2016 Annual Relationship, Marriage, and Divorce Survey
Final Report
The Study

These findings are based on a non-probability online sample of data collected using the Research Now panel. Data was collected in March 2016. A sample of over 2000 U.S. adults age 18 and over were surveyed online. For this poll, the credibility interval was calculated to be plus or minus 2.5 percentage points for all respondents. The data were weighted to the U.S. current population data by gender, age, and region based on Census data.

Avvo conducts periodic studies of topics at the intersection of lifestyle and the law to better understand the issues facing individuals engaging with attorneys and the legal system. Given that divorce and family law are two of the largest and most routine legal actions taken in the United States, understanding the relationship dynamics that lead to marriage and divorce is beneficial to the legal consumers and attorneys Avvo serves.
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Relationship Satisfaction
Relationships are good
Most Americans are very satisfied in their relationships

How satisfied would you say you feel in your current relationship?

- **Very Satisfied**: 68%
- **Somewhat Satisfied**: 26%
- **Not Very Satisfied**: 5%
- **Not At All Satisfied**: 1%

n=1411 people who are married or in a relationship
More women than men have something to complain about
Men are more likely than women to be “very” rather than “somewhat” satisfied

How satisfied would you say you feel in your current relationship?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all satisfied</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=696 men and n=715 women who are married or in a relationship
Those who stick it out reap more rewards

People over 55 are more likely to be “very” rather than “somewhat” satisfied

How satisfied would you say you feel in your current relationship?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Not at all satisfied

18-34 yrs: 68% Very satisfied, 27% Somewhat satisfied, 5% Somewhat dissatisfied, 1% Not at all satisfied
35-54 yrs: 62% Very satisfied, 30% Somewhat satisfied, 6% Somewhat dissatisfied, 2% Not at all satisfied
55+ yrs: 75% Very satisfied, 21% Somewhat satisfied, 3% Somewhat dissatisfied, 2% Not at all satisfied

n=385 18-34, n=556 35-54, and n=470 55+ who are married or in a relationship
More Republicans than Democrats have it great

Republicans are more likely than Democrats to be “very” rather than “somewhat” satisfied.

How satisfied would you say you feel in your current relationship?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat dissatisfied</th>
<th>Not at all satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How satisfied would you say you feel in your current relationship? n=416 Republican, n=515 Democrat, and n=290 Independent who are married or in a relationship.
You might like your partner more if you go to church

Those who identify with a formal religion (including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism) are more likely to be “very” rather than “somewhat” satisfied

How satisfied would you say you feel in your current relationship?

- Identifies with a religion:
  - Very satisfied: 70%
  - Somewhat satisfied: 26%
  - Somewhat dissatisfied: 4%
  - Not at all satisfied: 1%

- Spiritual but not religious:
  - Very satisfied: 57%
  - Somewhat satisfied: 32%
  - Somewhat dissatisfied: 8%
  - Not at all satisfied: 1%

- Agnostic or atheist:
  - Very satisfied: 57%
  - Somewhat satisfied: 30%
  - Somewhat dissatisfied: 10%
  - Not at all satisfied: 3%

How satisfied would you say you feel in your current relationship? n=979 who identify with a religion, n=97 who are spiritual, and n=137 who are agnostic/atheist who are married or in a relationship
Increase your chance at happiness in the South and Midwest

Those in the South and Midwest are more likely to be “very” rather than “somewhat” satisfied

How satisfied would you say you feel in your current relationship?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat dissatisfied</th>
<th>Not at all satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=293 Northeast, n=268 Midwest, n=508 South, n=342 West
Dating
More single women than men are OK staying that way
Half of single people aren’t dating; more women than men are not dating

Proportion of single people who are not actively dating

Men: 43%
Women: 60%

n=548 total single, n=269 single men, n=279 single women
More single men than women are looking for love online

3 in 10 single Americans have tried dating online; most have been men

Proportion of single people who have ever used an online dating site

- Men: 35%
- Women: 21%

n=548 total single, n=269 single men, n=279 single women
Most Americans don’t see potential in online dating
Less than 1 in 5 of all Americans believe online dating is a great way to meet someone

Say online dating is an excellent way to meet a romantic partner

Men: 17%
Women: 13%

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women
The online dating experience isn’t impressing most people
Only one in five have had a lot of success with online dating

Proportion of online daters who’ve had a lot of success with it

- Men: 19%
- Women: 20%

n=385 total, n=223 men, n=162 women who have ever used an online dating site
But online dating is working for some

Half of those in relationships who have ever dated online have found their current partner that way

Proportion of all people currently in a relationship who met their current partner online

14%

Proportion of online daters currently in a relationship who met their current partner online

49%

n=1,452 people in a relationship or married; n=230 people in a relationship or married who have tried an online dating site
Still, many prefer a face-to-face romantic spark

Half of all American men and women think a face-to-face meeting is the best way to start a relationship

Believe the best way to meet a potential partner is face-to-face

- **Men**: 53%
- **Women**: 51%

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women
Americans feel they need professional help finding love
About 30% of men and women are open to the idea of getting the help of a relationship expert

Say that, as a single person, they’d be willing to have a professional relationship expert match them with a romantic partner

Men: 28%
Women: 29%

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women (T3B)
Fidelity
More men than women stray
About 1 in 4 men have ever cheated in a relationship

Have ever had sex with someone outside of their relationship without the approval of their partner

18%

23%

14%

n=1912 people, n=923 men, n=989 women who have ever been in a relationship
Few Americans have open relationships

Only 4% have ever agreed to have an open relationship with their partner

Entered an agreement with their partner that allowed them to have sex with other people

- Men: 6%
- Women: 3%

n=1912 people, n=923 men, n=989 women who have ever been in a relationship
More women are morally opposed to “being open”

A little over half of all Americans are morally opposed to open relationships; the rest feel neutral about or comfortable with it.

Moral opposition to the idea of open relationships:

- **56%**
  - **47%** for Men
  - **64%** for Women

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women
Fewer men reject a partner’s request to “be open”

A little over half of all Americans would leave a partner who wanted to be “open”; the rest would not see such a request as an automatic deal-breaker.

Say that if their romantic partner wanted an open relationship, they would leave them.

56% would leave

Men: 46%
Women: 67%

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women
Southerners, Midwesterners aren’t as morally “open”  
More Americans living in the Northeast and West are morally neutral or OK with open relationships  

Are morally opposed to the idea of open relationships  

Northeast: 49%  
Midwest: 58%  
South: 60%  
West: 53%  

n=451 Northeast, n=388 Midwest, n=700 South, n=461 West
Fewer Northeasterners would leave if asked for “openness”
Fewer Southerners are tolerant of a request for an open relationship by their partner

Say that if their romantic partner wanted an open relationship, they would leave them

Northeast

49%

Midwest

55%

South

60%

West

58%

n=451 Northeast, n=388 Midwest, n=700 South, n=461 West
Fewer men reject the idea of dating a married person

Half of all Americans – and more women than men – say that, if single, they’d stay away from dating someone who is married

Would never, as a single person, date someone who is married

49%

Men

40%

Women

59%

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women
Marriage
Relationship longevity is something Americans believe in. Most people, and especially women, believe relationships should last.

Believe relationships were meant to last:
- Men: 61%
- Women: 76%

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women
Most Americans believe in the institution of marriage.

More women than men say marriage isn’t an outdated institution.

Don’t think marriage is an outdated institution:

- Men: 53%
- Women: 63%

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women
However, less than a quarter see marriage as a life goal

Only 1 in 5 Americans say marriage is something everyone should aspire to do

Think marriage should be a goal everyone has in life

- Men: 20%
- Women: 18%

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women
Getting a prenup is hardly a popular practice
Only 2% of Americans have ever had one

Proportion of married Americans who have ever gotten a prenup

2%

n=1,345 people who have ever been married
There is an interest in prenups as a source of protection
About 1/5 Americans say prenups are necessary

Think prenups are necessary to protect yourself in a marriage

17%

Men

16%

Women

19%

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women
And prenups aren’t a romance-killer for a lot of people
Most say they’d remain romantically secure or feel unaffected if they were asked for a prenup

Say they would doubt their partner’s feelings for them if their partner asked for a prenup

20%

Men 19%  Women 21%

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women
Marriage is more frequent for some Americans
1 in 20 get married three or more times

Proportion of married or divorced Americans who have been married more than twice

- Men: 6%
- Women: 5%

n=1,345 people, n=627 men, n=718 women who have ever been married
Divorce
Most Americans blame their exes for the failure of their marriage
More women than men are passing the blame, and more men are willing to share it

Whose fault was your divorce?

- **Theirs**: 55%
- **Mine**: 11%
- **Both of ours**: 34%

n=460 total divorced, 206 divorced men, 254 divorced women
Most who divorce don’t look back

For 3 out of 4 women, and also for most men, divorce does not come with regret

Don’t regret being divorced

68%

Men

61%

Women

73%

n=460 total divorced, 206 divorced men, 254 divorced women
This could be because, for most, happiness trumps being attached. Most say they’d rather be alone if being with someone brings less happiness.

Would rather be alone, successful, and happy than in a relationship where they’re not happy.

- Men: 58%
- Women: 75%

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women
But losing that loving feeling is not enough of a reason to split

Only 1 in 4 think that no longer wanting romance with your spouse is a reason to get a divorce

Believe that married couples who no longer want to be in a romantic relationship should definitely get a formal divorce

- **26%**
  - Men: 25%
  - Women: 28%

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women
Moral beliefs around divorce may not be enough to prevent it
Only 1 in 10 believe divorce is a sin.

Divorce is a sin

12%

Men

12%

Women

12%

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women
The Cost of Relationships
Most Americans believe time makes a relationship work
A large majority say that what you get out of a relationship depends on the time you put into it

Believe that what you get out of a relationship is related to how much time you put into it

- **84%**
- **83%**
- **85%**

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women (T3B)
Money isn’t as important, but it’s more important for men
More men than women say that a good relationship has to do with what you spend on it

Believe that what you get out of a relationship is related to how much money you put into it

Men
16%
Women
11%

n=2000; n=984 men, n=1016 women (T3B)
For most, saving money isn’t a reason to stick around

Only 14% say they’ve ever stayed with someone for financial reasons

Stayed in a relationship longer than they wanted to because it was affordable

14%

Men
13%

Women
15%

n=1912 people, n=923 men, n=989 women who have ever been in a relationship
Most don’t care about sunk costs either
Less than 10% stuck around in a relationship because they’d already spent a lot on it

Stayed in a relationship longer than they wanted to because they put a lot of money into it

9%

Men: 10%
Women: 8%

n=1912 people, n=923 men, n=989 women who have ever been in a relationship
Same-sex Marriage
Attitudes regarding same-sex marriage may be changing
One year after the SCOTUS ruling, more Americans may be accepting same-sex marriage in a legal sense

Believe same-sex marriage should be legal

2015: 43%
2016: 48%

2015: n=2011
2016: n=2000
Men’s attitudes about same-sex marriage have shifted more
While the proportion of female supporters has stayed the same, more men this year support it than did before the SCOTUS ruling

Men believing same-sex marriage should be legal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Men Supporting Same-Sex Marriage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women believing same-sex marriage should be legal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women Supporting Same-Sex Marriage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2015: n=903 men, n=1108 women
2016: n=984 men, n=1016 women
Attitudes among older Americans have also seen an shift
More Americans over 55 support same-sex marriage a year after the SCOTUS ruling than did before

Americans 55+ believing same-sex marriage should be legal

2015: 36%
2016: 43%

2015: n=720 55 and older
2016: n=665 55 and older
Regionally, attitudinal shifts are greatest in the Northeast

Northeasterners and Midwesterners have become more comfortable with the legalization of same-sex marriage

**Northeasterners** that believe same-sex marriage should be legal

- **2015**: 47%
- **2016**: 56%

**Midwesterners** that believe same-sex marriage should be legal

- **2015**: 40%
- **2016**: 49%

2015: n=366 Northeast, n=474 Midwest
2016: n=451 Northeast, n=388 Midwest
Attitudes in the South and West haven’t really shifted
There’s no statistically significant difference among Southerners and Westerners from 2015 to 2016

**Southerners** that believe same-sex marriage should be legal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Westerners** that believe same-sex marriage should be legal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2015: n=700 South, n=471 West
2016: n=700 South, n=461 West
More Democrats have changed their position on the issue
Republicans are still largely unsupportive of same-sex marriage, but support among Democrats has increased

Democrats believing same-sex marriage should be legal

2015
58%

2016
68%

Republicans believing same-sex marriage should be legal

2015
22%

2016
26%

2015: n=649 Democrats, n=556 Republicans
2016: n=744 Democrats, n=544 Republicans
Singles 50 and up
Many older singles have bypassed marriage
1 in 3 singles 50 and up have never been married

Relationship Statuses of Singles 50 and up

- Never married: 31%
- Divorced: 47%
- Widowed: 22%

n=217 singles 50 and older
Most don’t seem interested in romance
Only a little over a quarter are currently looking for a partner

Singles 50 and up who are currently dating/looking for a romantic partner

n=217 singles 50 and older
Most older singles prefer happiness over companionship
A large majority say they’d rather be happy and alone than with someone

Singles 50 and up who say they’d rather be alone, successful, and happy than in a relationship where they aren’t happy

84%

n=217 singles 50 and older
If they were to date, half would want to meet someone in person

Half agree with the notion that meeting someone face-to-face is the best way to start a romance

Singles 50 and up who believe meeting someone face-to-face is the best way to first meet a romantic partner

51%

n=217 singles 50 and older
Online dating hasn’t caught on with most singles 50 and up

Only about 1 in 5 have ever tried it, and 1 in 10 think it’s a good idea

Singles 50 and up who...

- Have used an online dating site at some point: 19%
- Say online dating is an excellent way to meet a romantic partner: 10%

n=217 singles 50 and older
Older singles may try professional matchmaking
About 1 in 4 say they’d give a professional relationship expert a shot

Singles 50 and up who are willing to have a professional relationship expert match them with a partner

n=217 singles 50 and older (T3B)
Older singles are likely to be monogamous

Very few have been in an open relationship, and about 3 in 10 seem neutral or open to the idea

Singles 50 and up who...

- Have been in an open relationship: 1%
- Are morally opposed to open relationships: 69%
- Would leave a partner who wanted to be “open”: 71%

n=217 singles 50 and older
About Avvo
About Avvo

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For additional resources about marriage and divorce from Avvo, or to find a divorce or family lawyer in your area, visit www.avvo.com.
Thank you!

Nika Kabiri, Director of Avvo Consumer Insights
nkabiri@avvo.com