

MARRIED WITH BENEFITS

COMMITMENT INVOLVES RISK, BUT ITS WORTH IT



The final step of making a commitment to marry does involve risk, it does require greater responsibility, but it must be taken to gain access to a greater sense of security and stability in the quality of your relationship. This is why research clearly establishes that there are larger percentages of couples who are married that describe their relationship as achieving high levels of romance, sexual enjoyment, and personal satisfaction than the percentage of couples who cohabit. For instance, in a 17-country study, marrieds rated their overall happiness significantly higher than unmarrieds or cohabiters. Marrieds reported higher levels of faithfulness, emotional and financial support, and higher earnings than singles or cohabiters. Researchers have found many other benefits married couples experience. Here are four:

BETTER HEALTH



Every country with health stats finds both married men and women live longer (mortality rates are 50 percent lower for married women and 250 percent lower for married men). They have lower rates of physical illness, depression and psychological distress, and are half as likely as singles to commit suicide. Compared to people of other marital statuses, married people have less stress, drink less alcohol, smoke less, and have the best health in normal daily activities.

BETTER SEX



Many people believe that marriage dampens the sex life. But married couples rate their sexual enjoyment higher than unmarried couples and have sex more frequently than singles (about 11% more marrieds state they are happy with their sex life than singles or cohabiters).

BETTER WEALTH



Some singles may have higher incomes, but on the whole, married couples accumulate more wealth than unmarried singles, divorced, and those who cohabit.

BETTER PARENTING OUTCOMES



A Swedish study of almost a million children found that children raised by single parents are more than twice as likely as those raised in two-parent homes to suffer from a serious psychiatric disorder, to commit or attempt suicide, to develop an alcohol addiction, and to engage in sex at earlier ages (similar findings to many studies conducted in the U.S.).

SOURCE:

Waite, L. & Gallagher, M. *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are happier, healthier, and better off financially.* New York: Doubleday, 2000. Camp, Dush, C.M. & Amato, P.R. (2005). *Consequences of relationship status and quality for subjective well-being.* *Journal of social and personal relationships*, 22, 607-627. Gunilla Ringback Weitoft, et al., "Mortality, Severe Morbidity and Injury in Children Living with Single Parents in Sweden: A Population-based Study," *The Lancet* 361 (January 25, 2003):289-295. Charlotte A. Schoenborn, "Marital Status and Health: United States, 1999-2002," *Advance Data from Vital and Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* (Number 351, December 15, 2004).