



# Remarried with Children: Ten Secrets for Successfully Blending and Extending Your Family

By Barbara LeBey

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It's the most daunting task many parents will ever face: bringing two growing families together into one brand new marriage. But even though statistics show that most remarriages are at high risk--especially when there are kids involved--more and more people are learning how to make them work and more and more kids are coming out of them with their psyches and souls intact. This honest and hopeful book looks at those successes--and at some failures--to show what they have in common: ten essential secrets that are at the heart of a healthy blended family.

As a stepparent with six children in a blended family, Barbara LeBey draws on her own family's hard-won success, as well as on extensive interviews and new research to show how to navigate the stresses, sticking points, pitfalls and perils most couples don't even anticipate. Starting with her first controversial secret--that the new marriage comes first, even before the demands of the children--LeBey debunks prevalent stepfamily myths and anticipates common traps. (Among them, money issues, warring stepsiblings, and destructive exes.) A strong advocate for children (including how to guard against fade-out parenting), she also suggests ways that in-laws, schools, and the legal system itself could provide better support for blended families. *REmarried with Children* is an expert, compassionate, down-to-earth book to turn to over and over again for advice, support and sanity.

Key topics include how to:

- Meet your children's and stepchildren's needs--without letting them undermine your new marriage
- Understand the new roles, new rules, and the new relationships for children and stepchildren of a blended family
- Deal with angry and/or manipulative exes--without adding fuel to the fire

- Handle key decisions about finances, religion, traditions, behavior and discipline
- Maintain healthy relationships with your children's grandparents--and other relatives--from a previous marriage
- Recognize warning signs of trouble ahead--and get the help you need

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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**Remarried with Children: Ten Secrets for Successfully Blending and Extending Your Family By  
Barbara LeBey Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #972217 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Bantam
- Published on: 2005-10-25
- Released on: 2005-10-25
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .66" w x 6.00" l, .70 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 318 pages



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### **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

If mothers-in-law have a difficult reputation, then step-children could give the devil a run for his money. At least that's the gist of this helpful, but ultimately disturbing look at the modern-day Brady Bunch. More than half of American families now fall into the category of blended/extended, but the clans profiled by LeBey (*Family Estrangements*) suggest that most are nowhere near as happy-go-lucky as the ones portrayed on TV. Indeed, most of the titular 10 secrets that LeBey recommends revolve around handling the emotions and behavioral problems of children. LeBey counters conventional wisdom by recommending that couples put their new marriage first, ahead of their children's feelings. Only then, she says, will their union survive the maelstrom of cold shoulders, rebellion and even incestuous relations that erupt in children of newly blended families. LeBey is no stranger to these perils herself, having weathered a remarriage and family blending nearly 30 years ago. She speaks of her experiences infrequently, however, preferring to rely on the advice of psychological studies, clergy, marriage counselors, teachers and other specialists. LeBey does occasionally inject a dose of sharp humor among her tips, and her book is peppered with lists (e.g., "How Do You Know If You're Dealing with a Lunatic Ex-Spouse?" and "Ten Traps for Prospective Stepmothers"). But most of the book's value lies in its many anecdotes of families who've survived their new incarnations; merely reading about the problems overcome by many of them should be reassuring to anyone working on an extended family. And while the couples featured are mostly dealing with the outcome of divorce, the chapter devoted to widows, widowers and grieving children is both compassionate and useful.

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From the Inside Flap

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#### About the Author

Barbara LeBey is a lawyer, former judge, and a wife, mother, and grandmother. Her first book, *Family Estrangements*, was featured in *People* magazine, as well as on Good Morning America and The Today Show. She lives with her husband in Atlanta, Georgia.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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