

# Northwestern Mutual's American Reality Study

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**Report of Findings  
January 2009**

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# Introduction & Methodology

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- **Northwestern Mutual Life sponsored this research to help provide insight into how Americans are handling the economic, political, and social changes taking place in our society and what the impact has been on the way they view their lives and their future. The goal of the research was to shed light on how Americans are prioritizing goals and preparing for their financial futures given the new realities of today's economic and social environment. The results will also help inform Northwestern Mutual's field representatives on ways in which they better communicate with policyholders.**
- **On behalf of Northwestern Mutual, independent research firm Mathew Greenwald & Associates conducted an online survey of 1,000 Americans ages 25 or older. Study participants were selected from among members of Survey Sampling International's SurveySpot™ Internet Survey Panel.**
- **The survey fielded between January 6 and January 14, 2009, and on average, each online interview lasted about 15 minutes.**
- **The survey data were weighted by gender, age and household income to reflect the makeup of the U.S. population ages 25 or older. Population statistics were based on data from the 2007 Current Population Survey. A detailed description of the weighting methodology is available upon request.**

# Executive Summary

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# Most Americans still believe in the “American Dream.”

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- The majority agree that the “American Dream” is still attainable for most Americans and many still believe in traditional American principles – that hard work can pay off, that it’s important to understand other cultures, that small business is an integral part of our economy, that young people have a lot to contribute to our future, and that helping others, above oneself, is key to success for all.
- This study demonstrates the value Americans place on people and actions that contribute to society as a whole. Asked how admirable they find certain professions to be, public servants rise to the top of the list, including teachers, police officers and social workers. Additionally, two-thirds rate being the founder of a start-up company as highly admirable, more so than being the executive of a Fortune 1000 company. Moreover, nearly six in ten survey respondents say that, if they could do it all over again, they would be interested in founding a company. Starting or growing one’s own company is also explicitly named as a top priority by one in twenty Americans.
- Supporting the ideal of the United States as a great “mixing bowl,” three out of four Americans agree that understanding other cultures can improve one’s own life. In addition to understanding others, two-thirds agree that it is more important to help others than to help oneself, and roughly four in ten include being environmentally-friendly, being involved in one’s community, and participating in charitable activities in their definition of “success.” Though these are not areas in which many feel they are doing very well, the focus on altruistic actions is clear.
- Many also value individualism. In addition to the emphasis on altruism, many also believe that self-preservation is important. More than half feel that they must look out for themselves because no one else will. Furthermore, Americans clearly believe that they control their own destiny. Virtually all say that they themselves have the most positive impact on whether or not they achieve their goals, more so than the amount of money they have, their health, or even the support of family and friends.
- In keeping with this do-it-yourself mentality, eight in ten Americans believe that a person can accomplish anything they put their mind to – and according to this study, Americans are goal-oriented. Six in ten report that they have identified specific goals for themselves for the next five to ten years. More importantly, nine out of ten are confident that they can achieve their goals within that timeframe.

# The economy may be limiting “success,” but many are achieving the lives they desire.

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- By all accounts, many already feel they are “successful,” mostly because they are satisfied with the success they have had in their home and family life. Large shares suggest that they define “success” by their ability to spend time with family, and more specifically, by having a good relationship with their spouse or partner and by being a good parent. Majorities feel that they are doing at least somewhat well in these areas of their life. In particular, roughly three-quarters of Americans believe that they are doing at least somewhat well when it comes to being a good parent or spending quality time with family.
- Americans don’t feel they are doing as well with their finances. Despite their feelings of success in some areas and their general belief in American ideals, the effects of difficult economic times are evident. Even though most disagree with the notion that money can buy happiness, half say that having more money is among the things that would most help improve their lives. More broadly, four in ten feel that the economy is working against them as they try to reach their goals, and a similar share suggest that the country as a whole is heading in the wrong direction.
- Being financially prepared for the future is a key component of success, as cited by seven in ten Americans. Importantly, financial *preparation* rates well above simply having more money. Additionally, three-quarters of survey respondents describe financial security as either extremely or very important. Another two in ten call it somewhat important. Yet, only 12% feel that they are currently very or extremely secure; half call themselves not secure.
- Four of the top five goals reported in respondents’ own words deal directly with financial matters. These include being financially stable, meeting with professional success, including earning a raise or promotion, saving for retirement and reducing debt. Fortunately, most are confident they can reach these goals. Two out of five Americans say that they expect their financial security to improve over the next 12 months.

# Many hope for financial security, and despite hard times, are optimistic about the long-term.

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- While it may seem that, because of world and economic events, it is less important to prepare for the future, eight out of ten Americans disagree with this. More than half strongly disagree with this pessimistic idea. In keeping with their optimism in other areas, Americans believe that financial preparation is important and are not giving up. Still, some do not appear to be making the connection between the high importance they place on family and the ways in which being financially prepared can help protect that which is most important to them.
- In fact, those who feel they are more financially prepared report being generally happier with their lives, compared to those who feel less financially stable. The average American rates his or her current level of happiness with their life a 6.5 on 1 (extremely unhappy) to 10 (extremely happy) scale. Among those who feel they have a better financial footing, the mean rating jumps to 7.8.
- The moderate 6.5 rating for happiness with one's current circumstances can be explained by many things, but inarguably chief among them is uncertain feelings of financial stability. All in all, Americans feel that they are on track with others, namely their peers and their parents, when it comes to their level of happiness.
- On an even more positive note, however, Americans maintain their optimism, believing that they will be happier in the future. Asked where they expect to be (on a 1 to 10 happiness scale) five years from now, the average rating is a 7.9. Such a change is not expected within the year, but Americans are clearly upbeat about their long-term happiness. Again demonstrating their focus on family and their positive outlook for the future, the average American suspects that, by the time they are their age, their children will be 7.7.

# Personal Attributes and World View

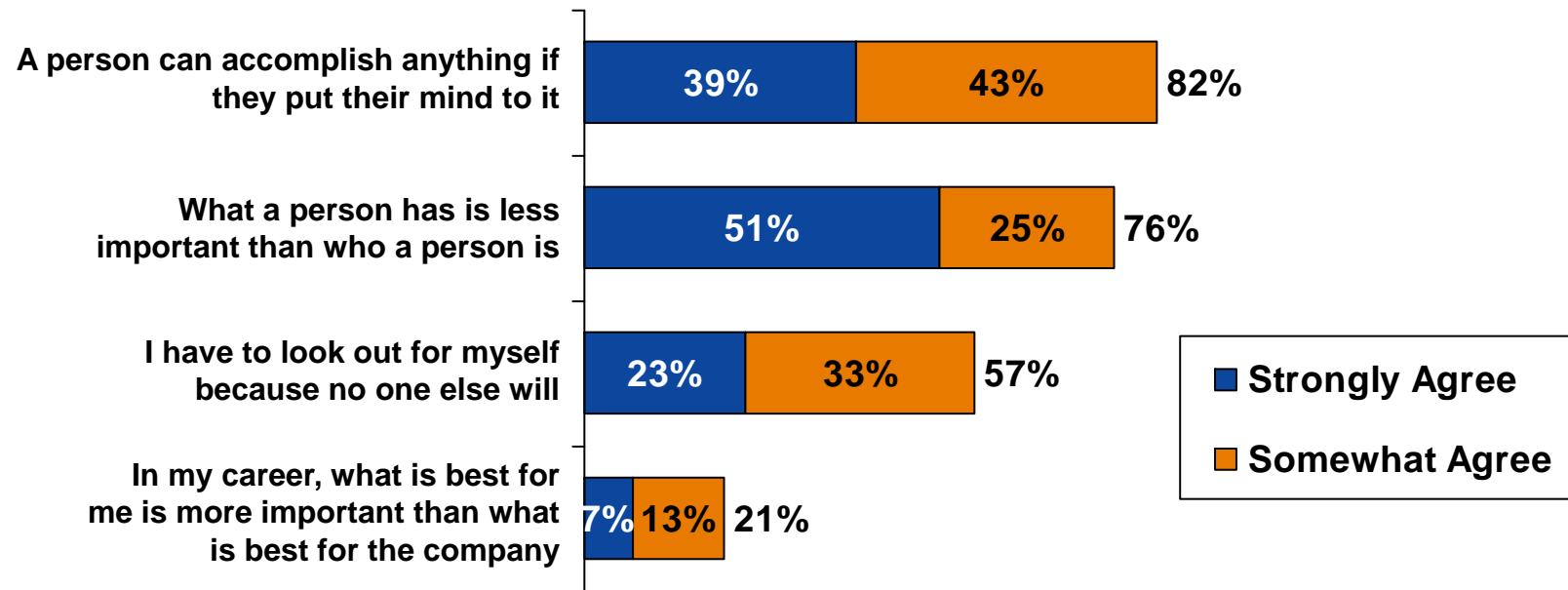
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# Most Americans believe that hard work can pay off.

- Four in five Americans surveyed (82%) agree at least somewhat that people can accomplish anything they put their minds to.
  - Women (84%) and respondents with children (83%) are more likely to agree with that statement than their counterparts (79% men, 78% without children).
- Similarly, three-quarters (76%) at least somewhat agree that what a person has is less important than who they are as a person, including half (51%) who strongly agree with this sentiment.
- Still, self-preservation is important. Many (57%) agree that they must look out for themselves because no else will. In the workplace, though, fewer (21%) feel that their interests are more important than the company's.
  - Americans ages 25 to 34 (63%) are more likely than older Americans (55%) to agree that they have to look out for themselves. The survey's youngest respondents (32%) are also more inclined to feel that, when it comes to their career, their personal interests are more important than what is best for the company (compared to 18% age 35+).

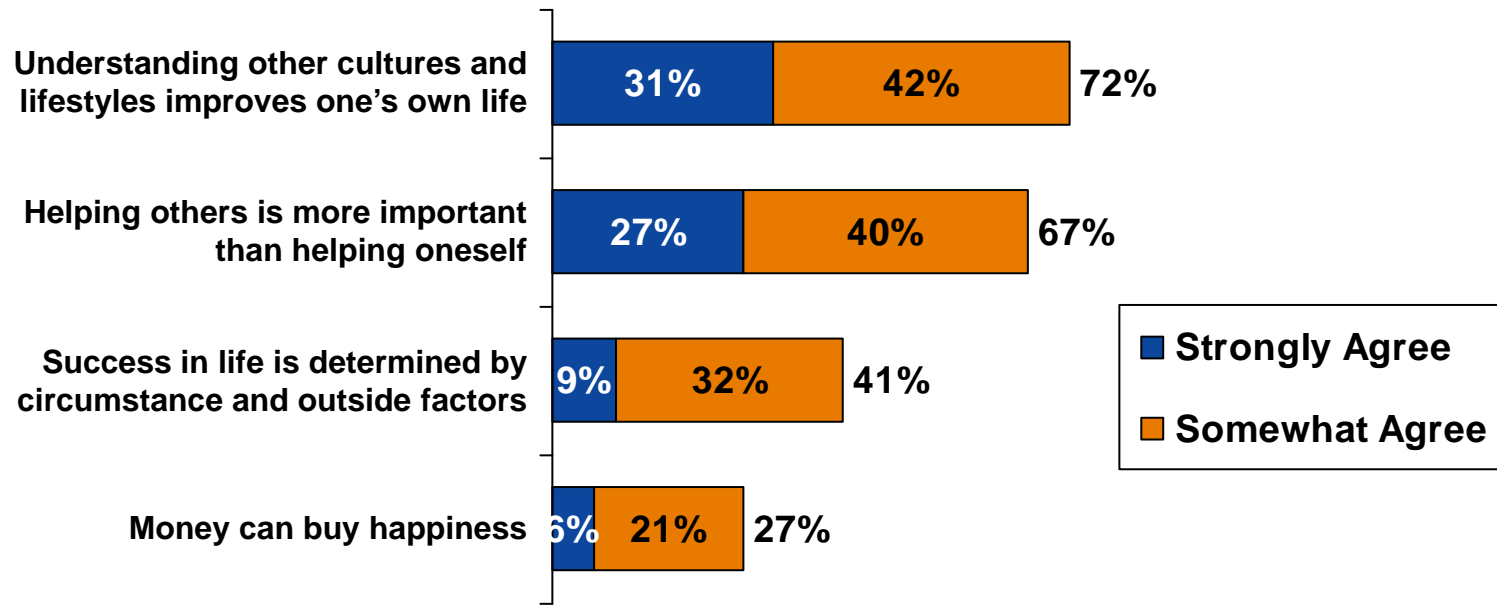
Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about yourself and others. (n=1,000)



# Many Americans feel their lives are enhanced by understanding and helping others.

- **Nearly three-quarters of Americans (72%) agree that understanding other cultures and lifestyles improves one's own life. Additionally, two-thirds (67%) believe that helping others is more important than helping oneself.**
  - The value of understanding other cultures is particularly strong among those age 55 or older (79% v. 69% of those younger). Those with a college education or more (81%) and those with household incomes of \$100,000 or more (82%) are also especially likely to agree with this (compared to 70% of those with less education and 72% among those with less than \$100k).
- **Relatively few seem to wholly subscribe to the fatalistic belief that success in life is determined by outside factors (only 9% strongly agree). Still, one-third “somewhat” agree with this (32%).**
- **Even fewer agree that money can buy happiness. Twenty-seven percent at least somewhat agree, but only 6% agree strongly.**

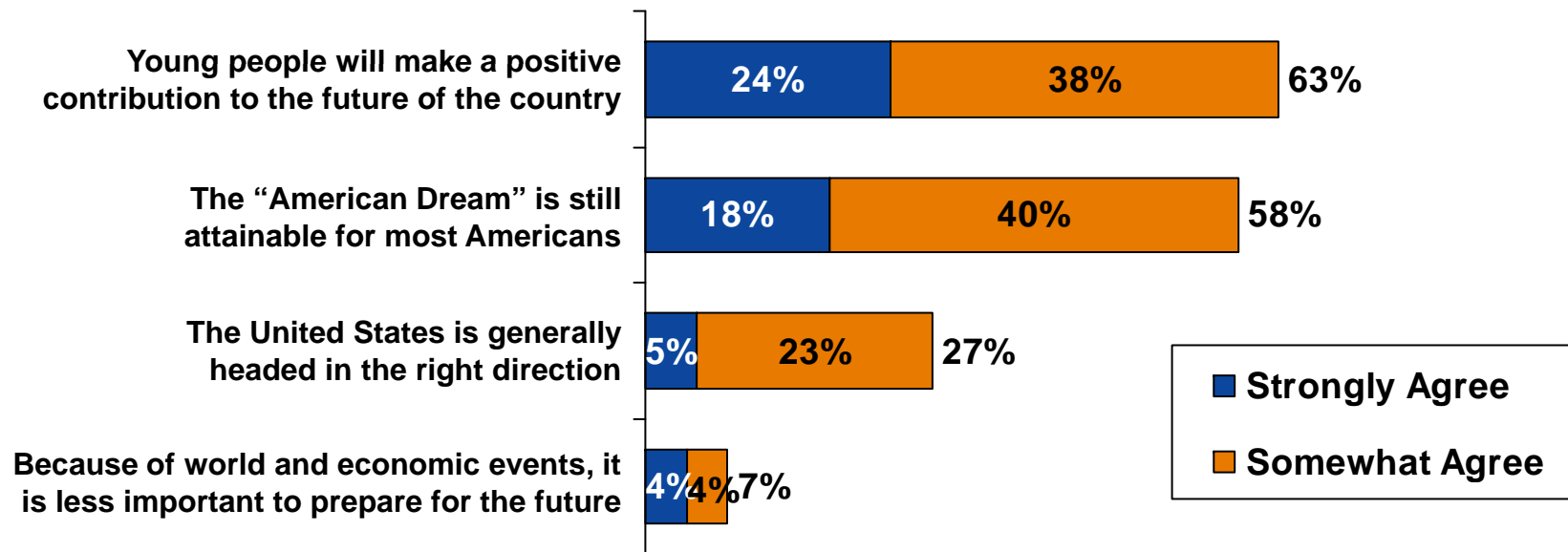
*Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about yourself and others. (n=1,000)*



# Six in ten feel the “American Dream” is still attainable for most Americans.

- **Nearly six in ten (58%) at least somewhat agree that the “American Dream” is still attainable for most Americans.**
  - Perhaps not surprisingly, those who are currently happy with their lives (68%) are more likely than those who are less content (48%) to feel that the “American Dream” is attainable.
- **A slightly greater share (63%) express confidence that today’s young people will make a positive contribution to the future of the country, despite the fact that just 27% feel the U.S. is currently headed in the right direction.**
  - Interestingly, Americans age 55 or older (71%) are more likely than younger Americans (59%) to believe that young people will make a positive contribution to the country’s future.
  - Among those with at least a college education, three-quarters (76%) believe that young people will make positive contributions to the country’s future, compared to 60% of those with less than a college degree.
- **Importantly, however, the vast majority reject the notion that it is less important to prepare for the future due to current world and economic circumstances.**

*Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about more global issues. (n=1,000)*

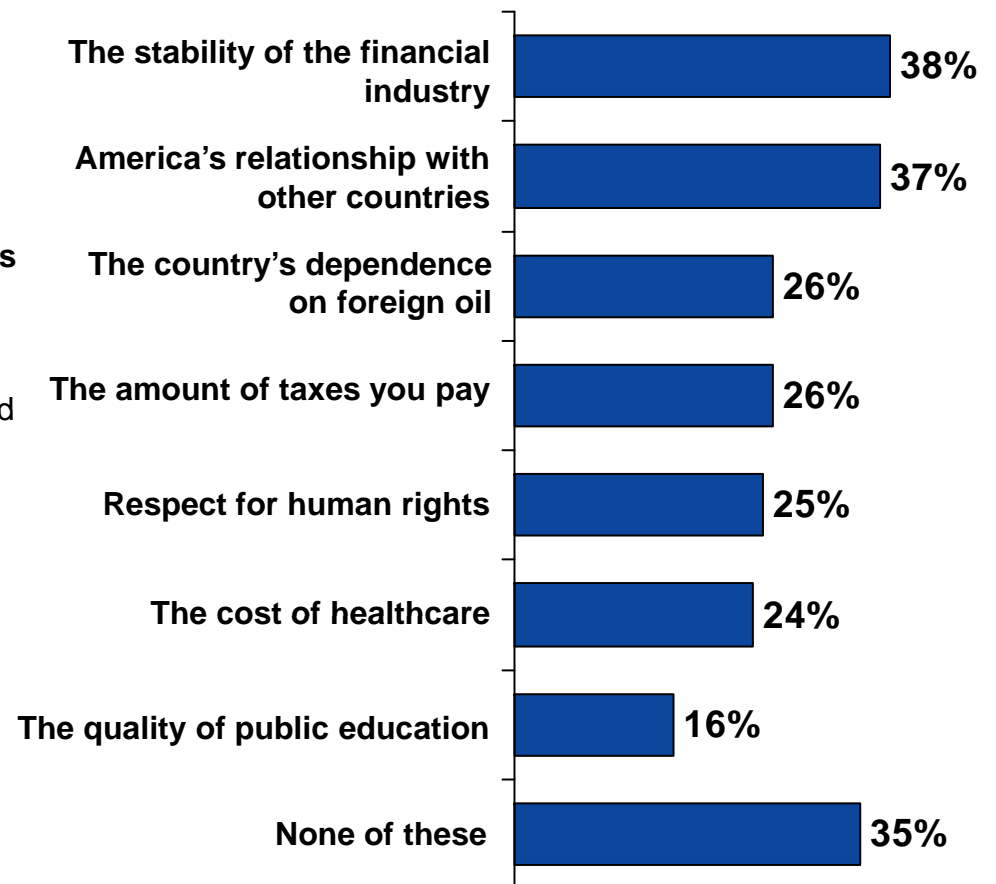


# Nearly four in ten feel the health of the financial industry will improve in 2009.

- **Thirty-eight percent of Americans expect that the stability of the financial industry will improve in the 12 months.**
  - Those with at least a college degree (44%) are significantly more likely than those with less education (36%) to feel the stability of the financial industry will improve.
  - Interestingly, respondents in the Northeast (49%) are more likely than those in other parts of the country (35%) to feel the financial industry will improve.
- **Just as many (37%) anticipate that U.S. foreign relations will improve.**
  - Americans age 55 or older (43%) are especially likely to believe that the U.S.'s relationship with other countries will improve in the next 12 months (compared to 34% of those younger).
- **Roughly one-quarter each foresee improvement in the America's dependence of foreign oil, tax rates, respect for human rights, and the cost of healthcare.**
  - Retirees (30%) are particularly optimistic that healthcare costs will improve in 2009 (compared to 20% of those employed at least part-time).
- **Fewer than one in five believe the quality of public education will improve in 2009.**
- **Some, however, are less optimistic – perhaps a sign of challenging times. Just over one-third (35%) feel that none of these issues will improve.**

*Which of the following things do you expect will improve over the next 12 months?*

*(n=1,000)*



# Definitions of Success

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# Public service professions are seen as highly admirable.

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- **Four out of five Americans (80%) feel that being a teacher is an admirable position, including 48% who call teaching very admirable. Half (51%) also say that, if they could start their lives all over again, they would be interested in pursuing a career as a teacher, though only 18% would be very interested in this profession.**
  - Women (86%) and those with children (84%) are especially inclined to feel that teaching is admirable (compared to 74% men and 72% without children). Parents (55%) are also more likely to say they would be interested in becoming a teacher if they started all over (compared to 44% without children).
  - Older Americans, age 55 or older (86%) are also more likely than younger Americans (78%) to feel being a teacher is at least somewhat admirable.
- **Other public service jobs also garner significant admiration. Three-quarters (73%) say they admire police officers, and six out of ten (62%) feel that being a social worker is a admirable position. Perhaps a recognition of the sacrifices required by these roles in our society, many would not choose these jobs for themselves. Fewer than one in ten say they would be very interested in becoming a social worker (9%) or police officer (7%). However, about two in ten suggest they would be “somewhat” interested in these professions.**
  - Women are more likely than men to say that being a police officer (79% v. 68%) or social worker (72% v. 52%) is admirable. However, while more women suggest they would be interested in pursuing a career in social work (44% women v. 23% men), men are more apt to be interested in police work (31% men v. 20% women).
- **Another role that many may view as challenging is President of the United States. Six out of ten Americans (61%) find the job of President admirable, including one-third (32%) who say it is very admirable. Yet, just 15% say they would be even somewhat interested in the job themselves.**
  - Although there has yet to be a female President, women (66%) are more apt to describe the job as admirable (compared to 56% men). Additionally, those with at least a college education (67%) are more likely than those with less education (60%) to describe the role of President as admirable.
- **Being a religious leader – another community-focused calling – is seen as admirable by more than half of those surveyed (54%). This includes one-quarter (26%) who feel being a religious leader is very admirable. However, in keeping with the other professions examined, far fewer indicate that they would be interested in pursuing a career as a religious leader (21% say at least somewhat interested).**
  - Men (24%) are more apt than women (17%) to say they would be interested in pursuing a career as a religious leader, despite the fact that women are more likely to describe the role as admirable (61% women v. 47% men).

# Small business is admirable, although some express interest in fame and “Fortune.”

- **The importance placed on small businesses in America is clear. Two-thirds of Americans (64%) say that the role “founder of a start-up company” is admirable. One-quarter (23%) call it very admirable and another four in ten (41%) consider it somewhat admirable. Of the professions examined in this survey, the largest share of Americans express interest in being the founder of a start-up – 55% say they would be interested in founding a company, if they could do it all over again.**
  - Respondents with at least a college degree (74%) are more likely to say that being the founder of a start-up is at least somewhat admirable (compared to 61% with less education).
  - Men (63%) are more likely than women (47%) to say they would be interested in founding a company, if they had to do it all over again.
- **In contrast, being an executive at Fortune 1000 company is seen as less admirable and less attractive than being the founder of a start-up. Three in ten Americans (30%) believe that being a Fortune 1000 executive is an admirable job, which is half the number who feel being the founder of a start-up is admirable. Still, one-third (33%) say they would be interested in becoming an executive at a Fortune 1000 company, if they could start their lives over again.**
  - Young Americans ages 25 to 34 (39%) are more likely to call being a Fortune 1000 executive admirable (compared to 28% of those older). They are also more likely to say they would be interested in pursuing this as a career (46% age 25-34 v. 30% age 35+).
  - More so than women (25%), four in ten men (40%) express interest in the executive role.
- **Rather than a career in public service, some indicate that they may try to earn a living by following a musical or theatrical passion. More than one-third of Americans (36%) say that, if they could start over and pursue a new field, they would be at least somewhat interested in becoming an actor or musician. Roughly the same share (39%) believe that being an actor or musician is an admirable calling.**
  - Men are especially likely to express interest in becoming an actor or musician (41% men v. 32% women).
  - Desire to become a musician or actor decreases with age. Half of those ages 25 to 34 (52%) say they would be at least somewhat interested, compared to 39% of those ages 35 to 54 and 24% of those age 55 or older.
- **Twenty-six percent feel that being a professional athlete is at least somewhat admirable. Still, nearly as many (22%) would be interested in pursuing a career as an athlete.**
  - By a wide margin, men (36%) are more likely than women (9%) to express interest in being a professional athlete.

# Doctors are more highly regarded than lawyers.

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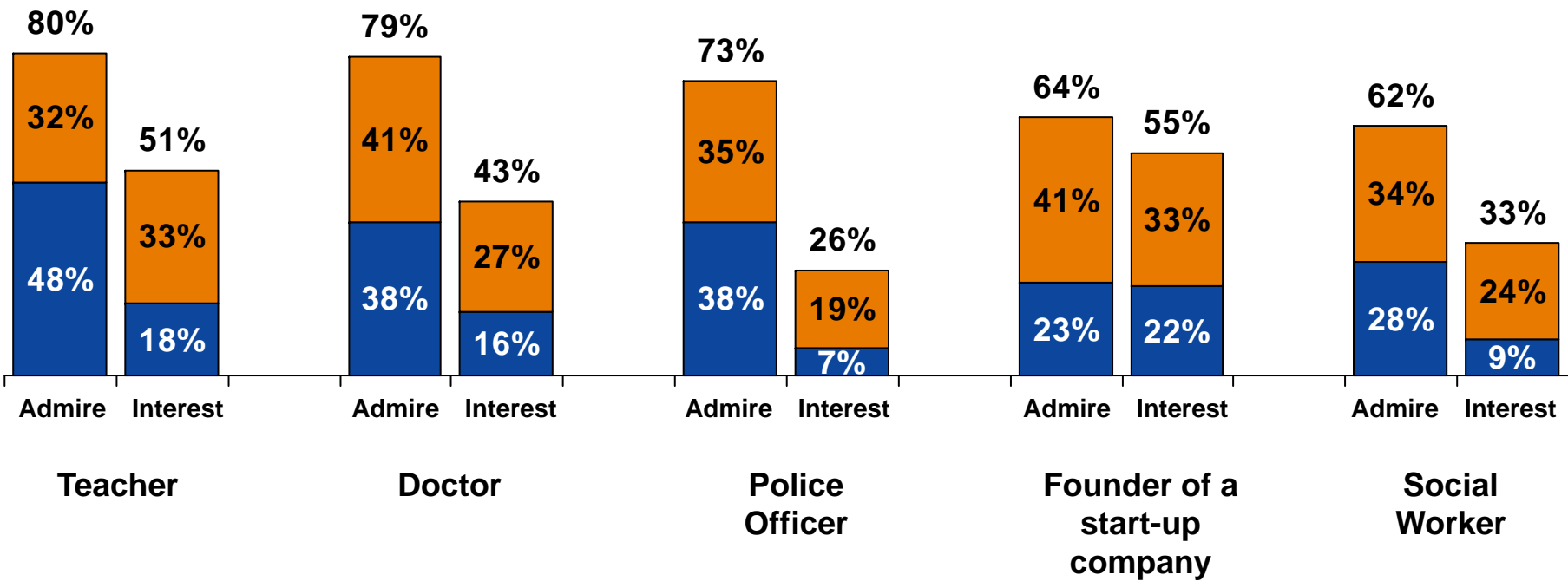
- **Doctors and lawyers – both stereotypical benchmarks of success – are viewed quite differently from one another. Doctors are widely viewed as having a highly admirable calling. Eight in ten respondents (79%) say being a doctor is at least somewhat admirable, and four in ten (43%) say they would be at least somewhat interested in career as a doctor if they could start anew.**
- **By comparison, just one-third (33%) consider being a lawyer an admirable job, though 23% would be interested in pursuing a career in this field.**
  - Women are more likely than men to call both of these professions admirable (doctor: 82% v. 76%, lawyer: 41% v. 26%). Still, men and women are equally likely to express an interest in pursuing these positions.
  - Interest in becoming a lawyer, if given the chance to start over again, decreases with age, such that 30% of those ages 25 to 34 express at least some interest compared to just 16% of those age 55 or older.



# Teaching garners the most admiration. Many would pursue it if they could start over.

For each of the following job types, please indicate how admirable you find each position.  
 Assuming you could completely start your life over again, how interested would you be in pursuing each of the following careers?  
 (n=1,000)

■ Very Admirable/Interested    ■ Somewhat Admirable/Interested

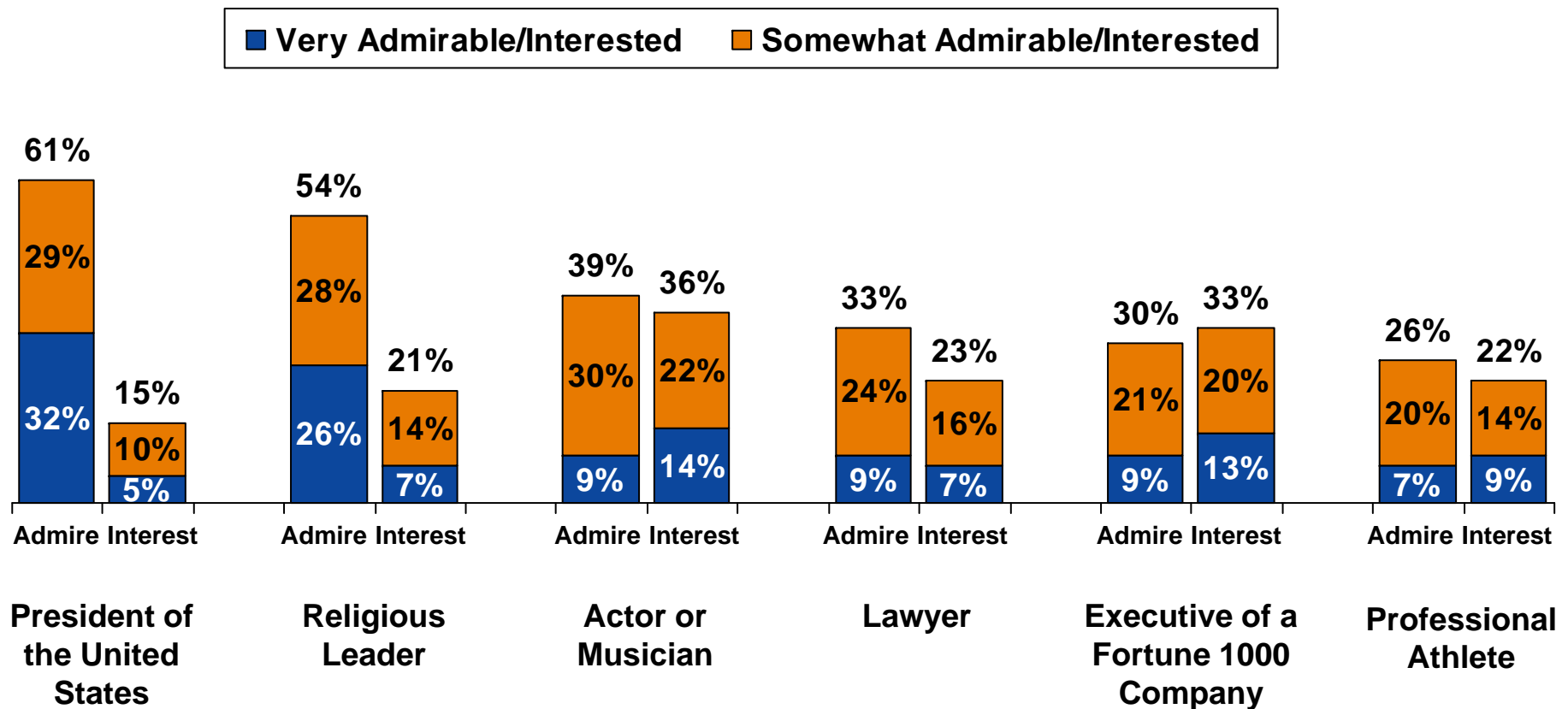


# Founding a start-up tops being the executive of a large corporation.

For each of the following job types, please indicate how admirable you find each position.

Assuming you could completely start your life over again, how interested would you be in pursuing each of the following careers?

(n=1,000)

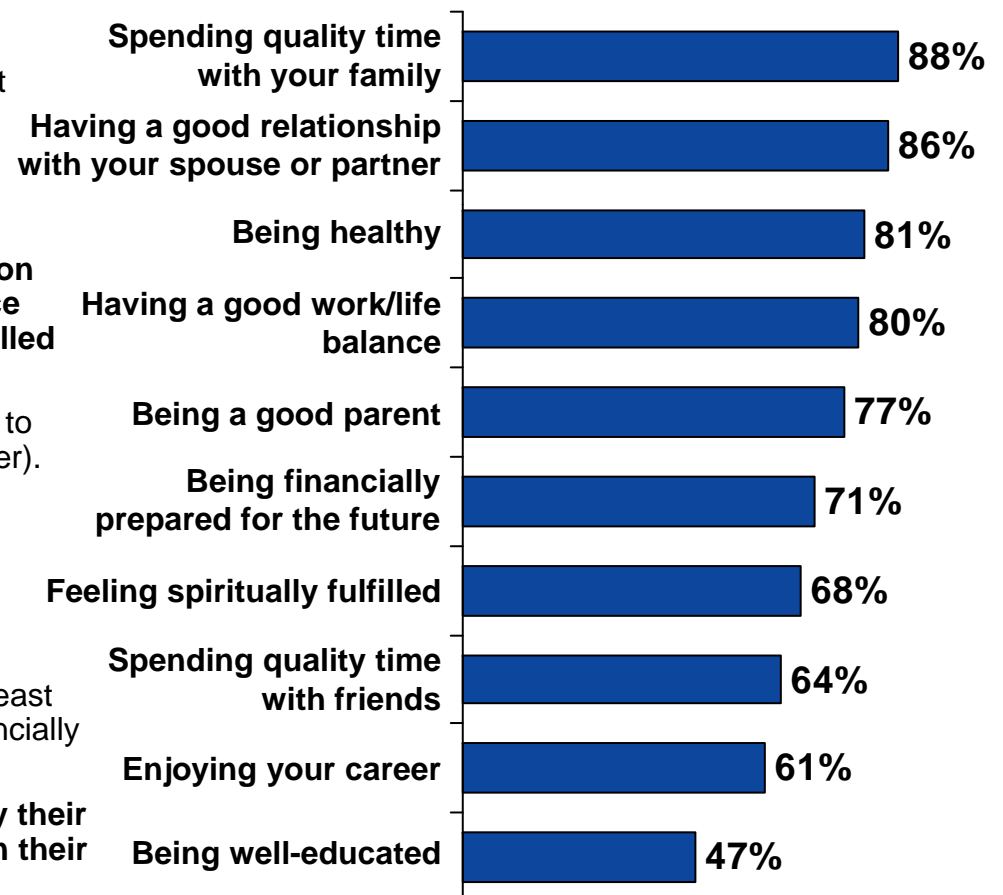


# The majority seem to measure success in family units.

- **Topping the list of how respondents define “success” are spending time with family (88%) and having a good relationship with one’s spouse or partner (86%). Many (77%) also include being a good parent in their definition of “success.”**
  - Women are more likely than men to cite spending time with family (91% v. 85% men) and being a good parent (81% v. 73% men). Additionally, likelihood of citing having a good relationship with your spouse or partner increases with age (78% age 25-34, 91% age 55+).
- **The majority also include aspects of their physical and mental well-being in their definition. Eight in ten mention being healthy (81%) and having a good work/life balance (80%). Two-thirds (68%) say that feeling spiritually fulfilled contributes to success.**
  - Americans age 55 or older (88%) are particularly likely to stress being healthy (compared to 78% of those younger).
- **Seven out of ten (71%) say “success” means being financially prepared for the future. Interestingly, this is a much higher share than say “success” means having a high income or owning nice things. Financial preparation seems to be the key.**
  - Those with incomes of \$100,000 or more (81%) or at least a college degree (78%) more often mention being financially prepared, compared to their counterparts (69% each).
- **Six in ten feel (61%) a person is successful if they enjoy their career. About half (47%) include being well-educated in their definition of “success.”**

*Below is a list of various personal attributes. Please select the 10 attributes that best fit your definition of “success.”*

*Top 10 Responses (n=1,000)*

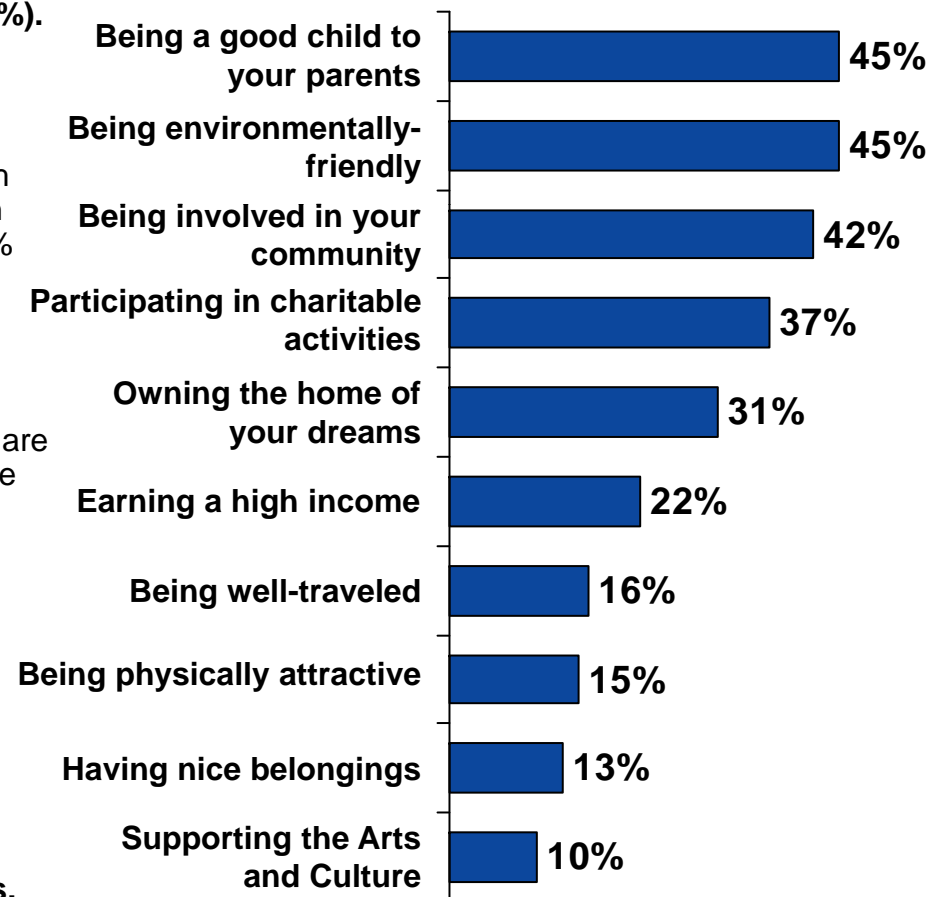


# Though mentioned slightly less often, some feel altruism can also contribute to success.

- In keeping with the emphasis on family values, 45% suggest that being a good child to one's parents is included in their definition of "success."
- Similar shares define "success" as being involved in the community (42%) and partaking in charitable activities (37%).
  - Inclusion of charitable activities in one's definition of "success" increases with age (28% age 25-34, 42% age 55+).
  - Americans with greater financial assets (48% of those with \$200,000+) are also more likely to feel that participation in charitable deeds contributes to success (compared to 35% with less).
- Almost half of those surveyed (45%) believe that being environmentally-friendly is a defining characteristic of "success."
  - Interestingly, those with less than a college degree (47%) are more likely than those who completed college (39%) to cite being environmentally-friendly.
  - In addition, Americans age 55 and older (50%) are more likely to define success as being environmentally-friendly than those age 25-34 (39%).
- Fewer define "success" in monetary or materials terms. Only one in five (22%) feel "success" is defined by a high income, and even fewer (13%) suggest possessing nice things makes someone successful.
- Still, one-third (31%) believe that owning a home is part of being successful. Those with lower incomes (40% with incomes of <\$25,000) are especially inclined to believe this.

*Below is a list of various personal attributes. Please select the 10 attributes that best fit your definition of "success."*

*Bottom 10 Responses (n=1,000)*

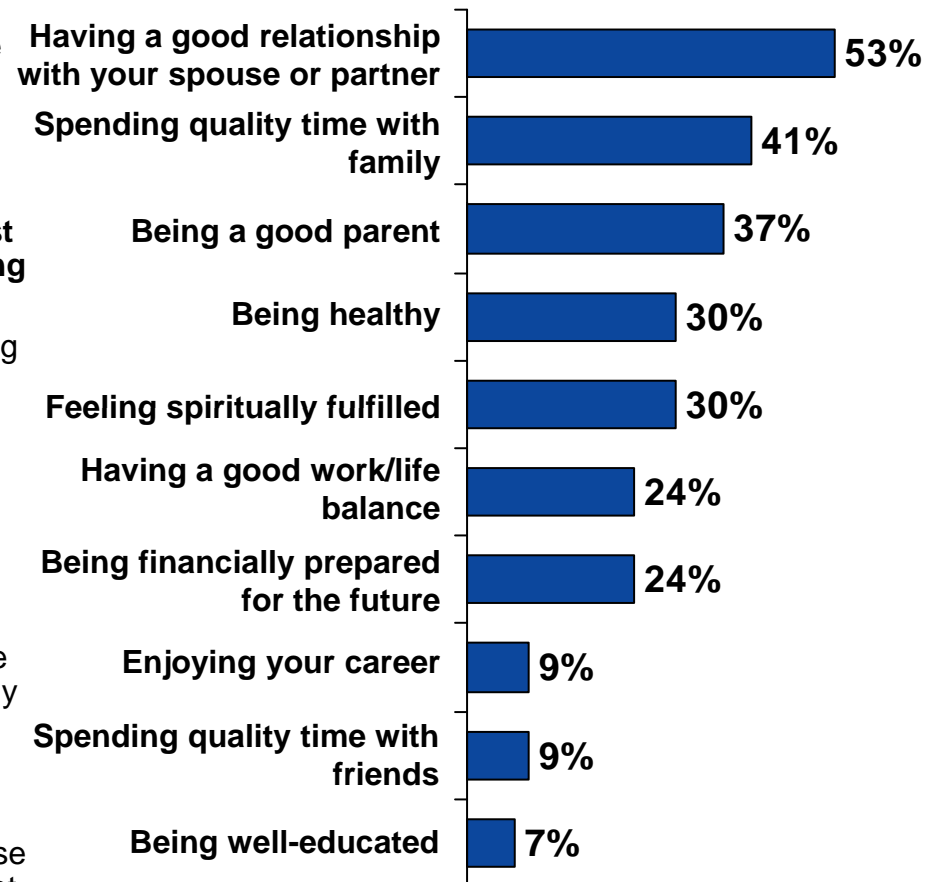


# At an individual level, family remains most important.

- Family relationships are clearly important.** Asked which of these attributes rank within the top three in terms of importance *to you*, good relationships with spouses or partners (53%), spending quality time with family (41%), and being a good parent (37%) remain at the top of the list.
  - Perhaps expectedly, married respondents (68%) are more likely than those who are not (32%) to include having a good relationship with a spouse in their top three.
- Attributes related to health and mental and spiritual well-being follow closely behind.** Thirty percent each place being healthy and spiritually fulfilled in their top three most important attributes. One-quarter (24%) include maintaining a good work/life balance in their top three.
  - Being healthy continues to be more commonly cited among respondents age 55 or older (43% v. 24% younger).
  - Also, those who have no children (41%) are more likely than parents (26%) to include health in their top three most important attributes.
- Another one-quarter of Americans (24%) rate being financially prepared for the future within their top three most important attributes.**
  - Americans age 55 or older – and closer to retirement – are more likely than younger Americans to say being financially prepared is among the three most important attributes.
- Career (9%), education (7%) and even friends (9%) fall within the top three for relatively few.**
  - Younger people (16% age 25-34) are more likely than those who are older (7%) to say enjoying their career is important.

*How important are each of these attributes to you?  
Which is most, second or third most important?*

*Top 10 Responses (n=1,000)*

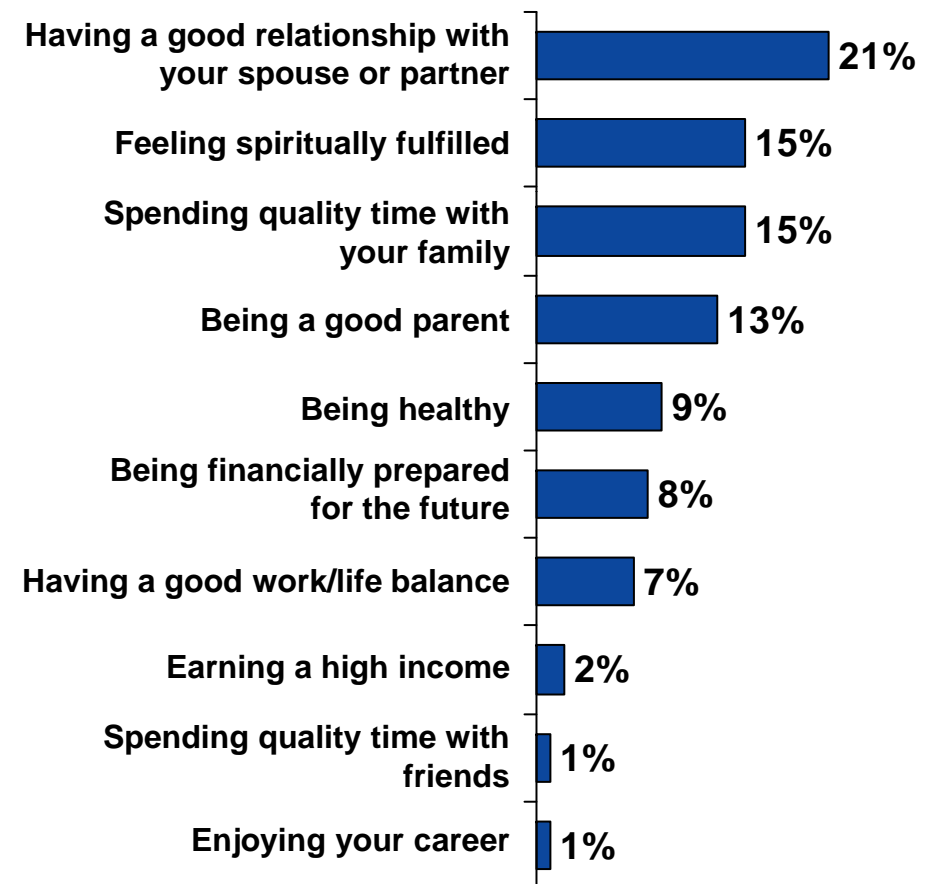


# Spiritual fulfillment rises to the top, second only to romantic relationships.

- When asked to select the single most important attribute, feeling spiritually fulfilled (15%) rises on the list. It is, however, still second to having a good relationship with a spouse or partner (21%).
  - Of note, key demographics, such as age, gender, or income, do not seem to influence a respondent's likelihood of citing spirituality as the most important attribute.
- Tied for second, fifteen percent call spending quality time with family the most important for them. Being a good parent (13%) is a very close third.
- Being healthy is most important for one in ten Americans (9%).
- Only 8% consider being financially prepared for the future to be the single most important attribute.
  - Americans without children (12%) are more likely than those who have children (7%) to say this is most important, which is perhaps counter-intuitive.
- Though a small share overall, it is interesting that work/life balance (7%) is seen as most important more often than merely having high earnings (2%).

*How important are each of these attributes to you? Which is the MOST important to you?*

*Top 10 Responses (n=1,000)*



# Most describe themselves as successful at home; workplace success is more varied.

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- **According to the definitions of success that respondents provided in this survey, large shares are, in fact, succeeding, especially when it comes to their family lives.**
- **Roughly three-quarters of Americans feel they are doing at least somewhat well when it comes to being a good parent (79%), having a good relationship with their spouse or partner (73%) and when it comes to spending quality time with family in general (79%). Nearly as many (71%) say they do well at being a good child to their parents.**
  - Women are more likely than men to say they do at least somewhat well at being a good parent (86% v. 72%) and in spending quality time with their families (84% v. 74%). Men and women give themselves roughly equal marks for having a good relationship with their spouse or partner.
  - Also of note, those with household incomes of \$75,000 or more are significantly more likely to say they do well in each of the four family-related attributes (good parent: 88% \$75k+ v. 77% <\$75k, good relationship: 85% v. 70%, spending time: 88% v. 77%, and good child: 78% v. 70%).
- **In addition to family, many feel they are doing well in nurturing their friendships. About six in ten (58%) say that “spending quality time with friends” describes them either somewhat or very well.**
- **Though still a majority, fewer feel they are doing well when it comes to their spiritual and physical well-being. Six in ten (59%) say that the phrase “feeling spiritually fulfilled” describes them at least somewhat well and just over half (56%) report they are doing somewhat well at being healthy.**
  - Respondents age 55 or older are more likely than their younger counterparts to feel they are doing well in these areas (spiritual: 63% age 55+ v. 56% younger, healthy: 64% v. 52%).
- **Professional and educational attributes receive mixed marks. Six out of ten (61%) report that they are doing at least somewhat well with regards to being well-educated and more than half (54%) believe they are doing well at having a good work/life balance. Still, only about one-quarter feel they are doing very well in these areas.**
- **Although half (50%) of Americans say that the phrase “enjoying your career” describes them at least somewhat well, half as many express the same positive views about the amount they are earning. Just 23% say “earning a high income” describes them well.**
  - In keeping with the findings about family-related attributes, though perhaps more expectedly, those with higher incomes (\$75,000 or more) are more likely than those in lower income brackets to believe they are doing well at each of these professional or educational areas (well-educated: 81% \$75k+ v. 55% <\$75k, work/life balance: 72% v. 48%, enjoying career: 64% v. 45%, and high income: 47% v. 14%).

# Some feel like they could be doing more to give back and help others.

- **Although many respondents indicated that they value helping others and working toward charitable causes, it appears that many may not be “giving back” as much as they would like. Slightly more than one out of three Americans (36%) feel that they are doing well when it comes to participating in charitable activities. A similar share (34%) believe that they are doing at least somewhat well in being involved in their community. Additionally, just two in ten (20%) feel they do well at supporting the Arts and Culture.**
- **By comparison, more than half (57%) suggest that they are doing at least somewhat well in being environmentally-friendly – an attribute which 45% said contributed to their definition of “success.”**
  - Across the board, respondents with greater household assets (\$200,000 or more, excluding the value of their home) are significantly more likely to describe themselves as doing at least somewhat well with regard to these charitable-type of attributes (charitable activities: 52% \$200k+ v. 32% <\$200k, involved in community: 52% v. 30%, supporting arts: 37% v. 16%, and being environmentally-friendly: 65% v. 54%).
  - Interestingly, Americans age 55 and older (62%) are more likely to consider themselves environmentally friendly than those age 25-34 (52%).
- **Many report that they are not doing as well with some of the more material or superficial attributes, but most also placed a low level of importance on such things. For example, more than one-third state that they are not doing well when it comes to owning the home of their dreams and two in ten suggest they do not feel they have nice belongings. Even more – 43% -- say the phrase “well-traveled” does not describe them well.**
  - Not surprisingly, feelings of being unsuccessful in these areas appears to be influenced by household income. Those with incomes below \$75,000 are significantly more likely than those with higher incomes to feel they are doing either not too or not at all well when it comes to owning their dream home (43% <\$75k v. 20% \$75k+), having nice things (24% v. 11%), and being well-traveled (49% v. 32%).
  - Interestingly, those who tend to make financial decisions and investments mostly on their own rather than relying on a financial professional are more likely to say that the phrases “owning the home of your dreams” (35% self-reliant v. 13% use an advisor) and “having nice belongings” (19% v. 7%) do not describe them well.
  - Parents (47%) are more likely to say “being well-traveled” does not describe them well (compared to 34% without children).
- **Moreover, although many feel good about how they are taking care of their health, a large share feel either neutral (42%) or negatively (24%) about their physical appearance.**



# Nearly half of Americans suggest that they are not financially prepared.

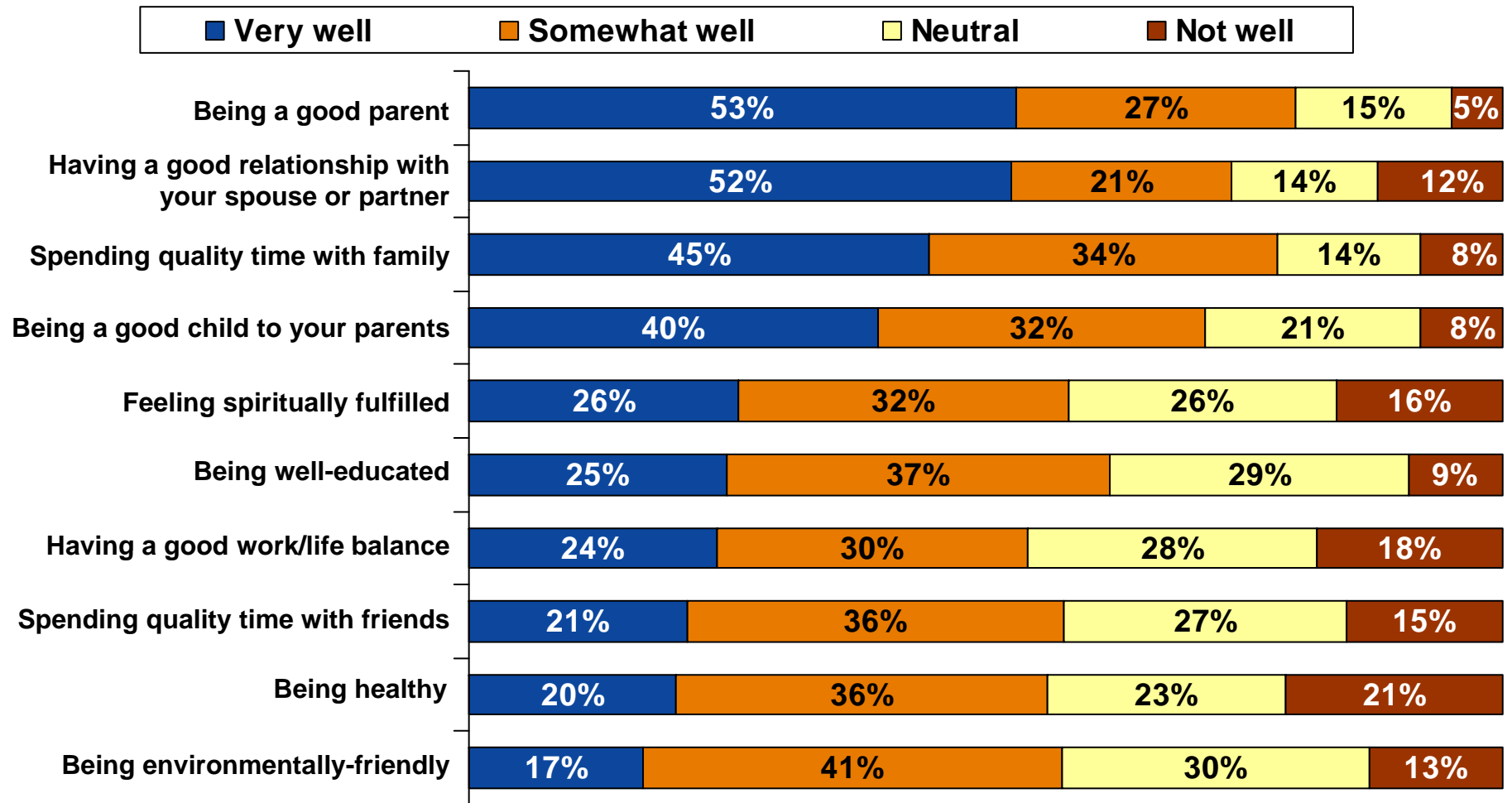
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- **Forty-four percent of survey respondents report that the phrase “being financially prepared for the future” does not describe them well. This includes two in ten (20%) who say the phrase does not describe them at all.**
  - As might be expected, those with lower household incomes (52% <\$75k) are more apt than those with higher incomes (29% \$75k+) to say that “being financially prepared” does not describe them well. These feelings are most pronounced among those with incomes below \$25,000 – two-thirds (65%) say they are not doing well with financial preparation, significantly more than all others.
  - Use of a financial advisor may improve feelings of financial readiness. Those who tend to be more self-reliant when making financial decisions (45%) are more likely than those who tend to use a financial professional (20%) to say that they are not doing well in terms of being financially prepared for the future.
  - Younger respondents, ages 25 to 34 (55%) are significantly more likely to suggest they are doing not too well or not at all well when it comes to being financially prepared for the future (compared to 42% of those older).
  - Unmarried respondents (52%) are also especially likely to feel “being financially prepared” does not describe them well (compared to 39% of married respondents).
  - Also of note, those who offered a high rating for how happy they are with their current circumstances (53%) are particularly likely to say “being financially prepared” describes them well (compared to just 9% who say they are unhappy with their lives right now).

# A majority of Americans suggest they are “succeeding” in their family life.

*How well would you say the following attributes describe you right now?*

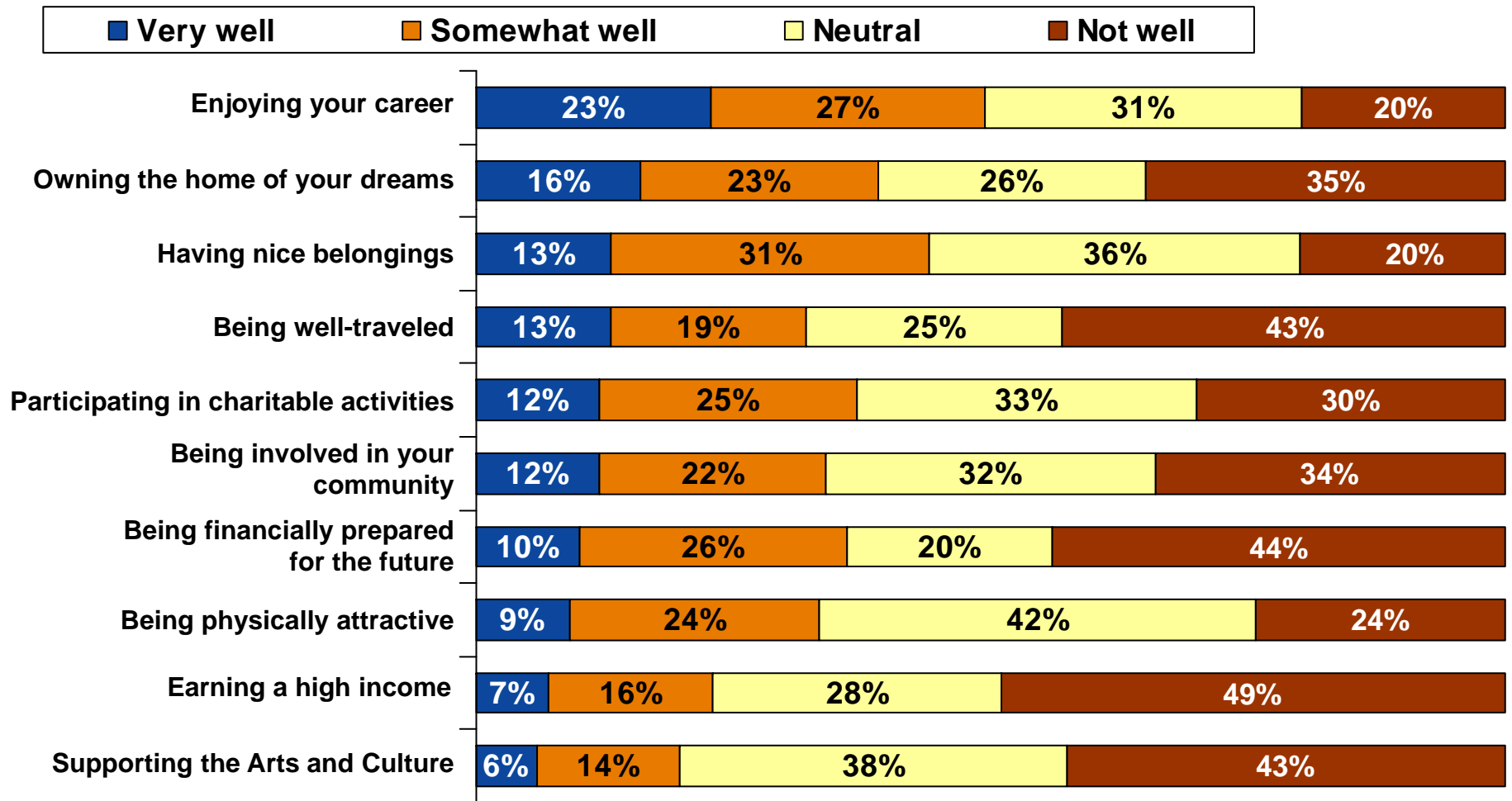
*Top 10 Responses (n=1,000, minus those who said “not applicable”)*



# Only one-third feel they are doing a good job at preparing financially for the future.

*How well would you say the following attributes describe you right now?*

*Bottom 10 Responses (n=1,000, minus those who said "not applicable")*



# Financial Security

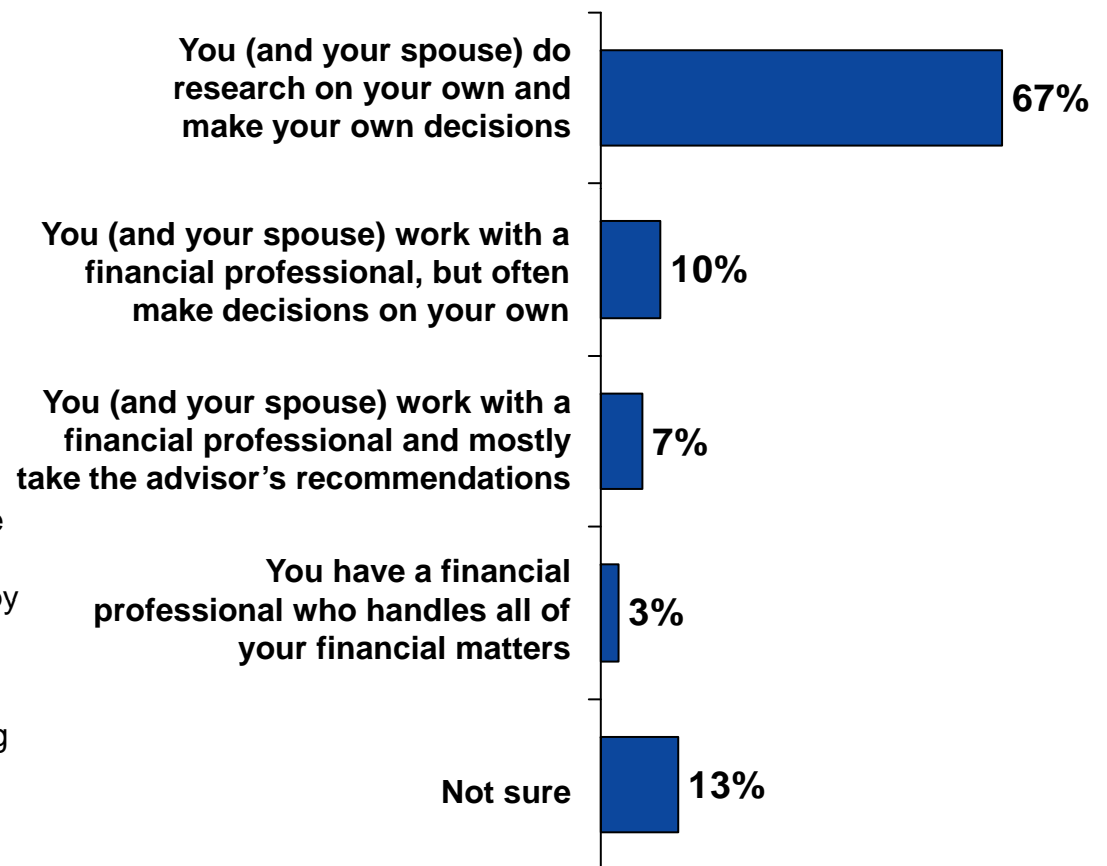
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# Most Americans make financial decisions on their own.

- **Two-thirds of Americans (67%) suggest that they are completely self-reliant when making financial decisions.**
- **Another one in ten (10%) say that, although they consult with a financial professional, most decisions are made independently.**
- **Just 10% report that they work with a financial professional and rely heavily, if not entirely, on his or her recommendations.**
  - Americans age 55 or older (18%) are more than twice as likely as younger respondents (7%) to indicate that they rely more on a financial professional.
  - Not too surprisingly, those with household assets of \$100,000 or more (23%, excluding the value of their home) are nearly five times more likely than those with fewer assets (5% <\$100k) to report that they work with a financial professional and often or always take his or her suggestions.
  - Additionally, those who say that they are happy with their current lifestyle report greater dependence on a financial professional (12%) than those who feel less happy (9%). In fact, the difference is even greater when comparing those who rate their happiness as an 8 or above on a 1 to 10 happiness scale (14% rely more on a financial professional).

*Which of the following statements best describes your overall personal approach to managing your money?*

*(n=1,000)*

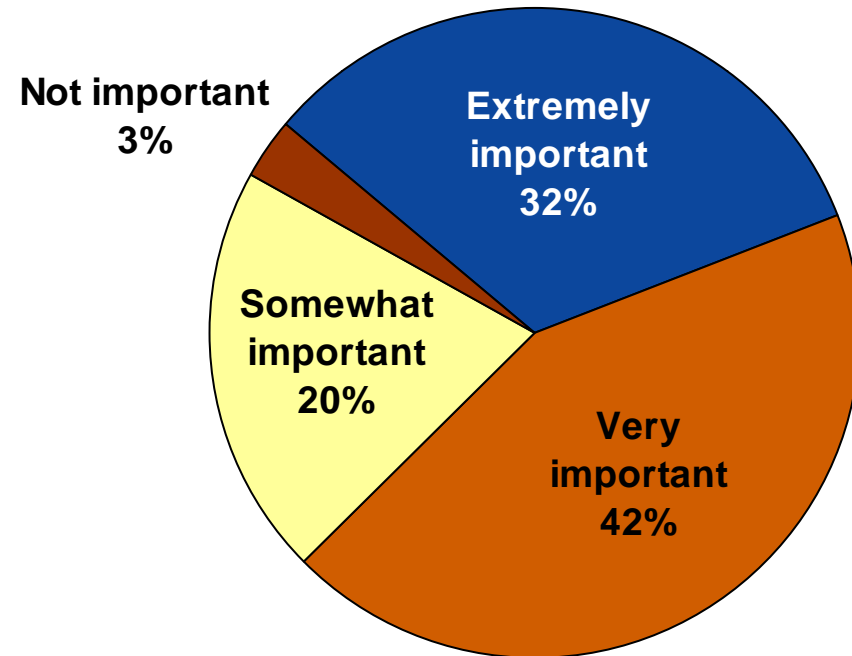


# Three out of four Americans say it is important that they feel financially secure.

- **Seventy-five percent of respondents describe financial security as either very or extremely important to them. Another 20% feel that it is somewhat important.**
  - Those ages 25 to 34 (82%) more often stress the importance of financial security (compared to 73% of those age 35 or older).
  - Interestingly, retirees (66%) are the least likely to describe financial security as very or extremely important (compared to 78% of those in other employment situations).

*Financial security can be described as “a feeling of confidence that you will achieve the financial goals you have through the actions you are currently taking.” How important is it to you that you feel financially secure?*

*(n=1,000)*

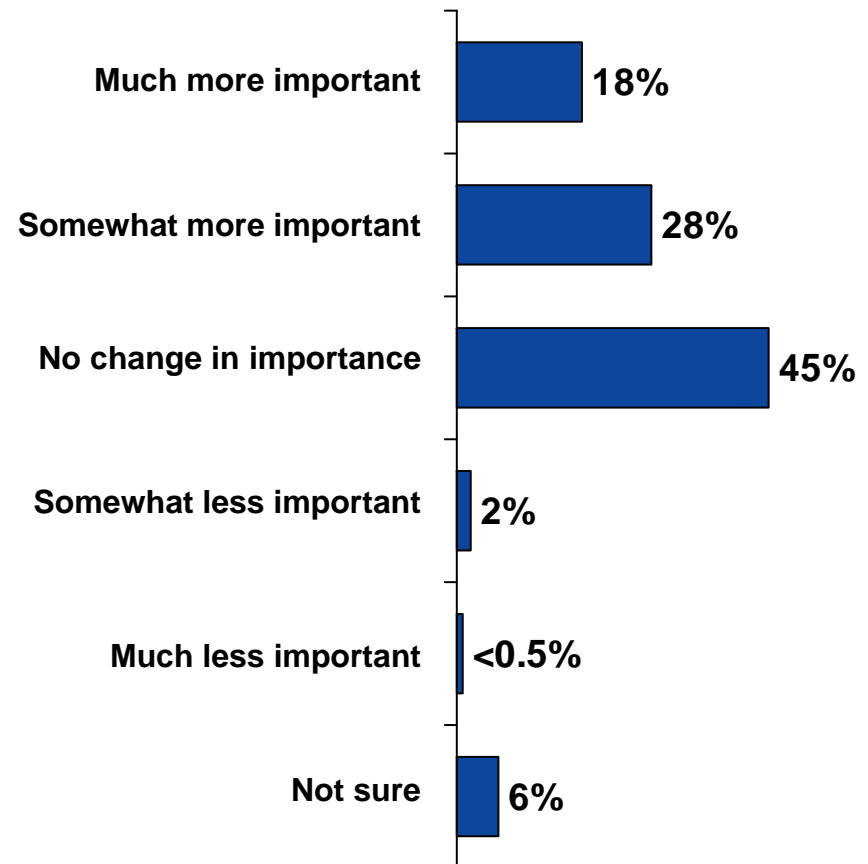


# Moreover, almost half say financial security will be more important in the coming year.

- **Nearly half of those surveyed (46%) expect that financial security will become more important for them over the next 12 months.**
  - Those who work full-time (53%) are especially likely to believe that financial security will grow in importance for them.
- **Just as many (45%) believe that financial security will be equally as important in the next year as it is right now.**
- **Understandably, just 2% feel their financial security will become less important.**
  - Though still a very small share overall, retirees (4%) are particularly likely to say that financial security will be less important in the coming year.

*How do you expect the importance of financial security to change for you over the next 12 months?*

*(n=1,000)*

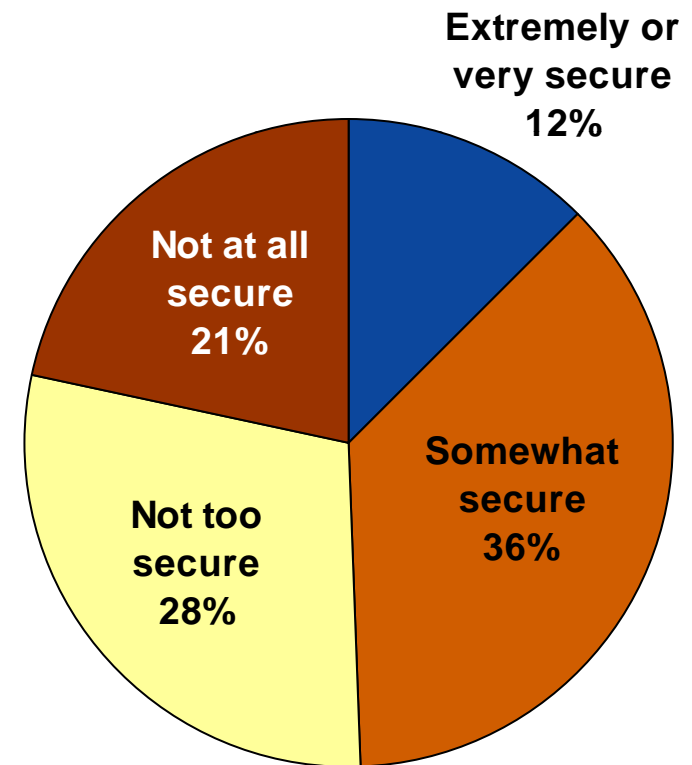


# Despite its importance, very few feel they are currently financially secure.

- **Possibly a sign of recent stock market and economic turbulence, only one out of eight Americans report feeling very or extremely financially secure right now.**
  - There may be a link between feeling financial secure and contentment with one's life. Americans who say that they are happy with their lives (18%) are far more likely than those who are less pleased with their lives (4%) to say they feel very or extremely secure.
- **Half (49%) say they are not secure, including two in ten (21%) who say they are not at all secure.**
  - Obviously feelings of financial security have a lot to do with income and asset levels. Those with household incomes under \$75,000 (55%) are more likely to say they feel insecure (compared to 36% \$75k+). Likewise, those with household assets under \$200,000 (57%) are nearly three times more inclined to say they feel insecure than those with \$200,000 or more in assets (20%).

*Still thinking of financial security as “a feeling of confidence that you will achieve the financial goals you have through the actions you are currently taking.” How financially secure do you feel today?*

(n=1,000)



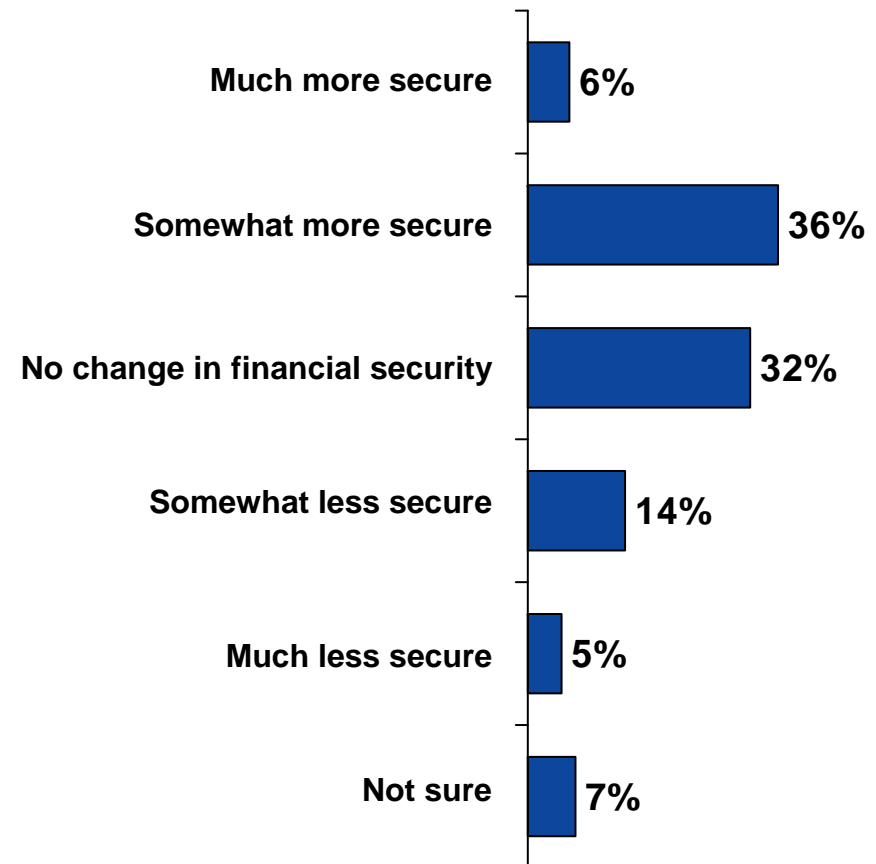


# Many expect financial security will increase in 2009, but not by much.

- **Two out of five Americans (41%) believe that their own financial security will improve over the next 12 months, but only one in twenty (6%) expect to be much more secure.**
  - Respondents who report that they have specific goals for the future (53%) are more likely than those without goals (27%) to predict an upswing in their financial security.
  - Younger Americans (62% ages 25 to 34) are more likely than older Americans (37%) to expect their own financial security to improve.
- **On the other hand, relatively few (19%) are predicting a downturn in their own financial security.**

*How do you expect your own financial security to change over the next 12 months? Will it be...?*

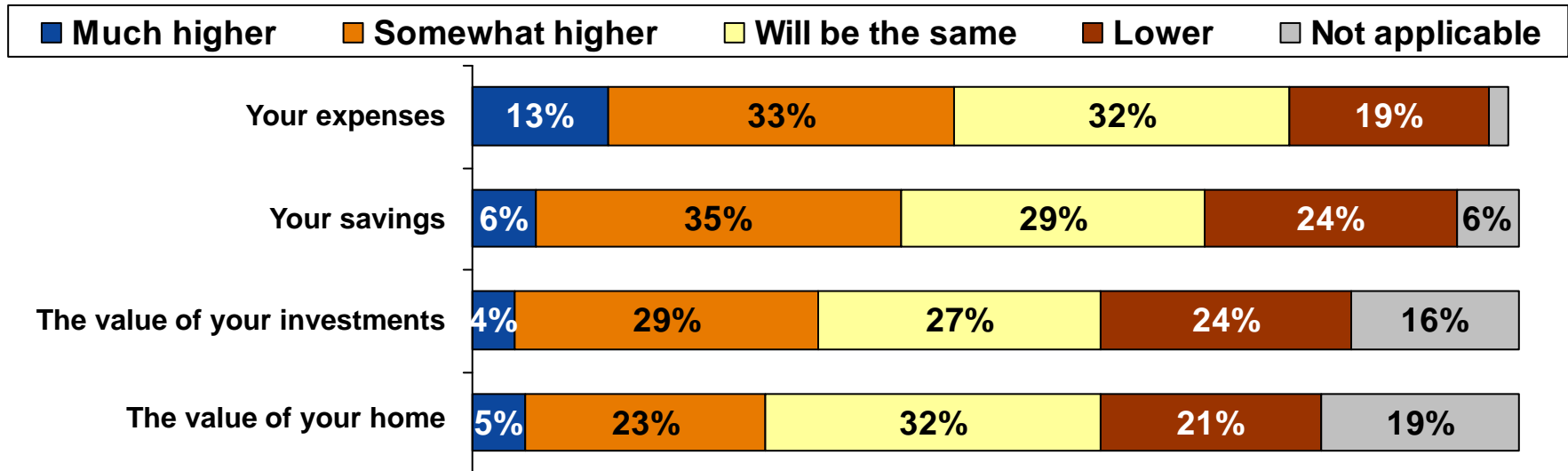
*(n=1,000)*



# Some predict that their expenses will be higher in 2009, but hope to save more as well.

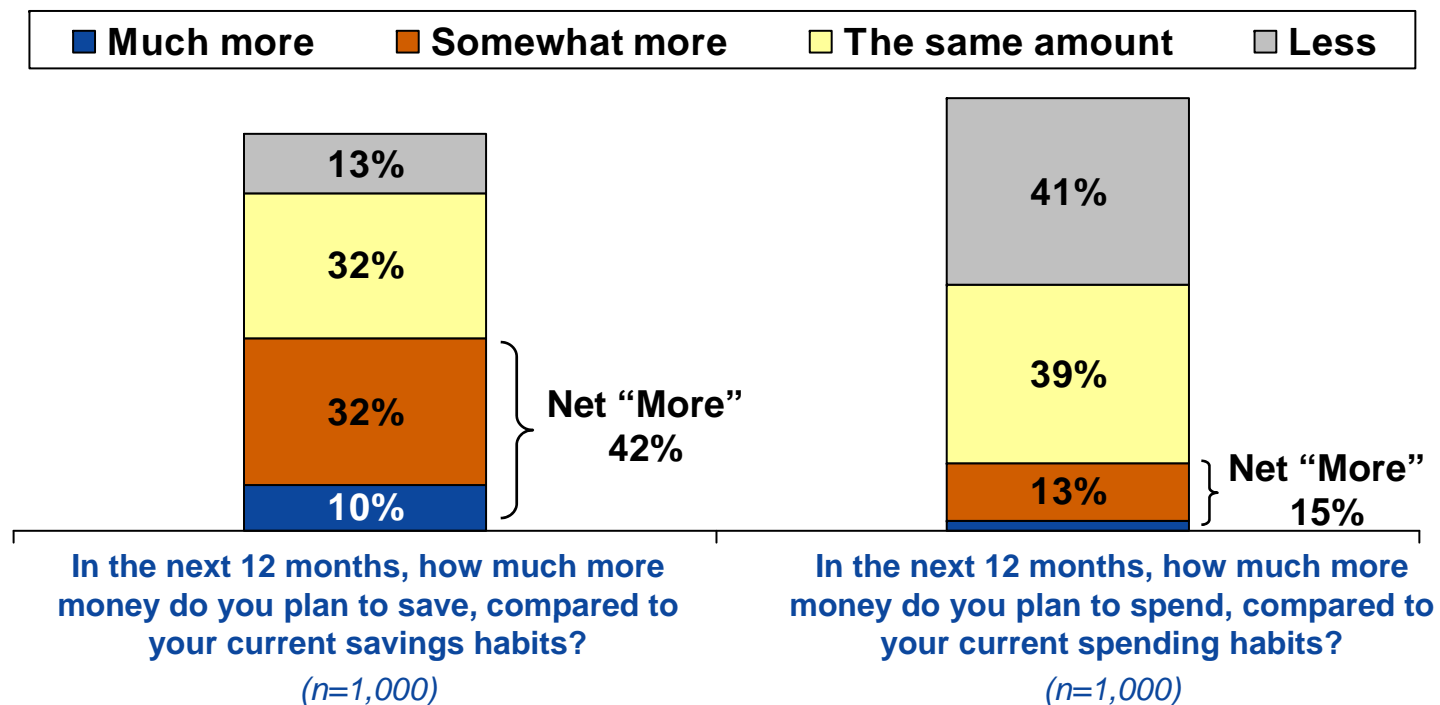
- Almost half of survey respondents (46%) believe that their expenses will be at least somewhat higher. Although it may be a contradiction, nearly as many (41%) also anticipate that they will increase their savings in 2009.**
  - Perhaps because they have further to go, Americans age 25 to 34 (54%) are especially likely to expect to save more (compared to 38% age 35+). Those with higher incomes (48% \$75k+) are also more likely than those with lower incomes (39% <\$75k) to foresee increased savings over the next 12 months.
  - Those who work full-time (51%) are more likely than those who do not (35%) to predict that their savings will be higher. By comparison, retirees (52%) tend to believe their expenses will increase.
  - As might be expected, Americans who feel that financial security is highly important (45%) are more inclined to expect their savings to increase (compared to 32% who place less importance on financial security). Similarly, those who say they have specific goals for the future (51%) are more likely than those who do not (28%) to anticipate increased savings.
- Roughly three in ten each believe that the value of their investments (33%) or the value of their home (28%) will be higher in the next 12 months.**
  - Respondents who work more closely with a financial professional (46%) are more likely than those who make most financial decisions on their own (34%) to feel that the value of their investments will increase.

*In the next 12 months, do you anticipate that each of the following will be higher or lower than it is right now? (n=1,000)*



# Four in ten expect to curb spending in the coming year. Many will focus on saving.

- Perhaps a result of the recent economic climate, four in ten respondents (41%) report that they expect to spend less in the next 12 months compared to their current spending habits. A similar share (39%) hope to hold spending at current levels.
  - Women (46%) are more likely than men (35%) to say they will spend less in the next year.
- At the same time, forty-two percent say that they expect to save at least somewhat more over the course of the year, though relatively few (10%) expect to be able to save much more.
  - Expectations of increased savings decrease with age. Those between the ages of 25 and 34 (60%) are the most likely to anticipate saving more compared 41% of those age 35 to 54 and just 32% of those age 55 or older.



# Current and Future Circumstances

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# Americans are moderately happy with their lives right now — optimistic about the future.

- **Asked to rate how happy they are with their lives right now on a 1 (extremely unhappy) to 10 (extremely happy) scale, survey respondents provide an average rating of just 6.5. Just over half suggest that they are highly satisfied with the way things are going for them (54% rate a 7 or above), while two in ten (20%) place themselves on the low end of the scale, a 4 or less.**
  - Presumably more established and experienced, Americans age 55 or older provide a higher mean rating for their overall level of happiness – a 6.9 compared to the 6.2 average among those ages 25 to 34 and the 6.3 among those 35 to 54.
  - Although the vast majority disagree with the earlier statement that “money can buy happiness,” mean ratings for happiness increase with household income. Those who earn \$100,000 or more say they are a 7.6 on the happiness scale, compared to the 5.5 measured among those with incomes below \$25,000.
  - Married respondents also offer an above-average rating (7.0 v. 5.8 among the unmarried).
- **More importantly, Americans are not as happy as they thought they would be. Five years ago, the average American believed that he or she would be a 7.3 on this happiness scale, significantly higher than their current 6.5. In fact, on average, Americans’ happiness has not increased at all over the past five years. They are precisely on par with how happy they were five years ago – a mean of 6.5 – and comparable to where they were just one year ago – a mean of 6.2.**
- **Still, most are maintaining a positive outlook. Survey respondents suggest that they will achieve the level of happiness they predicted for themselves five years ago. The average American expects that their level of happiness will warrant a rating of 7.3 just one year from now and two-thirds (65%) predict that they will soon be a 7 or above on the happiness scale.**
- **There is even greater optimism when looking a little farther into the future. Five years from now, Americans believe they will be significantly more satisfied with their lives. When asked to rate how happy they feel they will be with their lives in 2013, the average rating rises to 7.9 and nearly three out of four (72%) expect their happiness rating will be a 7 or above.**
  - Today’s younger adults also offer above-average ratings for future happiness. Those ages 25 to 34 believe that in 2010 they will be a 7.6 on the happiness scale (compared to 7.1 for those ages 35 to 54 and 7.3 for those 55 or older). By 2013, these young adults expect they will be an 8.4, significantly higher than those who are older (7.8 and 7.7).
  - Women express greater optimism. On average, women offer higher ratings than men for how happy they expect to be in the coming year (7.5 women v. 7.0 men) and in the next five years (8.1 v. 7.7).

# Happiness and financial preparedness are linked.

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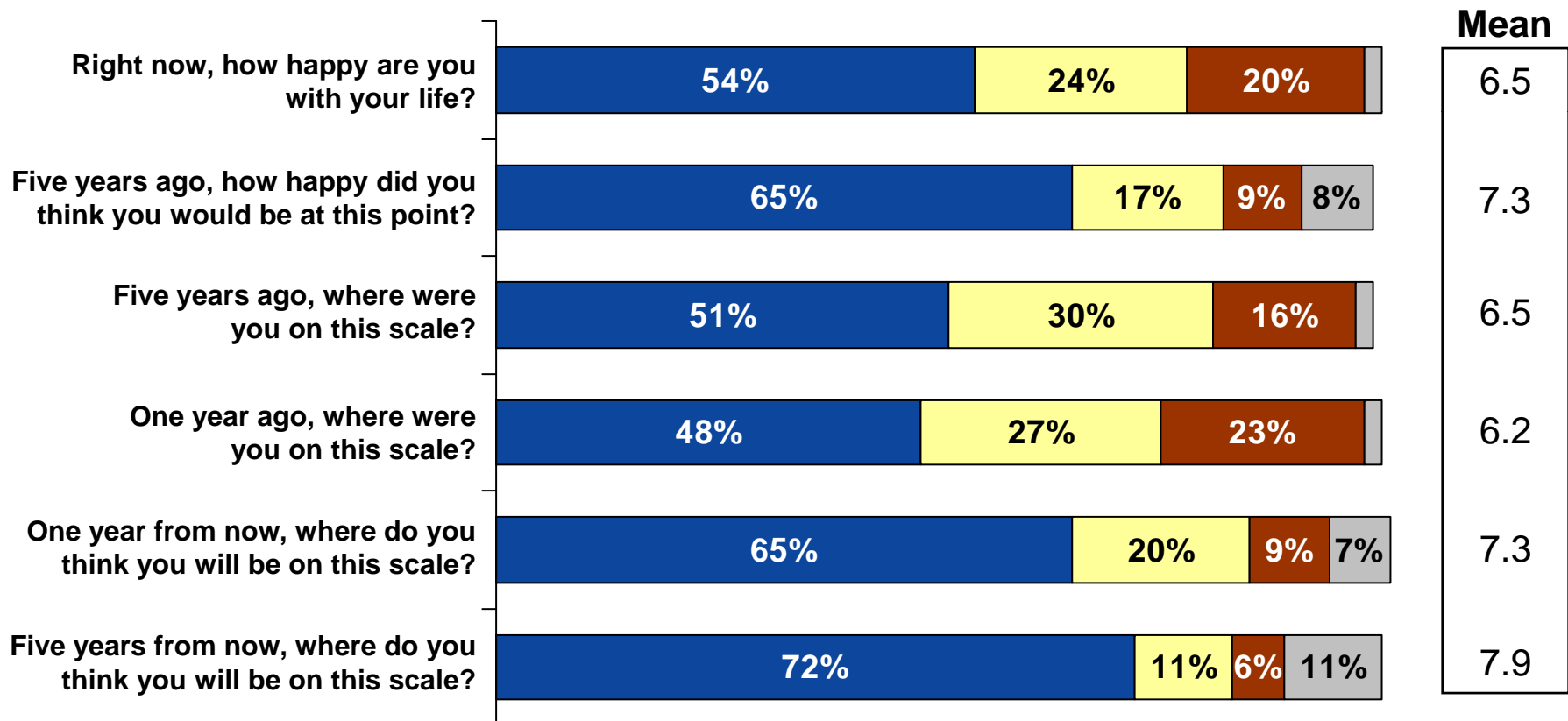
- **Whether or not respondents believe that money can buy happiness, the data suggests that feelings of financial preparedness can contribute to how highly one rates their current level of happiness. Americans who say that the phrase “being financially prepared for the future” describes them at least somewhat well provide a significantly higher average rating (a 7.8) for how happy they are with their lives, compared to those who feel the phrase does not describe them well (a 5.4).**
- **It follows then that those who feel they are doing well when it comes to financial readiness are also more optimistic about their future happiness. Financially prepared Americans rate themselves higher for how happy they expect to be a year from now (mean of 8.1 v. 6.7 among those who do not feel prepared) and five years from now (mean of 8.5 v. 7.5).**

# On average, Americans are not as happy as they *thought* they would be.

Please answer the following questions on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means “being extremely unhappy with one’s life” and 10 means “being extremely happy with one’s life”?

(n=1,000)

■ Happy (Rated 7 to 10) ■ Rated 5 or 6 ■ Unhappy (Rated 1 to 4) ■ Not sure



# Most feel they are just as happy as their peers and their parents.

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- **Despite just moderate ratings for their current level of happiness, most Americans don't feel behind. Actually, they feel they are right on target compared to others their age. Identical to the score they assigned to themselves, the average American believes that "most people their age" are a 6.5 on a happiness scale of 1 to 10.**
- **Based on their mean ratings, it also appears that most feel they are on track compared to where their parents were at their age. The average American believes that, when they were their age, their parents were a 6.7 in terms of how happy they were with their lives. This is statistically comparable to the 6.5 mean rating assigned to respondents' current level of happiness.**
  - Interestingly, the evaluation that one is on par with others their age and with where their parents were when they were their age is not noticeably influenced by the age of the respondent.
- **In keeping with respondents' general sense of optimism and good things to come, especially in the long-term, most anticipate that when their children are their age they will be happier. On average, Americans expect that their children will be a 7.7 on the happiness scale by the time they become their parents age.**

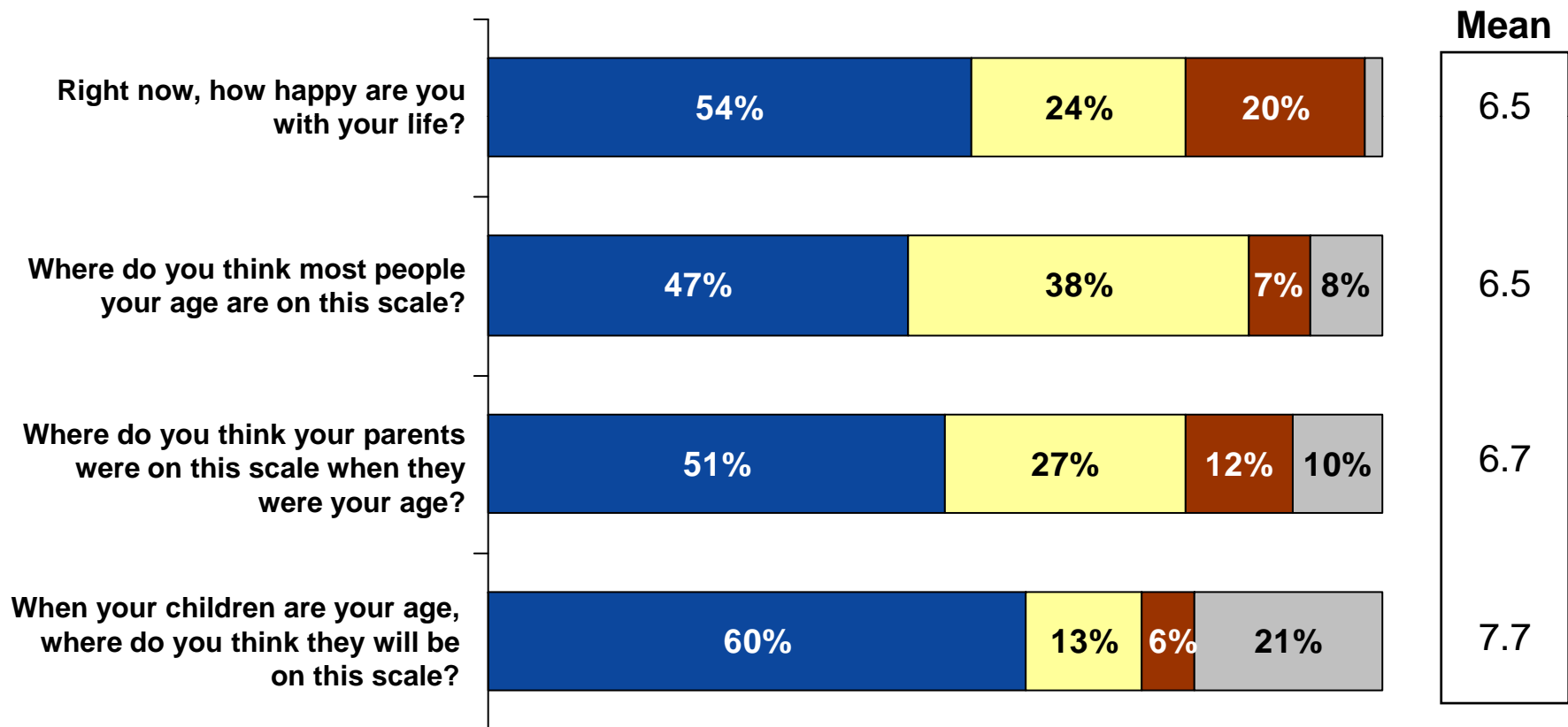


# Respondents feel that their level of happiness is on par with others.

Please answer the following questions on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means “being extremely unhappy with one’s life” and 10 means “being extremely happy with one’s life”?

(n=1,000)

■ Happy (Rated 7 to 10) ■ Rated 5 or 6 ■ Unhappy (Rated 1 to 4) ■ Not sure

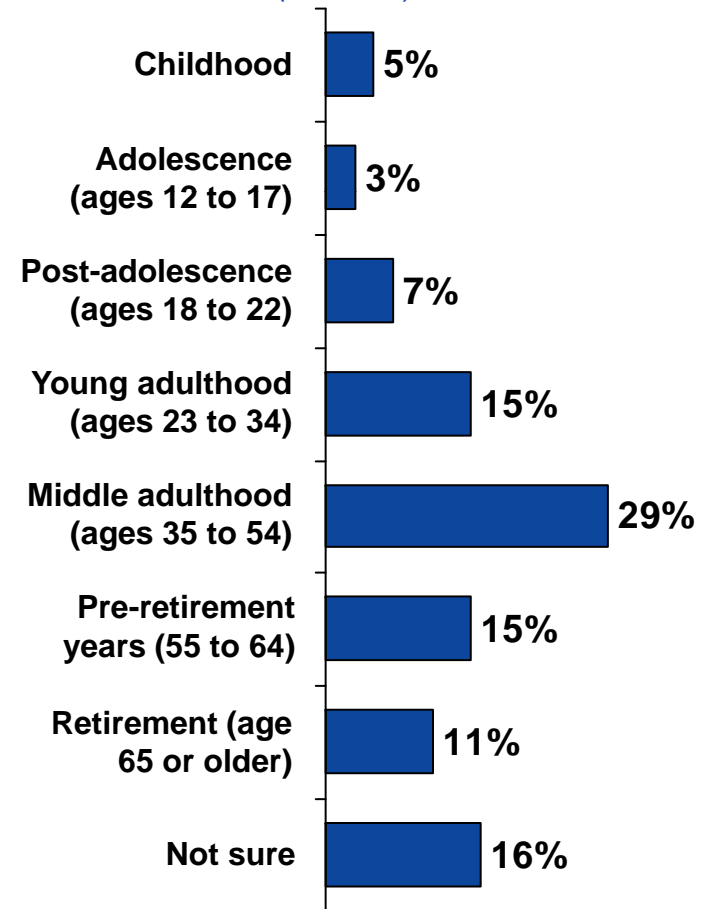


# Middle adulthood is more likely to be seen as the “golden years.”

- **Three in ten Americans (29%) believe that middle adulthood (ages 35 to 54) will ending up being the best stage of their life, twice as many as cite any other life stage.**
  - Interestingly, those who are currently between the ages of 25 and 34 (41%) are particularly likely to think middle adulthood will be the best stage of their life, compared to those who are already in this stage of life (28% age 35-54) and those who have passed it (24% age 55+).
- **Half as many feel that young adulthood (15%) or pre-retirement (15%) will be their best time of life.**
  - Current young adults (22% of respondents under the age of 35) are more likely to cite their own life stage as best, compared to only 13% of those who are older.
  - Nearly two in ten respondents age 35 or older (18%) think that their pre-retirement years will wind up being the best time, compared to only 3% of their younger counterparts.
  - Americans with incomes of \$75,000 or more (23%) are nearly twice as likely to say that the pre-retirement years are the best life stage, compared to their counterparts (12% <\$75k).
- **Interestingly, respondents’ happiness with their current lives affects which life stage they think is best. Those unhappy with their current life are more likely to look backwards to better times, while those happier with their current life tend to look forward to the future.**
- **The beginning and end stages of life, including childhood (5%), adolescence (3%), post-adolescence (7%), and retirement (11%) are less likely to be seen as great life stages.**
  - Those with assets totaling \$200,000 or more (20%) and those who are retired (27%) are more likely to cite retirement as the best stage of their life, compared to their counterparts (9% and 6%, respectively).

*Thinking about your whole life – past, present, and future – what do you think the best stage of your life will end up being?*

(n=1,000)

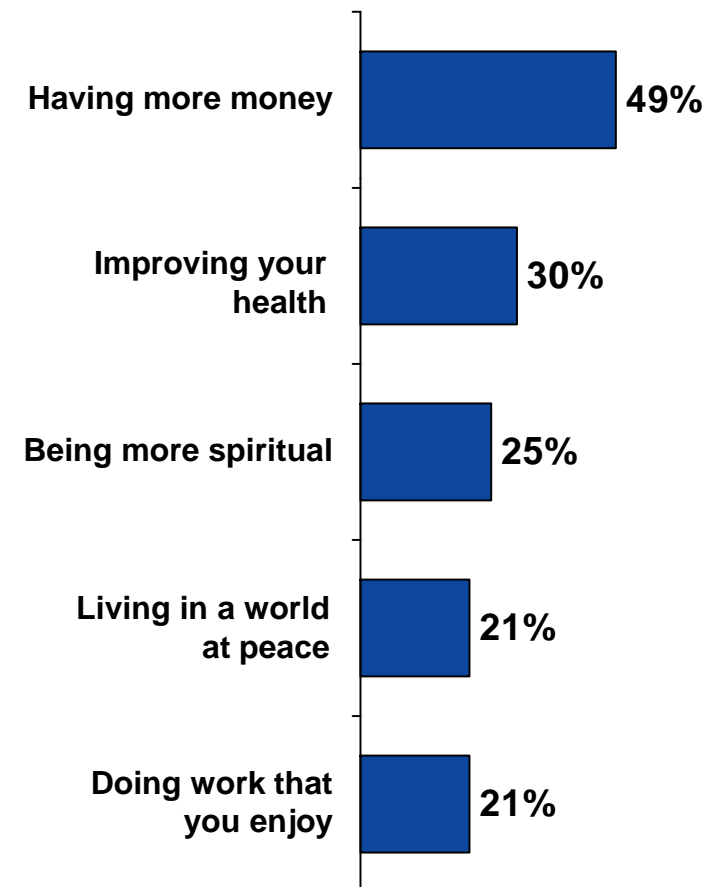


# Although most do not believe it will bring them happiness, more money would help.

- **Even though earlier findings suggest that most Americans do not believe that money can buy happiness, many seem to believe it can help. Half (49%) say that more money would help improve their lives. Given the current economic climate, this finding is not too surprising.**
  - Expectedly, those who earn less money (53% <\$75k) are particularly likely to feel having more money would help them (compared to 40% \$75K+).
  - Moreover, those who are currently unhappy with their lives (64%) are more apt to cite money as something that would improve their situations than their counterparts (45%).
- **Others look to improve their health and mental well-being. While three in ten (30%) would like to have better physical health, others would like to improve their mental well-being by becoming more spiritual (25%) or doing work that they enjoy (21%).**
  - Improved health is cited two times more often by older respondents (41% age 55+) than by younger ones (24%).
  - Those with at least a college education (28%) are more likely than those who are less educated (19%) to want to find work that they enjoy.
  - Women (29%) are slightly more likely than men (22%) to say that being more spiritual would improve their life the most.
- **Some think more globally. Two in ten (21%) believe that living in a world at peace would improve their own life.**
  - Women (25%) and older respondents (33% age 55+) are more likely than their counterparts (18% and 15%, respectively) to cite this big-picture goal as something that would make the biggest improvement in their life.

*From the list below, please select the three things that you feel would improve your life the most.*

*(n=1,000)*

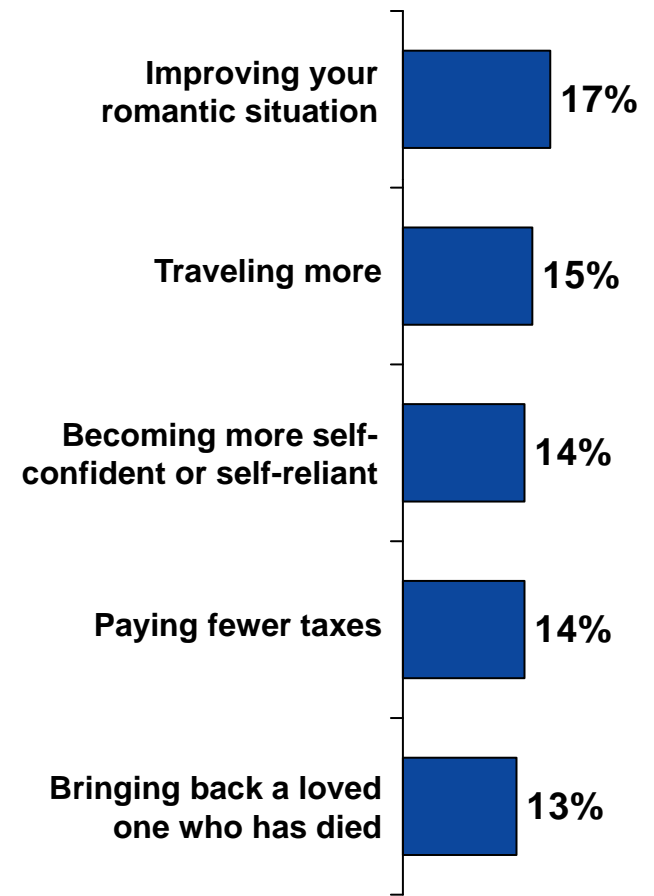


# Some feel that love and romance will improve their lives the most.

- **Roughly one in six (17%) hope for a little more romance in their lives.**
  - Interestingly, men (20%) are more likely than women (15%) to say improving their romantic situation would improve their overall well-being.
  - Also, those who have not yet tied the knot (26%) are more likely than those who have (12%) to say they would like to see their romantic situation improve.
- **While one in seven (15%) believe that spending money on travel would improve their life the most, a similar share (14%) are hoping to keep more of their money by paying fewer taxes.**
  - Americans with assets of \$50,000 or more (21%) are twice as likely as those with fewer assets (10%, <\$50k) to part with some of their money in order to travel more.
  - Men (17%) and married respondents (16%) are both more likely than their counterparts (11% and 10%, respectively) to say paying fewer taxes would make the greatest impact on their life.
- **Some focus on self-esteem. One in seven Americans (14%) feel that becoming more self-confident or self-reliant would help their lives the most.**
  - Women (19%) are more likely than men (10%) to say they would like to become more self-confident or self-reliant.
- **Others look backward, as 13% say bringing back a loved one who has died would make the greatest positive impact.**

*From the list below, please select the three things that you feel would improve your life the most.*

*(n=1,000)*

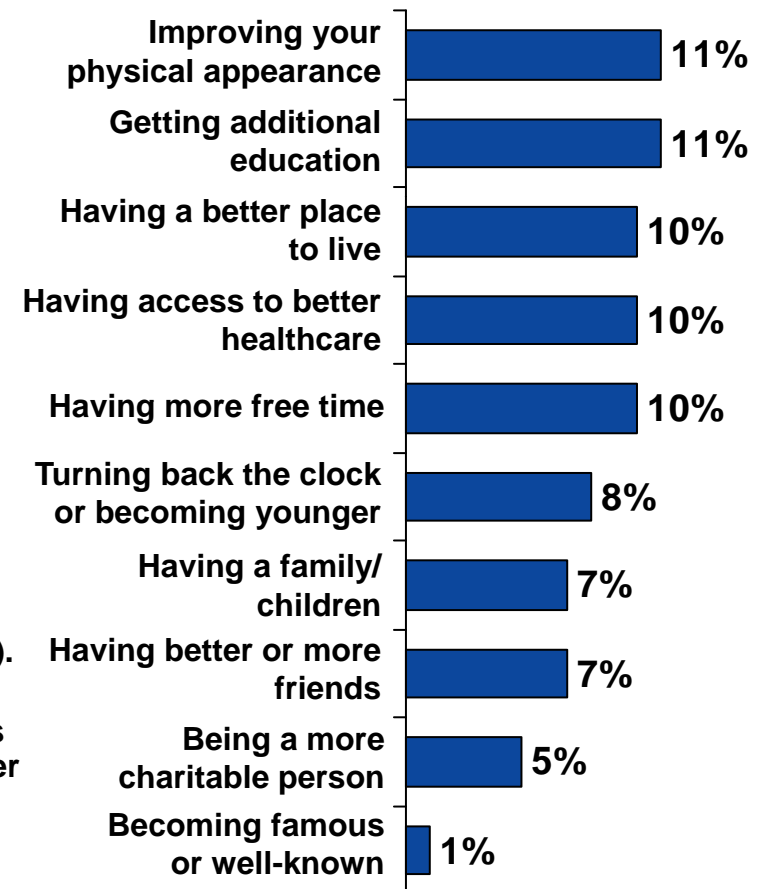


# A few focus on self-improvement – physically, socially and intellectually.

- Some (11%) feel that altering their appearance would make their lives better, though fewer (8%) think that turning back the clock and being younger would be a great improvement.
  - Although they still have the benefit of youth, Americans under age 35 (18%) are more likely than older Americans (9%) to say a change in appearance would have the greatest impact on their life.
  - Women (14%) are also especially likely to feel improving their physical appearance could make their lives better (compared to 8% males).
- Eleven percent believe that getting additional education could help better their lives. Men (13%) are particularly likely to mention this (compared to 8% women).
- Others continue to focus on home and family life. Ten percent feel that having a better place to live would improve their life. Slightly fewer (7%) say that having a family would be a welcome enhancement.
  - Those making under \$75,000 (12%) are more likely to cite having a better place to live (compared to 6% \$75k+).
- Despite the importance placed on being healthy, surprisingly few (10%) believe that access to better healthcare would improve their lives. However, the potential impact of access to healthcare is most noticeable among those earning less than \$25,000 (17% v. 9% \$25k+).
- Very few seek to be more social or charitable. Fewer than one in ten (7%) feel that having more or better friends would improve their lives and just 5% say being more charitable would help them. On the other hand, some would like more free time (10%) for such activities.
- Only 1% suggests that fame and notoriety would greatly enhance their lives.

*From the list below, please select the three things that you feel would improve your life the most.*

*Bottom 10 Responses (n=1,000)*



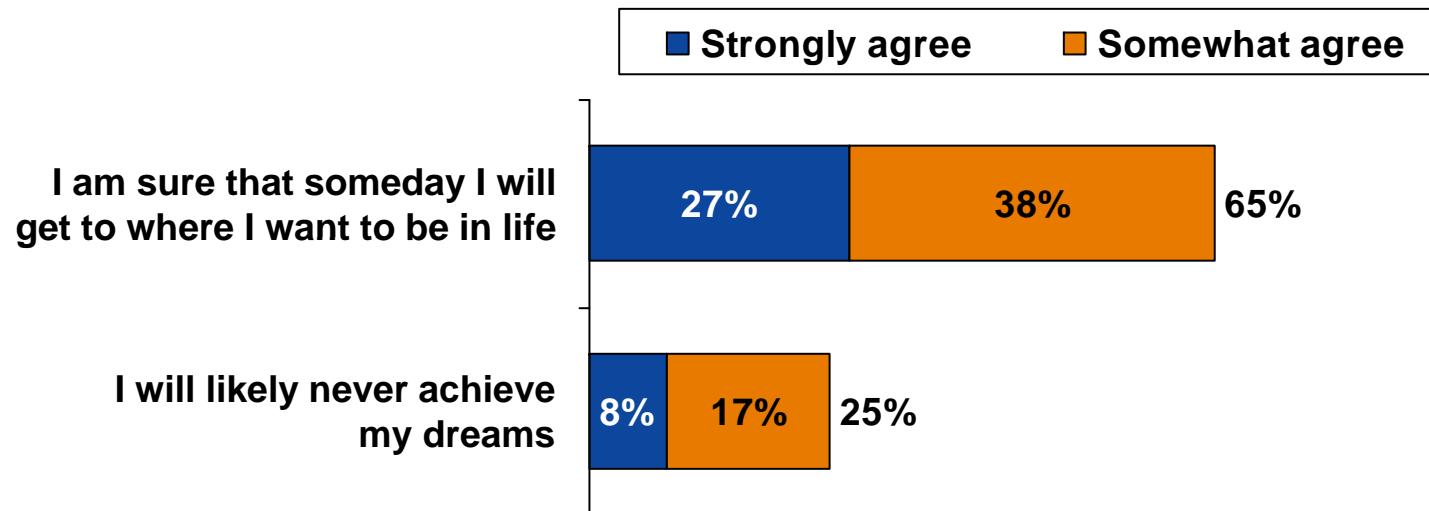
# Goals For The Future

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# Most Americans are optimistic that they will eventually achieve their dreams.

- **Two-thirds of respondents (65%) agree with the idea that someday they will get to where they want to be in life, including one-quarter (27%) who strongly agree. Accordingly, half (50%) disagree with the pessimistic sentiment that that they are unlikely to achieve their dreams.**
  - The youngest survey respondents are most optimistic about someday getting to where they want to be in life. Three-quarters of Americans age 25 to 34 (74%) agree with this statement, compared with only two-thirds (66%) of 35- to 54-year olds and even fewer (58%) of those age 55 or older.
  - Respondents' optimism about achieving their goals increases with income. Those earning incomes of \$50,000 or more (73%) are significantly more likely to believe they will achieve their dreams than those who earn less (61%).
  - Americans who have set goals for the future (76%) as well as those who are happy with their current life (75%) are twice as likely as their counterparts to be optimistic about achieving their goals in the future (50% and 54%, respectively).

*Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about yourself and others. (n=1,000)*

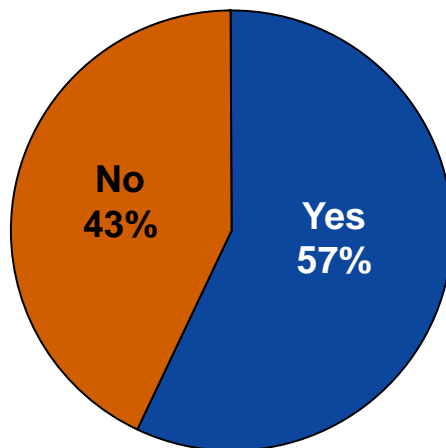


# A majority have specific goals for the future and expect to achieve them.

- **The majority of Americans are goal-oriented. Nearly six in ten (57%) report that they have set specific goals for the next five to ten years.**
  - Those who feel that financial security is at least somewhat important (59%) are twice as likely to have set goals for the future, compared to those who feel financial security is less important (27%).
  - Moreover, younger respondents, ages 25 to 34 (68%), and those earning higher incomes (66% \$50k+) are also more likely to have set goals for the future than their counterparts (54% age 35+, 49% <\$50k).
- **Of those who have specific goals, a remarkable nine in ten (92%) feel at least somewhat confident they will achieve their goals. This includes six in ten (61%) who describe themselves as very or extremely confident.**
  - In addition to being more likely to set goals, younger respondents (67% age 25-34) are also more likely to be confident that they will achieve them (compared to 59% age 35+).

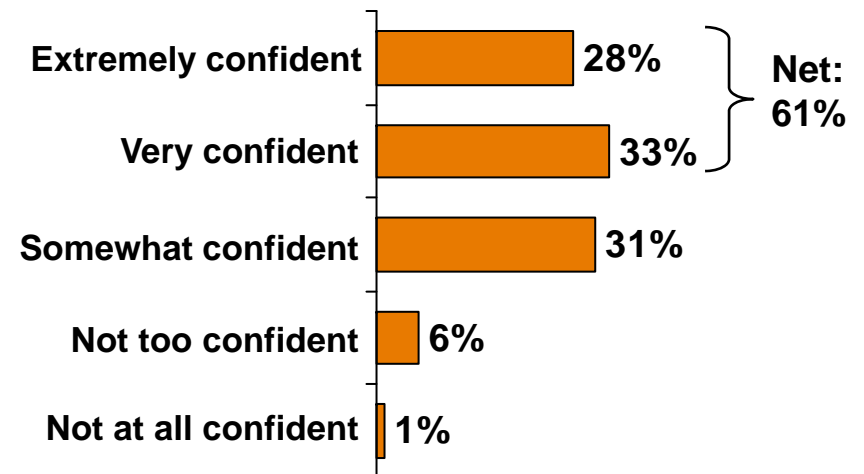
*Do you have specific goals for the next five to ten years?*

*(n=1,000)*



*In general, how confident are you that you will be able to achieve your goals over the next five to ten years?*

*Among those with goals (n=567)*



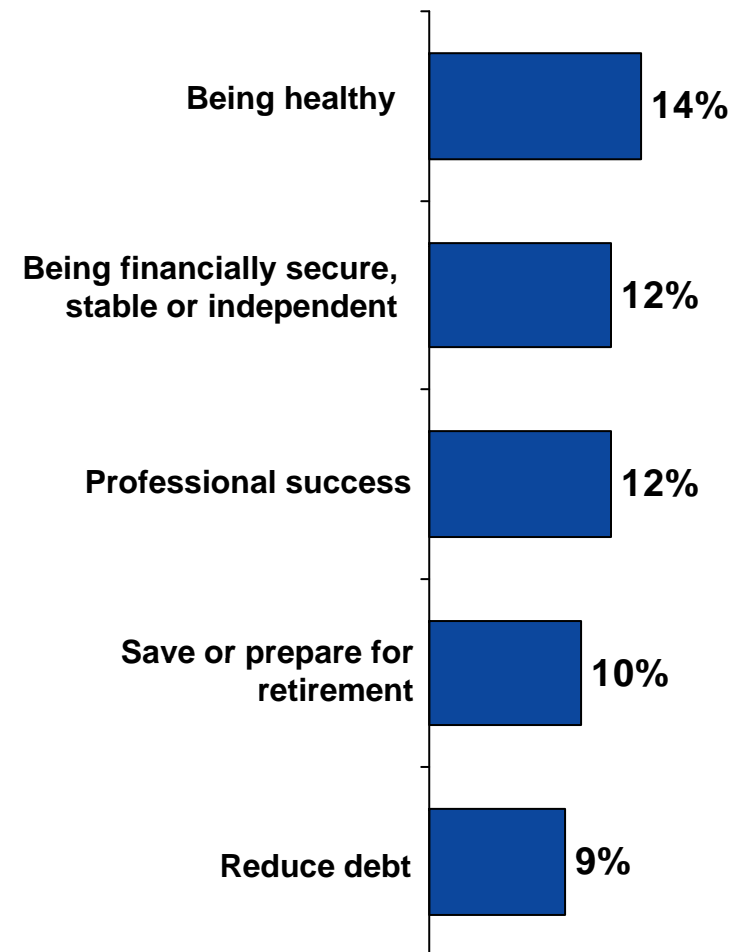


# Financial issues top the list of priority goals.

- **Four of the top five priority goals reported deal with financial matters. Twelve percent indicate their top goal is to become financially secure, and similar shares indicate they aspire to save more for retirement (10%) or to reduce their level of debt (9%).**
  - Not surprisingly, likelihood of citing saving for retirement as a top goal increases with age. Only one percent of those age 25 to 34 view retirement savings as a top goal, compared to nine percent of those ages 35 to 54 and nearly two in ten (19%) of those age 55 or over.
  - Those who mainly rely on themselves to make financial decisions (10%) are more likely to cite reducing debt as a top priority than those who rely more heavily on a financial professional (2%).
- **Achieving professional success – receiving a raise, earning a promotion or changing jobs (12%) – is also among the top mentions.**
  - Younger respondents (19% age 25-34) are more likely than older respondents (10%) to indicate that their top goal is professional success.
  - Those with incomes below \$25,000 (23%) are more likely to focus on professional success as a top goal (compared to 11% \$25K+).
- **Still, health tops the list as the number one goal (14%).**
  - Women (17%) are more likely than men (11%) to name health as their priority goal.
  - As might be expected, Americans age 55 or older (25%) are more than twice as likely as those who are younger (9%) to call being healthy their top goal.

*What is your top priority goal right now?*

*Top Mentions (n=567)*

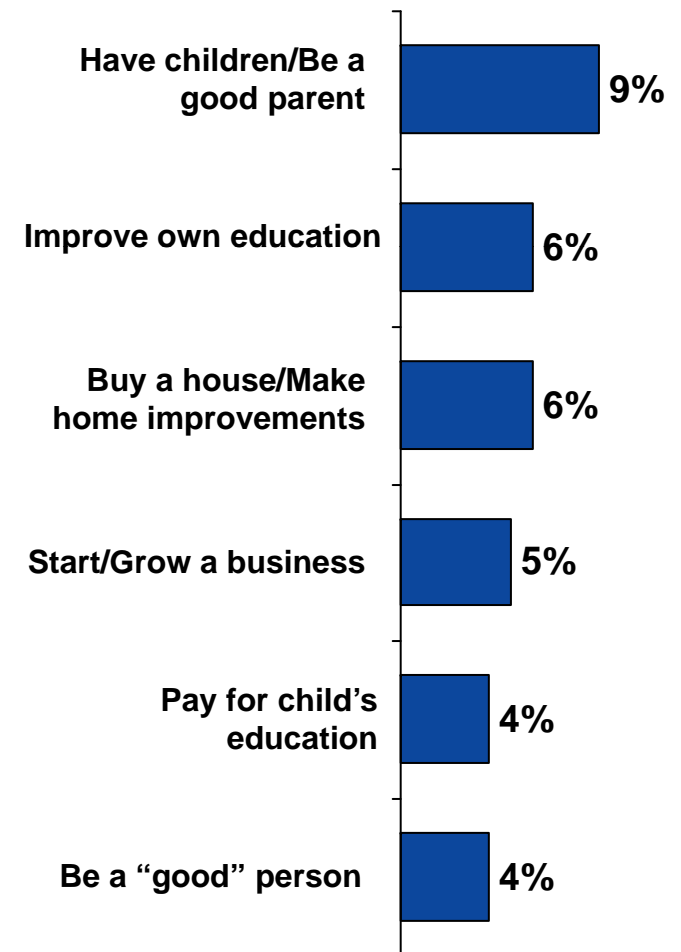


# Starting a family and being a good parent is a top priority for some.

- For some, home and family-oriented goals are important too. One in ten (9%) say having children or being a good parent is their top goal, while 4% say paying for a child's education tops their list. Six percent aim to buy a house or make improvements to their existing home.
  - Women (14%) are more than three times as likely as men (4%) to say having children or being a good parent is their top goal.
  - Given their time of life, it is not surprising that younger respondents (15% age 25-34) are more inclined to name starting a family and being parent as their number one objective (compared to 7% age 35+).
- A few set goals to improve themselves, whether through improving their own education (6%) or working to become a “good” person (4%).
  - Those under the age of 55 (9%) are more likely to say they would like to improve their education, compared to their older counterparts (1%).
- Finally, one in twenty (5%) report that their top goal is to start a business or expand their own business.

*What is your top priority goal right now?*

*Other Mentions (n=567)*



# Virtually all agree that they control their own destiny.

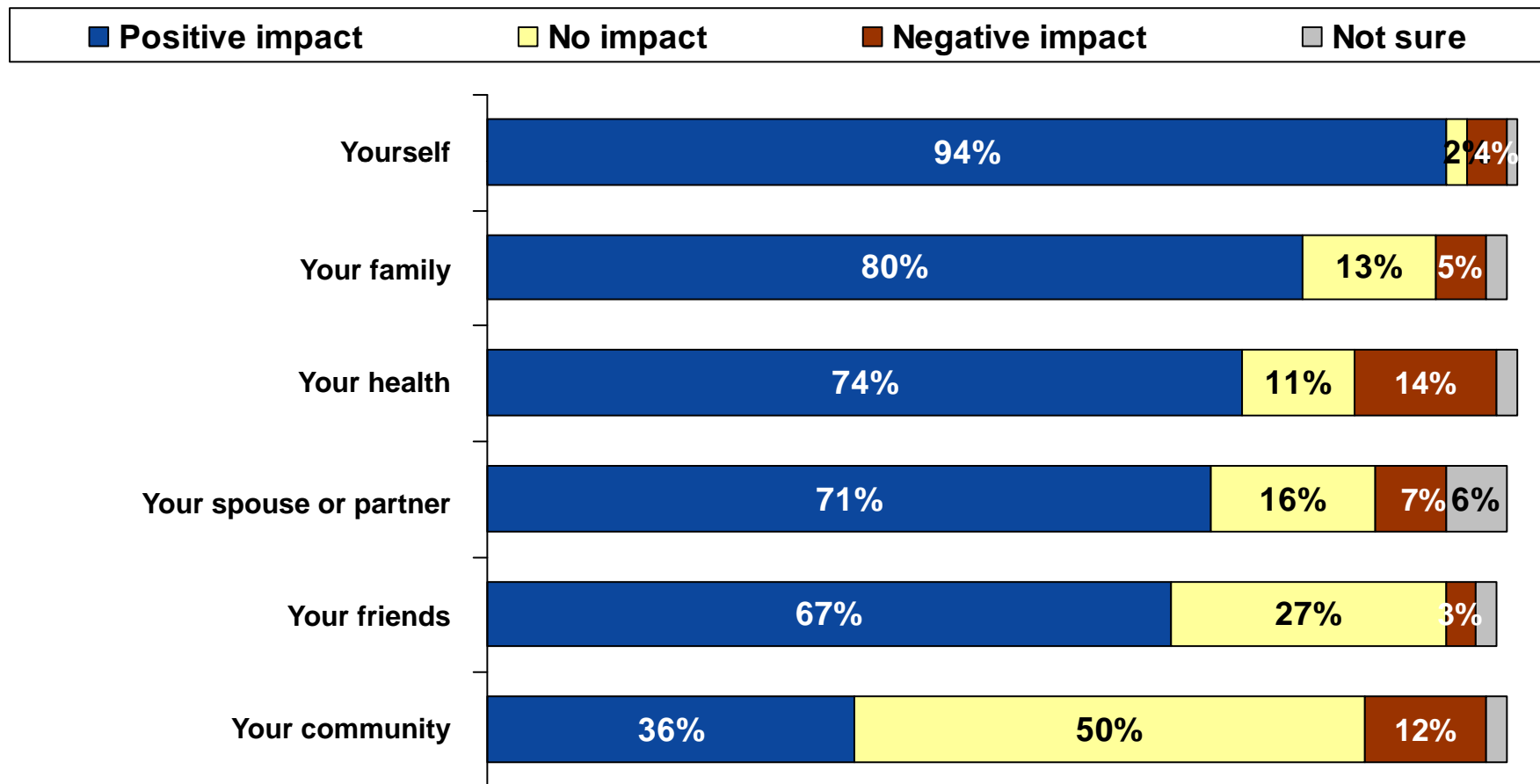
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- **Nearly all Americans feel empowered to make positive changes for themselves. More than nine out of ten (94%) believe that they have the greatest positive impact on their ability to reach their goals.**
- **Close behind, the company we keep – including family (80%), spouses or partners (71%), and friends (67%) – also play a major role in helping us to reach our goals.**
- **Still, three-quarters (74%) recognize that good health is an important factor in achieving their goals.**
  - Those with household assets totaling \$100,000 or more (81%) are more likely to view their health as having a positive impact on achieving their goals, compared to those with fewer assets (68% <\$100K).
- **Fewer (36%) feel strongly about the role their community at large plays, with half (50%) saying it has no impact at all.**
  - Perhaps because of their greater involvement in schools and extracurricular activities, parents (41%) are twice as likely to value the community's role in their ability to reach their goals (compared to 24% who do not have children).
  - Similarly, women (43%) are more likely than men (29%) to believe that their community has a positive impact on their ability to achieve their goals.

# Those close to us – family and friends – also play a positive role.

*In general, what sort of impact do you feel the following people and things have on your ability to reach your goals?*

(n=567)



# Time and money are key to achieving goals. The economy is seen as a hindrance.

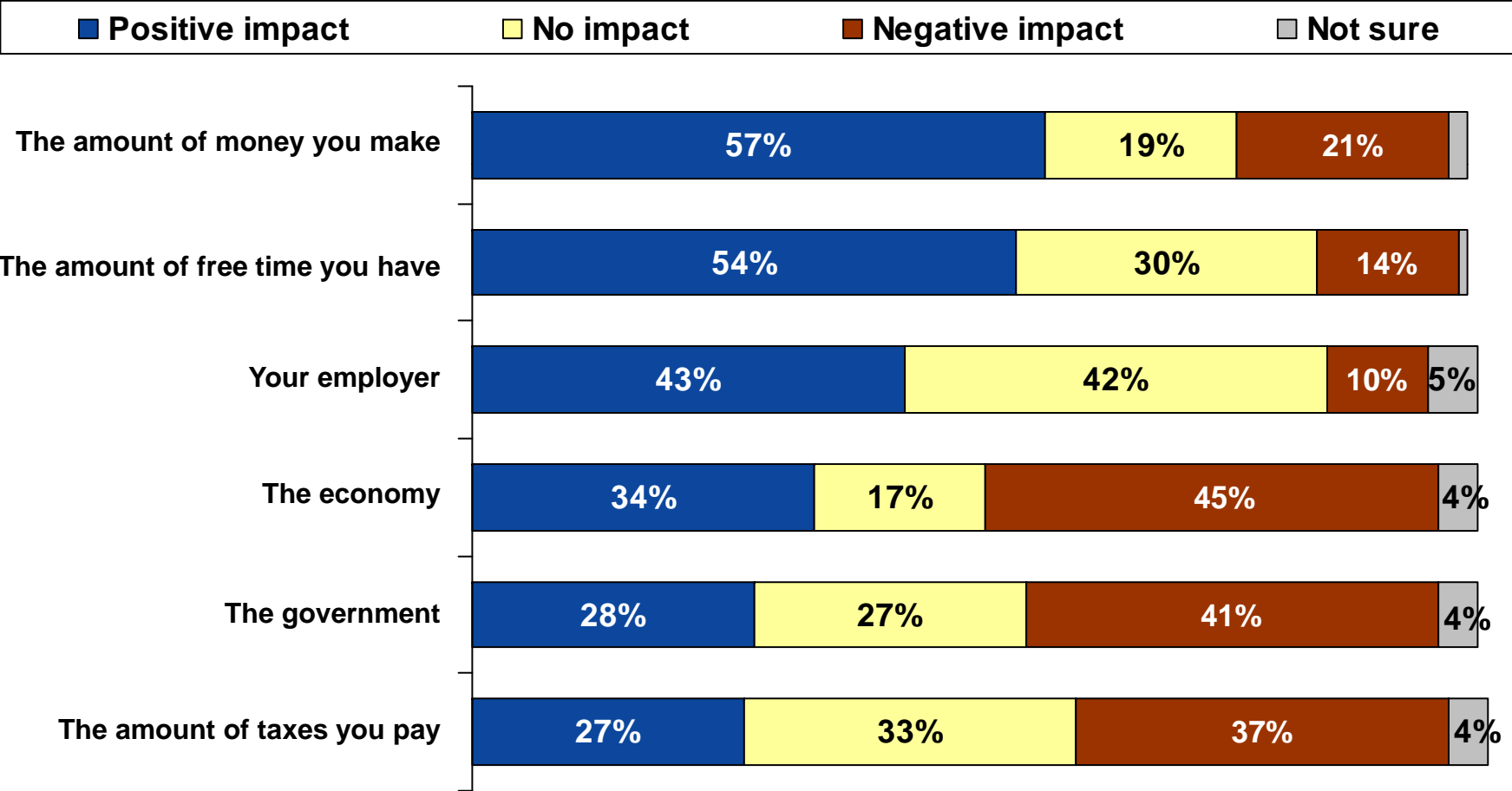
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- **Over half of respondents indicate that the amount of money they make (57%) or the amount of free time they have (54%) have a positive impact on their ability to achieve their goals.**
  - Men (64%) are more likely than women (51%) to feel the amount of money they make has a positive impact on their ability to reach their goals.
- **Related to earnings, more than four in ten (43%) feel their employer has a positive influence on their future goals. However, a similar share (42%) see their employer as having no impact at all.**
  - Since many are presumably still in the early stages of their careers, it comes as no surprise that Americans under age 55 (51%) are more likely than their older counterparts (25% age 55+) to feel their employer has a positive impact on their ability to accomplish their goals.
  - Survey respondents with at least a college education (52%) are more likely to say their employer has a positive impact than those with less education (40%).
- **Given its current state, it is understandable that many Americans (45%) would feel that the economy is having a negative influence on their ability to reach their objectives.**
  - Men (38%) are more likely than women (29%) to say that the economy has a positive impact on their ability to achieve their goals.
- **Additionally, despite the recent inauguration of a new President and a changing administration, the government is also seen as being a hindrance rather than a help. Four in ten (41%) feel the government has a negative impact on their ability to achieve their goals.**
- **Similarly, more than one-third (37%) feel that the amount of taxes they have to pay is a negative force.**
  - Parents are more likely than those who do not have children to say that the government (31% v. 21%) and the amount of taxes they pay (29% v. 19%) have a positive impact. At the same time, married respondents (42%) are more likely to say that the amount of taxes they pay has a negative impact compared to those who are not married (30%).
  - College graduates (44%) are more apt to say the amount of taxes they pay has a negative impact on their ability to reach goals (compared to 35% with less education).

# The government is widely seen as having a negative impact.

*In general, what sort of impact do you feel the following people and things have on your ability to reach your goals?*

(n=567)



# Profile of Respondents

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# Demographics

## Gender (n=1,000)

Male	50%
Female	50

## Age (n=1,000)

25 to 34	19%
35 to 54	47
55 or older	34
Mean	48.9

## Marital Status (n=1,000)

Married	60%
Single, never married	14
Divorced or separated	13
Living with partner	8
Widowed	4
Prefer not to answer	1

## Education (n=1,000)

Some high school or less	2%
High school graduate	24
Some college, trade/business school	52
Bachelors degree	12
Post-graduate work or more	9
Prefer not to answer	1

## Number of Children (n=1,000)

None	29%
1 to 2	42
3 to 4	23
5 or more	5
Prefer not to answer	1

## Own Primary Residence (n=1,000)

Yes	68%
No	32



# Demographics

<b>Employment Status</b>	(n=1,000)	<b>Primary Occupation (cont.)</b>	(n=525)
Employed full-time	37%	Administrative/Clerical	6
Employed part-time	8	Nurse	5
Self-employed	8	Manufacturing	4
Retired	22	Financial Professional (advisor, CPA, stock broker, etc.)	3
Unemployed	13	Engineer/Scientist	3
Homemaker/Stay-at-home parent	8	Transportation	3
Other	3	Doctor/Dentist/Psychiatrist	3
Prefer not answer	2	Corporate Executive (CEO, VP, etc.)	2
		Marketing/Advertising	2
<b>Primary Occupation</b>	(n=525)	Construction/Remodeling	1
Sales/Retail	12%	Food Services	1
Manager/Supervisor	12	Arts/Entertainment/Hospitality	1
Teacher/Educator	7	Attorney/Lawyer	1
Computer Specialist/Programmer/ Systems Analyst	7	Economist/Mathematician	<0.5
Business Owner	7	Other	15
Government Employee	6	Prefer not to answer	<0.5

# Demographics

## Household Financial Assets (n=1,000)

Less than \$50,000	48%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	13
\$100,000 to \$149,999	8
\$150,000 to \$199,999	4
\$200,000 to \$249,999	2
\$250,000 to \$299,999	2
\$300,000 to \$399,999	2
\$400,000 to \$499,999	2
\$500,000 to \$999,999	3
\$1 million or more	3
Not sure	3
Prefer not to answer	9

## Annual Household Income (n=1,000)

Less than \$25,000	17%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	29
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12
\$100,000 to \$149,999	9
\$150,000 or more	5
Not sure	1
Prefer not to answer	6

## Region (n=1,000)

South	35%
Midwest	27
Northeast	19
West	18