



CBS NEWS POLL
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WHERE AMERICA STANDS: THE AMERICAN FAMILY
December 17 - 22, 2009

While most married Americans think their marriage is at least as good as that of their parents', two-thirds of Americans overall say they know someone who has been unfaithful to their spouse. When a marriage isn't working out, most Americans favor divorce and think it's better for children to grow up with divorced parents rather than ones who always fight.

American parents value their family time: though most working parents feel torn between their job and their family, most also think they are spending the right amount of time doing family activities. And the hectic nature of the modern world hasn't impinged too much on families eating dinner together - three in four say they do so most of the time.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE IN AMERICA

Most married Americans are satisfied with their marriage, at least when they compare it to their parents'. A majority of 55% thinks their marriage is better than that of their parents, while another four in 10 thinks it the same. Just 3% think their marriage is worse than their parents'.

HOW DOES YOUR MARRIAGE COMPARE WITH YOUR PARENTS'?

(Among married Americans)

Better	55%
Worse	3
About the same	41

In spite of this, nearly two-thirds of all Americans know someone who has been unfaithful to their spouse. 63% say they know someone, while 31% say they do not.

**DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO HAS
BEEN UNFAITHFUL TO THEIR SPOUSE?**

Yes	63%
No	31

Some people are more likely to know an unfaithful spouse than others. Americans with higher incomes and education levels are more likely to know someone who has cheated on their spouse than Americans with lower incomes and less education, as are those who live in the West and South. Americans who are divorced or separated are also more likely to know someone who has cheated on their spouse than Americans overall.

**DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO HAS
BEEN UNFAITHFUL TO THEIR SPOUSE?**

	Yes	No
Total	63%	31
Men	65%	31
Women	62%	32
Income		
Under \$30,000	59%	34
\$30K - \$75K	65%	31
Over \$75,000	70%	26
Education		
High school or less	55%	37
Some college/college grads	69%	27
Post graduates	72%	24
Northeast	56%	32
Midwest	59%	37
South	66%	32
West	72%	26
Never married	56%	38
Married	64%	30
Divorced/Separated	77%	19

Overall, Americans favor divorce over staying together if a marriage isn't working out, though by a lesser margin than they did fifteen years ago. 46% favor divorce in such circumstances while 38% oppose - in 1995 a majority of 51% favored divorce.

**DO YOU FAVOR OR OPPOSE DIVORCE
IF A MARRIAGE ISN'T WORKING OUT?**

	Now	5/1995
Favor	46%	51%
Oppose	38	34
Depends (vol.)	13	11

Catholics and evangelical Christians tend to oppose divorce even if the marriage isn't working out. Americans who are currently married are divided on the subject, while a majority of those who are separated or divorced favor divorce under such circumstances.

And when it comes to what's better for kids growing up, Americans stand behind divorce as a better option than parents staying together and fighting all the time. Seven in 10 say it is better for kids to grow up with divorced parents in this case, as do six in 10 married parents.

WHICH IS BETTER FOR KIDS GROWING UP?

	All	Married parents
Married parents who fight	18%	18%
Divorced parents	69	62

Nevertheless, a majority of Americans thinks getting a divorce is too easy and should be made more difficult to obtain than it is now, while one in four Americans thinks getting a divorce should be made easier. These numbers are similar to those found in polls conducted by the University of Chicago over the past twenty years.

SHOULD DIVORCE BE EASIER OR MORE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN THAN IT IS NOW?

	Now	2/1998*	2/1989*
Easier	24%	23%	25%
More difficult	53	52	51
Stay as is (vol.)	14	19	18

*General Social Survey, University of Chicago

THE AMERICAN FAMILY: FINDING TIME

Most working parents feel torn at least some of the time between the demands of their jobs and wanting to spend more time with their families, and a third say they feel torn frequently. Just one in five parents who work say they feel torn between work and family life only rarely. There is little difference between working moms and dads in this regard.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU FEEL TORN BETWEEN THE JOB AND YOUR FAMILY?

(Among working parents with children under 18)

Frequently	33%
Sometimes	42
Rarely	22

Still, family activities are not what most parents would want to cut down on. When it comes to the amount of things their family has to do and the places they have to be, nearly two-thirds say it is the right amount. Again, moms and dads are equally likely to say so.

DOES YOUR FAMILY HAVE TOO MUCH TO DO?

(Among parents with children under 18)

	All	Moms	Dads
Too much to do	30%	30%	30%
Too little to do	4	3	5
Right amount	65	65	65

And when it comes to eating dinner together as a family, most parents say they do. Three in four parents say that in a typical week, their family eats dinner together most of the time, though more moms than dads say so.

HOW OFTEN DOES YOUR FAMILY EAT DINNER TOGETHER?

(Among parents with children under 18)

	All	Moms	Dads
Most of the time	74%	82%	66%
Some of the time	20	15	25
Hardly ever	5	3	8

When those families do eat dinner together, they are usually able to keep modern communication devices from disrupting the meal. Most parents say their family members never text, email, or talk on the cell phone during dinner. They are less successful about keeping television out of the dinner hour, however. More than half of parents say the television is turned on during dinner at least some of the time, including one in three parents who say it's always on during dinner.

WHEN EATING DINNER AS A FAMILY, HOW OFTEN...?

(Among parents with children under 18)

	Always	Sometimes/ Half the time	Rarely	Never
Is the television on?	33%	27	16	24
Do people text, Email, or use a cell phone?	5%	10	20	64

This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1048 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone December 17-22, 2009. Phone numbers were dialed from random digit dial samples of both standard land-line and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups is higher.

This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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 Where America Stands: The American Family
 December, 17-22 2009

q1-q55 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q55 If a marriage isn't working out, do you favor or oppose divorce as a solution?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **			May95a
	Total	*** GENDER ***		
	%	Men	Women	%
Favor	46	48	45	51
Oppose	38	39	37	34
Depends (vol.)	13	11	15	11
Don't know/No answer	3	2	3	4

q56 Should divorce in this country be easier or more difficult to obtain than it is now?

Easier	24	24	25
More difficult	53	54	52
Stay as is (vol.)	14	15	13
Don't know	9	7	10

q57 Which of these difficult family situations do you think is better for kids in the long run; kids growing up in a household where parents fight all the time but stay together, OR kids growing up with divorced parents?

Fighting together	18	25	12
Divorced	69	62	75
Don't know/No answer	13	13	13

q58 To the best of your knowledge, has anyone you know been unfaithful to their wife or husband?

Yes	63	65	62
No	31	31	32
Don't know/No answer	6	4	6

q59 Would you say that your marriage with your spouse is better, worse, or about the same as your parents' marriage?

	* MARRIED RESPONDENTS *			
Better	55	50	58	56
Worse	3	4	2	3
About the same	41	44	37	36
Don't know/No answer	1	2	3	5

q60 HELD FOR RELEASE

q61 When it comes to the amount of things your family has to do and places you have to be, how would you describe your family - does your family have too much to do, too little, or the right amount?

	***** PARENTS *****		
	*** GENDER ***		
	Total	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Too much	30	30	30
Too little	4	5	3
Right amount	65	65	65
DK/NA	1	0	2

q63 How often would you say you feel torn between the demands of your job and wanting to spend more time with your family--frequently, or sometimes, or rarely at all?

	* WORKING PARENTS *		
Frequently	33	34	32
Sometimes	42	42	43
Rarely	22	21	24
Does not apply (vol.)	3	3	1

q64 BLANK

q65 In a typical week, how often do you and everyone in your family living with you eat dinner at home together -- most of the time, only some of the time, or hardly ever?

	**** PARENTS ****		
Most of the time	74	66	82
Some of the time	20	25	15
Hardly ever	5	8	3
Depends (vol.)	0	1	0
DK/NA	1	0	0

q66 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q67 BLANK

q68 When you do eat dinners as a family, how often are people texting, emailing, or talking on a cell phone while at the table -- always, sometimes, about half the time, rarely, never?

Always	5	2	7
Sometimes	6	6	7
About half the time	4	8	1
Rarely	20	15	25
Never	64	68	61
Don't know	1	1	0

q69 When you do eat dinners as a family, how often is the television on -- always, sometimes, about half the time, rarely, never?

***** PARENTS *****
 *** GENDER ***

	Total	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Always	33	26	38
Sometimes	20	20	19
About half the time	7	7	7
Rarely	16	22	12
Never	24	24	24
Don't know	0	1	0

	<u>Unweighted</u>	<u>Weighted</u>	<u>Margin of error</u>
Total Respondents	1048		
Total Men	442	493	5 pts.
Total Women	606	555	4 pts.
Total Married Respondents	563	559	4 pts.
Total Parents (Children < 18)	254	354	6 pts.