

Blessings and Challenges of Marrying Later in Life

By Christy Monson

Getting married later in life can involve some unique twists and turns. But as couples walk this path with faith, they can discover great joy and develop Christlike qualities. Here are three life lessons from those who found romance in their older years, followed by three tips for blending families. I hope that sharing this will help older newlyweds—or those still waiting for marriage—realize that they are not alone in their journey. These short principles can prompt ideas for strengthening any marriage, whether you've been together 50 years or 5 months.

Keep an Eternal Perspective

Mona (names have been changed) didn't think she would ever find an eternal partner after two failed marriages. Then she moved to a retirement center and met Bob. They became friends, and she introduced him to the gospel. About the time they became engaged, Bob was diagnosed with cancer. He asked Mona if she still wanted to marry him.

"Of course," she said. "I'm marrying you for eternity, not just for this life."

The couple married, and Bob was baptized. They were both in wheelchairs as they were sealed in the temple. Mona said there was a celestial light about Bob that day. He lived another six months, rejoicing in each day with his sweetheart. Now Mona can't wait until they are together again.

Practice Communication

When Cassie fell in love with Albert, she worried about falling into the same negative communication patterns she had seen in her first marriage. So they took a marriage class together, where they learned to:

1. Practice listening skills.
2. Honestly share feelings.
3. Cooperate, not compete.
4. Agree to disagree when needed.
5. Discuss money management.

A few stories and tips for strengthening marriage at any age.





“Building a successful marriage takes practice, but we love each other enough to make it work,” Cassie said.

Navigate Changes with Love

Amanda puzzled over her patriarchal blessing. It said she would be a great influence on her children and grandchildren, but she was past childbearing years and had never married. Then she met Patrick, a pilot. They enjoyed listening to music and playing golf together. After a while, they got married.

Patrick’s first wife had died, with whom he had three daughters. Although they grieved the loss of their mother, they eventually warmed to Amanda’s love. Years passed.

One day, Patrick went flying and never returned. After weeks of searching, the plane was found in a nearby lake. Amanda realized that she was the only living parent Patrick’s daughters had left. She made an extra effort to support and communicate with them, especially through their grief.

Now she and her stepdaughters have a strong bond. They call her for advice and turn to her after a stressful day. With humility and gratitude, Amanda realizes that her patriarchal blessing is being fulfilled after all.

Three Tips for Blending Families

1. **Play together.** Terry and Lucinda are both in their second marriages. Terry’s stepson loves to golf, so they plan a golf date each week. Lucinda set up a special area with books, games, and puzzles for the grandkids when they visit.
2. **Be patient.** After Cassie and Albert married, Cassie’s children refused to visit for Christmas. The couple decided to drop presents off anyway, give the grandkids a hug, and let everyone know they were welcome anytime. It wasn’t long before the entire family grew to love Albert and started gathering for holidays.
3. **Try extra hard to connect.** Amanda reads stories to her new grandchildren over the computer and even prepares easy science lessons for them. Another mom hosts an online chat once a month with family members scattered around the country.

Loving those who come into our lives—like new spouses and children—may not be easy, but marriage and new families can replace loneliness with joy. As we ask Heavenly Father to bless us with charity, we can, at any age, prepare to meet our Savior with our family. ■

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