

# ***UNITED FAMILIES INTERNATIONAL***

## ***A Guide to Family Issues: The Marriage Advantage***



### ***Publisher***

United Families International

### ***Writing & Research***

Marcia Barlow

### ***Editing***

Dennis Durband

### ***Graphic Design***

Larry Mishler

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United Families International  
P.O. Box 2630, Gilbert, Arizona 85299-2630  
(480) 632-5450 Office / (480) 892-4417 FAX  
[www.unitedfamilies.org](http://www.unitedfamilies.org)

# Introduction

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## About the Guide

This publication includes peer-reviewed scientific research, expert commentary and sound logical arguments regarding the societal benefits of marriage between one man and one woman. In preparation for this publication, United Families International (UFI) reviewed a vast number of social science studies, books and other sources on the topic of marriage. Watch for updates to this and other similar guides on topics impacting the family on UFI's website: [www.unitedfamilies.org](http://www.unitedfamilies.org)

## Position Statement

Marriage is crucial to society's stability and its future. The weight of social science research indicates that marriage provides unique benefits for a man, woman and the children resulting from the marital union. Marriage assures that children have access to a mother and a father and the unique contributions that both provide to child development. The research is clear and profound: the fracturing of the natural family and the weakening of the institution of marriage come with a very severe cost to society. The breakdown of the traditional family handicaps future generations.

Revitalizing marriage should be a priority worldwide. Every nation stands to benefit from healthy marriages and healthy communities. Passing on to the next generation a happier, healthier and more successful marriage culture carries with it clear and succinct benefits.

United Families International respects the rights of individuals to freely associate. We respect the noble efforts of single parents who strive to raise their children in less than ideal circumstances. While the research cited in this publication points to the overall advantages experienced by married biological parents, we acknowledge that a broad continuum of outcomes exists among all categories of parents. Nevertheless, it is incumbent upon public policy makers to recognize the significant value added to communities by the marriage advantage. Cost-benefit analyses and all things considered, marriage between a man and a woman is an essential asset that assures a productive and stable community.

## About United Families International

United Families International is a 501(c)(3) public charity devoted to strengthening the traditional family as the fundamental unit of society at the local, national and international levels. UFI is a worldwide organization, accredited with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. UFI seeks (1) to educate government, community and religious leaders and citizens at the grass roots level on issues affecting the family and (2) to promote public policies and programs that preserve the traditional family.

## **Acknowledgements**

United Families International wishes to thank Assistant Professor Brad Wilcox, a faculty member with the University of Virginia Department of Sociology, for his assistance in the review of this booklet.

We also express our gratitude to The Heritage Foundation and The Howard Center for Family, Religion & Society for permitting the use of their charts and graphs.

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\*Courtesy of The Howard Center for Family, Religion & Society

\*\*Courtesy of The Heritage Foundation



# Executive Summary

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Marriage is a unique, opposite-sex union with legal, social, economic and spiritual dimensions. It is a fundamental and universal social institution and the mechanism by which every known society seeks to obtain for each child the love, attention and resources of a mother and a father. The happiness, development and productivity of a new generation are bound to the marriage and the family unit. The successful development of children is critical to the success and preservation of nations. Because of marriage's essential role, states and nations have chosen to provide unique benefits and incentives to those who choose to be married.

There is now broad bipartisan recognition that healthy marriage affords substantial benefits for adults and their children. Stable marriage has a positive effect on the economic, emotional and psychological well-being of men and women and dramatically benefits the well-being of children. A wealth of social science research attests to this conclusion. Efforts to uphold marriage between one man and one woman as the foundation for the family – the fundamental unit of society – should be supported and strengthened. Families, communities and responsible governments should use all prudent means to encourage healthy, lawful marriage and to discourage pre-marital sex, out-of-wedlock childbearing, adultery, divorce and alternative family forms.

## **Marriage Leads to:**

- Better health and greater longevity
- Less crime, less violence
- Safer homes
- Safer communities
- Less poverty, more wealth
- Healthier society
- Better intimate relations
- Less substance abuse and addiction
- Less hardship and better outcomes for children
- Less government, lower taxes
- More happiness

# Foreword

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This publication provides factual support, motivation and encouragement to responsible citizens and policy makers in the continuing effort to preserve and protect the traditional family as the fundamental unit of society.

This guide strives to serve the following purposes:

**To educate** the public, government agencies, news media, non-governmental organizations, religious organizations, families and individuals on facts about marriage and the consequences of marriage to individuals and society;

**To arm** citizens with factual information enabling them to make informed decisions regarding relationships and family;

**To equip** policy makers with research, facts and logical arguments in favor of marriage; and

**To provide** a reference source to citizens for use in articulating the benefits of marriage.

The guide was also created to assist in advancing the debate in the following scenarios:

- legislative debates
- school board meetings
- city council meetings
- preparing letters to the editor
- classroom debates
- educational term papers
- community involvement
- discussions with friends, family and neighbors

The section on **Questions & Answers about Marriage** provides insights into the arguments frequently raised in discussions and publicity about marriage.

The section on **Fast Facts & Commentary** supports the Questions & Answers section by providing peer-reviewed research, expert analysis and social science data regarding the myths and misrepresentations surrounding marriage.

*“The future belongs to those people and cultures that deeply commit to ideas grounded in human nature: Men and women are not interchangeable units; sex has a meaning beyond immediate pleasure, society needs babies; children need mothers and fathers; marriage is a word for the way we join men and women to make the future happen.”*

**Maggie Gallagher**,  
President of the Institute for Marriage and Public Policy, syndicated columnist and the author of three books on marriage

# Questions & Answers about Marriage

*Supporting documentation  
and commentary can be found  
in the Fast Facts & Commentary section*

# INTEREST IN MARRIAGE

*"A great marriage is not when a perfect couple comes together. It is when an imperfect couple grows together and learns to enjoy their differences."*

**Dave Meurer,**  
"Daze of our Wives; A Semi-Helpful Guide to Marital Bliss"  
(Bethany House Publishers:  
Minneapolis, Minnesota,  
2000): 19.

## **Question 1**

*Are people still interested in getting married?*

## **Answer**

**Ninety-eight percent of never-married survey respondents said they wanted to marry, and 88 percent said that marriage should be a lifelong commitment.\***

Asked to select their top two goals, a majority of Americans included a happy marriage as a foremost goal. The number one aspiration of high school seniors was "having a good marriage and family life."\*\* The proportion of high school seniors calling marriage and family "extremely important" has risen over the last two decades. Even cohabiting couples cast an eye toward marriage, as they mistakenly view their domestic relationships as a precursor to a successful marriage. Numerous surveys show that most young people continue to aspire to life-long marriage and not to the disposable marriages too often modeled by those in the media spotlight.

In an international survey, only 10 percent of Americans agreed that "marriage is an out-dated institution," compared to 26 percent in the United Kingdom and 36 percent in France. A majority of American high school seniors want to get married -- 82 percent of girls and 70 percent of boys agree that "having a good marriage and family life" is "extremely important" to them.\*\*\*

\* National telephone survey of 1,503 Americans age 18 and older, (2004)

\*\* Monitoring the Future Survey, (1995)

\*\*\* David Popenoe, The Future of Marriage in America, The National Marriage Project, (2007).

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 1-16, 156-160**

# MARRIED VS. SINGLE

## Question 2

*To be happy, shouldn't you just stay single?*

## Answer

**When it comes to happiness, married people have a decided advantage.** A survey of 14,000 adults over a 10-year-period found that marital status was one of the most important predictors of happiness. According to the latest data, 40 percent of married individuals said they were very happy with their life in general, compared with just less than 25 percent of those who were single or cohabiting. The separated and divorced were the least happy group.\*

Married people reported the highest levels of well-being, regardless of whether they were happily married or not. Even when controlling for relationship happiness, being married is associated with higher self-esteem, greater life satisfaction, greater happiness and less distress.\*\*

Married people are not only happier, they have better health and financial resources as well. In looking at indicators of well-being, the data gives little support to the myth that single adults lead better, happier lives.

\* Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher, "The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier and Better off Financially," (New York: Doubleday, October 2000): 67.

\*\* Claire Kamp Dush and Paul Amato, "Consequences of Relationship Status and Quality for Subjective Well-Being," Journal of Social and Personal Relationships 22(5) (2005): 607-627.

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 6, 17-19, 21-23, 26-32, 41-45, 90-129**

*Research in 17 nations found that married men and women report significantly higher levels of happiness than unmarried people.*

**Steven Stack and Ross Eshleman,** "Marital Status and Happiness: A 17-Nation Study," Journal of Marriage and the Family 60 (May 1998): 527-530

# MARRIAGE & THE WORKPLACE

*"Companies working to become increasingly profitable will do well to realize that 'business' takes place inside and outside the workplace. Inasmuch as your company works to increase productivity, efficiency and profitability, it's smart to make marriage and divorce your business."*

**Matthew Turvey and David Olson,**  
Marriage & Family Wellness:  
Corporate America's Business?  
A Marriage CoMission Research Report,  
Life Innovations, Inc., 2006

## Question 3

*Can business management afford to ignore the state of marriage among employees, or are healthy marriages beneficial to profit-driven organizations?*

## Answer

**At first glance, it would appear that marriage and the business world are distinctly unrelated. However, research over recent decades reveals a different perspective. Building marriages and strong families is not only good for individuals and communities, but it is good for a company's bottom line. Successfully married individuals with stable family relationships contribute to increased profits in the workplace. Unhappy marriages and divorce among employees often decrease profitability.**

Employees in failing relationships can cost employers money. There are substantial productivity declines for workers in failing relationships. These workers often have health concerns: increased stress and anxiety, increased rates of depression and increased rates of substance abuse. These workers directly cost companies in higher healthcare expenditures and absentee rates and indirectly through the societal effects of broken families.

Conversely, employees in successful relationships are more likely to increase profits for their employers. These workers are more stable, more committed to their employer and are often considered more dependable and motivated. Employees in healthy relationships are also physically healthier, experiencing fewer chronic health problems like stress, anxiety and depression, saving employers money in overall health care expenditures.

In the interests of increasing profitability, employers will do well to realize that business takes place in the boardroom and the family room.\* In short, happily-married employees are good for business.

\* Matthew Turvey and David Olson, "Marriage & Family Wellness: Corporate America's Business?" A Marriage CoMission Research Report in conjunction with Life Innovations, (2006).

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 15-23, 38-45, 90-129**

# ALTERNATE FAMILY FORMS

## **Question 4**

*Since traditional marriage in the U.S. has been declining for a few decades, isn't the logical course to follow the Scandinavian model in which the government steps in to assist families by meeting the needs of both parents and children while promoting alternate family forms?*

---

## **Answer**

**If countries choose to follow the Scandinavian model by promoting and rewarding alternate family forms (single parenting, cohabitation, same-sex unions) that break down traditional marriage, their governments must also be prepared for the inevitable rise in welfare costs.**

Government can never create enough social programs to compensate for problems driven by premarital sex, out-of-wedlock childbearing and failed marriages.

The shoring up of traditional marriage is essential. Of the \$150 billion a year spent on various means-tested welfare programs in the United States, 75 percent of that money goes to single parents and individuals in non-traditional relationships. The increasing frequency of alternative family forms does not justify government endorsement. The United States does not have a "welfare problem" so much as it has a problem related to the decline of marriage.

Marriage researcher David Popenoe said that the United States is moving in the direction of the weaker family structures of Europe while lacking many of the welfare "safety-nets" found there, and that the negative effects of marital decline on children will likely be heightened in America.

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 6, 26-129, 140-155**

*"When men and women fail to form stable marriages, the first result is a vast expansion of government attempts to cope with the high cost in social needs that result. There is scarcely a dollar that state and federal government spend on social programs that is not driven in large part by family fragmentation: crime, poverty, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, school failure, mental and physical health problems."*

**Maggie Gallagher,**  
*"The Stakes,"*  
National Review,  
July, 2003

# MARRIAGE PREVALENCE

*Seventy-three percent of all women who have reached the age of 30 now occupy a traditional female role as either wives or widows.*

U.S. Census Bureau, 2005

## **Question 5**

*Is it true that the majority of women in the United States today are living without a husband?*

---

## **Answer**

**According to 2005 figures from the U.S. Census Bureau, a clear majority (56 percent) of all women over the age of 20 were married.** Moreover, nearly all women in the U.S. will get married at one time or another. Two-thirds of the women in the 34-39 and 40-44 age groups were married. Among women 50 and over, 94 percent had been married at one time or another and some 79 percent were either currently married or widowed.

A 2007 media headline stated “Fifty-One Percent of All Women Are Now Living without a Spouse.” This deceptive use of U.S. census data included girls between the ages of 15 and 19, and women whose husbands were working out of town, in the military or who were institutionalized. The misleading “51 percent” figure also included nine million elderly widowed women.

The Census Bureau numbers clearly show that marriage is far from dead. Marriage is less common than it used to be, but the number of people who want to be married and those succeeding in marriage are still extraordinarily high. Nevertheless, the media portrays marriage as a collapsing, outmoded, dysfunctional institution – despite its longevity and resilience.

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 1-11**

# GOVERNMENT & MARRIAGE

## Question 6

*Would it be better if the government got completely out of marriage? Why not leave the defining and support of marriage to individuals and churches?*

## Answer

**For centuries, civil law around the world supported marriage as a necessary and fundamental social good. Marriage and family are the structural underpinning of all successful societies. Marriage is the legal framework that ties men and women to the children their union creates; it is the logical and ideal setting for nurturing and developing the next generation.**

Societies cannot assume that such a vital, life-sustaining entity as marriage can be maintained without the support of government and the community, particularly in secularized society. Government does not depend upon churches and faith communities to assure the education of children or the maintenance of private property because it is understood that the proper function of government is to produce educated citizens and to facilitate prosperous economies. Is marriage beneficial enough to society that governmental, community and religious institutions should all support it? Clearly, that is why for centuries they have done so.

Government involvement in marriage would not simply end with the cessation of issuing marriage licenses. Government would continue to be heavily involved as taxpayer-funded public agencies pick up the pieces and engage in damage control when marriage either does not occur or when marriage fails. Each year, the government spends between \$150 and \$200 billion in subsidies to single parents. Much of this expense could be avoided if the mothers were married to the fathers of their children. Responsible individuals of all political persuasions acknowledge the importance of marriage to the well-being of children, adults and society as a whole. They recognize that government has a long-established and legitimate role in maintaining and supporting marriage.

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 15, 16, 26-112, 165-173**

*Federal and state governments spend about \$150 billion each year subsidizing single-parent families.*

**Patrick Fagan,**  
“Encouraging Marriage and Discouraging Divorce”  
The Heritage Foundation  
Backgrounder  
Report, No. 1421,  
March 26, 2001

# SAME-SEX “MARRIAGE”

*“Marriage is at the center of the family, and the family is the basis of society itself. The government’s interest in the marriage bond, and the reason it treats heterosexual unions in a manner unlike all other relationships, is closely related to the welfare of children. Government registers and endorses marriage between a man and a woman in order to ensure a stable environment for the raising and nurturing of children. Social science on this matter is conclusive: Children need both a mom and a dad.”*

**U.S. Senator Sam Brownback**, “Defining Marriage Down,” July 9, 2004, National Review Online

## **Question 7**

*Since marriage is about loving, committed relationships, should same-sex couples be allowed to enjoy all of the benefits afforded by marriage?*

---

## **Answer**

**Marriage does not exist so that government can sanction and validate romantic relationships; civil marriage exists because society needs children and it needs them raised in the most optimal environment possible.** Tax breaks, subsidies and other benefits are conferred because society receives something in return. A stable marriage between a man and a woman is the only relationship that has the biological potential to produce children and then provide the optimal environment in which to rear the next generation. This is a societal and governmental imperative.

Marriage is not an issue of love, rights or sexual preference. All loving relationships are not equal, nor have they ever been so. United Families International respects the rights of people to freely associate as they wish, while also recognizing that marriage is not about adult rights and adult benefits. Marriage is principally about the bearing, nurturing and development of children. There is no mandate to ratify a “right” for some individuals that stands in direct conflict with the equal right of children to have both a mother and a father.

The same arguments that require legal recognition of same-sex “marriage” also require legal acknowledgement and protection for any consensual sexual practice or form of marriage. Once the significance of a union between one man and one woman is abandoned, there will be little -- if any -- principled ground upon which to deny marital status to group marriage, incestuous coupling or any type of loving relationship. Same-sex unions are not a minor change to marriage, but represent a radical redefinition of the one institution we know to be best for children.

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 14-16, 48, 57-89, 156-160, 165-173**

# INDIVIDUAL HAPPINESS

## Question 8

*Is individual happiness the most important goal in life for adults? Do marriage and family hinder autonomy, individuality and the pursuit of happiness?*

## Answer

The self-fulfillment sentiment is articulated by the following statements:

“As the economic necessity of it has become less pressing, people have discovered that they no longer need marriage. It restricts our choices and is too confining, which is why fewer people are marrying.” -- *Laura Kipnis, professor of media studies at Northwestern University*

“We no longer need a spouse for economic security or to [financially] take care of us when we get old. We can do these things for ourselves now.” -- *Stephanie Coontz, professor of history at The Evergreen State College*

**Emotional fulfillment and individual happiness are important and worthy goals, but they are not the only worthwhile goals. The quest for greater happiness and individual choice often clashes directly with the obligations and social norms that hold families together and enable communities to prosper. Children greatly benefit from healthy, intact marriages. Adult happiness and well-being cannot trump the best interests of children without consequences.**

On measures of happiness and health, married people fared better than non-married persons. Many married persons find great pleasure and fulfillment in raising children and sharing in their joys and successes. This family life often leads to further joys with the presence of grandchildren. When individuals make sacrifices for the benefit of their family, they report greater long-term happiness and self-fulfillment.

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 17-23, 38-54**

*“Marriage itself, detached from any objective foundation, is seen by many as possessing little or no intrinsic worth but as being a means to an end: the end, that is, of ‘personal happiness’ or ‘fulfillment.’ In the quest for fulfillment, spouses and children are often looked upon not as persons to be loved and valued for their own sake but as objects to be acquired, enjoyed, and discarded.”*

**William Bennett,**  
“The Broken  
Hearth: Reversing  
the Moral  
Collapse of the  
American Family”  
(Doubleday: 2001):  
11-12

# THE KEY TO HAPPY MARRIAGE

*"I didn't marry you because you were perfect. I didn't even marry you because I loved you. I married you because you gave me a promise. That promise made up for your faults. And the promise I gave you made up for mine. Two imperfect people got married and it was the promise that made the marriage. And when our children were growing up, it wasn't a house that protected them; and it wasn't our love that protected them--it was that promise."*

**Thornton Wilder,**  
"The Skin of Our Teeth," (Harper Perennial Modern Classics: 2003)

## Question 9

*Ninety-four percent of never-married singles agreed that "when you marry you want your spouse to be your soul mate, first and foremost."\* Is finding the right person – one's soul mate -- to love and marry the key to a happy marriage?*

## Answer

**Searching for the "right person" facilitates the acceptability of disposable marriages and a perpetual search for that one, unique person. Rather than searching for one's "soul mate," the focus should be on developing character traits to be the "right person."**

While love is an important component of a successful marriage, love alone is not enough. Marriage requires commitment, faithfulness, work and sacrifice. A couple can be successful in marriage when each member:

- has done a reasonable job of selecting a like-minded mate;
- is committed to marriage in spite of the inevitable challenges;
- has developed effective communication and problem-solving skills;
- is more concerned about their spouse than themselves and has developed preservation and enhancement of love skills; and
- recognizes a commitment to past and future generations.

Sexual attraction, while certainly important to marriage, is only one of many components that go into successful partner selection. Ideally, one is marrying not only a sexual partner, but also a best friend. The evidence of long-term marital success suggests that partners should be selected mainly on the grounds of mutual compatibility and shared attitudes, values and beliefs. These are grounds that extend beyond physical attraction, which declines with aging and familiarity.

\* Barbara Dafoe Whitehead and David Popenoe, "Who Wants to Marry a Soulmate?" Report by the National Marriage Project, Rutgers University, (2001).

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 25, 140-155**

# FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

## Question 10

*Are radical feminists correct in asserting that marriage was instituted for the benefit of men, and that it is oppressive to women physically, emotionally and economically?*

---

## Answer

**This perspective does not hold up under scrutiny. Marriage, as an institution, has enormous economic benefits for women and children.** Stable marriage has substantial positive, emotional and psychological benefits for women, and it dramatically improves the well-being of children. Not surprisingly, the harsh anti-marriage views of radical feminists have failed to gain broad public acceptance, and the overwhelming majority of Americans continue to view marriage in a positive light. In all socioeconomic classes, most men and women wish to marry, and they entertain hope for happiness and stability within marriage.

Married women experience lower levels of violence, poverty, depression and emotional problems, enjoy better sex lives and live longer than single women. While marriage enhances well-being for both genders, married women scored higher than married men on measures of perception of well-being.\*

Wives typically gain greater financial advantages from marriage. Family life -- marriage and childbearing -- has an extremely important civilizing influence on men. Marriage socializes men by focusing and regulating their sexual energy, provides the greatest likelihood of safety for women, provides children with a mother and a father and provides greater stability.

\* Harsha Mookherjee, "Marital Status, Gender, and Perception of Well-Being," *The Journal of Social Psychology* 137 (1997): 95-105.

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 6, 7, 19-23, 26-42, 46-49, 53, 56-57, 90-91, 94-128, 131**

*"... Being married is like having somebody permanently in your corner, it feels limitless, not limited."*

**Feminist Gloria Steinem**, after marrying for the first time at age 66, *People Magazine*

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

*"Recent studies from Canada, Great Britain, and here in the United States all point to the same conclusion. Young women who live in a cohabiting relationship with a male put themselves and their children at significant risk of violence and abuse."*

**Roger Sider,**  
"Living Together Risky for Young Women and Children," Grand Rapids Press, (1999, 25 January).

## **Question 11**

*Is domestic violence inherent in marriage?*

---

## **Answer**

**Domestic violence is most common in the transitory, free-form, cohabitating relationships that are surging in numbers. The claim that married women are subject to greater risk of violence collapses under the weight of research. While there are serious and lamentable exceptions that must be addressed, the research is unequivocal: overall, marriage is the safest place for women and children.**

In a study by the United States Department of Justice, the National Crime Victimization Survey data suggested that mothers with children who had married (including those who were currently married as well as those who were divorced and separated) were half as likely to experience domestic violence by an intimate as were mothers with children who have never been married.

Unmarried cohabitants reported nearly four times more serious physical injuries as compared to married couples.\* U.S. and Canadian women in cohabiting relationships were nine times more likely to be killed by their partner than women in marital relationships.\*\*

\* Sonia Miner Salari and Bret Baldwin, "Verbal, Physical and Injurious Aggression among Intimate Couples Over Time," *Journal of Family Issues* 23 (2002): 523-550.

\*\* Todd Shackelford, "Cohabitation, Marriage and Murder," *Aggressive Behavior* 27 (2001), 284-291. Margo Wilson, Martin Daly and C.Wright, "Uxoricide in Canada: Demographic Risk Patterns," *Canadian Journal of Criminology* 35 (1993): 263-291

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 46-49, 53**

# SEX & MARRIAGE

## Question 12

*Is sex outside of marriage better than married sex?*

## Answer

**Surveys show that husbands and wives are more satisfied with sex than sexually active singles.** Forty-eight percent of husbands labeled sex with their partner “extremely satisfying emotionally,” compared to just 37 percent of cohabiting men; 50 percent of married men found sex physically satisfying compared to 39 percent of cohabiting men. For women, 42 percent of married women and 39 percent of cohabiting women said they were “extremely satisfied emotionally” by sex with their partner. After controlling for age and other differences, married men and married women were substantially more satisfied with sex than cohabiting or single men and women.

In addition, research suggests that there are strong reasons for believing marriage improves sex in a variety of ways. Marriage provides:

- *Proximity*—Sex is easier for married people because it is more comfortably fitted into their daily lives.
- *A long-term contract*—Married people have more incentive to invest time and energy into pleasing their partners. They have more time in which to learn how to please them and are more confident that the gifts they give to their partners will be reciprocated.
- *Exclusivity*—Without other sexual outlets, married people put more effort into working out a mutually agreeable sex life than the less committed do.
- *Emotional bonding*—In marriage, sex becomes a symbol of the union of the partners, of their commitment to care for each other both in and out of the bedroom. By giving sex this added meaning, marriage increases the satisfaction men and women draw from sexual activity, both their own and their partner’s.\*\*

\* “Cohabitation: A Communitarian Perspective,” The Communitarian Network for Individual Rights and Social Responsibility.

\*\* Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher, “The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier and Better Off Financially,” (New York: Doubleday, October 2000): 96.

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 130-132, 134-139**

*“Of all sexually active people, married couples who are sexually faithful to one another experience the most physical pleasure and emotional satisfaction with their sex lives.”*

**Edward Laumann, John Gagnon, Robert Michael and Stuart Michaels**, *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994): 364.

# COHABITATION

*"The cost of the marriage license is the best investment most couples ever make."*

**Tony Perkins,**  
Family Research  
Council

## **Question 13**

*Are couples that cohabit (live together) similar in all respects to married couples?*

---

## **Answer**

**Cohabiting couples do not experience many of the well-documented benefits of traditional marriage. Living together before marriage may seem like a harmless or progressive family trend until one takes a careful look at evidence to the contrary. Cohabiting couples are more closely aligned statistically -- in areas of health (physical and emotional), economics and well-being of children -- with single people and single parents. The empirical data paints an overwhelmingly negative picture of the outcomes for both children and adults living in cohabiting households.**

Cohabiting relationships are often viewed differently by each gender. Women tend to see a cohabiting relationship as a step in the dating relationship that is moving the couple toward marriage. Although men view cohabitation as an opportunity to test compatibility, they place great value on cohabitation as a sexual opportunity without the ties of long-term commitment and are more concerned about the relationship curtailing their freedom. Statistically, cohabiting individuals do not make the same commitment to their partner that marriage partners make.\*

A marriage license is more than just a commitment to a spouse. It is also evidence of a commitment to the care and upbringing of children.

\* Pamela Smock, Penelope Huang, Wendy Manning and Cara Bergstrom, "Heterosexual Cohabitation in the United States: Motives for Living Together among Young Men and Women," PSC Research Report No. 06-606, (2006, August).

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 6, 8, 9, 11, 25-43, 46-47, 49, 78, 82, 90, 94-96, 124, 131, 135, 138**

**See UFI's "Guide to Family Issues: Cohabitation vs. Marriage"**

# MALE/FEMALE ROLES

## Question 14

*Is there a difference in the role that a man or a woman fills in a family or in a marriage? Are traditional male/female roles nothing more than a social construct?*

## Answer

**Alternative forms of marriage and families do not achieve the same positive results for individuals and society that marriage between a man and woman provides. Men and women are distinctly different; they are not interchangeable units.**

A father can never adequately fulfill the role of a mother and a mother can never adequately fulfill the role of a father. Each gender brings vitally important and unique elements to a child's development. When it comes to parenting, common sense says that single parents and same-sex couples cannot bring this essential gender mix to bear on their children. At its best, parenting is a cooperative activity, a true partnership between husband and wife. Fathers should have an equivalent parenting role with mothers. However, this does not mean that fathers and mothers can play the role of the opposite gender.

Family organization is necessarily based to some extent on incontestable biological differences between the sexes. From a social science research standpoint, it is clear that men and women bring different, but complementary, skills and talents to the task of parenting. The combined roles become greater than the sum of separate parts. Remove one gender from the equation and any of numerous difficulties may potentially ensue -- as many single parents will readily testify. Boys and girls need the loving daily influence of both male and female parents to reach their full developmental potential.

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 14, 56-75, 79-80, 84**

*"Studies suggest that men and women bring different strengths to the parenting enterprise, and that the biological relatedness of parents to their children has important consequences for the young, especially girls."*

**The Witherspoon Institute,**  
"Marriage and the Public Good: Ten Principles"

# SINGLE PARENTING

*"Few propositions have more empirical support in the social sciences than this one: compared to all other family forms, families headed by married, biological parents are best for children."*

**David Popenoe,**  
"The Scholarly Consensus on Marriage," Center for Marriage and Family at the Institute for American Values Fact Sheet #2 (February 2006).

## Question 15

*Are single parents as capable as married biological or adoptive parents of raising healthy, happy children? As the saying goes: all children need is love.*

## Answer

**The traditional family structure of a married man and woman has a greater capacity to generate the time, money, supervision and emotional capital required for raising children in an increasingly complex and demanding economy and society.** Healthy traditional families can focus their resources and attention on children without having their attention diverted towards fragmented relationships. In many single-parent homes, the lack of adequate economic resources and the time constraints of single parents place children at a disadvantage. "All children need is love" is a nice sentiment, but this is far from reality. **Two parents united in a healthy marriage represent the best environment for rearing children.**

Evidence suggests that a family built around a married man and woman and their biological or adopted children is better at building high levels of child nurturing. The traditional family produces strong parent-child bonds which in turn will contribute to the success of the next generation. In spite of the valiant efforts of many single parents, children are more likely to suffer when they are denied the nurturing influence of their mother and father in a stable marriage. In singlemother homes, the hope that other men (uncles, brothers, boyfriends) will be able to substitute for absent biological fathers receives little to no support in the empirical data.

Although there are exceptions, the outcomes associated with single parenting are often negative. Children living with their married parents are more likely to have better health, fewer behavioral and emotional problems, better cognitive and verbal development and greater educational and job attainment. These children also experience lower dependency on welfare and better financial well-being, less exposure to crime, a lower risk of being sexually abused and less marital problems of their own.

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 14, 26-42, 46-88, 104, 112-128**

# LIFETIME MARRIAGE

## **Question 16**

*Since people live much longer today, can we reasonably expect people to stay in a marriage for a lifetime?*

---

## **Answer**

**Extended longevity in life can account for only a tiny fraction of the increase in divorce from 1965 to 1980 and very little of the increase before then. Only a decline in age-specific death rates among young adults could have much actual effect on divorce, because a large majority of divorces occur among young adults. Those death rates have changed very little since the middle of the 20th century.**

The increase in life expectancy due to a decline in age-specific death rates among older adults has been accompanied by an increase in the typical age at marriage, leaving the natural life span of marriage (excluding divorce) only moderately longer than it was earlier in the last century.

With determination, commitment, honesty, faithfulness and good communication and problem-solving skills, men and women can indeed have a marriage that lasts a lifetime.

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 1-5, 10, 140-155**

*"To dare to pledge our whole selves to a single love is the most remarkable thing most of us will ever do."*

**Maggie Gallagher,**  
"The Abolition of Marriage: How We Destroy Lasting Love,"  
(Washington, D.C.: Regnery Books, 2007).

# MARRIAGE EDUCATION

*"Families, religious communities, community organizations and public policy makers must work together towards a great goal: strengthening marriage so that each year more children are raised by their own mother and father in loving, lasting marital unions."*

**The Witherspoon Institute,**  
"Marriage and the Public Good: Ten Principles"

## **Question 17**

*Are attempts to shore up marriage through education programs effective or a waste of taxpayer dollars?*

---

## **Answer**

**Marriage education programs represent a wise investment of public resources. Public programs in support of marriage and the behaviors that give children the best chance to be born into and reared in an optimal environment are beneficial to society.**

In 1996, the U.S. Congress made the following statement: marriage is the foundation of a successful society and is an essential institution of a successful society which promotes the interests of children.\*

Opponents of marriage education have suggested that there is no evidence that the programs are successful, but at least 29 journal articles covering more than 100 separate evaluations show that marriage-strengthening programs are effective in reducing strife, improving communication, increasing parenting skills, enhancing marital happiness and reducing divorce and separation. A major study by the Institute for Research and Evaluation reported that "Community Marriage Policies" in 114 cities yielded a net decline in the divorce rate of 17.5 percent over seven years.\*\*

Marriage education programs provide couples with the tools needed to build healthy, stable marriages, thereby reducing rates of welfare dependence, child poverty, domestic violence and other social ills that impede the healthy development of children, families and nations.

\* The Healthy Marriage Initiative, Administration for Children & Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

\*\* Paul Birch, Stan Weed, and Joseph Olsen, "Assessing the Impact of Community Marriage Policies on U.S. County Divorce Rates," Institute for Research and Evaluation, (2004, March).

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 15, 16, 140-155**

# THE FUTURE OF MARRIAGE

## Question 18

*The institution of marriage is so fractured and problematic. Can it even be saved?*

## Answer

**The decline of marriage is not inevitable. Between 1997 and 2002, the proportion of children under six living in intact married families actually increased.\***

The history of social progress is one of confronting and overcoming seemingly well-entrenched problems: slavery, racism, drunk driving, domestic violence, sexism and others. In each case, people have proven that when a social practice is wrong or destructive, the correct response is perseverance in bringing about positive change.

Few social problems are ever perfectly resolved. Certainly, there will always be children born without committed fathers and there will always be abusive marriages that should not continue. But social recovery is possible, as evidenced by the turnaround in recent years of the divorce rate. The goal is not perfection, but progress; not to eliminate divorce, but to reduce it further; not to make every marriage last, but to help more marriages succeed.\*\*

What happens to marriage -- whether it fails or thrives -- depends on what we do today. Accepting the decline of marriage as inevitable means giving up on far too many of our children. They deserve better than that.

\* U.S. Census Bureau, "Families by Presence of Own Children Under 18: 1950 to Present," Internet Table FM-1 (Internet Release date: 2001, 29 June).

\*\* The Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education, The Marriage Movement: A Statement of Principles, Institute for American Values, Religion, Culture, and Family Project, (2000).

**See: Fast Facts and Commentary # 2, 3, 5, 10, 15, 16, 139-163**

*"Marriage is an important social good, associated with an impressively broad array of positive outcomes for children and adults alike. ... Whether American society succeeds or fails in building a healthy marriage culture is clearly a matter of legitimate public concern."*

**William Galston**, former domestic policy advisor in the Clinton Whitehouse, "Why Marriage Matters: Twenty-one Conclusions from the Social Sciences," Institute for American Values, New York, (2000): 6.



# FAST FACTS & COMMENTARY

*Supporting documentation  
and commentary for the  
Questions & Answers about  
Marriage section*



# Fast Facts and Commentary Index

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# The Fundamental Nature of Marriage

CHART 1

America's Mid-Century "Culture of Marriage"		
Year	Marriage Rate*	% Above Base Year (1932)
1932	56.0	0%
1936	74.0	+32%
1940	82.8	+48%
1944	76.5	+37%
1948	98.5	+76%
1952	83.2	+49%
1956	82.4	+47%
1960	73.5	+31%
1964	74.6	+33%
1968	79.1	+41%
1972	76.5	+37%
<i>(Eisenstadt v. Baird)</i>		
1976	64.8	+16%
1980	61.4	+10%
1984	59.5	+ 6%
1988	54.6	- 3%
1992	53.3	- 5%
1996	49.7	- 11%

\*Marriages per 1,000 Unmarried Women, 15 years & older

The revolution in marriage law, launched by Supreme Court cases Griswold (1965) Loving (1967) and climaxing in Eisenstadt (1972), directly coincides with the collapse of America's 20th-century culture of marriage.

SOURCE: Allan Carlson, "The Judicial Assault on the Family," The Family in America, Online Edition 20(4) (April 2006).

*"There are few things I know for certain, but here is one: all societies need a critical mass of healthy marriages in order to function well, and when societies lose that critical mass, they will forever be seeking new programs and services to cope with the ever increasing social problems that result from its absence."*

Wade Horn, assistant secretary for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "My Family Story," The World Congress of Families III, (2004, 29-31 March), Mexico City.

# The Fundamental Nature of Marriage

continued

*“[E]vidence suggests that [the link between individual benefits and marriage] is not primarily due to particularly competent and healthy persons being more likely to marry and stay married but instead is primarily due to the effect of the marital relationship on individuals.”*

Walter Gove, Carolyn Briggs Style and Michael Hughes, “The Effect of Marriage on the Well-Being of Adults,” *Journal of Family Issues* 11 (1990): 4, 25.

**1. In the early years of the new century, there were approximately 6,400 marriages per day in the United States. For men, the median age at first marriage in 2003 was 27.1, compared to 23.2 in 1970. For women, it was 25.3 in 2003 versus 20.8 in 1970.**

U.S. Census Bureau Facts and Figures, January 31, 2003. Jason Fields, “America’s Families and Living Arrangements: 2003,” *Current Population Reports*, U.S. Census Bureau (2004, November): Figure 5.

## CHART 2

### The Retreat from Marriage

Marital Status - Female (Percent Married)			
	Ages 20-24	Ages 25-29	Ages 30-34
1984	39.4	65.6	74.2
1988	35.7	62.2	72.4
1992	32.0	58.5	69.8
1996	28.5	55.9	69.1
2000	25.3	54.8	68.3
2003	23.0	53.9	67.8
Change, 1984 to 2003	-41.7%	-17.8%	-8.6%

Marital Status - Male (Percent Married)			
	Ages 20-24	Ages 25-29	Ages 30-34
1984	23.5	56.8	69.8
1988	20.8	51.4	66.2
1992	18.3	46.3	63.0
1996	17.8	43.7	61.7
2000	15.2	44.4	62.3
2003	13.0	41.7	59.9
Change, 1984 to 2003	-44.7%	-16.4%	-14.2%

SOURCE: Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1986-2004, Courtesy of The Howard Center for Family, Religion & Society

**2. Although they marry at a later age, the vast majority of Americans -- 91 percent of women and 89 percent of men -- eventually marry. This number has declined since the late 1960s when 97 percent of men and 97 percent of women married.**

Robert Schoen and Vladimir Canudas-Romo, “Timing Effects on First Marriage: Twentieth-century Experience in England and Wales and the USA,” *Population Studies* 59 (2005): 135-146.

**3. Ninety-one percent of women born at the turn of the 20th century ever married. Of the women coming of age during the economic boom after World War II, 97 percent eventually married, a historic peak. At the turn of the 21st century, marriage rates were much the same**

## Fundamental Nature of Marriage

continued

as they were 100 years earlier. Women born between 1961 and 1965 had an 89-percent chance of marrying at least once. Among first marriages, wives were on average only 2.1 years younger than their husbands; among second marriages, 3.4 years.

Carrie Conaway, Chances Aren't. Regional Review, Quarter 3, (2002).

**4. In 1960, the proportion of an American's life spent living with a spouse and children was 62 percent, the highest in history. By 1980, this proportion had dropped to 43 percent, the lowest in history. U.S. Census Bureau projections suggested that by 2010 married couples with children will account for only 20 percent of total households and families with children will account for little more than one-quarter of all households, the lowest figure in recorded U.S. history. By contrast, the percentage of one-person households was projected to approach 27 percent of total American households by 2010.**

Susan Cotts Watkins, Jane Menken and John Bongaards, "Demographic Foundations of Family Changes," American Sociological Review 52 (1987): 354. U.S. Census Bureau, Projections of the Number of Households and Families in the United States: 1995 to 2010, Current Population Reports, 25-1129 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 1996).

**5. The overall divorce rate peaked around 1980 and appears to have declined modestly since then. Divorce rates per 1,000 marriages were 22.6 in 1980 and 17.7 in 2004.**

National Marriage Project, State of our Unions, Rutgers University, New Jersey, (2005).

**6. Marriage provides: (1) social support that improves physical health and survival. As a marriage improves over time, so does the reported health of the husband and wife. Spouses encourage healthy behavior that in turn affects emotional and physical well-being: regular sleep, a healthy diet, moderate drinking, monitoring each other's checkups and health habits and compliance with doctor's orders; (2) emotional support: In marriages that last, partners are usually assured a certain basic level of emotional sustenance. Married people recover better, manage chronic disease and experience boosts to their immune systems. Good marriages help people weather the storms and shocks of life; (3) financial support: The higher incomes of married men boost access to health care. The heavier commitment of marriage brings with it long-term concern over a spouse's future well-being.**

Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher, The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off Financially, (New York: Double Day, October 2000), 33, 56, 68.

*"Throughout the annals of human experience, in dozens of civilizations and cultures of varying value systems, humanity has discovered that the permanent relationship between men and women is a keystone to the stability, strength, and health of human society -- a relationship worthy of legal recognition and judicial protection."*

Senator Robert Byrd, West Virginia, at the signing of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), (1996).

# Fundamental Nature of Marriage

## continued

### CHART 3

#### International Marriage Comparisons, 2003

	U.S.	Canada	U.K.	France	Germany	Italy	Sweden
Annual marriages per thousand people	7.4	4.7	5.1	4.3	4.8	4.3	4.8
Annual marriages per thousand unmarried adults	18.1	13.0	11.4	9.4	12.1	10.8	8.8
% of adult population currently married	59.6	62.9	55.1	54.3	60.4	60	45.2
% of adult population ever married	76.9	75.5	72	69.5	75.9	72.8	64.3
Remarriage (% of marriages in which the bride was previously married)	28.4	--	28.9	17.6	28.3	6.3	23.7
% of 2002 marriages in which the bride was 35 years old or over	31	28	30	28	--	15	33

SOURCE: Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers, "Marriage and Divorce: Changes and their Driving Forces," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 21(2) Spring (2007): 40.

**7. Rather than selection factors, marriage itself was responsible for at least 61 percent of the positive effect of marriage on the subjective well-being of married men and women. Even after controlling for respondents' subjective well-being, a study estimated that marriage elevated life satisfaction by about four points, a statistically significant effect.**

M.D.R. Evans and Jonathan Kelley, "Effect of Family Structure on Life Satisfaction: Australian Evidence," *Social Indicators Research* 69 (2004): 303-349.

**8. By the turn of the century, nearly 60 percent of adults were married, 10.4 percent separated or divorced, 6.6 percent were widowed, 19 percent were never married and 5.7 percent lived with a partner.**

Charlotte Schoenborn, "Marital Status and Health: United States, 1999-2002," *Advanced Data From Vital and Health Statistics*, Centers for Disease Control 351 (2004, 15 December).

*"Marriage exists in every known human society, bringing men and women together to create and to provide for the next generation of society, and it is not the right of any government anywhere to undermine or destroy it."*

United States Senator Jim Bunning (Republican-Kentucky), during 2004 debate on the proposed Federal Marriage Amendment

## Fundamental Nature of Marriage continued

**9. Married-couple households fell from nearly 80 percent in the 1950s to 50.7 percent by 2003. Since 1960, there has been an 850-percent increase in the number of unmarried couples living with children and families consisting of breadwinner dads and stay-at-home moms accounted for 10 percent of all households by 2003.**

"Unmarried America," Business Week Online, (2003, 20 October).

**CHART 4**  
**Marriage Statistics**

	1965	2000
Number of adults never married	18.2 million	48.2 million
Percent of total adult population	14.9%	23.9%
Number of divorced adults	3.5 million	19.8 million
Percent of total adult population	2.9%	9.8%
Number of cohabitating adults	est: 300,000	11 million
Percent of total adult population	> 1%	6%
Number of out-of-wedlock births	291,200	1.35 million
Percent of all births	7.8%	33.1%
Number of children in center-based, non-relative day care (ages 3-5)	est. 300,000	6 million
Percent of all children (ages 3-5)	2.5%	50%
Married couple families with children present, as percentage of all households	45%	24%

SOURCE: Alan Carlson, "The Natural Family Meets the Moral Hazard at National Health Care Gulch," *The Family in America* 19(8) (2005, August), The Howard Center for Family, Religion & Society.

**10. Contrary to media depictions, there was not a "surge" in the divorce rate among Americans age 65 or older.**

David Blankenhorn and Tom Sylvester, "The Wall Street Journal Blows It (Again)," *Institute for American Values*, (2003, January).

**11. Between 1970 and 2000, the rate of marriage dropped by about one-third, the out-of-wedlock birth ratio climbed from 11 percent to 33 percent of all births, the divorce rate doubled and the number of people living together outside of marriage grew by more than 1,000 percent.**

David Popenoe, *Marriage Decline in America: Testimony Before the United States House of Representatives*. Washington, D.C., (2001, 22 May): 19.

**12. Married couples tended to be more engaged in social and community activities. A disruption in marriage and family could cut civic engagement.**

Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2000): 94, 95, 187, 249.

*"Conjugal society is made by a voluntary compact between man and woman; and tho' it consist chiefly in such a communion and right in one another's bodies as is necessary to its chief end, procreation; yet it draws with it mutual support and assistance, and a communion of interests too, as necessary to their common off-spring, who have a right to be nourished, and maintained by them, till they are able to provide for themselves."*

John Locke, "Second Treatise of Government," (Hackett Publishing Co. 1980) c. VII, s. 78: 43.

## Fundamental Nature of Marriage continued

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*“The Founders, including John Witherspoon and John Adams, saw marriage as a bulwark of social order and a ‘seedbed of virtue’ that the new republic could not do without. Witherspoon argued that marriage awakens a spirit of benevolence and duty in its members that is then extended to their local communities and the nation as a whole.”*

W. Bradford Wilcox, “Suffer the Little Children: Marriage, the Poor, and the Commonweal,” in *The Meaning of Marriage: Family, State, Market and Morals*,” Robert George and Jean Bethke Elshtain eds.), (Dallas: Spence Publishing Company, 2006): 242.

**13. Married persons were more committed than unmarried peers to volunteering, civic association membership, voting and religious participation. Parents were more likely than childless adults to volunteer for social service.**

Corey L. M. Keyes, “Social Civility in the United States,” *Sociological Inquiry* 72 (2002): 393-408.

**14. According to a survey by Pew Research Center, “More than two-thirds (69 percent) say that a child needs both a mother and father to grow up happily. Public opinion has remained steadfastly in favor of a home with a mom and a dad.” “Two-thirds (66 percent) of all respondents say that single women having children is bad for society, and nearly as many (59 percent) say the same about unmarried couples having children.”**

Pew Research Center “As Marriage and Parenthood Drift Apart, Public Is Concerned about Social Impact” (2007, 1 July).

**15. “The state has a compelling public interest in the marriage of young adults. Marriage has beneficial social and health effects for both the married and their children, and these gifts also benefit immediate communities and all of society. ... This would mean that our society would predictably have fewer children in foster care, less poverty, crime and drug abuse, and lower health care costs. These public gifts from marriage would translate into higher government revenues, lower government expenses, more citizen engagement and a more stable public order.”**

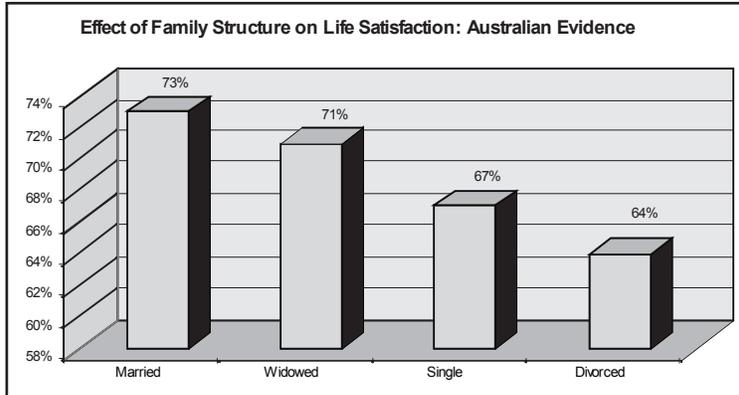
Allan Carlson, “Anti-Dowry?: The Effects of Student Loan Debt on Marriage and Childbearing,” *The Family in America* 19(12) (2005): 6.

**16. Marriage is not only a private vow; it is a public act, a contract taken in full public view, enforceable by law and in the equally powerful court of public opinion. When you marry, the public commitment you make changes the way you think about yourself and your beloved; it changes the way you act and think about the future; and it changes how other people and other institutions treat you as well.**

Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher, *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off Financially*, (New York: Double Day, October 2000): 17.

# Marital Happiness

**CHART 5**

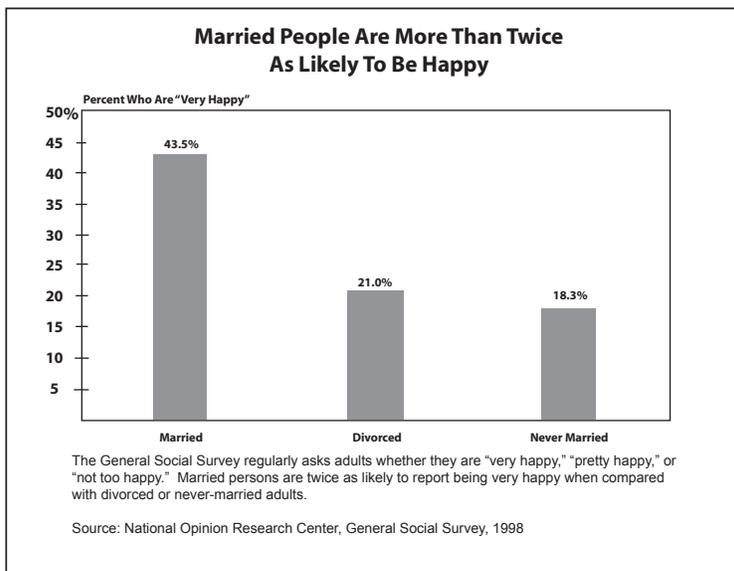


SOURCE: M. D. R. Evans and Jonathan Kelley, "Effect of Family Structure on Life Satisfaction: Australian Evidence," *Social Indicators Research* 69 (2004): 303-349.

**17. Married people were more likely than those who were not married to be very happy. Forty-three percent of people who said they were very happy they were married, versus 24 percent of unmarried people saying they were very happy.**

"Are We Happy Yet?: A Social Trends Report," Pew Research Center, (2006, 13 February).

**CHART 6**



Courtesy of The Heritage Foundation

*Marriage and parenting roles give individuals a sense of meaning and purpose. Marriage improves emotional well-being in part by giving people a sense that their life has meaning and purpose.*

Debra Umberson and Walter Gove, "Parenthood and Psychological Well-Being: Theory, Measurement, and Stage in the Family Life Course," *Journal of Family Issues* 10:443. Cited in: Russell Burton, "Global Integrative Meaning as Mediating Factors in the Relationship between Social Roles and Psychological Distress," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 39(3) (1998, September).

## Marital Happiness continued

*Married people were happier and healthier than widowed, divorced, separated, cohabiting or never-married people, regardless of race, age, sex, education, nationality or income.*

Charlotte Schoenborn, "Marital Status and Health: United States, 1999-2002," Advance Data from Vital and Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 351 (2004).

**18. Two-thirds of unhappily married spouses who stayed married reported that their marriages improved within five years. The most unhappy marriages reported the most dramatic turnarounds: among those who rated their marriages as "very unhappy," almost eight out of 10 who avoided divorce were happily married five years later.**

Linda Waite, Don Browning, William Doherty, Maggie Gallagher, Ye Luo and Scott Stanley, "Does Divorce Make People Happy? Findings from a Study of Unhappy Marriages," New York: Institute for American Values, (2002): 148-149.

**19. People who were married reported the highest levels of well-being, regardless of whether they were happily married or not. "Even when controlling for relationship happiness, being married was associated with higher self-esteem, greater life satisfaction, greater happiness and less distress."**

Claire Kamp Dush and Paul Amato, "Consequences of Relationship Status and Quality for Subjective Well-Being," Journal of Social and Personal Relationships 22(5) (2005): 607-627.

**20. Men who are married to women who function in a more traditional role (homemaker) were more likely to spend "quality time" with their wives. These traditional wives also expressed greater satisfaction with their husbands' emotional interaction with them.**

W. Bradford Wilcox and Steven Nock, "What's Love Got to Do With It? Equality, Equity, Commitment, and Women's Marital Equality," Social Forces 84 (2006, March).

**21. Marital status and psychological well-being was statistically linked in an analysis of data from 19 countries. In nearly all countries, married men and women reported greater happiness and "overall life satisfaction" than unmarried and divorced peers. The divorced and separated were the least happy and the least satisfied.**

Arne Mastekaasa, "Marital Status, Distress, and Well-Being: An International Comparison," Journal of Comparative Family Studies 25 (1994): 189-204.

## Marital Happiness continued

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**22. Using a sample of 9,643 respondents from the National Survey of Households, it was found that the transition from marriage to separation or divorce was associated with an increase in depression, a decline in happiness, less personal mastery, less positive relations with others, and less self-acceptance. These associations were stronger for women than for men. Becoming married, on the other hand, was associated with a “considerable well-being boost” evident in both men and women.**

Nadine Marks and James Lambert, “Marital Status Continuity and Change Among Young and Midlife Adults: Longitudinal Effects on Psychological Well-Being,” *Journal of Family Issues* 19 (1998): 652-86.

**23. In research where data was collected from adults over a 10-year period, married people reported that they were more satisfied with life than did unmarried people.**

Harsha Mookherjee, “Marital Status, Gender, and Perception of Well-Being,” *The Journal of Social Psychology* 137 (1997): 95-105.

**24. Children raised in intact families entered relationships without fear of failure gnawing at them. The children of divorce often sought partners who had been raised in stable intact families.**

Judith Wallerstein, Julia Lewis and Sandra Blakeslee, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: A 25-Year Landmark Study*. (New York: Hyperion, 2000), 60.

**25. The high aspirations for a “soul mate” may be one reason why so many young adults are cohabiting before they marry. Among the young adults surveyed, 44 percent had at some time lived with an opposite-sex partner outside of marriage. Although young adults express high aspirations for the marital relationship, they see a diminished role for marriage in other domains. Many of the larger social, economic, religious and public purposes once associated with marriage are receding or missing altogether from their portrait of marriage.**

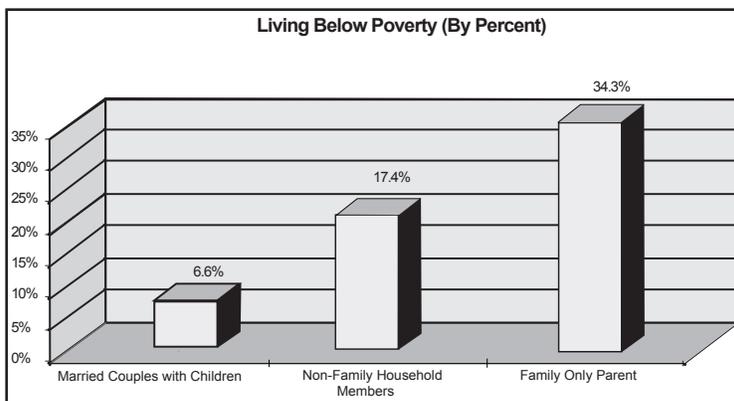
Barbara Dafoe Whitehead and David Popenoe, “Who Wants to Marry a Soul Mate?,” *The State of Our Unions: The Social Health of Marriage in America*, (2001).

*Happiness is contagious for married couples. When a husband or wife is happy, that happiness extends to the spouse, too. It's so strong that it can even supersede the non-financial cost of unemployment or a two-month hospitalization. A 30-percent increase in the spouse's life satisfaction score from the previous year can completely offset the negative impact of unemployment on the respondent's life satisfaction.*

British Household Panel Survey, United Kingdom Longitudinal Studies Centre, Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex, (2002).

## Standard of Living

CHART 7



SOURCE: Robert Lerman, "Married and Unmarried Parenthood and Economic Well-Being: A Dynamic Analysis of a Recent Cohort," (2002, July).

*"The 'haves' are generally those in stable marriages. The 'have nots' are generally those who live outside of marriage, especially with children. So vast is the difference, one is tempted to replace the traditional notion of social class with the more descriptive term marriage class."*

Steven Nock, "Illustrations of Family Scholarship: Introduction to the Special Issue," *Social Science Research* 35 (June 2006): 322-331.

**26. Among couples who married and stayed married, the per person net worth increased on average by 16 percent with each year of marriage. Compared to those who remained single, getting married increased one's wealth, on average, by 93 percent.**

Jay Zagorsky, "Marriage and Divorce's Impact on Wealth," *Journal of Sociology* 41(4) (2005): 406-424. Cited in: *Want to be Wealthy? Try Marriage*, Cable News Network, (2006, 18 January).

**27. Marriage in early adulthood doubled the odds of affluence. The cumulative incidence of affluence at age 45 was 33 percent for married versus 16 percent for non-married. Among older individuals, wedlock conferred an even more pronounced advantage: "42 percent of older married will experience affluence versus 18 percent among nonmarried..."**

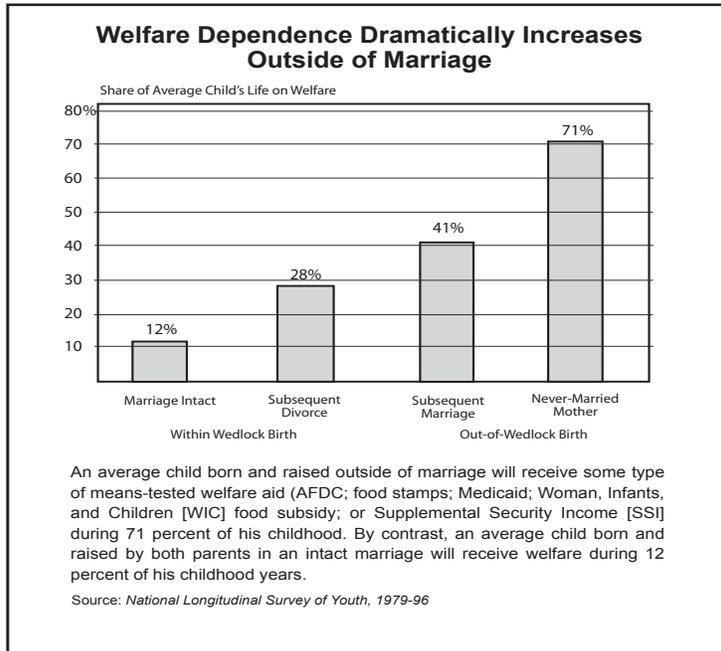
Thomas Hirschl, Joyce Altobelli and Mark Rank, "Does Marriage Increase the Odds of Affluence? Exploring the Life Course Probabilities," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65 (2003): 927-938.

**28. A highly publicized study of millionaires in the United States revealed the importance of marriage to financial success and stability. "Nearly 95 percent of millionaire households are composed of married couples." These are individuals who have married once and remained married.**

Thomas Stanley and William Danko, *The Millionaire Next Door: The Surprising Secrets of American's Wealthy*, Longstreet Press, Inc., Marietta, Georgia (1996).

## Standard of Living continued

### CHART 8



Courtesy of The Heritage Foundation

**29. Individuals who were not continuously married had significantly less household wealth than those who remained married throughout life. Average household wealth of unmarried adults was 63 percent lower than that of married adults. Within the category of unmarrieds, this reduction difference was 77 percent for the separated, 75 percent for the never-married, 73 percent for the divorced, 58 percent for the cohabiting and 45 percent for widows. The reduction difference was 86 percent for unmarried women and 61 percent for unmarried men.**

Janet Wilmoth and Gregor Koso, "Does Marital History Matter? Marital Status and Wealth Outcomes Among Preretirement Adults," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 64 (2002): 254-268.

**30. Married men earned more than single men by about 15 percent when education, work experience, race, occupation and industry were considered. Married men also established higher income goals to support their wives and families. "Married men are more likely to quit with a new job in hand, less likely to quit without having found a new job and less likely to be terminated involuntarily."**

Elizabeth Gorman, "Bringing Home the Bacon: Marital Allocation of Income-Earning Responsibility, Job-Shifts and Men's Wages," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 61 (1999, February): 110-122.

*Analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households indicate that married men earn more than single, noncohabiting men. Wages appear to rise more rapidly following marriage.*

Leslie Stratton, "Examining the Wage Differential for Married and Cohabiting Men," *Economic Inquiry* 40 (2002): 199-212.

*The strong correlation between poverty and single-parent families suggested that marriage could be viewed as a cost-effective poverty alleviation policy.*

Nada Eissa and Hillary Hoynes, "Explaining the Fall and Rise in the Tax Cost of Marriage: The Effect of Tax Laws and Demographic Trend 1984-97," National Tax Journal Washington (2000, September): 20.

**31. Married parents were significantly less likely to be poor. According to a study by economist Robert Lerman, poverty rates for married couples were half those of cohabiting couple parents and one-third that of noncohabiting single parents in households with other adults.**

Robert Lerman, "How Do Marriage, Cohabitation and Single Parenthood Affect the Material Hardships of Families With Children?," U. S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation under HHS Grant Number 00ASPE359A, (2002, July). Robert Lerman, "Married and Unmarried Parenthood and Economic Well-Being: A Dynamic Analysis of a Recent Cohort," U. S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation under HHS Grant Number 00ASPE359A, (2002, July).

**32. Married men earned more money than single men with similar education and job histories. For men, marriage reaped as many benefits as education.**

Robert Lerman, "Marriage and the Economic Well-Being of Families with Children: A Review of the Literature," U. S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation under HHS Grant Number 00ASPE359A, (2002).

**33. The economic benefits of marriage are not limited to the middle class; some 70 percent of never-married mothers would be able to escape poverty if they were married to the father of their children.**

Robert Rector, Kirk Johnson, Patrick Fagan and Lauren Noyes, "Increasing Marriage Will Dramatically Reduce Child Poverty," Heritage Foundation Center for Data Analysis Report No. CDA03-06, (2003, 20 May).

**34. If enough marriages had taken place to return the incidence of single parenting to 1970 levels, and the incomes of the men and women were combined, the poverty rate among children in 1998 would have fallen by about a third.**

Isabel Sawhill, "The Behavioral Aspects of Poverty," The Public Interest, (2003, Fall).

## Standard of Living continued

**35. Poor parents who married gained economic advantage from marriage. Though marriage itself may not lift a family out of poverty, it may reduce economic hardship. This effect occurs because marriage, especially if it is long-lasting, allows couples to pool earnings, to recruit support from a larger social network of family, friends and community members, to share risks, and to mitigate the disruptions of job loss, loss of job benefits or loss of earnings due to absenteeism, illness, reduced hours on the job or layoffs.**

Testimony of Barbara Dafoe Whitehead Before The Committee On Health, Education, Labor And Pensions Subcommittee On Children And Families, U.S. Senate, (2004, 28 April).

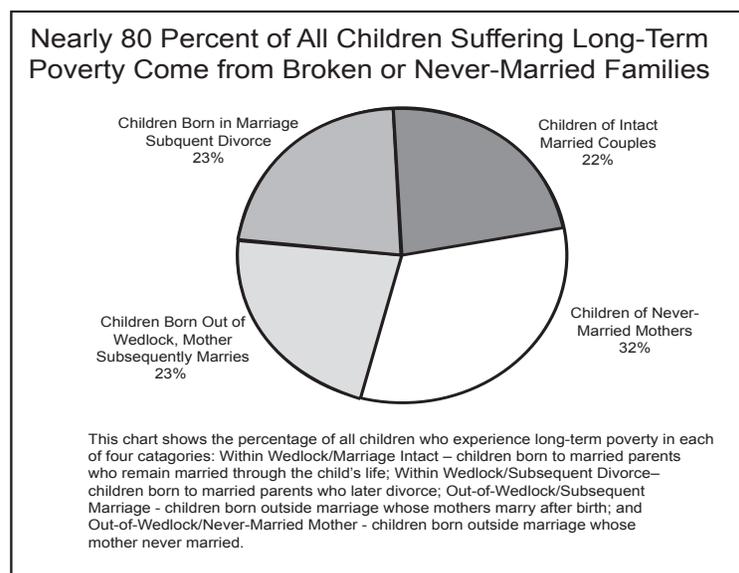
**36. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 6.6 percent of married couples with children lived below the poverty level, while 17.4 percent of non-family householders and 34.3 percent of female-only parent households with children lived in poverty.**

QT-P35. Poverty Status in 1999 of Families and Non-family Householders; Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data, (2000).

**37. Divorce and unmarried childbearing increase child poverty. The majority of children who grew up outside of married families had experienced at least one year of dire poverty.**

Mark Rank and Thomas Hirschl, "The Economic Risk of Childhood in America: Estimating the Probability of Poverty Across the Formative Years," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 61 (1999): 1,058-1,067.

### CHART 9



Courtesy of The Heritage Foundation

*The poverty rate for all children in married-couple families was 8.2 percent. By contrast, the poverty rate for all children in single-parent families was four times higher at 35.2 percent.*

Robert Rector, Kirk Johnson and Patrick Fagan, "The Effect of Marriage on Child Poverty," *The Heritage Foundation*, (2002, 15 April).

*Ever-married women, regardless of race or education, had a poverty rate roughly one-third lower than the poverty rate experienced by never-married women.*

Daniel Lichter, Deborah Roempke Graefe and J. Brian Brown, "Is Marriage a Panacea? Union Formation Among Economically Disadvantaged Un-wed Mothers," *Social Problems* 50 (2003): 60-86.

**38. A child born and raised outside marriage was six times more likely to receive welfare aid than a child raised in an intact, married family. Each year, federal and state governments spent more than \$200 billion on means-tested aid for low-income families with children through programs such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, food stamps, public housing, the earned income tax credit and Medicaid. Of this total, some 75 percent (\$150 billion) went to single-parent families.**

Patrick Fagan, Robert Rector, Kirk Johnson and America Peterson, "The Positive Effects of Marriage: A Book of Charts," *The Heritage Foundation*, (2002, April).

**39. The median income of married-parent households whose heads have only a high school diploma was 10 percent higher than the median income of college-educated, single-parent households. Parents who are college graduates and married were the economic elite.**

Analysis of Current Population Statistics, Families With One or More Children Under 18, The Northeastern University Center for Labor Market Studies, 1994. Cited in: Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, "The Divorce Culture," (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1996).

**40. For every \$1,000 that government spent providing services to broken families, it spent \$1 dollar trying to stop family breakdown. In return, society received for its "investment" broken families, troubled children and increased social problems.**

Patrick Fagan, "Encouraging Marriage and Discouraging Divorce," *The Heritage Foundation Background Report No. 1421*, (2001, 26 March): 1.

**41. Researchers reasoned that marriage fostered the accumulation of wealth because "it provides institutionalized protection, which generates economies of scale, task specialization and access to work-related fringe benefits, which lead to rewards like broader social networks and higher savings rates." High divorce rates could lead to "serious implications for aging individuals, their families and public policies for retirement saving incentives and income maintenance programs."**

Janet Wilmoth and Gregor Koso, "Does Marital History Matter? Marital Status and Wealth Outcomes Among Preretirement Adults," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 64 (2002): 254-268.

## Standard of Living continued

**42. Using data from the 1998 Survey of Consumer Finances, researchers found that compared to single male-head households, single female-head households or cohabiting households, married households:**

- had higher median incomes
- were more likely to own a business, nonresidential real estate, a vacation home and have savings bonds
- were more likely to have received an inheritance
- carried less debt relative to their assets
- have greater net worth overall.

Martha Ozawa and Yongwoo Lee, "The Net Worth of Female-Headed Households: A Comparison to Other Types of Households," *Family Relations* 55 (2006, January): 132-145.

**43. It is likely that married men benefit from specialization within marriage and from the emotional support they receive from their wives. It is also likely that married men's domestic routines and health habits reduce job absenteeism, quit rates and sick days. And it may be that men's role obligation to provide for others gives them a greater sense of purpose and intensifies their commitment to work.**

Testimony Of Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, Co-Director, National Marriage Project Rutgers, The State University Of New Jersey, Before The Committee On Health, Education, Labor And Pensions Subcommittee On Children And Families U.S. Senate, (2004, 28 April).

**44. "Over time, lower rates of marriage and high rates of divorce lead to fewer highly productive workers. The eventual result is either a labor shortage of skilled, motivated workers and/or an increased demand to import disciplined, productive workers from abroad to compensate for the domestic shortfall.**

Maggie Gallaher, "Why Supporting Marriage Makes Business Sense," *Corporate Resource Council*, (2002).

*Married individuals were seven times more likely to own a home than single individuals and nearly twice (80 percent) more likely to own stocks. Divorced individuals were a third (32 percent) less likely to own a home compared to single individuals.*

L. Keister, "Race, Family Structure, and Wealth: The Effect of Childhood Family on Adult Asset Ownership," *Sociological Perspectives* 47 (2004): 161-187.

*"[W]e estimate that family fragmentation costs U.S. taxpayers at least \$112 billion each and every year, or more than \$1 trillion each decade. These costs arise from increased taxpayer expenditures for antipoverty, criminal justice, and education programs, and through lower levels of taxes paid by individuals ..."*

*"The Taxpayer Costs of Divorce and Unwed Childbearing," Institute for American Values and Georgia Family Council (2008): 5.*

**45. Productivity gains are disrupted when marital status changes. In a study of young adult workers, husbands earned on average \$11.33 per hour, single men earned \$10.38 and divorced and separated men earned \$9.61 (in 1989 dollars).**

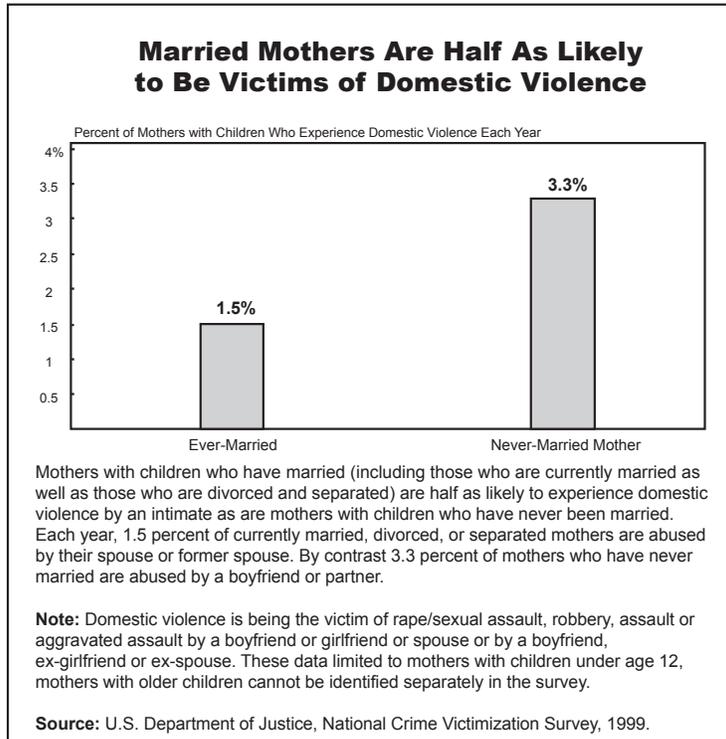
Jeffery Gray, "The Fall in Men's Return to Marriage," *Journal of Human Resources* 32 (1997): 481-503 Table 1.

**46. Researchers estimate that \$6.5 billion is lost per year by American businesses due to decreased productivity stemming from marriage and relationship difficulties.**

Melinda Forthofer, Howard Markman, Martha Cox, Scott Stanley and Ronald Kessler, "Associations Between Marital Distress and Work Loss in a National Sample," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 58(3) (1996): 597-605.

# Violence and Crime

CHART 10



*Courtesy of The Heritage Foundation*

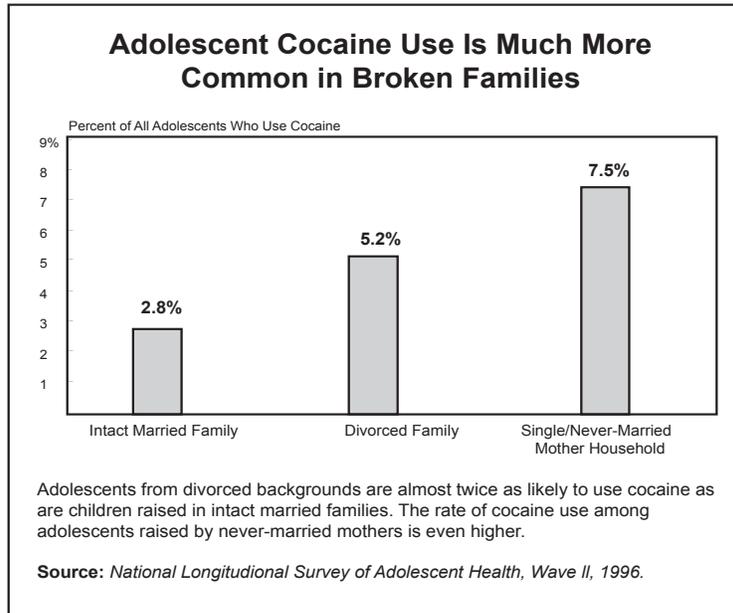
**47. Married mothers were less likely to suffer abuse than never-married mothers. In fact, even when the very high rates of abuse of separated and divorced mothers were added into the statistic, the rates of abuse among mothers who had ever been married were still lower than the rates of abuse among women who had never married and those who were cohabiting. Among mothers who were currently married or had ever been married, the rate of abuse was 38.5 per 1,000 mothers. Among mothers who have never been married the rate was 81 per 1,000 mothers.**

National Crime Victimization Survey. Cited by: Robert Rector, Patrick Fagan and Kirk Johnson, "Marriage: Still the Safest Place for Women and Children," Heritage Foundation Backgrounder (Working Paper) 1732 (2004): 2-3.

*Growing numbers of young people, often from broken homes or so-called dysfunctional families, are committing murder, rape, robbery, kidnapping and other violent acts.*

**James Wootton and Robert Heck,** "How State and Local Officials Can Combat Violent Juvenile Crime," The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder #1097, (1996, 28 October).

CHART 11



Courtesy of The Heritage Foundation

*Compared to peers in intact families, adolescent boys whose parents had broken up were significantly more likely to commit a wide range of offenses, including destroying property, getting drunk, stealing merchandise and assaulting classmates. "Delinquency tended to be higher among boys whose parents had divorced or separated."*

Cesar Rebellon, "Do Adolescents Engage in Delinquency to Attract the Social Attention of Peers? An Extension and Longitudinal Test of the Social Reinforcement Hypothesis," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 43 (2006): 387-411.

**48. For both men and women, divorced or separated persons were subjected to the highest rates of intimate partner victimization, followed by never married persons. The rate of non-lethal intimate partner violence by marital status (per 1,000 persons) for the period 1993-1998 was:**

	Female	Male
<b>Divorced/separated</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>6.2</b>
<b>Never married</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>1.6</b>
<b>Married</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Widowed</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>--</b>

Callie Marie Rennison and Sarah Welchans, *Intimate Partner Violence*. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Special Report, (2000, May), NCJ 178247.

**49. Married women in traditional families experienced the lowest rate of violence compared with women in other types of relationships. Women were four times more likely to be victims of domestic violence in a lesbian household than in a married household.** Claire Renzetti, *Violent Betrayal* (London: SAGE, 1995). "Violence Between Intimates," Bureau of Justice Statistics Selected Findings, (November 1994): 2. **The incidence of domestic violence among homosexual men is nearly double that in the heterosexual population.**

D. Island and P. Letellier, "Men Who Beat the Men Who Love Them: Battered Gay Men and Domestic Violence," (New York: Haworth Press, 1991), 14.

## Violence and Crime continued

**50. Stably-married couples have the lowest rates of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) with an incidence of 16.2 percent for overall IPV and 3.5 percent for IPV involving “physical violence with injury.” Cohabiting couple rate runs more than twice as high for overall IPV (37.5 percent) and for “physical violence with injury” the rate was four times as high (16.1 percent). Though the incidence of overall and severe IPV does run higher among newly-married or remarried couples (overall IPV 18.7 percent and 7.0 percent for “physical violence with injury”), it still is far below that observed among cohabiting couples.**

Greer Litton Fox and Michael Benson, “Household and Neighborhood Contexts of Intimate Partner Violence,” Public Health Report 121 (2006): 419-427.

**51. An analysis of 50 separate studies of juvenile crime revealed that the prevalence of delinquency in broken homes was 10-15 percent higher than in intact homes. In addition, there were no appreciable differences in the impact of broken homes between girls and boys or between black youth and white youth.**

Edward Wells and Joseph Rankin, “Families and Delinquency: A Meta-Analysis of the Impact of Broken Homes,” Social Problems 38 (1991): 71-89.

**52. A study of adolescents convicted of homicide in adult court found that at the time of the crimes, 42.9 percent of their parents had never been married, 29.5 percent were divorced and 8.9 percent were separated. Less than 20 percent of these children were from married parent households.**

Patrick Darby, Wesley Allan, Javad Kashani, Kenneth Hartke and John Reid, “Analysis of 112 Juveniles Who Committed Homicide: Characteristics and a Closer Look at Family Abuse,” Journal of Family Violence 13 (1998): 365-374.

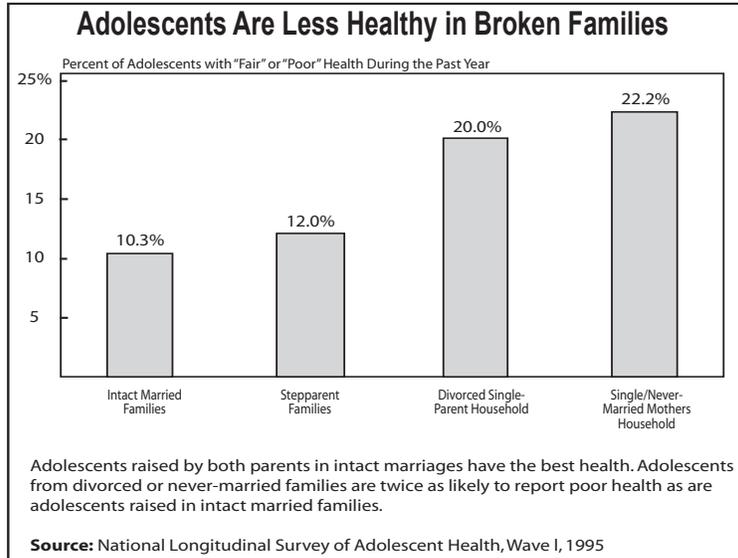
**53. States with a lower percentage of single-parent families, on average, had lower rates of juvenile crime. State-by-state analysis indicated that, in general, a 10-percent increase in the number of children living in single-parent homes (including divorces) accompanied a 17-percent increase in juvenile crime.**

Patrick Fagan, “The Real Root Causes of Violent Crime: The Breakdown of Marriage, Family, and Community,” The Heritage Foundation, Backgrounder #1026, (1995, 17 March).

*A study of juvenile crime in rural areas revealed that broken homes were strongly associated with higher rates of arrest for violent crimes, while poverty was not directly associated with juvenile violence.*

D. Wayne Osgood and Jeff Chambers, “Social Disorganization Outside the Metropolis: An Analysis of Rural Youth Violence,” Criminology 38 (2000): 81-115.

### CHART 12



*Single men had almost six times the probability of being incarcerated as married men.*

George Akerlof, "Men Without Children," *The Economic Journal* 108 (1998): 287-309.

*Courtesy of The Heritage Foundation*

**54. There was a drastic increase in the number of incarcerations among women over the last three decades of the 20th century. Nearly half of the women in state prisons and local jails had never been married. Another one-third of women in state prison and local jails were divorced or separated, compared to just 17 percent of prison inmates who were married.**

Dorothy Ruiz, "The Increase in Incarcerations Among Women and its Impact on the Grandmother Caregiver," *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 29 (3) (2002): 179-197.

**55. Criminals capable of sustaining marriage gradually moved away from a life of crime after they got married.**

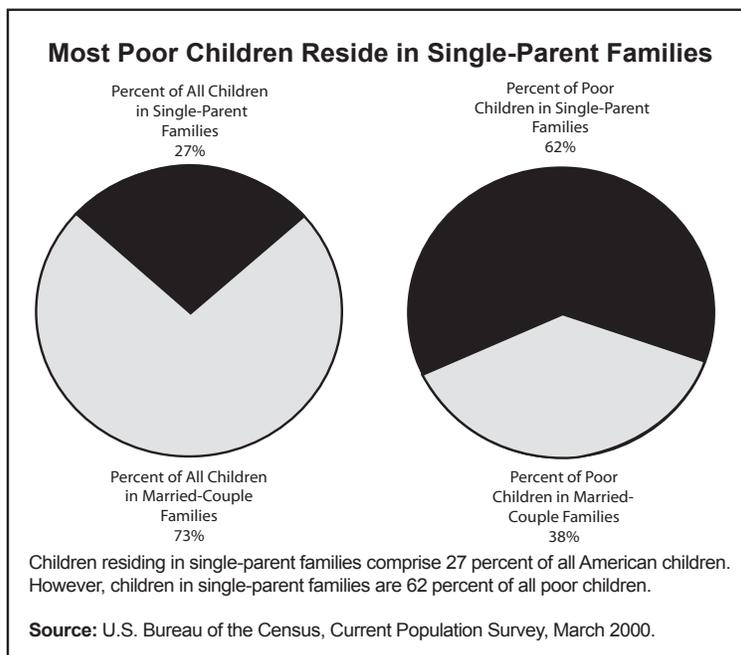
Patrick Fagan, "The Real Root Causes of Violent Crime: The Breakdown of Marriage, Family, and Community," *The Heritage Foundation*, Backgrounder #1026, (1995, 17 March).

**56. Being married is associated with an average reduction of approximately 35 percent in the odds of crime compared to nonmarried states for the same man.**

Robert Sampson, John Laub, and Christopher Wimer, "Does Marriage Reduce Crime? A Counterfactual Approach to Within-Individual Effects," *Criminology* 44 (2006): 465-502.

## Impact on Children

CHART 13



Courtesy of The Heritage Foundation

**57. Marriage -- especially if low-conflict and long-lasting -- was a source of economic, educational and social advantage for most children. Researchers agreed that, except in cases of high and unremitting parental conflict, children who grew up in households with their married mother and father did better on a wide range of economic, social, educational and emotional measures than the children raised in other kinds of family arrangements.**

Mary Parke, "Are Married Parents Really Better for Children?," Center for Law and Social Policy, (2003, May).

**58. "Having a child outside of marriage virtually guarantees a teenage woman and her children a life of poverty, low education, low expectations and low achievement. It gradually puts in place the conditions which foster rejection and, ultimately, crime."**

Patrick Fagan, "The Real Root Causes of Violent Crime: The Breakdown of Marriage, Family, and Community," Backgrounder #1026, (1995, 17 March).

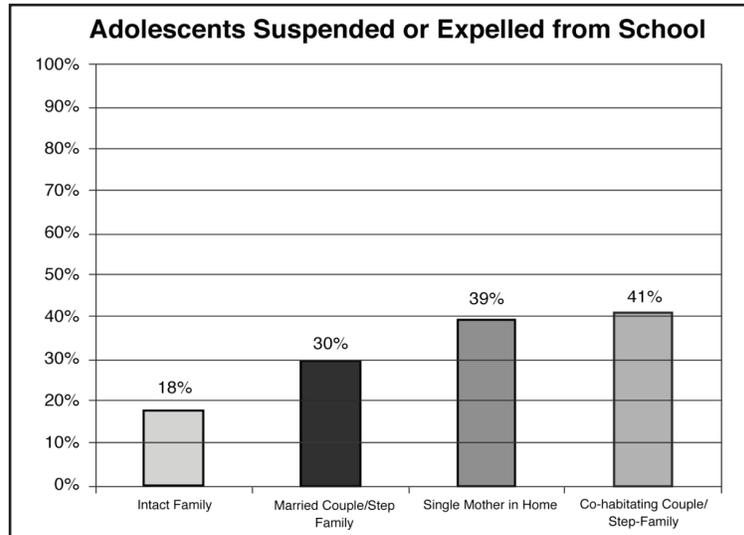
*Growing up with both married parents in a low-conflict marriage was so important to child well-being that it was replacing race, class and neighborhood as the greatest source of difference in child outcomes.*

Testimony of Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, Before The Committee On Health, Education, Labor And Pensions Subcommittee On Children And Families, U.S. Senate, (2--4, 28 April).

## Impact on Children continued

### Education

CHART 14



SOURCE: Wendy Manning and Kathleen Lamb, "Adolescent Well-being in Cohabiting, Married, and Single-Parent Families," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65 (2003): 876-893.

*Studies consistently showed that children in two-parent families were significantly less likely to drop out of high school than children in a one-parent family.*

Linda Waite, "Does Marriage Matter?" *Demography* 32 (1995, November): 494. Linda Waite, "Does Marriage Matter?" Presidential Address to the American Population Association of America, (1995, 8 April 8).

**59. Adolescents from intact two-parent (mother/father) families were less likely to be suspended or expelled from school, less likely to commit delinquent crimes, less likely to be reported for problem behaviors at school, less likely to receive low grades in two or more subjects and more likely to score well on standard tests of cognitive development.**

Wendy Manning and Kathleen Lamb, "Adolescent Well-Being in Cohabiting, Married, and single-Parent Families," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65 (2003): 876-893.

**60. Students who were living with both parents (mother/father) in an intact family had consistently higher reading and math scores than their peers from other living arrangements. Socioeconomic factors reduced, but did not account for this correlation.**

Gary Marks, "Family Size, Family Type, and Student Achievement: Cross National Differences and the Role of Socioeconomic and School Factors," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 37 (2006): 1-24.

**61. "[A]dolescents living with their continuously married biological parents have significantly lower behavioral problem scores compared to all other family types, even controlling for maternal and adolescent**

## Impact on Children continued

### background characteristics.”

Marcia Carlson, “Family Structure, Father Involvement, and Adolescent Outcomes,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68 (2006): 137-154.

**62. Children in single-mother homes were less like to complete high school, attend or graduate from college than either children in intact married (mother/father) families or children in widowed families -- including after controlling for race, gender and maternal education.**

Timothy Biblarz and G. Gottainer, “Family Structure and Children’s Success: A Comparison of Widowed and Divorced Single-Mother families,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62(2) (2000): 533-548.

**63. In studies involving more than 25,000 children, those who lived with only one parent had lower grade-point averages, lower college aspirations, lower attendance records and higher dropout rates than students who lived with both parents. Adolescents who had lived apart from one of their parents during some period of childhood were twice as likely to drop out of high school and one-and-one-half times as likely to be “idle” -- out of school or out of work -- in their late teens and early 20s.**

Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, “Growing up with a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps,” (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994): 2, 37, 41, 46, 47, 50, 52, 53, 60.

*Children living with cohabiting mothers had the lowest academic ratings and highest school behavior problems, a ranking that persisted after economic resource and parental behavior differences were controlled.*

Elizabeth Thomson, Thomas Hanson and Sara McLanahan, “Family Structure and Child Well-Being: Economic Resources vs. Parental Behaviors,” *Social Forces* 73 (September 1994): 237.

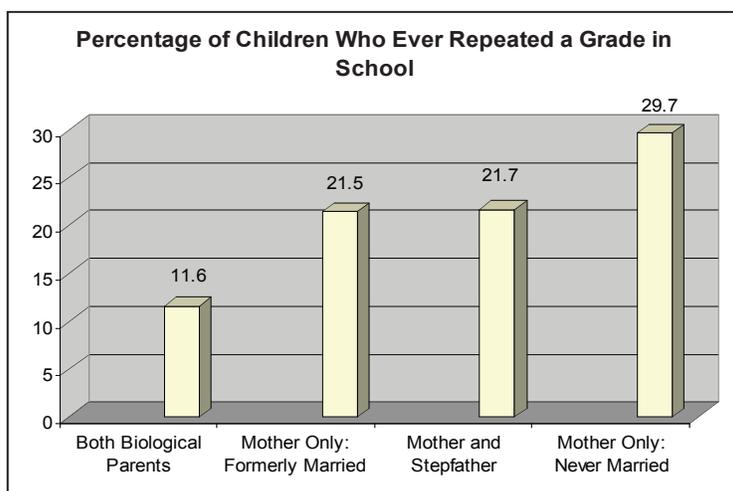
*Among households of the same race, having more than two children was not associated with a decline in wealth. Rather, reported household assets increased as the number of children in the household increased.*

M. A. Painter, K. Shafer, "All in the Family: Children, Race/Ethnicity, and Adult Wealth Accumulation," Paper presented at the annual conference of the Population Association of America, (2007).

**64. Children who lived with their biological parents had fewer behavior problems and experienced better general adjustment in school than children who lived with divorced parents or with a mother who had remarried. Children in intact families achieved higher grades and engaged in fewer problem behaviors than peers in single-parent or step-families.**

Cheryl Buehler and Kay Pasley, "Family Boundary Ambiguity, Marital Status, and Child Adjustment," *Journal of Early Adolescence* 20 (2000): 281-308.

**CHART 15**



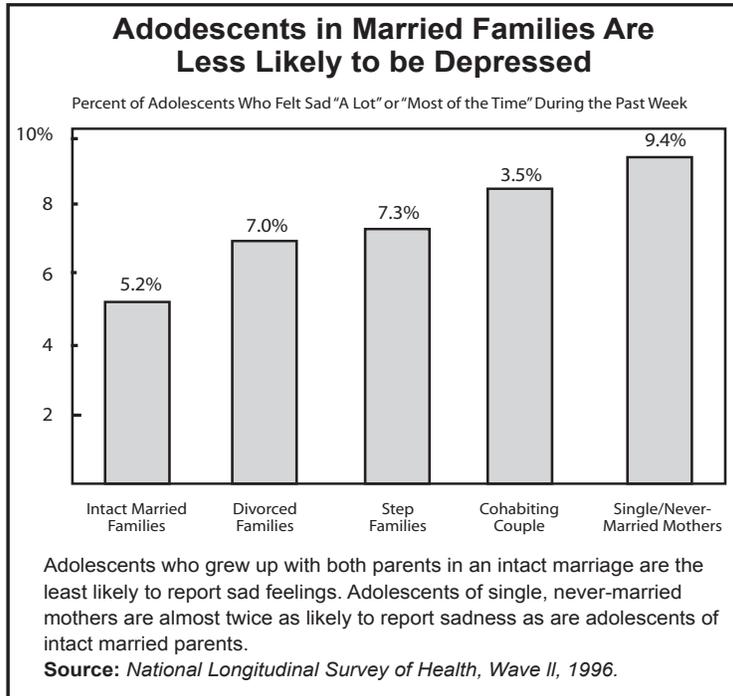
SOURCE: Deborah Dawson, "Family Structure and Children's Health and Well-Being: Data from the 1988 National Health Interview Survey on Child Health," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 53(3) (1991, August): 578.

**MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH**

**65. A major population-based study in Sweden concluded that children living in one-parent homes had more than double the risk of psychiatric disease such as severe depression or schizophrenia, suicide or attempted suicide and alcohol-related disease. Girls were three times more likely to have drug problems and boys four times more likely, compared to children living in two-parent homes. These findings remained after the scholars controlled for a wide range of demographic and socioeconomic variables. Because Sweden has a comprehensive system that eliminates the economic and material consequences of growing up in one-parent homes, these problems cannot be attributed to poverty.**

Gunilla Ringback Weitoft, Anders Hjern, Bengt Haglund and Mans Rosen, "Mortality, Severe Morbidity, and Injury in Children Living with Single Parents in Sweden: A Population-Based Study," *The Lancet* 361 (2003, January): 289-295.

### CHART 16



Courtesy of The Heritage Foundation

**66. Young adults of divorced parents reported significantly more distress in their childhoods than counterparts with married parents. They were more than three times more likely to report having "harder childhoods than most people" and tended to wish their father had spent more time with them. One in three in this group said they wondered if their fathers really loved them, a rate three times higher than that of students with married parents. Young people were disturbed even many years after a divorce.**

Lisa Laumann-Billings and Robert Emery, "Distress among Young Adults from Divorced Families," *Journal of Family Psychology* 14(4) (2000, December): 671-687.

**67. Higher levels of anxiety among children and adolescents in the 1990s, compared to the 1950s, were related to changes in the divorce rate, the birth rate and the crime rate. As divorce and crime rates climbed, as birth rates dropped and as increasing numbers of Americans began to live alone, anxiety levels among children skyrocketed.**

Jean Twenge, "The Age of Anxiety? Birth Cohort Change in Anxiety and Neuroticism, 1952-1953," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 79 (2000): 1,007-1,021.

*"Children should be seen as a hope for the future rather than part of a problem. A government makes a very hopeful statement when its policies invest in children's lives and in marriage – humanity's most pro-child institution."*

Jenny Tyree, Associate Marriage Analyst for Focus on the Family Action

*After controlling for maternal characteristics and background characteristics, adolescents living with both biological parents who were continuously married exhibited lower levels of problem behavior than peers from any other family type.*

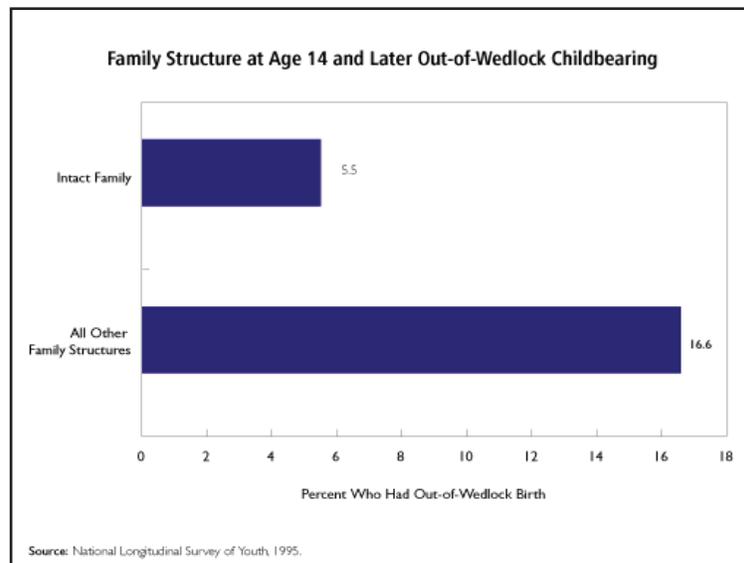
Marcia Carlson,  
"Family Structure, Father Involvement, and Adolescent Behavioral Outcomes," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68(1) (2006, February): 137-154.

**68.** An analysis of child abuse cases in a nationally-representative sample of 42 countries found that children from single-parent families were more likely to be victims of physical and sexual abuse than children who lived with both biological parents. Compared to their peers living with both parents, children living in single-parent homes faced:

- 77 percent greater risk of being physically abused;
- 87 percent greater risk of being harmed by physical neglect;
- 165 percent greater risk of experiencing notable physical neglect;
- 74 percent greater risk of suffering from emotional neglect;
- 80 percent greater risk of suffering from serious injury or harm as a result of abuse or neglect;
- Overall, 120 percent greater risk of being endangered by some type of child abuse or neglect.

Andrea Sedlak and Diane Broadhurst, "The National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C., (1996): xviii, 5-19.

### CHART 17

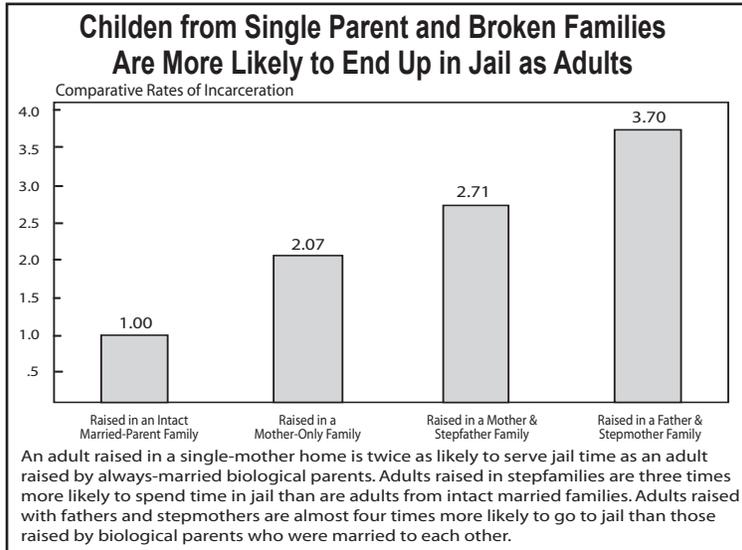


*Courtesy of The Heritage Foundation*

**69.** On average, children reared in married-parent families were less vulnerable to serious emotional illness, depression and suicide than children in non-intact families.

"State of Our Unions: The Social Health of Marriage in America, 2003," (Piscataway, NJ: The National Marriage Project), (2003): 8, 16, 18.

**CHART 18**



*Courtesy of The Heritage Foundation*

**70. In a survey of 272 high school students, family cohesion and marital status were the strongest protective factors against suicidal behavior, with students from intact mother/father families the least likely to be suicidal and those in re-married families the most likely to be suicidal. Thirty-eight percent of teens in step-families reported suicidal behavior, compared to 20 percent of teens from single-parent homes and just 9 percent of teens from intact families.**

Judith Rubenstein, Antonia Halton, Linda Kasten, Carol Rubin and Gerald Stechler, "Suicidal Behavior in Adolescents: Stress and Protection in Different Family Contexts," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 68 (1998): 274-84.

**71. Children raised in single-parent homes were much more likely to be depressed and to have developmental, behavioral and emotional problems; such children are more likely to fail in school, use drugs and engage in early sexual activity. They were also more likely to become involved in crime and to end up in jail as adults.**

Patrick Fagan, Robert Rector, Kirk Johnson, and America Peterson, "The Positive Effects of Marriage: A Book of Charts," *The Heritage Foundation*, (2002, April).

**72. Children from single-parent families had more than twice the emotional and behavioral problems compared with children in two-parent mother/father**

*The more often teenagers have dinner with their parents, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use illegal drugs. Compared with teens who have frequent family dinners, those who have dinner with their families only two nights per week or less are at double the risk of substance abuse.*

"The Importance of Family Dinners," *The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, CASA Survey Report: The Importance of Family Dinners* (2--3. September): 3, 7.

*“Children whose parents live apart appear to be at heightened risk of being diagnosed with asthma and experiencing an asthma-related emergency even after taking into account demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.”*

Kristen Harknett,  
“Children’s Elevated Risk of Asthma in Unmarried Families: Underlying Structural and Behavioral Mechanisms,” Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, Working paper #2005-01-FF (2005).

families. For instance, children in single-parent homes were more likely to be in the lower half of their class and have significantly more developmental and behavioral problems. Children in two-parent families experienced just half the developmental delay that children in single-parent families face.

The Heritage Foundation analysis from Nicholas Zill, National Health Interview Survey Child Health Supplement, 1981. Cited in: Robert Rector, Kirk Johnson, America Peterson, “The Positive Effects of Marriage: A Book of Charts,” The Heritage Foundation (2002, April): 33.

**73. In Sweden and Finland, the break-up of a family and a single-parent background had negative effects on mental and general health of the children and was associated with deaths in young adults.**

O. Lundberg, “The Impact of Childhood Living Conditions on Illness and Mortality in Adulthood. *Social Science Medicine* 36 (1993): 1,047–1,052. H. Hansagi, L. Brandt, S. Andréasson, “Parental Divorce: Psychosocial Well-Being, Mental Health and Mortality During Youth and Young Adulthood: A Longitudinal Study of Swedish Conscripts,” *European Journal of Public Health* 10 (2000): 86–92. T.Mäkikyrö, A.Sauvola J.Moring, J.Vejjola, P.Nieminen, M.Järvelin and M.Isohanni, “Hospital-Treated Psychiatric Disorders in Adults With a Single-Parent and Two-Parent Family Background: A 28-year Follow-Up of the 1966 Northern Finland Cohort,” *Family Process* 37 (1998): 335–344. A. Sauvola, P. Räsänen, M. Joukamaa, J. Jokelainen, M. Järvelin, M.K. Isohanni, “Mortality of Young Adults in Relation to Single-Parent Family Background,” *European Journal of Public Health* 11 (2001): 284-286.

**74. Vulnerability to eating disorders ran twice as high among young women with unmarried parents than it did among peers with married mothers and fathers.**

Miguel Angel Marinez-Gonzalez, Pilar Gual, Francisca Lahortiga, Yolanda Alonso, Jokin de Irala-Estevéz and Salvador Cervera, “Parental Factors, Mass Media Influences, Influences, and the Onset of Eating Disorders in a Prospective Population-Based Cohort,” *Pediatrics* 111 (2003): 315-320.

### PARENT INVOLVEMENT

**75. Married fathers can exercise an abiding, important and positive influence on their children and are especially likely to do so in a happy marriage.**

Paul Amato, “More Than Money? Men’s Contributions to Their Children’s Lives,” In Alan Booth and A.C. Crouter (eds.), “Men in Families: When Do They Get Involved? What Difference Does it Make?” (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998).

**76. The physical presence of a biological father is important for the sexual development of girls. Girls who live apart from their biological father develop sexually at earlier ages than girls who live with their biological**

## Impact on Children continued

**father. Girls exposed to the presence of the mother's boyfriend or a stepfather reach puberty at earlier ages than the daughters of unpartnered single mothers.**

Bruce Ellis, "Of Fathers and Pheromones: Implications of Cohabitation for Daughters' Puberty Training," In A.Booth and A.Crouter (Eds.) "Just Living Together: Implications of Cohabitation on Families, Children and Social Policy," (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002).

**77. Marriage made a difference for parent-child relationships. In one nationally representative study, 30 percent of young adults whose parents divorced reported poor relationships with their mothers, compared to 16 percent of children whose parents stayed married. Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of young adults with divorced parents reported poor relationships with their fathers, compared with 29 percent of young adults from non-divorced homes. Forty percent of the children of divorce had received psychological help, and 25 percent had dropped out of school.**

Nicholas Zill, Donna Morrison and Mary Jo Coiro, "Long-Term Effects of Parental Divorce on Parent-Child Relationships, Adjustment, and Achievement in Young Adulthood," *Journal of Family Psychology* 7(1) (1993): 91-103.

**78. Biological children of cohabiting parents consistently received smaller investments from their fathers than biological children of married parents. After controlling for ways that married and unmarried fathers differed, as well as demographic factors, statistically significant correlations showed that unmarried fathers spent about four hours less per week with their children than their married peers.**

Robin Fretwell Wilson, "Evaluating Marriage: Does Marriage Matter to the Nurturing of Children?" *San Diego Law Review* 42 (2005): 848-881.

**79. Marriage strengthened the bonds between fathers and their children. Married men were more involved and had better relationships with their children than unwed or divorced fathers. In part, this was because married fathers shared the same residence with their children. But it was also because the role of husband encourages men to voluntarily take responsibility for their own children. Paternity by itself does not seem to accomplish the same transformation in men's lives.**

Steven Nock, "Marriage in Men's Lives," (N.Y: Oxford University Press, 1998); David Popenoe, "Life Without Father: Compelling New Evidence That Fatherhood and Marriage Are Indispensable for the Good of Children and Society," (New York: The Free Press, 1996).

*More than two-thirds of all babies who died from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) were born to unmarried mothers. This study drawing from Scottish morbidity records showed a clear link between maternal marital status and the risk of SIDS.*

**Gordon Smith and Ian White,** "Predicting the Risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome From Obstetric Characteristics: A Retrospective Cohort Study of 505,011 Live Births," *Pediatrics* 117 (2006): 60-66.

*Compared with peers who were raised in a home with married parents, males whose parents never married were significantly less likely to marry and were more likely to cheat and walk out on their romantic partners.*

Rebecca Colman and Cathy Spatz Widon, "Childhood Abuse and Adult Intimate Relationships: A Prospective Study," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 28(11) (2004, November): 1,133-1,151.

**80. When a young child (typically 18-24 months of age) begins to show a deep need to understand and make sense of his/her sexual embodiment, the child's relationship with mother and father become centrally important. Both the same-sex parent and the opposite-sex parent play vital roles as gender identity continues to develop and is deeply influential throughout the life cycle.**

Ethel Person and Lionel Ovesey, "Psychoanalytic Theory of Gender Identity," *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis* 11 (1983): 203-225.

**81. Compared with children from traditional families, children from nontraditional families showed more psychological problems as rated by their parents and more internalizing behavior as rated by their teachers. Boys from nontraditional families were especially at a disadvantage; they showed lower self-concept, more externalizing, poorer classroom behavior and lower grade-point averages. Girls from such families were less popular with peers.**

Phyllis Bronstein, JoAnn Clauson, Miriam Frankel Stoll and Craig Abrams, "Parenting Behavior and Children's Social, Psychological and Academic Adjustment in Diverse Family Structure," *Family Relations* 42 (1993): 268-276.

**82. Only about 60 percent of U.S. children were living with their own biological (or adoptive) married parents. "What is America's Most Pressing Social Problem?" Center for Marriage and Families, American Institute of Values, Fact Sheet No. 1 (2006, February). In 1970, only 12 percent of families with children were headed by a single mother. By 2003, that share had more than doubled, to 26 percent. From 1970 to 2003, the number of single-father households increased six-fold.**

U.S. Census Bureau, "America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2003," *Current Population Reports* (2004, November): 4, 8.

**83. Fifty-two percent of births to unmarried women in 2001 occurred within a cohabiting relationship. Highly educated women were much less likely to give birth outside of marriage: 7 percent of women with a college degree or higher gave birth outside marriage, compared with 53 percent of women with a high school diploma.**

Lisa Mincieli, Jennifer Manlove, Molly McGarrett, Kristin Moore and Suzanne Ryan, "The Relationship Context of Births Outside Marriage: The Rise of Cohabitation," *Child Trends Research Brief, Publication #2007-13*, 4.

**84. Teens from two-parent homes were significantly more involved in constructive use of time through groups, sports and religious organizations than teens from single-parent homes.**

Michelle Crozier Kegler, Roy Oman, Sara Vesely, Kenneth McLeroy, Cheryl Aspy, Sharon Rodine and LaDonna Marshall, "Relationships Among Youth Assets and Neighborhood and Community Resources," *Health Education & Behavior* 32 (2005): 380-397.

## Impact on Children continued

**85. The special capacities of mothers seem to have deep biological underpinnings. During pregnancy and breastfeeding, women experience high levels of the hormone peptide oxytocin, which fosters affiliative behaviors.**

David Geary, "Male, Female: The Evolution of Human Sex Differences," (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2004): 104.

**86. Infants of married mothers were more likely to be securely attached than those of cohabiting or single mothers, even after controlling for age, ethnicity and education.**

Stacy Aronson and Aletha Huston, "The Mother-Infant Relationship in Single, Cohabiting, and Married Families: A Case of Marriage?" *Journal of Family Psychology* 18(1) (2004): 5-18.

**87. Married mothers showed greater psychological well-being and reported less ambivalence and conflict, and greater love and intimacy in their relationships with their partners than cohabiting or single mothers. They also believed in more progressive child rearing ideas and were less likely to believe in benefits for child development from maternal employment.**

Stacy Aronson and Aletha Huston, "The Mother-Infant Relationship in Single, Cohabiting, and Married Families: A Case of Marriage?" *Journal of Family Psychology* 18(1) (2004): 5-18.

**88. A national study on drug abuse found that adolescents ages 12-17 who lived with their married biological parents were the least likely to use illicit drugs. Adolescents who lived with their father only or with their father and step-mother were the most likely to use marijuana or other illicit drugs.**

John Hoffmann and Robert Johnson, "A National Portrait of Family Structure and Adolescent Drug Use," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 60 (1998, August): 633-645.

**89. High school students who reported heavy episodic drinking were disproportionately "older, male, from families that receive welfare benefits, are not living in intact mother/father families, are attending religious services less often, and are more likely to have delinquent friends than those who have not drunk heavily in the month prior to the survey."**

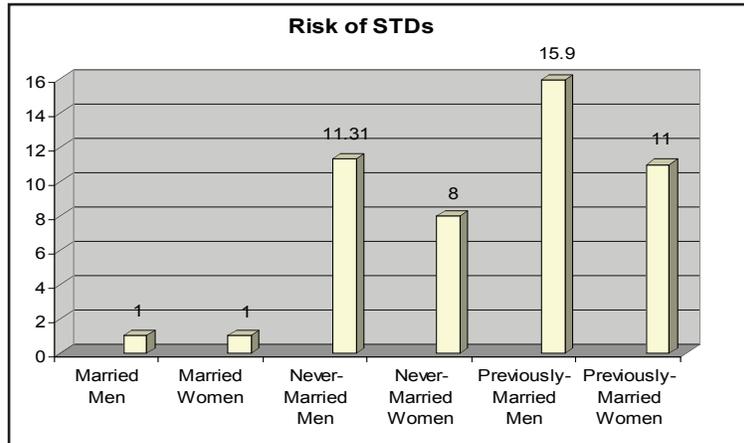
Barbara Costello, Bradley Anderson and Michael Stein, "Heavy Episodic Drinking Among Adolescents: A Test of Hypotheses Derived from Control Theory," *Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education* 50(1) (2006): 35-36.

*Girls who lived with their married biological parents in eighth grade were one-third as likely to have a pre-marital birth by grade 12 as girls living in other family structures.*

Kristin Moore, Jennifer Manlove, Dana Gleib and Donna Morrison, "Nonmarital School-Age Motherhood: Family, Individual, and School Characteristics," *Journal of Adolescent Research* 13 (1998, October): 433-457.

## Better Physical Health/Longer Lives

CHART 19



SOURCE: Lawrence Finer, Jacqueline Darroch and Susheela Singh, "Sexual Partnership Patterns as a Behavioral Risk Factor for Sexually Transmitted Diseases," *Family Planning Perspectives* 31 (1999): 228-236.

*"Virtually every study of mortality and marital status shows the unmarried of both sexes have higher death rates, whether by accident, disease or self-inflicted wounds, and this is found in every country that maintains accurate health statistics."*

Robert Coombs, "Marital Status and Personal Well-Being: A Literature Review," *Family Relations* 40 (1991): 97.

**90. Marriage was associated with better health across all major health domains and across all types of conditions within health domains. Of the non-married groups, divorcees had the worst overall health profiles. Divorce had even more deleterious health consequences for women than for men.**

Amy Mehraban Pienta, Mark Hayward and Kristi Rahrig Jenkins, "Health Consequences of Marriage for the Retirement Years," *Journal of Family Issues* 21 (5) (2000, July): 569.

**91. Being unmarried significantly increased the hazard of dying for both men and women. For both sexes, the hazard of mortality fell significantly with marital duration. For men, there was a large initial drop in the risk of dying after the wedding, followed by an additional, gradually accumulating benefit of marriage duration. The conclusion was that, for women, the greatest benefit from marriage was accumulated over time.**

Lee Lillard and Linda Waite, "Til Death Do Us Part: Marital Disruption and Mortality," *American Journal of Sociology* 100(5) (1995, March): 1,131-1,156.

**92. "Marriage promotes better health habits and greater longevity among men, largely due to the care, attention and monitoring by their wives. In fact, men appear to reap the most physical health benefits from marriage and suffer the greatest health consequences when they divorce. Once married, men are also less likely to hang out with male friends, to spend time at bars, to abuse alcohol or drugs or to engage in illegal activities. They are more likely than unmarried men to attend religious services regularly, to join faith groups**

## Better Physical Health/Longer Lives continued

**and to spend time with relatives. In brief, men settle down when they get married.”**

Testimony Of Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, Co-Director, National Marriage Project Rutgers, The State University Of New Jersey, Before The Committee On Health, Education, Labor And Pensions Subcommittee On Children And Families U.S. Senate, (2004, 28 April).

### MORTALITY RATES

**93. Compared to men living with a wife (or partner) and their children, fathers living alone -- without spouse (or partner) and apart from their children -- experienced “almost four times as great a risk of all-cause mortality, 10 times of death from external violence, 13 times from fall and poisoning, almost five times from suicide and 19 times from addiction.” When controlling for health-selections effects and differences in socioeconomic status, researchers found “significantly elevated risks” remained for men living without a spouse (or partner) and for men living without children.**

Gunilla Ringback Weitof, Bo Burstrom and Mans Rosen, “Premature Mortality Among Lone Fathers and Childless Men,” *Social Science & Medicine* 59 (2004): 1,449-1,459. As cited in: “Men Dying Alone,” *New Research, The Howard Center for Family, Religion & Society* 18(11) (2004, November).

**94. Singleness was one of a number of important “psychosocial predictors of premature mortality.”**

Carlos Iribarren, David Jacobs, Catarina Kiefe, Cora Lewis, Karen Matthews, Jeffrey Roseman and Stephen Hulley, “Causes and Demographic, Medical, Lifestyle and Psychosocial Predictors of Premature Mortality: The CARDIA Study,” *Social Science & Medicine* 60 (2005): 471-482.

**95. Unmarried individuals had higher rates of mortality than married people -- about 50 percent higher for women and 250 percent higher for men. Married people had better physical health and psychological well-being than divorced, separated, never-married or widowed people.**

“The Benefits of Marriage,” *National Center for Policy Analysis, Daily Policy Alert*, (2006, 4 January).

**96. Researchers identified marital status as a reason for the black-white gap in mortality rates. Blacks were more likely to be in the non-married category than whites, and those who never married had almost twice the mortality risk of those who had married.**

Stephanie Bond Huie, Robert Hummer and Richard Rogers, “Individual and Contextual Risks of Death Among Race and Ethnic Groups in the United States,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 43 (2002): 359-381.

*“The size of the health gain from marriage is remarkable. It may be as large as the benefit from giving up smoking.”*

Chris Wilson and Andrew Oswald, “How Does Marriage Affect Physical and Psychological Health? A Survey of the Longitudinal Evidence,” *Institute for the Study of Labor, Discussion Paper No. 1619* (2005).

## Better Physical Health/Longer Lives continued

### GENERAL HEALTH

**97. Married women reported the best physical and psychological health. Formerly married women reported the worst health, with never-married women falling between these two groups. Compared with unmarried women, married women had less job stress, environment stress, child stress, financial stress and relationship stress.**

Peggy McDonough, Vivienne Walters and Lisa Strohschein, "Chronic Stress and the Social Patterning of Women's Health in Canada," *Social Science and Medicine* 54 (2002): 767-782.

**98. A wide body of social science literature characterized marriage as a powerful protector of public health. Children raised by their own two married parents lived longer, had fewer illnesses and accidents and enjoyed better health than children raised outside of intact marriages. Both men and women who stay married enjoyed powerful health advantages: longer lives, better health, better-managed chronic illness, less likely to require extensive (and expensive) hospitalization and nursing home care and became disabled less often than single or divorced people.**

Maggie Gallagher. "The Case for Marriage," Institute for American Values, (2001, March).

**99. A study showed that married persons were less likely to have high blood pressure than the divorced, widowed and separated. Nonmarried adults were at higher risks of hypertension because of low social support, social isolation and reduced economic resources. The study found the following rates of high blood pressure among the different groups:**

- **Married and living with spouse: 8.5%**
- **Widowed: 12.8%**
- **Divorced: 13.3%**
- **Separated: 14%**

Jennifer Warner, WebMD Medical News, Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, M.D., (2004, 17 May). S. Morewitz, "Marital Status as a Risk Factor for Hypertension Impairment," presented at the American Heart Association's 5th annual Scientific Forum on Quality of Care and Outcomes Research in Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke, Washington, (2004, 16-17 May), News release, American Heart Association.

**100. People who said they were happily married had much higher levels of antibodies (which increase disease-fighting capability) in the blood than those who reported lower marital satisfaction. Immune responses**

*Married persons had the lowest incidences of diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and hypertension.*

Amy Mehraban Pienta, "Health Consequences of Marriage for the Retirement Years," *Journal of Family Issues* 21 (2000): 559-586.

## Better Physical Health/Longer Lives continued

were not related to other health factors such as smoking, alcohol intake, sleep, exercise or diet.

Anna Phillips, Douglas Carroll, Victoria Burns, Christopher Ring, John Macleod and Mark Drayson, "Bereavement and Marriage are Associated with Antibody Response to Influenza Vaccination in the Elderly," *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity* 20(3) (2006, May): 279-289.

**101. Divorced people suffered from more health problems than married people, even when taking into account differences in "age, sex, educational level, degree of urbanization, religion and country of birth." The divorced were significantly more likely to suffer from chronic illnesses, more likely to voice "subjective health complaints," and more likely to claim work disability benefits and to report "less than good" perceived general health. The never-married reported health conditions that were between that of the married and the divorced. Although they were more likely to claim work disability benefits than the married, the widowed "do not differ significantly from the married in their perceived general health and subjective health complaints."**

I.M.A. Joung, "Differences in Self-Reported Morbidity by Marital Status and by Living Arrangements," *International Journal of Epidemiology* 23 (1994): 91-97.

**102. Marriage was associated with better health and longer life spans. A marriage rife with conflict and stress, however, can reduce these benefits. Hostility reduces a body's ability to heal. "[A] bad marriage is particularly risky, because your major source of support becomes your major source of stress, and you can't easily look for a replacement."**

Janice Kiecolt-Glaser, T. Loving, J. Stowell, W. Malarkey, S. Lemeshow, S. Dickinson and R. Glaser, "Hostile Marital Interactions, Proinflammatory Cytokine Production, and Wound Healing," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 62 (2005): 1,377-1,384.

**103. Elderly patients without a spouse end up in lower quality hospitals and then require hospital care much longer than peers who have a spouse. "Marriage may provide the interpersonal resources necessary to develop and execute a better algorithm for care seeking." Elderly patients with spouses "have shorter lengths of stay" in the hospital. "As the fraction of the elderly population that is married declines, the impact of marital status on health care choices could be quite important...."**

Theodore Iwashyna and Nicholas Christakis, "Marriage, Widowhood, and Health-Care Use," *Social Science & Medicine* 57 (2003): 2,137-2,147.

*"[D]ivorce without remarriage, or long lasting cohabitation without formal marriage, reduces the lifetime sum of subjective well-being by 4-12 percent for both men and women."*

M. D. R. Evans and Jonathan Kelley, "Effect of Family Structure on Life Satisfaction: Australian Evidence," *Social Indicators Research* 69 (2004): 303-349.

## Better Physical Health/Longer Lives continued

*“Women who were not married generally had worse health trends than married women.” Never-married women and divorced and separated women had more physical impairments, psychosomatic symptoms and overall health problems than married women.*

Ingrid Waldron, Christopher Weiss and Mary Elizabeth Hughes, “Marital Status Effects on Health: Are There Differences Between Never-Married Women and Divorced and Separated Women?” *Social Science and Medicine* 45 (1997): 1,387-1,397.

**104. An American Academy of Pediatrics task force concluded that “marriage is beneficial in many ways.” People behave differently when they are married. “They have healthier lifestyles, eat better and mother each other’s health. Being part of a couple and a family also increases the number of people and social institutions with which an individual has contact, this ... increases the likelihood that the family will be a successful one.”**

American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on the Family, “Family Pediatrics,” *Pediatrics* 111 Supplement (2003): 1,541-1,553

### CANCER

**105. Studies revealed that “every type of terminal cancer strikes divorced individuals ... more frequently than it does married people.” Divorced males died by more than double the incidence of respiratory cancer, a four-fold increase in buccal cavity and pharynx cancer and a more than 50-percent increase in cancer of the digestive organs and peritoneum of the urinary organs. Deaths by genital cancer more than doubled for divorced white females. Premature death rates, defined as occurring between the ages of 15 and 64, “are significantly higher from a number of diseases among divorced men and women compared to married persons the same sex and age.”**

J. Lynch, “The Broken Heart: The Medical Consequences of Loneliness,” (New York: Basic Books, 1977). Cited in: *Divorce and Health*, Rocky Mountain Family Council Fact Sheet. H. Carter and P. Glick, “Marriage and Divorce: A Social and Economic Study,” American Public Health Association, *Vital and Health Statistics Monograph*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970). Cited in: *Divorce and Health*, Rocky Mountain Family Council Fact Sheet.

**106. A review of more than 130 empirical studies from the 1930s to 1990 indicated that married people generally lived longer, were more emotionally and physically healthy, happier and more likely to recover from cancer than unmarried people.**

Robert Coombs, “Marital Status and Personal Well-Being: A Literature Review,” *Family Relations* 40 (1991): 97-102.

**107. Married persons lived longer and experienced lower mortality rates for cancer, in comparison with single, separated, widowed or divorced persons. Married persons with cancer tended to be diagnosed earlier, received more frequent curative treatment and were more likely to survive.**

James Goodwin, William Hunt, Charles Key and Jonathan Samet, “The Effect of Marital Status on Stage, Treatment, and Survival of Cancer Patients,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 258 (1987): 3125, 3129.

## Better Physical Health/Longer Lives continued

**108. Marital status had a significant impact on survival from 12 common types of cancer, with the exception of uterine cancer and leukemia. Mortality was 15 percent higher for never-married men, never-married women and divorced men, compared with their married peers. Mortality among previously-married cancer patients (including divorced women and widowed men and women) was 7 percent higher than for their married counterparts.**

Oystein Kravdal, "The Impact of Marital Status on Cancer Survival," *Social Science and Medicine* 52 (2001): 357-368. Cited in: *Cancer Medicine -- The Impact of Marital Status on Cancer Survival, Fathers for Life.*

### SUBSTANCE ABUSE

**109. Using data from 48 states, researchers calculated that never-married white women were 27 percent more likely to smoke than married peers. Divorced or separated white women were 99 percent more likely to smoke than married peers. Never-married white men were 20 percent more likely to smoke and divorced or separated white men were 91 percent more likely to smoke than married peers.**

Theresa Osypuk, I.Kawachi, S.Subramanian and D. Acevedo-Garcia. "Are State Patterns of Smoking Different for Different Racial/Ethnic Groups? An Application of Multilevel Analysis," *Public Health Reports* 121 (2006): 563-577.

**110. In a study of mothers incarcerated for drug offenses, 69 percent were single, 17 percent were either separated, divorced or widowed and 14 percent were either married or in a long-term relationship. Almost two-thirds (62 percent) of drug-abusing mothers were born to "natural parents [who] had either separated or had never lived together."**

Thomas Hanlon, Kevin O'Grady, Terry Bennett-Sears and Jason Callaman, "Incarcerated Drug-Abusing Mothers: Their Characteristics and Vulnerability," *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse* 1 (2005): 59-77.

**111. Divorced and single women were statistically more likely to engage in binge drinking than married peers. Married women were less likely to display depressive symptomology, and they felt safer than their single peers.**

Alfred DeMaris and Catherine Kaukinen, "Violent Victimization and Women's Mental and Physical Health: Evidence from a National Sample," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 42 (2005): 396, 399, 401.

*Cures for cancer were significantly more successful (eight to 17 percent) when a patient was married. Being married was comparable to being in an age category 10 years younger.*

James Goodwin, William Hunt, Charles Key and Jonathan Samet, "The Effect of Marital Status on Stage, Treatment, and Survival of Cancer Patients," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 258 (1987): 3,152-3,130.

## Better Physical Health/Longer Lives continued

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**112. Divorced women were more likely to test positive for any drug (15.1 percent versus 9.6 percent). Tests for cocaine use showed that the prevalence of use was almost twice as high among divorced women (1.5 percent) and single women (1.6 percent) as among married women (0.8 percent).**

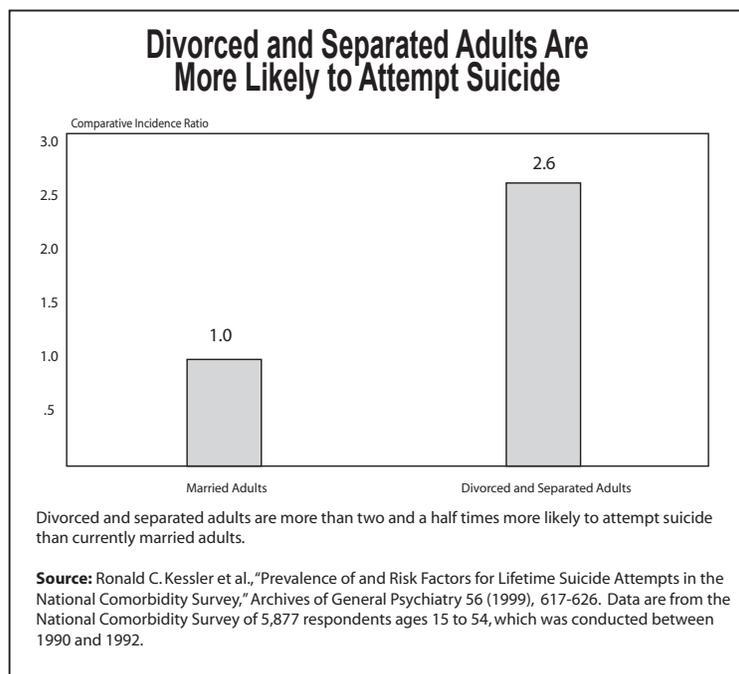
David Pegues, Michael Engelgan and Charles Woernle, "Prevalence of Illicit Drugs Detected in the Urine of Women of Childbearing Age in Alabama Public Health Clinics," Public Health Reports 109 (1994): 530-538.

*Although men were the clear beneficiaries of marriage in this regard, married women were nearly one-third less likely to report drinking problems than divorced women.*

Linda Waite, "Does Marriage Matter?" Demography 32 (1995, November): 483, 494. A. V. Horwitz and H.R. White, "Becoming Married, Depression, and Alcohol Problems Among Young Adults," Journal of Health and Social Behavior 32 (1991): 221-237.

# Mental Health / Depression / Suicide

## CHART 20



*Courtesy of The Heritage Foundation*

**113. Married adults were more likely to be mentally healthy, while suffering fewer limitations in daily activities and missing fewer days of work than unmarrieds.**

Corey L. M. Keyes, "The Mental Health Continuum: From Languishing to Flourishing in Life," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 43 (2002): 207-222.

**114. Continuously married people experienced better emotional health and less depression than never-married, remarried, divorced or widowed people. Getting married for the first time significantly increased a person's emotional well-being.**

Nadine Marks and James David Lambert, "Marital Status Continuity and Change Among Young and Midlife Adults," *Journal of Family Issues* 19 (1998, November): 652-686.

**115. Because of "the therapeutic benefit of marriage," rates for alcoholism, suicide, schizophrenia and other psychiatric problems run lower among married men and women than among their unmarried peers. Married people enjoyed "continuous companionship with a spouse who provides interpersonal closeness, emotional gratification and support in dealing with daily stress."**

Robert Coombs, "Marital Status and Personal Well-Being: A Literature Review," *Family Relations* 40 (1991): 97-102.

*After controlling for race, education, family structure, income and living arrangements, married people -- with or without children, male or female -- were less depressed and emotionally healthier than singles.*

Linda Waite and Mary Elizabeth Hughes, "At Risk on the Cusp of Old Age: Living Arrangements and Functional Status Among Black, White and Hispanic Adults," *Journal of Gerontology* (1999, May).

## Mental Health / Depression / Suicide continued

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*Remaining married in midlife has protective effects in the face of adverse experiences at work.*

Karen Matthews and Brooks Gump, "Chronic Work Stress and Marital Dissolution Increase Risk of Posttrial Mortality in Men From the Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial," *Archives of Internal Medicine* 162 (2002): 309-315.

**116. Marriage was associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms in both Japan and the United States. This study underscored the importance of spousal presence in mitigating the expression of depressive symptoms -- even in a vertical society such as Japan.**

Hidehiro Sugisawa, Hiroshi Shibata, Gavin Hougham, Toko Sugihara and Jersey Liang, "The Impact of Social Ties on Depressive Symptoms in U.S. and Japanese Elderly," *Journal of Social Issues* 58 (2002): 785-804.

**117. Psychologists found that, compared to married peers, unmarried mothers (19 percent) were almost four times more likely than married mothers (5 percent) to have experienced a depressive episode in the year prior to the interview. Never-married mothers were 3.1 times more likely than married mothers and separated or divorced mothers and 4.6 times more likely than married mothers to have experienced an episode of depression.**

Lorraine Davies, William Avison and Donna McAlpine, "Significant Life Experiences and Depression Among Single and Married Mothers," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 59 (1997): 294-308.

**118. A study found "that marriage continues to be beneficial for mental health." Canadian men and women in a stable marriage experienced "significantly lower levels of distress relative to those who remain single, separated or divorced." In the short term, the psychological distress brought about by change in marital status impacted men and women equally.**

Lisa Stronschein, Peggy McDonough, Georges Monette and Qing Shao, "Marital Transitions and Mental Health: Are There Gender Differences in the Short-Term Effects of Marital Status Change?" *Social Science & Medicine* 61 (2005): 2,293-2,303.

**119. Divorced women, compared to married women, experienced more frequent and serious depression.**

Frederick Lorenz, Ronald Simons and Rand Conger, "Married and Recently Divorced Mothers' Stressful Events and Distress: Tracing Change Across Time," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 59 (1997, February): 219-232.

## Mental Health / Depression / Suicide continued

**120. Single mothers were more than twice as likely to have sought help for mental health concerns in the previous 12 months as married mothers. Researchers found that 6.4 percent of married mothers suffered from affective disorders, compared to 14.8 percent of single mothers.**

John Cairney, Michael Boyle, Ellen Lipman and Yvonne Racine, "Single Mothers and the Use of Professionals for Mental Health Care Reasons," *Social Science and Medicine* 59 (2004): 2,535-2,546.

**121. Young adults who stayed married experienced less depression and fewer alcohol problems than those who remained single.**

Allan Horowitz, Helen Raskin White and Sandra Howell-White, "Becoming Married and Mental Health: A Longitudinal Study of a Cohort of Young Adults," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 58 (1996, November): 895-907.

**122. Those who were married experienced a decrease in symptoms of depression, while those who separated from or divorced their spouse experienced an increase in depression.**

Robin Simon and Kristen Marcussen, "Marital Transitions, Marital Beliefs, and Mental Health," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 40 (1999): 111-125.

**123. Compared with single women, married women had the lowest rates of suicide. In addition, suicide rates among married women with children ran far lower -- in all age groups -- than among childless married women. Parenthood was an important factor in suicide prevention, and suicide protection increased with the number of children.**

Georg Hoyer and Eiliv Lund, "Suicide Among Women Related to Number of Children in Marriage," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 50 (1993): 134-137.

**124. The married full-time mother was at less risk of mental disorders than lone mothers, both working and not working. Marriage reduced the risk of mental disorders, compared to lone mothers. When a range of types of mental disorders were considered, marriage reduced the risk of mental disorders for both men and women.**

David De Vaus, "Marriage and Mental Health," *Family Matters* 62, Australian Institute of Family Studies, (2002): 31, 32.

*The statistical relationship between suicide and singleness was a global phenomenon, showing striking regularities across studies and across national and cultural boundaries.*

Arne Mastekaasa, "Age Variations in the Suicide Rates and Self-Reported Subjective Well-Being of Married and Never-Married Persons," *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 5 (1995): 21-39.

## Mental Health / Depression / Suicide continued

*Divorced and separated men and women were more than twice as likely as married persons to commit suicide.*

Augustine Kposowa, "Marital Status and Suicide in the National Longitudinal Mortality Study," *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 54 (2000): 254-261.

**125. Rising suicide rates in Quebec between 1961 and 1986 were associated with "a sharp decline in the rate of marriage, a rise in the average age at first marriage, increased cohabitation outside of legal marriage, rising divorce propensities, a precipitous decline in fertility and a significant rise in the labor force participation of women." A significant, positive relationship was found between the incidence of divorce and suicide among both men and women. Compared to average suicide rates between 1931 to 1956 (3.45 per 100,000 women; 10.9 per 100,000 men), average suicide rates doubled between 1961 and 1986 (9.72 per 100,000 women; 22.0 per 100,000 men).**

Catherien Krull and Frank Trovato, "The Quiet Revolution and the Sex Differential in Quebec's Suicide Rates: 1931-1986," *Social Forces* 74 (1994): 1,121-1,147.

**126. Compared to single peers, married college students were approximately 30 percent less likely to seriously contemplate suicide. "The single most protective factor [from seriously attempting suicide] was being married."**

Jeremy Kisch, Victor Leino and Morton Silverman, "Aspects of Suicidal Behavior, Depression and Treatment in College Students: Results from the Spring 2000 National College Health Assessment Survey," *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior* 35.1 (2005): 3-13.

**127. After adjusting for socioeconomic and demographic variables, higher risks of suicide were found in divorced than in married persons. Divorced and separated persons were more than twice as likely to commit suicide as married persons. Marital status, especially divorce, had strong net effect on mortality from suicide, but only among men. Divorced men were nearly 2.5 times more likely to die from suicide than married men. The effect of divorce on suicide risk may be attributable to absence of social integration and increased psychological distress.**

Augustine Kposowa, "Marital status and suicide in the National Longitudinal Mortality Study," *Journal of Epidemiologic Community Health* 54 (2000, April) 254-261.

## Mental Health / Depression / Suicide continued

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**128. Among individuals who committed suicide, “a high proportion live alone, are unmarried, separated, [or] divorced.” Those most at risk of committing suicide were males between the ages of 25 and 60 who lived alone.**

Anthony Gallagher and Noel Sheehy, “Suicide in Rural Communities,” *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 4 (1994): 145-155.

**129. Never-married men under 40 years of age had suicide mortality levels that were approximately 90 percent higher than the standard rates. Divorced and widowed men also had elevated suicide rates. The suicide mortality rate for married men under 40 years of age was between 43 percent and 25 percent lower than the standard rates.**

I. H. Burnley, “Socioeconomic and Spatial Differentials in Mortality and Means of Committing Suicide in New South Wales, Australia, 1985-91,” *Social Science and Medicine* 41 (1995): 687-698.

*Over a five-year period, compared to individuals who remained married, those who became divorced, separated or widowed reported more depressive symptoms. The effects of divorce on depression appeared to be more significant for women than it was for men.*

**Robin Simon,**  
“Revisiting the Relationships among Gender, Marital Status, and Mental Health,”  
*American Journal of Sociology* 107(4) (2002, January): 1,065-1,096.

## Marital Sex Life

*Of all sexually active people, married couples who were sexually faithful to one another experienced the most physical pleasure and emotional satisfaction with their sex lives.*

Edward Laumann, John Gagnon, Robert Michael and Stuart Michaels, "The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States," (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994): 364.

**130. Researchers reported growing evidence linking marital and relationship intimacy to better health, including stronger immune systems. Conversely, relationships in turmoil appeared to weaken the immune system.**

Janice Kiecolt-Glaser, L.McGuire, T.Robles and R.Glaser, "Psychoneuroimmunology: Psychological Influences on Immune Function and Health," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 70(3) (2002): 537-547. Janice Kiecolt-Glaser and T.Newton, "Marriage and Health: His and Hers," *Psychological Bulletin* 127(4) (2001): 472-503.

**131. Married couples who practiced fidelity reported the most positive feelings about sex; they felt cared for, loved, satisfied and wanted. They were the least likely to experience sadness, being anxious or worried, afraid or scared or feeling guilty about sex.**

Edward Laumann, John Gagnon, Robert Michael and Stuart Michaels, "The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States," (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994): 368.

**132. Married women enjoyed their sex lives more than sexually active single or cohabiting women, a finding that researchers attributed to women's greater trust and expectation of marital monogamy and permanence. Marriage also makes for happier mothers. Compared to cohabiting mothers or single mothers, married mothers were more likely to receive the cooperation, hands-on help, emotional support and positive involvement from their child's father and his kin. Having practical and emotional support reduced maternal stress, anxiety and depression and enhanced a mother's ability to parent effectively.**

Testimony Of Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, Co-Director, National Marriage Project Rutgers, The State University Of New Jersey, Before The Committee On Health, Education, Labor And Pensions Subcommittee On Children And Families U.S. Senate, (2004, 28 April).

**133. Married men with and without children had significantly lower evening testosterone than unmarried men. Among married men without children, higher scores on a "spousal investment" measure and more hours spent with a man's wife on his last day off from work were both associated with lower testosterone levels. This suggests that lower testosterone levels during the day among fathers facilitated paternal care in humans by decreasing the likelihood that a father would engage in competitive and/or mating behavior.**

Peter Gray, Sonya Kahlenberg, Emily Barrett, Susan Lipson and Peter Ellison,

## Marital Sex Life continued

"Marriage and Fatherhood are Associated with Lower Testosterone Levels in Males," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 23 (2002): 193-201. Allan Mazur and Joel Michalek, "Marriage, Divorce, and Male Testosterone," *Social Forces* 77 (1998): 315-320. Alan Booth and J.M. Dabbs, Jr., "Testosterone and Men's Marriages," *Social Forces* 72 (1993): 463-477.

### **134. Marriage was rated more highly by virgins or people who had only one sex partner than non-virgins, especially those who had multiple sex partners.**

Connie Salts, Melissa Seismore, Byron Lindholm and Thomas Smith, "Attitudes Toward Marriage and Premarital Sexual Activity of College Freshmen," *Adolescence* 29(11) (Winter 1994): 775.

### **135. Compared to those who had never divorced, men and women who had divorced or legally separated were twice as likely to have an extramarital affair.**

M. W. Wiederman, "Extramarital Sex: Prevalence and Correlates in a National Survey," *Journal of Sex Research* 34(2) (1997): 167-174.

### **136. Once married, the vast majority of people had no other sexual partner. That 80 percent of adult Americans ages 18 to 59 had zero or one sex partner in a given year reflected the fact that most Americans in that broad age range were married and faithful. Married people were also fulfilled; 88 percent reported enjoying great sexual pleasure and 85 percent great emotional satisfaction.**

Robert Michael, Edward Laumann and Gina Kolata, "Sex in America: A Definitive Survey," (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1994). Cited in: Todd Flanders, "Are Our Sex Lives Too Normal?" *Christianity Today*, July 1, 1995.

### **137. Over the whole length of a marriage, about 25 percent of men and 10-15 percent of women reported having had sex with someone other than their spouse.**

Edward Laumann, John Gagnon, Robert Michael and Stuart Michaels, "The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States," (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.)

### **138. A pattern of "high fidelity" was documented among married Americans. "The vast majority reported having only one sexual partner during the previous 30 days (98.8 percent), 12 months (96.3 percent) and five years (93.6 percent). Consequently, "most people were not placing themselves or their partners at high risk for exposure" to AIDS.**

Barbara Leigh, "The Sexual Behavior of U.S. Adults: Results from a National Survey," *American Journal of Public Health* 83 (1993): 1,400-1,406.

*Ninety-two percent of married men and 93 percent of married women reported being faithful to their spouses during the previous 12 months.*

"Sexual Behavior and Selected Health Measures: Men and Women 15-44 Years of Age, United States, 2002," *National Center for Health Statistics, Advance Data* 362 (2005, 15 September).

## Marital Sex Life continued

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*Women who had more non-marital sexual partners were less likely to have stable marriages. More than 80 percent of the women who had never had a non-marital partner were in stable marriages at the time of the survey (i.e., they were in a marriage that had lasted at least five years). By contrast, only 30 percent of the women who had had five non-marital sexual partners were in stable marriages.*

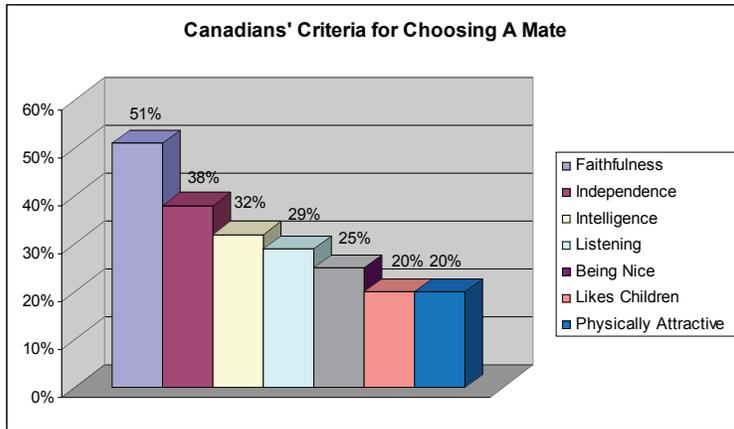
Robert Rector, Kirk Johnson, Lauren Noyes and Shannan Martin, "The Harmful Effects of Early Sexual Activity and Multiple Sexual Partners Among Women: A Book of Charts," Heritage Foundation Working Paper 1 (June 2003): 18.

**139.** About 40 percent of married people had sex twice a week, compared to 20-25 percent of single and cohabitating men and women. More than 40 percent of married women said their sex life was emotionally and physically satisfying, compared to about 30 percent of single women. For men, 50 percent of married men were physically and emotionally content versus 38 percent of cohabitating men.

Richard Niolon, "Review of The Case for Marriage by Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher," Partners & Couples, PsychPage.

# Building Strong Marriages

**CHART 21**



SOURCE: "Canadians and St. Valentine's Day," Leger Marketing, February 10, 2003.

**140. Ten important research findings on marriage and choosing a marriage partner:**

- a) Marrying as a teenager is the highest known risk factor for divorce.
- b) The most likely way to find a future marriage partner is through an introduction by family, friends or acquaintances.
- c) The more similar people are in their values, backgrounds and life goals, the more likely they are to have a successful marriage.
- d) Women have a significantly better chance of marrying if they do not become single parents before marrying.
- e) Both women and men who are college educated are more likely to marry and less likely to divorce than people with lower levels of education.
- f) Living together before marriage has not proved useful as a "trial marriage."
- g) Marriage helps people to generate income and wealth.
- h) People who are married are more likely to have emotionally and physically satisfying sex lives than single people or those who just live together.
- i) People who grow up in a family broken by divorce are slightly less likely to marry and much more likely to divorce when they do marry.
- j) For large segments of the population, the risk of divorce is far below 50 percent.

David Popenoe and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, From the National Marriage Project's Ten Things to Know Series, (2004, November).

*Community Marriage Policies in 114 cities sparked a net decline of the divorce rate of 17.5 percent over seven years. These numbers indicated that programs with wide spreads in effective implementation can positively impact the divorce rate and bring about more stable and healthy marriages.*

"Assessing the Impact of Community Marriage Policies on U.S. County Divorce Rates" by the Institute for Research and Evaluation of Salt Lake City, Released 5 April 5, 2004 at the National Press Club.

## Building Strong Marriages continued

*Among people with unusually poor marital success were those who had little education, little or no religiosity, who lived in the South and West, whose parents divorced before they were age 16 (females only), who lived with their spouses before marrying and who married before age 20.*

Norval Glenn, "With this Ring: A National Survey on Marriage in America," 2005 National Fatherhood Initiative.

**141. A meta-analytic review indicated that those who participated in a marriage education program were significantly better off afterward than 79 percent of people who did not participate.**

Linda Skogrand, David Shramm, James Marshall and Thomas Lee, "The Effects of Debt on Newlyweds and Implications for Education," *Journal of Extension*, 43(3) (2005), Article #3RIB7 citing J.S. Carroll and W.Doherty, "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Premarital Prevention Programs: A Meta-Analytic Review of Outcome Research," *Family Relations* 52 (2003): 105-118.

**142. A meta-analysis of 16 studies of one of the oldest marriage-enhancement programs, Couple Communication, observed meaningful program effects with regard to all types of measures. Couples that took the training experienced "clinically relevant positive outcomes" -- moderate to large gains in communication skills, marital satisfaction and other relationship qualities.**

Mark Butler and Karen Wampler, "A Meta-Analytic Update of Research on the Couple Communication Program," *American Journal of Family Therapy* 27 (1999): 223.

**143. The No. 1 predictor of divorce is the habitual avoidance of conflict. Successful couples are those who know how to discuss their differences in ways that actually strengthen their relationship and improve intimacy. Successful couples don't let their disagreements spill over and contaminate the rest of the relationship.**

Diane Sollee, Founder, Smart Marriages, The Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education, (2007).

**144. "Lack of commitment," "too much conflict and arguing" and "infidelity" were listed as the three most common reasons for divorce.**

Norval Glenn, "With this Ring: A National Survey on Marriage in America," 2005 National Fatherhood Initiative.

**145. Entering the marriage with any amount of debt was associated with lower levels of marital adjustment and marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives in this study. The researchers looked at four types of debt: education, medical, credit card and auto loan. Of the four types of debt, credit card and automobile loan debt had the highest correlations with lower marital satisfaction and adjustments scores, for both husband and wife.**

Linda Skogrand, David Shramm, James Marshall and Thomas Lee, "The Effects of Debt on Newlyweds and Implications for Education," *Journal of Extension*, 43(3) (2005), Article #3RIB7.

## Building Strong Marriages continued

### **146. Wives with more traditional sex-role attitudes were less likely to divorce.**

Laura Sanchez and Constance Gager, "Hard Living, Perceived Entitlement to a Great Marriage, and Marital Dissolution," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62 (2000): 708-722.

### **147. While female employment was generally associated with a higher risk of relationship dissolution -- whether couples were married or cohabiting -- women who worked in a family business or who worked in their homes were no more likely to experience relationship dissolution than women who did not work. Specifically, female employment outside of a family setting weakened marriage.**

Karen Price Carver, and Jay Teachman, "Female Employment and First Union Dissolution in Puerto Rico," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 55 (1993): 686-698.

### **148. College-age couples who held traditional gender roles were much more likely to make enduring marriages than couples who subscribed to egalitarian precepts. Traditional women were more likely than other women to marry their college sweetheart and to stay married to him during the 15-year period of study. Forty-three percent of traditionalist women married their college boyfriend, and none of these marriages ended in divorce. In contrast, only 26 percent of egalitarian women married their boyfriend and half of these marriages ended in divorce.**

Letitia Peplau, Charles Hill and Zick Rubin, "Sex Role Attitudes in Dating and Marriage: A 15-Year Follow-Up of the Boston Couples Study," *Journal of Social Issues* 49(3) (1993): 49.

### **149. Among the dimensions of compatibility for forming successful marriage relationships are the core personal dimensions: intellect, similar energy levels, spirituality, education, appearance, sense of humor, mood management, traditional versus nontraditional personalities, ambition, sexual passion, artistic passion, values, industry, curiosity, vitality and security and autonomy versus closeness.**

Dr. Neil Clark Warren, "Falling in Love for All the Right Reasons: How to Find Your Soul Mate," (New York: Time Warner Group, 2005).

### **150. Among the dimensions of compatibility for forming successful marriage relationships are skills that can be developed: communication, conflict resolution, sociability, adaptability, kindness and dominance versus submissiveness.**

Dr. Neil Clark Warren, "Falling in Love for All the Right Reasons: How to Find Your Soul Mate," (New York: Time Warner Group, 2005).

*Of all the ever-married Americans, only one-third have ever been divorced. This 2:1 ratio of marital success should encourage young people who may fear the "50-50" marriage myth. The much-touted 50-percent divorce rate is a result of serial marriage on the part of a segment of the population.*

George Barna, pollster,  
March 2008.

## Building Strong Marriages continued

*“For thousands of years, marriage has been humanity’s most important economic and social institution. It gave women economic security and helped men financially, through dowry payments and socially by connecting them to another family.”*

Stephanie Coontz, in David Masci, “Future of Marriage,” CQ Researcher 14(17) (2004, 7 May).

**151.** The background characteristics of people entering a marriage have major implications for their risk of divorce. Following are some percentage point decreases in the risk of divorce or separation during the first 10 years of marriage, according to various personal and social factors:

Annual income over \$50,000 (vs. under \$25,000)	-30 percent
Having a baby seven months or more after marriage (vs. before marriage)	-24 percent
Marrying over 25 years of age (vs. under 18)	-24 percent
Own family of origin intact (vs. divorced parents)	-14 percent
Religious affiliation (vs. none)	-14 percent
Some college (vs. high school dropout)	-13 percent

David Popenoe, “The Future of Marriage in America,” The State of Our Unions: The Social Health of Marriage in America,” The National Marriage Project (2001).

**152.** The things people need for a happy marriage are on the inside, like character and intellect, rather than the shape of their love one’s nose. Those who succeed at marriage are usually paired with someone who shares most of their basic values and beliefs. It is said that opposites attract, but that’s not so. When people have a lot in common, they have much less to negotiate, fewer things to compromise on.

David Masci, “Future of Marriage,” CQ Researcher 14(17), (2004, 7 May).

**153.** The five key characteristics of happily married couples are that they have greater skills in the areas of communication, flexibility, closeness, personality compatibility and conflict resolution.

D. H. Olson, National Survey of Marital Strengths.

**154.** Every happy, successful married couple has approximately 10 areas of “incompatibility” or disagreement that they will never resolve. Instead, they learn how to manage the disagreements and live life “around” them.

Diane Sollee, Founder, Smart Marriages, The Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education, (2007).

## Building Strong Marriages continued

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### 155. Ten characteristics of successful marriages:

- a) **Commitment:** Divorce is not a considered an option;
- b) **Common Interests:** Shared values and interests in: children, work, travel, goals, dependability and the desire to be together;
- c) **Communication:** Openness about opinions and feelings (self-disclosure) where couples are willing to interact, trust and share;
- d) **Religiosity (high levels of religious commitment):** A strong religious orientation provided couples with social, spiritual and emotional support;
- e) **Trust:** Provided a stable foundation for security in marriage;
- f) **Finances and Work:** Being non-materialistic -- valuing family and marriage over the accumulation of material goods. Practicing financial self-control and not spending beyond their means;
- g) **Role Models:** Good marriages beget good marriages. Growing up in a happy parental marriage helped create good marriages for children;
- h) **Virtues:** Individuals who develop good character make better husbands and wives, mothers and fathers;
- i) **Low Stress Levels:** Low stress levels in one's life are associated with marital quality; and
- j) **Sexual Desire:** Sexual desire for one's spouse expressed consistently through the life course.

*"Marriage will continue to be important. We will continue to need someone who is permanently and unquestionably in our corner."*

William Doherty, director of the Marriage and Family Therapy Program at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul, in David Masci, "Future of Marriage," CQ Researcher 14(17) (2004, 7 May).

S. Billingsley, M. Lim and G. Jennings, "Themes of Long-Term, Satisfied Marriages Consummated Between 1952-1967," Family Perspective 29 (1995): 283-295.

## Public Perceptions of Marriage

*“For men, even more than for women, marriage is a transformative event. Getting married tends to change men’s behavior in notable and predictable ways. When men marry, they begin to lead healthier and more productive lives.”*

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead and David Popenoe, “The Marrying Kind: Which Men Marry and Why (Part 2),” *The State of Our Union: The Social Health of Marriage in America*, National Marriage Project, (2004).

**156.** Ninety-four percent of survey respondents agreed that divorce is a serious national problem and 86 percent agreed that all couples considering marriage should get premarital counseling. A substantial majority (71 percent) disagreed with the statement that “either spouse should be allowed to terminate a marriage at any time for any reason.”

Norval Glenn, “With this Ring: A National Survey on Marriage in America,” 2005 National Fatherhood Initiative.

**157.** Eighty-four percent of people around the world agreed that “the definition of marriage is one man and one woman.”

Wirthlin Worldwide for The Howard Center and Brigham Young University, World Congress of Families II, (1999, November).

**158.** Eighty-six percent of the never-married survey respondents said they wanted to marry and 88 percent said that marriage should be a lifelong commitment. Most disagreed with the statement, “Marriage is an old-fashioned, outmoded institution” (88 percent). Eighty-nine percent agreed that it is better for children to be raised in a household that has a married mother and father. Ninety-seven percent of married people expected to be married for life.

Norval Glenn, “With this Ring: A National Survey on Marriage in America,” 2005 National Fatherhood Initiative.

**159.** A majority of seniors thought that it was extremely important to have a good marriage and family life (76 percent). This figure had risen slightly since 1976, when it was 73 percent. Females were more likely to indicate that having a good marriage and family life was extremely important (81 percent for females and 70 percent for males).

“Life Goals: The percent of high school students who rated selected personal and social life goals as extremely important,” Human Services Policy, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning & Evaluation.

**160.** Ninety-seven percent of married respondents said they expected to be married for life, and 93 percent said they would marry their spouses if they had it to do again. Seventy-three percent of all of the respondents agreed that “most married couples I know have happy, healthy marriages.”

Norval Glenn, “With this Ring: A National Survey on Marriage in America,” 2005 National Fatherhood Initiative.

## Public Perceptions of Marriage continued

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**161. Eighty-nine percent of survey respondents said that, all things being equal, it is better for children to be raised in a household that has a married mother and father. Ninety-seven percent said that fathers are just as important as mothers for the proper development of children.**

Norval Glenn, "With this Ring: A National Survey on Marriage in America," 2005 National Fatherhood Initiative.

**162. According to a nationally representative survey of young men, ages 25-34, young men from married-parent families were less likely to be divorced and more likely to be married. Among the never-married young men surveyed, those from married-parent families were more likely to express readiness to be married than young men from other kinds of family backgrounds. In addition, young men from married-parent households had more positive attitudes toward women, children and family life than men who grew up in non-intact families.**

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead and David Popenoe, "The Marrying Kind: Men Who Marry and Why, State of Our Unions: The Social Health of Marriage in America," (Piscataway, NJ: The National Marriage Project, 2004).

**163. Many of the participants in a study favored marriage preparation and education as a way to prevent divorce, as well as unhappy marriages. They said they wanted to develop skills that would help them resolve problems that arise in marriage.**

"Sex Without Strings, Relationships Without Rings: Today's Young Singles Talk About Mating and Dating," National Marriage Project, (2000).

**164. Fifty-five percent agreed that government should be involved in licensing marriage, and almost half (47 percent) agreed that laws should be changed so that divorces are more difficult to get.**

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead and David Popenoe, "Who Wants to Marry a Soul Mate?," The State of Our Unions: The Social Health of Marriage in America, (2001).

*Nearly 81 percent of mothers said mothering is the most important thing they do.*

Martha Farrell Erickson and Enola Aird, "The Motherhood Study: Fresh Insights on Mothers' Attitudes and Concerns," The Motherhood Project, (2006).

## Legal Precedent and Marriage

*“[M]arriage and procreation are fundamental to the very existence and survival of the race” and “of basic importance to our society.”*

Skinner v. Oklahoma, 316 U.S. 1110, 1113 (1942).  
Boddie v. Connecticut, 401 U.S. 371, 376 (1971).

**165. The Washington State Court of Appeals (1974):** “[T]he state views marriage as the appropriate and desirable forum for procreation and the rearing of children. ... Marriage exists as a protected legal institution primarily because of societal values associated with the propagation of the human race.”

Singer v. Hara 522 P. 1187, 1195 (Wash. Ct. App. 1974).

**166. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court (1847) ruled that “the paramount purpose of marriage [is] the procreation and protection of legitimate children, the institution of families and the creation of natural relations among mankind from which proceed all the civilization, virtue and happiness to be found in the world.”**

Matchin v. Matchin 6 pa. 332, 337 (1847).

**167. The Supreme Court of Massachusetts (1862):** “[O]ne of the leading and most important objects of the institution of marriage under our laws is the procreation of children, who shall with certainty be known by their parents as the pure offspring of their union.”

Reynolds v. Reynolds, 85 Mass. 605 (1862).

**168. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State. Men and women of full age ... have the right to marry and to found a family.**

United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 16, (1948, December).

**169. “We are unwilling to hold that a right to same-sex marriage has taken hold to the point that it is implicit in the concept of ordered liberty or deeply rooted in the history and tradition of Maryland.”**

Frank Conaway, et al. v. Gita Njali Deane et al., Maryland Court of Appeals, (2007, 18 September).

**170. “[A]lthough many traditional views of homosexuality have been recast over time in our state and Nation, the choice to marry a same-sex partner has not taken sufficient root to receive constitutional protection as a fundamental right.”**

Harold Standhardt and Tod Keltner v. Maricopa County, Superior Court of the State of Arizona, (2003, 8 October).

## Legal Precedent and Marriage continued

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**171. “We are not unmindful of the fact that the relationships gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons seek to enter involve intimate and private decisions that extend to the core of the right to personal autonomy. Those decisions do not necessarily require us or the State to recognize formally those relationships in the form of State-sanctioned marriage. That a liberty interest such as the argued-for right to marry a person of the sex of one’s choosing, even if assumed to be important, does not render automatically fundamental that liberty interest.”**

Frank Conaway, et al. v. Gita Njali Deane et al., Maryland Court of Appeals, (2007, 18 September).

**172. “When dealing in the realm of due process, furthermore, we are hesitant to recognize new fundamental [marriage] rights, especially when the Supreme Court has either failed or declined to do so.”**

Frank Conaway, et al. v. Gita Njali Deane et al., Maryland Court of Appeals, (2007, 18 September).

**173. Upon signing the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996, U.S. President William Clinton said: “I have long opposed governmental recognition of same-gender marriages, and this legislation is consistent with that position.”**

“Statement on Same-Gender Marriage,” President Bill Clinton Speech Transcript, September 30, 1996, Bnet Business Network.

*“The institution of marriage has played a critical role both in defining the legal entitlements of family members and in developing the decentralized structure of our democratic society. In recognition of that role, and as part of their general overarching concern for serving the best interests of children, state laws almost universally express an appropriate preference for the formal family.”*

Lehr v. Robertson, 463 U.S. 248, 256-57 (1983)

## Information Sources

Marriage Law Foundation	<a href="http://www.marriagelawfoundation.org/mlf/">http://www.marriagelawfoundation.org/mlf/</a>
National Marriage Project	<a href="http://marriage.rutgers.edu/">http://marriage.rutgers.edu/</a>
Center for Marriage and Families	<a href="http://center.americanvalues.org/">http://center.americanvalues.org/</a>
Institute for American values	<a href="http://www.americanvalues.org">http://www.americanvalues.org</a>
Institute for Marriage and Public Policy	<a href="http://www.marriagedebate.com">www.marriagedebate.com</a>
Marriage and Family Law Research Grant, Brigham Young University	<a href="http://www.law2.byu.edu/marriage_family/">http://www.law2.byu.edu/marriage_family/</a>
Smart Marriages	<a href="http://www.smartmarriages.com">www.smartmarriages.com</a>
Americans for Divorce Reform	<a href="http://www.divorcereform.org">www.divorcereform.org</a>
Divorce Busting	<a href="http://www.divorcebusting.com">www.divorcebusting.com</a>

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