

Scene

life, arts and the pursuit of happiness

INSIDE!

An old world reality.

D-3



Time doesn't always heal

Local counselor has a program to help check out of heartbreak hotel

By **JASON COLLINGTON**
World Scene Writer

Jeff Rindt is a divorced man with a message to all who are heartbroken: What you are left with is more important than what you lost.

As hard as that might sound to anyone fresh from a divorce or a horrible breakup, Rindt knows it's true. He's not only a divorcee, he's a psychotherapist in Tulsa who's spent the last six years creating a program that helps people heal from a broken heart.

"Getting On With It" consists of 24 CDs and a 300-page workbook that Rindt said fills the void that exists in today's self-help world.

Rindt began researching the topic of heartbreak after his own divorce. After 18 years, the father of three couldn't find anyone or anything to help him through his emotions. And he was someone who spent his days counseling other couples, trying to save their relationships.

"Whenever you go through a breakup or divorce, people tell you that time will heal you, that eventually you will feel better," he said. "Well, that's just not true."

By analyzing his own experience and researching the topic, Rindt came away with a piece of advice that he repeats throughout his program: "We need to be healthy people to have healthy relationships."

"I start in the program not with the failed relationship but with the individual," he said. "You have to remember, you were not born with this person attached to your hip. The rest of the world lives without this person every day."

"At the end, you get so healthy as an individual, it doesn't hurt that this person is not a part of your life anymore. You get to thinking not what this relationship will do to you, but what it can do to your future."

When Kristy Umfleet's 13-year marriage ended, she described herself as "a total flattened-out mess." She would have panic attacks in public places. She cried constantly. She lost almost 50 pounds. She was in such a downward spiral that her 7-year-old daughter told her, "If I slap you across the face, you will quit crying over daddy."

"When she told me that, I looked at her and she replied, 'Oh, not hard. Just enough to make you think of something else,'" Umfleet said. "Even a 7-year-old could recognize I was in bad shape."

Umfleet's ex-husband bought the series for her, and now the 43-year-old mother of three credits it for her new life.

"It helped me let it go," she said. "Once you realize that your spouse is



JOHN CLANTON/Tulsa World

Local psychotherapist Jeff Rindt talks about a series of CDs he created to help people deal with heartbreak after a breakup or divorce.

to order GETTING ON WITH IT

To order the "Getting On With It" program for \$240 or to contact Jeff Rindt, call The American Center for Relationships and Recovery at 742-7722 or log on to www.relationshipsandrecovery.com.

searching for happiness just like you, you are able to see him and the situation in a totally different light. You learn it's not personal. We all make choices that are not based on hurting someone else."

Umfleet discovered she never had the self-esteem to make a marriage successful.

"By asking and answering the questions Jeff gives you in the program, you realize that you have been looking at the relationship from a

skewed point of view," she said.

She said not only is she stronger because of the program but all of her relationships have benefited, including those with her ex-husband, her children and her co-workers.

"I think the program has helped her deal with the situation, and I think deal with the situation much better than she could have ever done on her own," said Michael Umfleet, her ex-husband. "She realizes she is a good person and always was, and I think her self-esteem has increased tremendously."

As a mother, Kristy Umfleet never felt she was strong enough to give her kids what they needed.

"Now, I have the tools to raise the kids as strong as I have become," she said. "I want so much for my kids to feel good about themselves and be their best self and succeed in life. I

never had a healthy esteem in all my life. I really feel like now I can lead by example."

Rindt said one of the hardest facts for the heartbroken to understand is that they can't control who loves them.

"I mean relationships are great and love is wonderful, but they are not the only things you need in life," he said. "People will discover in the program that the reason why many relationships end is we feel restless because we are not becoming what we need to be."

That was true for him. He met his ex-wife at 13 and married at 20. After 18 years and three kids, they divorced.

"There are times when it is the best thing for everyone involved," said Rindt, who is now dating. "That is not something I would have said 10 or 15 years ago. There are times

when a relationship has run its course. It's just not healthy."

Rindt said his CD series was made with four groups in mind: people who are still struggling years after a breakup, people who can't move on after a divorce that is five to 10 years old, people who have been single for a long time, and married couples who can't find a way to make it work. For the latter, he said, "I help you discover if your relationship is worth trying to save."

For Umfleet, she said the depth of the program is the reason why it works. "This is not just a little quiz you take," she said. "It actually gets underneath the problem and pushes up from the bottom. My heart aches for those who go through a divorce without it."

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Fiancées of Iraq casualties are often the forgotten survivors

Pictures of Stacey Martinez and 2nd Lt. Jeffrey Graham hang on Martinez's refrigerator. The two were to be married on Nov. 6, but Graham was killed on Feb. 19 in Iraq.

PAM SPAULDING/
The (Louisville, Ky.)
Courier-Journal/
GNS



By **KATYA CENGL**
The (Louisville, Ky.) Courier-Journal

More than 1,000 men and women from the U.S. military, the majority of them Army, have been killed since the war in Iraq began in March 2003. The wives and husbands, or parents, of the fallen are usually offered flags, medals and counseling.

Fiancées often aren't even notified. Sometimes the Army doesn't even know they exist. Unless a soldier has made a point of listing a fiancée on an emergency data card, this loved one is officially anonymous.

No one knows how many of these "forgotten survivors" exist. No list keeps track of them; no one follows up on how they are doing.

"One of the problems is when soldiers deploy they often don't update them (their emergency data cards)," says Shari Lawrence, deputy public affairs officer with the Army Human Resources Command. "And if that person is not listed, we don't know that person exists."

Unless the soldier has designated his fiancée, or her fiancé, to take care of the disposition of physical and material remains — something that rarely happens, said Lawrence

— the betrothed receives no special attention from the Army brass. No flag at the soldier's funeral, no offer of an Army casualty assistance officer to help cope with the loss.

Fiancées of fallen soldiers must deal on their own with perhaps the greatest grief of their lives. If they are lucky, an Army chaplain will offer his or her services, even though this gesture doesn't fall under official duties. Sometimes an extra flag will be set aside. But those cases are rare.

"Unfortunately, it is a matter of legal standing, and they just don't have any," says Lawrence. "That is pretty much across the board with all DOD (Department of Defense)."

Fiance's family eases the pain

On Nov. 6, Stacey Martinez was supposed to walk down the aisle in Frankfort, Ky. A picture of the white, floor-length wedding gown the 25-year-old was going to wear is posted on the refrigerator at her mother's house. The reception hall, bridesmaid dresses, tuxedos and honeymoon location were all chosen. Martinez even has the ring; she wears it on her slender ring finger on her right hand.

Her fiancé, Jeffrey Graham, a 2nd lieu-

tenant in the Army, was killed Feb. 19 when an explosive device blew up in front of him while he was on foot patrol in central Iraq. Two days later, Martinez and her mother were supposed to choose the menu for the wedding reception. Instead, they prepared for the funeral — held at the same church where the couple were to be married.

The day after Graham died, Martinez received a letter from him postmarked Jan. 28. She keeps the letter with all his others in a camouflage Army bag in her closet. In it, her 24-year-old fiancé had written: "I can't wait for Nov. 6. It will be the happiest moment of my life."

"Memories don't hurt," she says. "What hurts the most is thinking about the future that's not there anymore."

During the three years they were engaged, Martinez says, they planned to marry many times. But each time it was postponed. They wanted to marry after Graham graduated from the University of Kentucky in May 2003, but the Army didn't tell him where he would be going until the last minute, which made planning the big family wedding they wanted almost impossible. So they waited. Before Gra-

SEE FIANCÉES D-2