I like him very much as my ex-spouse; he has changed a lot in that he is way more responsible, he thinks about other people, communicates better, but his attitude about work is the same." This ex-couple still gets together with their son and continues to develop a relationship based on friendship and shared parenthood.

#### Unresolved Grievances From the Past Relationship

Participants had very little to say in response to the direct question about how they felt about their ex-spouse. However, throughout the interview they referred to their ex-

spouse over and over again as the source of negative emotional experiences.

Participants had their strongest memories about the negative experiences around their past relationships and were still sensitive to them. They tended to forget or suppress the positive aspects of their past relationships.

Past experiences colored the quality of present relationships and had a strong influence on attitude and behavior. All participants recognized the power of past ghosts. Ron acknowledges that, "A lot of what I'm experiencing with my new partner is a result of what happened before." It was not always clear whether recognition included understanding of the insidious interference of past relationships or not.

Jane had lost faith in her ex-husband and herself due to his infidelity and finds it hard to always trust her new partner and trust in her own desirability. Furthermore, at first her new partner behaved in a similar pattern as her ex-spouse in that he found her jealousy irritating rather than a shared problem that stressed their relationship to be resolved together. Jane explains his defensiveness, "His ex-wife was extremely jealous and he reacts badly to that." He is still triggered by an old pattern and may be arming himself to relate to Jane in the same way he related to his ex-wife from behind a protective barrier. Jane may also be arming herself in the critical way she did with her ex-spouse.

Sometimes participants were able to use the pain of the past as a catalyst for change in the present. This experience meant an increase in self-trust and a sense of control. Meg, "I sought the support of my women friends to get through these issues...I had read enough to know that they had nothing to do with him."

#### Take Time to Put the Old Ghosts to Rest

Put the old ghosts to rest, was a common sentiment from four participants in their advice to others entering new relationships. It was advice that they themselves had not followed. Harry observed that, "On some level my sanity says there should have been a time span in there to deal with the old stuff before getting into the new stuff...I can't say I've ever done that." Judy felt it was important to, "Take a good look at what went wrong in the first one, what you want from a relationship, your values and deal with all your problems. Until you have dealt with them it is not a good idea to start something new." But even so she also observed that, "I dealt with it after I started the relationship."

Jane recalled that she did not know how to feel fulfilled in a relationship because she had met her needs and had partners that met their needs by playing games. "I knew that the relationship could be fulfilling but I didn't know how to do it, I needed to learn things, communication, how not to fall into all the manipulative games." She learned through relations with others what she did and did

not want from being involved in a relationship, not from spending time alone. Meg who turned to her female friends for companionship, intimacy and fun recalls that the quality of these relationships became the standard of relating she later sought in a relationship with a man. Through her friendships with women she discovered the spiritual power of being with others. "That was the most rewarding and the most healing of any relationships I've ever had." This may be more of reflection of the quality of past relations Meg has had with women and will continue to have. It may be difficult for her to relate to men in a similar way and unfair of her to expect men to relate like her female friends.

### Breaking Old Patterns

All participants found that the new relationship was what allowed them to face some of the distressing unresolved issues from the past. They felt nurtured and safe enough to take risks regarding their own personal growth with their new partner. Judy explained, "He has given me a lot of insight to work from, and sometimes it's been horrible, it hasn't been easy, I think that's where the relationship has really contributed to my emotional health." Harry explains that the relationship with his new partner has allowed him to get to know and like himself. Now that his life is not taken up with "worries, anger and guilt",

there is room to be in love with life and himself. His personal development is part of his commitment to his partner, "personal development, staying an equal in the relationship, maintaining my own space, remembering who I am...if I can maintain that then I can maintain the relationship."

Harry has bitter memories of supporting both his wives while married. Now he struggles with giving up his traditional male role with his new partner. "I want to know what I'm getting out of this...it's an issue for her to be supported, so at some point we may need to find a way that works for both of us."

Meg's openness to understanding herself and her life enables her to find personal meaning in everyday experiences. She observed the reaction of her children and her new partner to a particular movie with a theme of separation of children from their father, "we all had father-daughter issues". The message for her was that they had come together to provide each other with support to heal old wounds.

Participants often judged their progress in the new relationship by examining the changes they perceived in themselves in how they behaved in sensitive situations. Ron, "I don't have high expectations of Sue, that is definitely one of the reasons why this relationship is working well. In my marriage, I had expected my wife to change from day one."

### What participants Would Most Like to Tell Others Entering Second Relationships

The most important quality in a relationship for Lee was to establish a solid foundation of friendship. Her advice to others is to "look for someone you can really share things with, that you really like, try to strip away all the external things."

In recognizing her own parsimonious nature Jane felt most moved by a phrase she heard on a CBC radio talk show about five years ago. The guests were Counsellors giving advice to couples, they said to practice "generosity of spirit". This participant found that this phrase captured the essence of what relating to another meant to her. "The key concern for me is not to get hung up about the concerns...to be positive in my life."

Participants relied on their friends to a large extent to help them sort out issues in their relationships. Meg saw a counsellor, with her new partner, who provided the witness they needed to confirm their feelings about each other.

## COMMITMENT

### Uncertainty

The initial stages of relationships were described by five participants as scary because of the uncertainty of the future. The uncertainty seems to be a reflection of their own self-doubt about their ability to love another

person and be loved. For three of the participants this was an extremely uncomfortable experience rather than an exciting process. Meg, "It brought out all my insecurities and neurotic patterns which I was able to sort out with a friend rather than phone him up and scream at him and scare him half to death."

Harry could not tolerate the ambiguity and began making short-term commitments with his new partner. "For tonight I'll be here, for a week I'll be here, I'm not going to be here for a while, we did that one too." This helped him to give some perspective to the relationship. He was terrified of getting involved in another forever-relationship and terrified of being alone. The short-term commitments helped him to define and limit the expectations he had of himself and his new partner.

Lee found herself questioning "what is the real appeal here, is it that I'm going to be taken care of?" She could not resolve this question for months until one day she realized it just was not an issue anymore. In the same manner uncertainty eventually fades as people get to know each other.

It is not clear whether the uncertainty is resolved by joining households or before joining households or whether it is ever totally resolved. It may always be just below the surface. After six years, uncertainty is still a factor in Judy's relationship, "there was no sense of where it was going right from the start...he was very

loose and not firm on anything." This couple, although open and communicative in general has still not discussed the parameters of their relationship. They seem to live it day to day and have made assumptions about what they are doing together that neither of them question. The events that led up to their cohabitation reflect the looseness of their relationship and are somewhat representative of how other participants joined households. Meg, "It just sort of happened...it was easy to be together."

There seems to be a period where couples need to talk and play with the idea of living together. As Ron put it, "to see what our reactions would be inside and with each other, after a while it began to feel better."

Harry and Jane may have short-circuited this period of adjustment by changing their long-range plans. Both participants made the choice to move in with their partner within a month instead of staying with their original plan of moving in together in one year. They both experienced substantial stress as a result. The stress brought out the sense of uncertainty and self-doubt once again. Jane, "I had feelings of being trapped...I didn't want to move in with him unless I knew for sure that it was going to be okay, a guarantee...I worried about everything." She and her new partner spent more concentrated time together to gain confidence in their bond and their future together before a decision could be made.

### Defining Commitment

The general concern around commitment was to define it or redefine it in more behavioral terms and contemporary terms. Harry, "When you get into these things forever, I'll do this forever, it's like getting into astronomy, the mind doesn't grasp the numbers." Jane was unsure of what commitment meant to her. "In the past I think it had a lot of negative connotations, I think about my children, responsibility, I'm tired of responsibility." In the relationship with her new partner it meant "just to be cognizant that he is important in my life so that I'll make decisions that benefit our relationship."

Participants agreed on a number of issues in defining commitment. Commitment was looked upon as active, an expenditure of energy, also an attitude of openness and receptivity to learn about themselves as well as their partner. Commitment in this sense is extremely demanding and requires self-discipline. Meg realized that she is not bored with a recurring problem of her partner's, "I'm not really bored, the truth is that I'm selfish and don't want to give him the time...I have to give him energy when I wanted to do something else." Lee, "I just don't want to talk about things when I'm feeling insecure about them, or when I'm not feeling good about them." Judy, "It basically means a very strong sense of responsibility and honesty."

A common meaning given to commitment was "to be

present for the other person." My interpretation about this was that it paralleled a child's expectation of unconditional love. This may be an unconscious or subconscious expectation. There is also an expectation stated by Judy that her partner will be responsible for his own life and for creating good will in the relationship. According to Harry, commitment means to be present for the other person but not to give yourself up to the relationship. Commitment to Judy is a moment to moment intention towards another person evident in specific actions rather than promises. In this way commitment is developed and becomes stronger over time with the partner. Commitment cannot be planned or projected into the future. It can only be understood through past experience with the partner. Judy, "I think that my partner has been there through all sorts of events and hassles and problems with me, I think that shows commitment. I can look at the commitment backwards but I can't look at it forwards."

Commitment is not a Guarantee that we will Continue to Feel the Same

One of the most disturbing feelings about commitment is the conception of it as a long term guarantee or obligation. There is an underlying desire and expectation to live with their partner for a long time but making such a promise is terrifying, it eliminates all the options. Ron, "We are very

comfortable with the idea of living together for the rest of our lives, we expect to be, we take it for granted but we both know we cannot promise anything like that." Lee, "We can't guarantee that this is going to be like this forever, so let's not even kid ourselves that because it is this way now, that it will be the same in five or ten years time." Their experience of separation has forced them to reorganize a new view of commitment. They have no reason to expect their relationship to continue indefinitely. They are wary of promises.

For all participants commitment forever was viewed as unreasonable because it assumes that neither partner will ever change and it made them feel stifled in their own personal growth. Harry claimed that commitment forever creates complacency, for him. There was no challenge to progress in the relationship; it had been sealed in a framework of social expectations, roles and promises of a predictable future.

#### Commitment is not a Guarantee of a Fantasy Life Style

For some participants it was important to clarify that commitment did not mean a guarantee to live out a personal fantasy or a fairy tale existence. It did not guarantee that both partners would develop along specific paths or that they could be assured not to develop certain interests or habits. Harry considered, "What happens if Sally discovers

gambling? I'm gone, I'm not doing that again...until gambling do us part?" His second wife was consumed with gambling and he was clearly unwilling to live with the problems of a gambler again. Judy, "Commitment is one of those things you have to take moment to moment, not try to think of your whole life time ahead."

Commitment is a Process of Establishing a Base of Trust and Good Will

Although commitment does not guarantee a specific life style, it does involve determining specific roles and behaviors. Harry and his partner establish short-term commitments where they negotiate specific roles and tasks such as cooking, cleaning and child and pet responsibilities. This short-term commitment also defines particular behaviors that are important for the couple. For example expectations around fidelity are openly discussed and clarified. "Defining a role is very exciting for me, I can live with that, rather than having a rule that is unclear." Furthermore, the commitment is not just a verbal promise but this couple writes a contract and signs it. Each contract has a specific time frame, at the end of the period the couple must renegotiate a new contract which involves examining the latest commitment period for positive and negative aspects. In this way the relationship is always relevant for each partner and is deliberately establishing a foundation of trust and good will from which to judge

their experience with commitment with one another. Trust and good will are, for Harry and Sally, the basis of feeling good about themselves and each other. They are the positive emotions that motivate Harry and Sally to continue the commitment. Judy explains the concept of commitment being a cognitive and emotional concept in this comment, "A relationship is a process that either goes on or stops, dies a natural death, no matter how committed you are in your head, if your heart is not in it anymore then you have to give up the idea of being committed to that person. It is not working. If it is working then let's keep on being committed."

Commitment is built up over time, it may be the one way to resolve the uncertainty of relationships discussed in the previous section.

#### Life Involves a Balance of Commitments

Although commitment to the relationship and partner is believed to be important for a relationship to work, participants frequently found themselves struggling to balance other commitments to other people and projects. "I treat it as one thing that is as important as many other things, keeping myself healthy and happy, looking after my son and my friendships."

## MARRIAGE

### Entrapment in Marriage

Entrapment is by far the most common fear around getting married. Jane, "Heavy duty fear, because it's so hard to get out of legally...I think if I can live with him and make it work then that's good enough for me. Marriage has such negative connotations to me." Harry, "Marriage seems to have that continuum that says if there's something you don't like, then tough, you signed up for it, live with it." Jane, "The feeling of being entrapped was something that came up with my new partner...my marriage felt like a trap, a prison, I didn't ever want to repeat that." Meg, "From the beginning I felt trapped, resentful and abandoned and mother." Lee, "There is a little bit of that trapped feeling but we all know we can get divorced again." Judy, "I have trouble with marriage actually because I feel that it might spoil things...it scares me in that it almost puts you in a frame and things might change." All participants referred to a sense of entrapment around marriage and an unwillingness to risk their relationship by getting married. The sense of entrapment emerges from feeling confined by roles and expectations. For Meg the role began with the marriage ceremony itself. "I definitely felt that it was a performance, acting out something, sort of a ritual, but without being involved, which was the same as taking Confirmation and Holy Communion in the Catholic church. I

was well schooled and able to do that, wore white on all occasions."

### The Marriage Ritual

All participants were struggling with a new understanding of the rituals of marriage, particularly the marriage ceremony. Whereas marriage was a symbol of love at one time it now has other connotations. A good example of this was described by Meg who found herself buying a dress that she imagined herself wearing to her own wedding, a dress she had to have but "...it made me feel so panicky...this dress was too traditional, it was like boxing myself in, it symbolized the same old trip..."

Lee describes the reaction of her sister's husband when the sister's marriage was ending, he said in bitterness, "you lied when you said your marriage vows, my sister said I didn't lie I guess I believed it at the time, I didn't lie they haven't worked out that way". Lee continued "it's like swearing to something you know can't possibly be true."

### Advantages of Marriage

Marriage offers practical advantages which all participants valued. Ron articulated the advantages as "all kinds of irrational things...it means success in life, it means I'll have a higher social level, degree of acceptance

with my fellow persons, it means I can go to my parents and they will be more proud of me than they are now, it means getting charge cards." His reference to "irrational" may refer to the notion that this list comprises the social advantages of marriage such as greater social acceptance, parental and family approval and access to credit but does not include emotional advantages of marriage such as love.

The more concrete advantages of marriage were described by Lee and Judy who have young children and whose careers are not settled. They both valued the economic security that marriage could provide and that they were not capable of creating on their own at the present time. However they both preferred a legal contract over marriage. Lee, "My personal preference is not to be married, to make the commitment but not follow the conforming trend of marriage. I'm looking at marriage from a practical perspective, it gives me certain rights and securities...if I could get the benefits of being his wife, being his spouse, without going through some sort of marriage ceremony, I'm sure we would do it...being married for practical reasons makes a lot of sense, once I put away the emotional stuff there doesn't seem to be such a barrier...I don't know what benefits you get out of it emotionally."

It seems that the practical benefits of marriage are obvious and concrete but the emotional benefits are obscure. Ron, when asked if he was considering marriage exclaimed, "definitely! yes! I'm so glad you asked me...what is

exciting for me is that in talking about it and planning it, it has added another dimension to our relationship...it's not so much the legal contract but it's the statement to each other and it's the commitment." Commitment in this context is an attractive emotional concept.

#### Ambivalence about Marriage

The contradictions evident in people's statements about commitment and marriage were interpreted by the author as representative of the general confusion and ambivalence participants experienced about these issues. Thus, Ron who previously indicated a positive reaction to getting married also said, "maybe these discussions are more a phase of getting to know each other and feeling out the territory... it's not a hundred per cent definite." Another example of this confusion is evident in the statements by Meg who declared, "I do idealize the traditional one-and-only marriage with lots of children and family home and extended family...it allows me to fit into society which has a lot of advantages but the price for this kind of relationship is very high and the alternative is not clear to me yet."

#### Marriage as Loss of Choice

It may be that cohabitation allows a feeling of choice that marriage eliminates. Meg, "...one thing I feel really good about right now is that I can marry him or I might not

but it is definitely my choice, I don't feel like I'm being pressured to do something." Marriage in this sense is like a trap and the partner is looked upon as the guard of the internment and eventually becomes the source of unfulfilled dreams and wasted potential.

#### Marriage and Loss of Self-Confidence

Five of the six participants described how they gradually lost confidence in themselves and lost their personal identity as they struggled to gain their partners approval and positive regard. Ron, "No matter what I did it was not enough." Harry described the feeling of burden and self-alienation he experienced in playing roles that suited his partner.

#### What does Marriage Mean?"

There is a general sense of confusion about marriage. Judy who was not of Canadian origin claimed that she was confused by the different culture but what she said reflects the general confusion expressed by all participants. "It frightens me because I don't quite know what it means here, I don't have a grasp of what's behind it...it seems really binding, doesn't seem nice, it seems to be contradictory too my values of what a relationship should be, like I think a relationship should be free, and supportive and an on going process." Harry expresses his confusion in a similar way,

"Marriage...I don't know what it would look like, I know it would not look like what I have seen in the past, experienced in the past, so I don't have a clear vision of what it would look like."

## PARENTING

### Children

Participants were agreed in wanting to have their partner's children as part of their extended family but they were unsure of how to cope with the emotional complexities that arose day to day.

When Jane was first separated and for close to a decade she did not want anyone interfering with her parenting, "I didn't want anyone to step into the father role except their father." She did not want to negotiate different parenting styles, "...everyone has different views on parenting". She realized that in giving up shared parenthood she also gave up support, "no one argued with me but no one supported me either." Now that her youngest child is leaving school she welcomes the support her new partner offers. Often this entails him supporting her in parenting rather than him stepping into a parenting role.

Both Ron and Harry described a tendency to withdraw from parenting their partner's children. Ron, "Sometimes I withdraw from her [the child] I just don't want to deal with her...I get frustrated about her behavior, no matter what I

say it doesn't seem to affect her, so I just carry on."

There is a feeling of powerlessness and ineffectiveness that is harder to cope with as the parent's partner than as the parent. Jane is uncomfortable watching her partner withdraw from dealing with her child. She wants him to stay involved and carry through.

Ron and Harry expressed feeling appreciated and validated as a care-giver when their partner did not interfere with a dispute between themselves and the partner's child. Harry, "She [the parent] did not get involved, she just sat there and let us work it out, that felt really good." This man also believed that he and his partner's child appreciate each other and get along better when the parent is not around and that they sometimes need time alone together.

### Stepparenting

The concept of stepparenting was distasteful to two women. Jane, "When we talked about what our worst attributes were, I said mine was handling other people's kids; I'm not very good at being a stepparent and I don't want to be one." She viewed the responsibilities of parenting as overwhelming and was preparing with joy for her own children to begin their own separate lives. Meg realized she did not want to "give up her star position" with her partner, a place she was sure his children would take over if they came to live with them. She admitted to feeling jealous and tense when

they came to visit. This situation may be better understood by looking at Ron's experience of his children coming for a rare visit. He expressed his concern for the children's comfort during their stay. He realized that his energy would be diverted towards caring for them. "They will feel lost, they will be relying on me to make everything okay, so I'll take some time off work." He realized that his children's presence in the house creates tension from loss of space, regular residents must give up some space temporarily and from a change in dynamics, regular residents receive a smaller portion of time and energy.

#### Feeling Torn

Jane seemed to expect her new partner to cope with the troublesome behavior of her child and at the same time felt responsible for the continuous difficulties. This created a feeling of being torn between the child's and the new partner's needs, a situation she felt helpless to resolve. She looked forward to her teenager leaving home.

#### What Children Want

Meg and Judy described their children's desire for them to marry the new partner. Judy, "It seems very important to the kids, the younger one especially; he doesn't consider the new partner as part of the family unless we are married, he feels very strongly about that." Both of these children

were between seven and nine.

### Appreciation

All participants expressed appreciations for the contribution the new partner offered in the care and emotional support of the children. Lee "He takes over with my son, reads him stories and things."

### Teenagers' Ambivalent Messages

Ron received mixed messages from his partner's teenager about wanting him to move in. At first she was very friendly but after a while "I began to see her concerns coming out, it wasn't pleasant, she was obviously concerned about her mom and I living together."

Harry saw the emotional turmoil his partner's young daughter was going through in trying to sort out where her biological dad fit in her life and where he (Harry) was going to fit. Sometimes she would be very angry and accused him of "you took my mother away from me, we used to walk around all day and eat ice cream cones." He could empathize with the child's distorted perception of how things used to be.

## REWARDS AND COSTS

### Exchanges of Benefits

Practical and emotional benefits are difficult to distinguish because of their interdependence. Practical

benefits strengthen emotional bonds and lack of practical benefits create distance between partners. Two women complained about the imbalance in household chores between themselves and their new partner. Meg, "I'm pissed off that I am doing more house work than he is. The problem is that I don't know how to sort out a balance; I'm the one with the children so it's up to me to be responsible for them and their crap, but at the same time he wants to live with a family. Well part of being with a family is equal sharing. I don't expect him to pay for them, I don't expect him to buy clothes or pay for their activities, I do that". This woman also felt that to involve her new partner in equal housework gave him the right to have chore expectations of her children. This was a reasonable expectation given the ages of her children. She also realized she had not included them in keeping the house clean and that it was the responsibility of all residents not just the adults.

Judy complained "I don't gain a lot from the relationship in terms of manual work, house cleaning, he is hopeless; day to day stuff is all on me and I do resent it a lot...he doesn't cook, he doesn't clean, he's that way, it's not in him, but it does balance out, he helps me with my kids, I gain a lot of financial support, I don't know where I would be financially without him. You always have to pay something, I don't think you find someone whose absolutely perfect in everything".

### Support

The central focus of the relationship for one participant has been the tremendous emotional and financial support the relationship has provided for her and her baby son. At the same time she is intimidated by the responsibility of this freedom, "it has really allowed me to be who I want to be, all the financial security and support, he would encourage me to do whatever I wanted to do, now the hard thing of course is what kind of person do I really want to be...I've got to be responsible for what I do or not do."

Judy describes the emotional support she gets from her partner, "he supports me a lot and he also just lets me be, he really encourages me to express myself and to communicate my emotions, much more than I'm used to...I've done a lot more self-exploration in the last six years than I have ever before."

### Challenge as Support

Harry described his new partner as, "someone who is not letting me be less than I am." He says that he is unable to hide from her, to be complacent or to make do. He considers this to represent supreme support. He feels challenged to look at himself as an equal partner in a partnership with equal power to create or hamper the growth of the relationship. He feels free for the first time in his life to explore who he is and what he wants. He describes

the relationship thus, "...it stretches me, growing is an integral part of the relationship and I may move on and grow in different ways and that's not wrong. Always before there has been a specific growth pattern and when that was ended the relationship was over." This man has learned to ask his partner for what he wants through negotiable short-term commitments. In this way they have come to trust in each other's word and to build a strong bond between them.

#### Relating that is Healing and Progressive

All participants described their current relationships as healing and progressive. Meg, "I get into my old shit every now and then but it seems that my old shit keeps changing. I seem to be getting over some of it and moving on to other things." "I found myself just kind of sopping up this physical closeness and I was able to give that to my kids, it just made me bigger somehow fuller...that part has been so nurturing." Ron reported that, "We spend a lot of time touching and talking, that really ensures we bond very strongly; it comes back to the fact that she wants to do it as much as I do and that's what makes it so strong." Judy observed that, "It seems like I don't think of myself as an intellectual person and he always says, 'well what does it mean to be intellectual?' So he doesn't agree...he is definitely supporting me to feel good about my mind." Jane noticed, "Life is more fun, it feels lighter, more playful,

I have someone to play with, a sense of playful excitement, life isn't so serious now thank god." Meg, "I feel very whole, very loved, respected and feminine; it's a very wholesome relationship". Lee, " I think it is really stabilizin because it is so secure, I've never had that before." Judy, "I would feel very lonely, he has a wonderful sense of humor and he makes me laugh, he is very very insightful with my children, he has been really helpful that way."

#### Making a Contribution

Another side to receiving benefits from a relationship is having a sense of the significance of one's contribution. This is a major concern for two participants. There is a sense of feeling inadequate, of not making enough money, of not giving an equal share to the material side of the partnership and perhaps of feeling indebted.

#### Sex With The Same Partner

For Judy sex is just one aspect of a relationship drenched with a lot of unrealistic expectations of life-long fidelity and enjoyment. "I can understand if he wants to be with another woman, there are so many attractive woman out there, I don't pretend to satisfy every need." Although a liberal belief, she had an underlying trust that her partner would not abuse her vulnerability; perhaps this security allowed her to be more open to the possibilities of what a lifetime together means. She went on to say, "there's

something I really cherish about making love to the same person over and over again; you have this intimacy, total lack of inhibition and he knows you and you can express what you want and what you don't want. It takes a long time to get to that."

A vexing issue for Lee was the different value she and her new partner placed on fidelity. For her life-long sex with one person is an unreasonable expectation. Faced with a realization that her new partner does not meet her physical ideal and that she may at some time be tempted to have an affair she wonders if this will put the relationship in jeopardy. In an attempt to reduce her discomfort with the conflict in values, she may have inhibited her physical enjoyment with her partner.

### Sex as Communication

For all participants sex was an important part of the relationship. Judy, "It means a lot to me actually, it opens up the relationship, it makes me feel like I'm more intimate with him, I trust him, I reveal more of myself." This participant also expressed her disappointment with sex. "One thing that is really wearing in our relationship is that you have to find that extra energy and time for sex, which I am so pressed for; it's like nurturing a plant, if you don't water it and give it food it just dies." To Judy, sexual interactions with her partner require thought and planning and does not just occur spontaneously, there are too many

other demands on her and her partner's time and energy. Like other aspects of relating, sex always needs conscious intension.

#### RELATIONSHIP OF TOPICS AND THEMES

The crucial issue for all participants was their emotional connection with their ex-spouse. This connection had a strong influence on the themes in all the other topic areas. For example, when a participant was able to dissolve the negative perceptual patterns that were established in the first marriage and not carry them forward into the new relationship, opportunities for wholesome change emerged and these were evident in all the other topic areas. A crucial factor in dissolving the negative perceptions was the presence of advanced communication skills between the couple.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## COMPARING RESEARCH FINDINGS

When initiating this study it was found that there was no published research reporting the experience of forming new relationships after divorce. A number of studies dealing with the formation of relationships prior to a first marriage were referred to in Chapter 1. These described issues that were similar to some of the issues presented by participants in this study. This section will compare and contrast the findings of other research with the findings of this study as summarized in the thirty themes reported in the previous chapter. Only a fraction of the thirty themes have been addressed in the published literature, however, there are many other issues which are published but not represented in in this study. This comparison of the current study with the published research is organized under the five main topics used in the previous chapter.

## PAST RELATIONSHIPS

Stephen (1984) found that post-break-up distress varies among premarital couples but the strongest predictor was the measure of symbolic interdependence of couples. Symbolic interdependence refers to the extent couples have constructed a shared view of the world. It is a framework of interwoven beliefs and values that connects couples even when their relationship is unsatisfactory. There still may be

a high level of interdependence between them. When a couple separates, persons are "thrust into a new social status where they may experience difficulty finding support and confirmation for their beliefs and values and for their individual identities which, to a great extent, may have been forged and supported in their previous relationship" (Stephen, 1984,p.5). Stephen's study supports the findings reported in this research. In this study couples were found to experience connectedness to their ex-spouse as a function of time, association and meaning. The connectedness was highly emotional and easily triggered by conversations with the ex-spouse or by situations reminiscent of the ex-spouse. Furthermore, all participants in this study described a phase of discovering themselves after the separation, as if their previous identity had been forged or repressed.

According to Israelstam (1989) what we perceive and how we perceive it is determined by our inner world which is formed in childhood and through relating to significant others. Individuals connect according to the inner structures of their belief systems and form relationships that either serve to confirm and strengthen the belief system or help to disconfirm them through positive interactions. The participants in this study reported that they experienced a disconfirming of their negative self beliefs through the nurturing interactions of their new partner. Harry described an incident where he and his new

partner were bidding farewell to some friends. He spontaneously hugged one of the women and felt immediately anxious believing that it was wrong for him to hug another woman. In his marriage his wife would have accused him of making a pass, but his new partner only saw it as a friendly act. He gradually became aware that this belief was not necessarily relevant in his new relationship and he was able to change his response with the support of his new partner who would sometimes question him about his behavior and who encouraged open communication about his concerns.

Harry, Lee and Meg reported that their new relationship has provided an opportunity for them to become the person they want to become, they are able to step out of some of their old patterns of behavior and thoughts and try to distinguish between what issues relate to the relationship and what issues relate to their new partner's past or their own past. All participants in this study claim more awareness of themselves and others, they claim more responsibility for their actions and for change, and they understand the power of the past to determine the quality of their interactions. Although participants claim to have more knowledge and awareness in their new relationships it is difficult to assess.

### Time

Research indicates that time between divorce and remarriage averages less than 3 years (Giles-Sims & Crosbie-

Burnett, 1989). Meg and Harry met their new partners within two and a half years after their separation, Ron after five years and Jane after eight years. Five of the six participants have been cohabiting for just under two years. Judy has been cohabiting for six years. She met her partner just over a year after her separation. Participants of this study are atypical of the survey discussed by Giles-Sims and Cosbie-Burnett (1989) in that they have not married.

The remarriage process usually includes the past sequence of marriage-separation-divorce-remarriage (Giles-Sims & Crosbie-Burnett, 1989) because problems often focus on experiences of loss and reorganization. Historical events were still prominent in the lives of the participants in this study. They struggled to resolve prior losses, both tangible ones and symbolic ones, they were confused by the potentially new family structure including new members, potential family members, they tried to re-commit or re-define commitment and how it related to family and to the developing relationship; they had to relinquish feelings of deprivation and burden which are such a big part of separation and single life, especially for single mothers.

#### COMMITMENT

Singh and Khullar (1985) conducted research on the role of commitment in marital intimacy. They identified several divergent types of commitment but their actual research does not reflect which styles of commitment are most prevalent,

only that marital commitment is related to socioeconomic and geographic variables in migrants from India. However the commitment styles are useful to explore the trends with participants in this study. The commitment styles are as follows:

**Continuance Commitment:** In this variety commitment is what assures that the relationship will continue. It is a pledge to be involved, a state of binding oneself but it also implies a coercion or pressure to stay in an activity. This may include external or internal factors such as pressure from family and society. The ideal marital commitment is forever, until death do us part.

**Moral Commitment:** Expectations and obligations are defined and there is an underlying implication of an altruistic motive. One must renounce some personal gratifications for the good of the relationship.

**Commitment as Willingness:** Commitment is conceptualized as the individual's willingness to be involved which may include risk, sacrifice and loyalty. This type of commitment has a higher propensity for actively pursuing the relationship.

**Value Commitment:** A high value is placed on personal satisfaction in the relationship itself and not on the ideals of society. It is supported by Rogers (1972) who says that the couple makes a commitment to the growth and changing process of the relationship which is presently life and love enriching.

In attempting to define commitment the participants in this study placed a high value on a voluntary relationship that is personally satisfying. Intimacy or emotional closeness as part of commitment was evident in participants descriptions of communication that was open, understanding, caring and consisted of sharing personal information. They expressed positive regard for each other and enjoyed each other's company. This regard was not based upon perfectionism or preconceived expectations but open to the development of relating and getting to know and understand each other. Although participants expected to continue together they did not promise permanence. There was an underlying sense of uncertainty about the future. Commitment was described as a choice, a responsibility to the well-being of the partner but not to the extent of loss of personal fulfillment.

According to McDonald (1981) social trust is built up gradually through cumulative commitment to a relationship. Social trust and commitment are necessary to avoid uncertainty in the relationship. Uncertainty in relationship motivates people to be calculative and to pursue short-term outcomes (McDonald, 1981). Although participants did not seem to be cognizant of building trust through cumulative commitment it was most evident from Harry's description that he and his partner were in the process of building trust through trustworthy interactions. Even though Harry's

commitments tended to be calculative and short-term, this may be because of the relatively short time span of the relationship. According to McDonald's (1981) notion of social trust it would be predicted that Harry's commitments should gradually become more long term and diffuse.

## MARRIAGE

What seems to create a lot of confusion for couples in this study and perhaps adds to their ambivalence is the lack of institutionalized social guidelines for remarriage. This is supported by research by Bernstein and Collins (1985) and Skeen, Covi, and Robinson (1985) who reported that there are no clear role descriptions, no prescriptions to help clarify the interactions between family members. Terms like my real dad and real mom insinuate that a subsequent marriage is not a real marriage. In some ways cohabiting may be less confusing because the new partner is a boy friend or girl friend and does not carry the ambiguous labels.

In this study the participants struggled with their concept of marriage as self-sacrificing and unfulfilling. Although they wanted to keep some of the practical advantages of marriage they were unclear about the psychological rewards. Marriage is changing according to Thompson and Walker (1989) who did a literature review on women and men in marriage. They claim that woman predominantly received the message to be self-sacrificing in marriage but that the new trend is toward "love as an open

expression of feelings and marriage as a partnership in self-development" (p.846).

In this study the participants supported open expression of their needs and feelings and looked upon their relationship as a partnership in self-development. Although Thompson and Walker (1989) say that woman tend to monitor and orchestrate intimacy more than men, Lee and Judy claimed that their partners were more willing to talk openly and initiated discussions about delicate issues. The two men in the study were extremely open in their interview and had connected with woman who had very high expectations regarding open and effective communication. They both respected and depended on these skills to support them through difficult issues. This may reflect the general disposition of this group of people. They were willing to participate in a study that required open communication.

#### PARENTING AND STEPPARENTING

Knaub and Hanna (1984) studied children's perception of the remarried family strengths as characterized by:

- 1) expression of appreciation to each other;
- 2) willingness to spend time together and participate in activities together;
- 3) good communication patterns;
- 4) commitment;
- 5) religious orientation; and

6) ability to deal with stress in a positive manner.

In general, children indicated that their families were high in the above strengths. Knaub and Hanna admit that they may not have wanted to reveal difficulties.

In this study the participants described their children as experiencing problems with the addition of a new partner. For example, it was revealed that children experience problems in dealing with the loss of the separated parent and loss of the resident parent's attention, problems with divided loyalties, confusion in terms of belonging and conflict in terms of the new partner's authority. The characteristics of family strength (aside from religious orientation) described above are highly evident in this study in the couples' relationship but not in the relationship between the couple and the children. It may be that family strength will increase over time or that there is a lack of commitment towards the new partner's children.

All the participants in this study formed families that would potentially have stepfathers. This is not unusual since according to Giles-Sims and Crosbie-Burnett (1989) five residential stepfather families exist for every residential stepmother family.

Skeen, Covi and Robinson (1985) suggest that stepfathers adjust better to stepparenting than stepmothers and that both need to develop a gentle, flexible approach and a friendship with stepchildren rather than an authoritarian approach.

The men in this study reported a tendency to withdraw or disengage from the daughters of their new partners. This sort of response is also supported by the research of Hetherington (1987) and Skeen, Covi, and Robinson (1985) who report that stepfathers most often used an inattentive or disengaged parenting style and that this tended to become more exaggerated in time especially when stepdaughters were concerned. One participant with two young sons reported that her new partner is very directly involved in caring for them. This relationship has endured for six years and began when the boys were under seven years old.

The most difficult stepchildren-stepparent relationship according to Skenn, Covi, and Robinson (1985) was with teenagers which is confirmed in this study.

#### REWARDS AND COSTS

McDonald (1981) explored the interactions or exchanges that bring people together, contribute to the development of committed relationships and contribute to stability in marriage. He examined how trust and commitment in marriage affect marital exchange processes. The basic premise of social exchange is "that individuals in social interaction attempt to maximize rewards and minimize costs to obtain the most profitable outcomes" (McDonald, 1981).

The exchange is governed by normative marital expectations and obligations of the roles of husband and

wife and by their beliefs and values. This may explain the imbalanced exchange relationships that commonly exist in most contemporary marriages but as stated previously, in remarriages there is no normative marital orientation. Participants in this study are insecure about the lack of norms and also about their beliefs and values regarding marriage and commitment. Weighing the costs and rewards associated with the new relationship is a major concern for all participants and may be a carry over from the bargaining for property at the time of separation or from the imbalance in exchanges during the previous marriage.

Participants expressed outrage at the inequity of exchanges between them and their ex-spouse. The more powerful individual (typically the husband but for one participant in this study, the wife) has an opportunity to exploit the junior partner and maintain the imbalance and maximize individual profit. For example, Harry's ex-wife was more powerful in the relationship than he was. She had more access to resources and he felt exploited. During the marriage he supported her through school and the marriage ended just as she began to make money.

Meg more typically conformed to the role of wife. She was the junior partner in her marriage. Her husband had more education, more money, a better car, a better social life and opportunities to expand his personal growth. Conforming to normative roles allowed the inequitable exchanges to continue during marriage and even after. Both Harry and Meg

indicated that they had suppressed their feelings of anger over the inequity in the relationship during marriage.

James and Johnson (1987) examined social interdependence, psychological health, and the quality of life between remarried couples. Social interdependence is defined as an individual's personal orientation to interacting with their partner which can be cooperative, competitive or individualistic. They found a weak but nonetheless consistent relationship between competitiveness in dealing with their spouse and psychological pathology for both males and females.

Mutual cooperative interdependence promotes psychological health and improves the quality of life. Participants in this study are attempting to create mutual cooperation and are dissatisfied with the traditional or normative roles.

The personal orientations of the participants in this study is unclear. However there is a tendency for participants to be very concerned about equity in the exchange of goods and services. The women in this study reported that they did more housework than their partners. Only one of these women was not employed during this period. Two women resented the imbalance in labour, one believed she gained in other ways but the second got tired of the discrepancy and hired a housecleaner as a solution. Benin and Agostinelli (1988) report that wives who have the full

responsibility of household chores are more depressed and the quality of the marriage suffers.

Exchange is strongly connected to commitment. Social trust is built up through cumulative commitment which gradually reduces uncertainty in the relationship. At some point a couple moves from interest in a relationship because of what it can offer, to interest in a relationship for its own sake. In this sense the commitment is diffuse not based on the exchange of goods and services or profits which become irrelevant. McDonald (1981) speculates that as commitment between individuals increases, exchange is nondirect and cooperation increases with interpersonal satisfaction.

Participants in this study may be at an immature stage of relationship development where there is a high exchange orientation and low commitment. Also, they were still concerned with the inequitable exchanges that took place in their first marriage which may account for such a high concern for equitable exchanges in the second relationship. Exchange tends to be reciprocal, for example, couples may be competitive, hostile, or passive in their interdependence. As trust is developed the nature of their commitment and exchange orientation will also change.

## CHAPTER SIX

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, the significance of the study will be considered followed by a summary of the major findings which will structure the implications for counselling.

The purpose of this study was to elucidate the tangible, particular elements of the experience of building a new relationship after divorce through the subjective account of six previously married participants. The experience of these individuals is unique and not generalizable to the population of individuals in this situation. Nevertheless the findings of this study are intended to sensitize couples and counsellors to some of the problems in creating new relationships that involve children.

In some cases there is significant discrepancy between my research into the literature and the information provided by participants in this study. The literature on developmental aspects of attachment patterns of individuals proved to be somewhat relevant in that past relationships with ex-spouses were a major issue for the participants in this study. However, the library research did not indicate that this would be such a prominent issue. This may be because research has looked at separation from a grieving perspective, concentrating on the process of letting go. But, physical separation does not constitute a severing of

the connection. This is evident by how easily participants reacted to issues related to their ex-spouse. When reviewing the transcriptions of the interviews several times participants expressed surprise, "did I really say that?" One participant wanted to remove a statement about her new partner which was precisely like a statement about her ex-spouse.

In my library investigation I also examined research on mate selection and found that similarities between individuals in attractiveness, values and sex drive was important in courtship (Murstein, 1970). In this study only Lee brought up the issue of homogamy. She and her new partner were of different ages and had different values regarding fidelity. Both of these dissimilarities were a source of discomfort for Lee. Other participants were of similar age, background, education and values.

Scanzoni (1986) discussed the intrinsic and extrinsic gratification that each partner can potentially offer a relationship and this proved to be a major issue for participants in this study. Participants were very concerned to have a balanced exchange relationship. Hyper sensitivity to conflict over dividing assets of a previous marriage where both spouses lose, and anger and guilt over imbalance in the exchange during the previous marriage may carry over into a new relationship where couples are determined to do it differently and/or fairly. For these reasons equitable exchange is a major issue for couples in the process of

developing new relationships after divorce which was not evident in research on developing relationships for first marriages.

Participants were not able to directly articulate their need for an equitable exchange relationship. It emerged as a wariness about getting married. The benefits of marriage and and the pain of separation and divorce seem to have become associated or paired, so that contemplating marriage also means to contemplate a number of painful memories and separation and loss. This is a normal protective human survival strategy, one that needs to be acknowledged and addressed. Prenuptial agreements are a practical approach to coping with fear of dissolution of another relationship. In this study none of the participants had not made such agreements.

Commitment was not an issue I investigated in the initial literature review but is a major concern with the participants of this study. In this study participants were concerned with redefining and understanding commitment.

Finally, my initial investigation did not examine the literature on how merging couples deal with children. This turned out to be another major issue in this study, one that is researched in the context of blended families.

#### Summary of the Major Findings

All participants reported dealing with disturbing emotional feelings toward their ex-spouse. These feelings

erupted in conversations with the ex-spouse and in similar situations but with the new partner. Protective psychological barriers intended for the ex-spouse also emerged inappropriately with the new partner and had the effect of creating distance between them.

Uncertainty was the underlying tone of the initial stages of the new relationship. Uncertainty about what they wanted and what they could give. Gradually this gave way to trust and good will through the cumulative experience of commitment. Trust and commitment also determined the quality of exchange that took place between the couple. The process of building trust over time and through fidelity to commitments was demonstrated in Harry's and Judy's relationships. Uncertainty created a short-term commitment with an exchange of specific goods and services. This was clearly described by Harry who had been living with his partner for a year. They established short-term commitments that were renegotiated over an exchange of specific behaviors. Trust created more stability and a more nondirected exchange evident in Judy's relationship which had endured over six years. Judy and her partner were confident in providing each other with ample freedom and their exchange was more diffuse.

Commitment was discovered to be a process that participants engaged in in the present, not a guarantee or a promise for the future. All participants realized they and

their partner would change in the future. In a sense there was a resignation that relationships end. This may be part of the wariness of getting involved with a new partner.

The development of intimacy was another aspect of commitment which all participants agreed was frequently uncomfortable and difficult.

Fear and confusion about marriage was another common theme for all participants in this study, fear of taking traditional vows and getting locked into a confining, unfulfilling relationship. All participants wanted a ritual to confirm their commitment to each other but no one wanted to make a formal promise "till death do us part." They had come to distrust marriage and commitment as a continuing, viable and rewarding experience that they could trust in.

Finally, parenting and stepparenting was a major issue. Parents, in this case, mothers, sometimes felt torn between their child and their new partner. On the one hand they did not want interference with the care of their children but they did want and appreciate support. They also wanted new partners to engage in an understanding, caring manner with the child during conflict rather than withdraw.

The men in this study were coming into a parent and children unit. They found it difficult to relate to teenage children especially with regard to discipline. There was a tendency for them to withdraw rather than deal with conflict with a child.

## Implications For Counselling

### Breaking Patterns

Israelstam (1989) describes how individuals develop their ability to be intimate through their early positive interactions with primary caregivers. Those who have had positive bonding experiences are likely to develop positive relationships. It is a process best represented by Bowlby (1979) who calls this "internal representation." Any significant experience regarding relationships can be taken in, not just ones relating to the mother. These would include father-child, sibling-child, peer-child and although it is most intense in the beginning of life, it continues with each relationship event to create a fairly fixed belief system about oneself and others, a belief system that is cognitively, affectively, behaviorally and physiologically interconnected and interdependent. So for example a belief system that promotes that intimacy is harmful can lead to anxiety, rage and withdrawal. Furthermore, within the belief system time is melded into past, present and future so that what happened in the past becomes evident in the present and predictable in the future. Life is viewed through the tinted lens of the belief system and determines what we perceive and experience.

From the interview data collected in this study, it seems imperative that counsellors delve into their clients'

personal beliefs about themselves. Some of the beliefs that may have distorted reality for participants and that interfere with forming intimate bonds are described below. Three participants experienced a feeling of loss of identity in their previous marriages and may have a belief that intimacy means giving up oneself. One man expressed a fear of being engulfed in his relationship, of trying to become whatever his new partner wanted him to become. He may have believed that to be loved means one must dissolve all the boundaries. Intimacy derives from a firm sense of identity.

A woman described two occasions where she felt possessive and dependent since her new partner moved in. Her past interactions with her ex-husband were traumatic experiences of breach of trust at a time when she was very dependent. She may believe that men are untrustworthy or that dependency makes men untrustworthy.

A man described how the sex life in his marriage became a burden for him to provide physical pleasure for his wife. What had at first been a positive bond, later turned into feelings of inadequacy and resentment. His belief may have been that closeness means feeling inadequate.

Participants claimed to be aware of the power of past relationships and how they continue to be brought forward into present relationships. However, it is difficult to assess the depth of this understanding because throughout the interview participants constantly referred to their ex-spouse as a source of painful emotional memories and were

often unaware that they responded to their new partners based on this past experience. Understanding the presence of past relationship issues in present relationships seemed to depend on the degree of discomfort the past evoked. A twinge of distress allowed for cognitive connections like, "oh yes I know where that comes from and it has nothing to do with you". In contrast, a painful issue suppressed cognitive connections and triggered the old protective barriers against the new partner. In this sense participants who were still easily triggered by events that related to their past relationship were more strongly connected to the ex-spouse, whereas those participants who were less easily triggered were less connected to their ex-spouse. This may be especially significant in predicting the success of subsequent relationships and may explain the wariness that pervades the attitudes of all the participants about commitment and marriage.

It also helps to shatter the myth that intimacy is warmth and ease. Intimacy as described by participants in this study is created by sharing values, expectations, hurts, humiliations, fears, and strengths. It is a difficult process of revealing their inner selves. It is created by supporting the significant other to go beyond their comfort zone of beliefs to be a fuller functioning person and a more capable partner.

Thompson & Walker (1989) claim that intimacy is defined

using feminine behaviors such as emotional warmth, expressiveness, vulnerability and sensitivity. These are ideal qualities of women, not men and frequently it is difficult to be with and support an expressive, vulnerable man. One woman in this study said she found it uncomfortable to be with her partner when he was insecure and stressed. Although women and men want an emotionally open and expressive relationship it is not always easy to create. We are conditioned according to Thompson and Walker (1989) by our gender. They present ways that men have of being intimate which are often ignored. Men tend to express love through sex, sharing activities, providing practical and economic support, or just being in the other's presence. It is difficult to look at these as men's ways since women do all of these things as well but do not interpret them as intimate behavior. Thompson and Walker (1989) go on to say that we need to broaden our definition of intimacy and not earmark specific behaviors as intimate or not according to our beliefs.

According to Goldberg (1985) there must be equality to have intimacy. This seems logical since inequality in a relationship creates negative emotion and/or suppression of that emotion as has been conveyed by participants in this study.

A specific area where counsellors can be most effective is to facilitate communication skills between partners and between partners and children. Guerney's (1977) Relationship

Enhancement programs develop skill-training for problem prevention and enrichment. With improved communication couples more easily explore and share their beliefs, values and expectations about their relationship, themselves, their partner and difficulties with children. Children can also be taught Relationship Enhancement skills.

### Commitment

This study revealed how uncertainty is normal in the initial stages of a relationship when trust is in the process of being established. There is still a belief that commitment is some sort of assurance of a continued involvement. Couples need to realize that commitment begins with trust and that it is built on consistent, familiar and reliable behavior. Counsellors may need to explore individual expectations to reduce the pressure on the relationship and reduce disappointment between the couple.

Participants in this study revealed their wariness about relationships in general, their loss of faith in marriage as predictable and stable. This wariness is a normal self-protective reaction but makes new relationships quite unstable. The wariness may create feelings of needing to withdraw from the relationship and/or feelings of extreme vulnerability. Although participants in this study openly discussed their fears about marriage they did not directly attempt to reduce their fear by entering a written contract. All couples referred to wanting a contract that would

provide similar security to a marriage contract but they did not actually carry this out as if asking for security indicated a flaw in the relationship. It is important that individuals planning to remarry admit their loss of trust in love-forever and protect themselves with prenuptual agreements.

### Children

The bonds in a biological family are different from those of stepparents and children. What is acceptable from one's own child is not tolerated by a stranger who is sharing the same residence. Negative feelings in families are common and the need for open and effective communication is essential in stepfamilies.

Johnson (1988) examines the value of rituals to reduce the harmful effect of change in status during birth, puberty, marriage, death and to mark the passage of time. Ritual relieves tension and encourages social conformity and reinforces group solidarity. Johnson's (1988) paper analyzed how formal and informal ritual processes function to reduce ambiguity and conflicts in divorce. In this study participants described difficult relations between new partners and children. A celebration where couples declare their commitment to each other may need to include a declaration between children and partners to reduce the tension of change. Such a ceremony need not be a traditional

marriage although marriage is the strongest public affirmation at this time.

#### Implications for Research

This study has revealed insights into the nature of the experience of couples who are building new relationships after having previously been divorced. The findings from the present study have implications for family therapists, counsellors and other professionals working with couples and blended families. This is a parameter that deserves further research given that there are so few studies.

Suggested below are a number of research alternatives that future researchers might follow to expand the foundations of this study.

a) Research alternatives to marriage. The gay community has never been able to wed in the traditional sense. Do they partake in marriage-like rituals? Perhaps a cross-cultural exploration would reveal more alternatives to marriage.

b) A longitudinal study that compares the life experiences of individuals in blended family formations who cohabit and individuals in blended families where the couple has remarried.

c) A look at the effect of the prenuptial agreement on the courtship process of couples preparing for remarriage.

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APPENDIX A  
WRITTEN CONSENT FORM  
Courtship for Remarriage

To the participants in this study:

I am a graduate student at the University of Victoria. The topic of my master's thesis is: Courtship for remarriage. I am interviewing people who are presently in the process of entering a committed relationship after the dissolution of their marriage. As a participant you are being asked to part-take in an in-depth interview which will be audio-taped. You will be asked questions about your experience of entering a new relationship. A second interview will be scheduled if we need more time to cover the material. At a follow-up interview I will give you a summary of the audio-taped material for you to read and revise if I have not captured the essence of your story.

Your involvement in this research will remain confidential and secure. Any material which could identify you will not be used in the thesis or in presentations.

This consent form does not lock you into continuing the study, you may withdraw your participation and your material at any time. Also you may withdraw consent for specific information to be used in the study.

I have read the above statement and agree to participate as an interviewee under the conditions stated above.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions arose from my own personal experience, the literature review and the pilot study. These questions guided the participant interviews.

1. Describe as best you can how your life was going just prior to meeting your new partner, how you felt about yourself?
2. How did you come to live with your new partner?
3. Describe how you experience this relationship, describe the physical, emotional, social and personal reactions you have had.
4. Are you considering marriage with this partner?
5. Describe your feelings about yourself now.
6. How do you feel about your ex-spouse?
7. In your current relationship what is your main concern? What have you done about this? Has this helped?
8. What would you like to tell others who are forming second relationships? What do you wish you had known?
9. Are you consulting other people about your relationship, like counsellors, astrologers, priests? What do you perceive you are getting from them?
10. What does commitment mean to you in this relationship?
11. What meaning does this relationship have in your life?

VITA

Surname: Hanna

Given Names: Roslyn Agnes

Place of Birth: Ottawa, ON.

Date of Birth: March 9, 1950

Educational Institutions Attended:

University of Victoria 1980 to 1990

Degrees Awarded:

B.Ed

University of Victoria

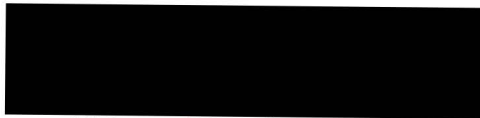
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Title of Thesis: Building a Relationship With a New Partner  
After Divorce

Author



(Signature)

ROSLYN HANNA

(Name in Block Letters)

September 17/90

(Date)