



happily ever after... again

Marriage is tough, but sometimes a second marriage works much better than the first.

By Matt Bendell and Jade Freeman

For those who have endured failed relationships, it can be difficult to open up again and give love a second chance, but for happily second-married couples **Zahide and Edward Wallace of Lake Nona** and **Marlene and Brian Olsen of Waterford Lakes** that's exactly what they did.

Taking a Chance

There are so many emotions that can surface when a relationship doesn't work out. "The very first instinct after a failed relationship is 'I'm never doing this again!' You fear being hurt, mistreated or taken advantage of," says Zahide. The decision to give dating another try is not taken lightly. For Zahide and Edward, the choice itself was a journey. Ironically, their mutual circle of friends made the transition back into the realm of dating much easier. "When both of our previous marriages ended, a mutual friend introduced us to each other," says Zahide. Marlene and Brian Olsen met much the same way.

Marlene was 35 when she got divorced. She was enjoying being single until her friend Dan introduced her to Brian, who had never been married. It was Dan's birthday and Marlene did some cooking for the event. She says she knew she had Brian hooked after he tasted

her food. "Once he ate my food I knew I had him," she says.

Love Grows

Edward and Zahide both agreed to take it slow and for nearly a year, they enjoyed a deepening friendship. Learning from the past, they both agreed upon some ground rules in moving forward with dating each other exclusively. With shared values, they got off on the right foot. "Once we decided to date, conversations of a potential marriage were commonplace but we both agreed that we would wait on God to help us determine if and when it could happen," says Edward.

For the Olsens it was a bit different, but going slow was still the preferred pace. "I dated my first husband for nine years before we decided to get married. He was totally different when we got married – a night and day difference," Marlene says. "We did everything wrong. I knew this time, before I got married, we would have to live together first. I don't necessarily recommend moving in with someone, it was what I had to do for me to see who he really was," Marlene says.

Getting Engaged

Because they knew marriage arrangements could be overwhelming, the Wallaces decided to plan the wedding before announcing their engagement. "Our family and friends were made aware only a month before the wedding when they received the invitation to attend. The ceremony was easy-going, beautiful and perfect in every way," Zahide says.

In the Olsens' case, **Brian** surprised **Marlene** by asking her to marry him after he returned from a trip to Scotland. He asked her what she wanted as a souvenir – she said she wanted something crystal, Brian returned with two crystal champagne glasses and told her that they were for their wedding.

The Big Day

Edward's mother, **Dr. Patricia Wallace**, was one of the three officiates at the ceremony, making it even more special for the couple. "After their divorces, both Edward and Zahide really

studied themselves," says Patricia. "And in doing so, they had a much better understanding of themselves and the importance of covenant."

In keeping with their serendipitous nature, the Olsens decided to have a surprise wedding. Marlene's first husband didn't like her parents and only wanted to get married with three witnesses; for her second wedding, she wanted her parents to be a part of the celebration. Brian and Marlene wanted to have a small wedding and invited both of their parents over for dinner to surprise them with the news.

Adjusting and Blending Families

The Wallaces had the added joy of blending their families. There were a number of ways Edward and Zahide tried to make the transition go more smoothly for their children. Planning more meals together, going on outings together, and picking each other's children up from school were all ways to remain actively involved and to establish a meaningful presence in their lives. And the mental and emotional 'merge' process is on-going, even now – more than a year later. "Blending a family is not for the faint-hearted but it's not impossible," Zahide says.

Encouragement For Others

So, what advice do Zahide and Edward have to give? Pray for each other. Place value on your relationship, be honest with each other, and recognize that the past is past and in your new relationship you

are looking forward to a brighter future.

The Olsens, who have been married to each other for 20 years now, say that finding balance in the relationship is the best way to make a second marriage work. An aspect to a second marriage to keep in mind is to never condemn the other person for their past and make a fresh start. "It's really important to have a mutual respect for each other," Marlene says.

Both couples say communication is key. Never stop communicating if you want to keep your marriage strong. "Someone deserves everything you have to give," Zahide says. "Very simply put, we both believe in a love that is open, honest, daring, forgiving." **L**

To read about other people who chose to give love a second chance, visit our website at CentralFloridaLifestyle.com.



Zahide and Edward Wallace on their wedding day.

MELISSA T. PHOTOGRAPHY



Marlene and Brian Olsen have been married 20 years.