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## **New Poll Shows 75% of Women Think Marriage in U.S. is Weaker Than it Was 10 Years Ago**

*SheByShe Opinion Poll Reveals Women's Insights on Marriage; Divorce Rate Cited as #1 Reason for Weaker Views*

**Burlingame, CA – May 28, 2014 –** SheByShe, the leading women's opinion site, recently asked women to share their opinions and stories about the current state of marriage in the U.S. Six hundred and forty-one women participated in the study. With roughly 2.1 million marriages occurring annually in the U.S., and about 875 thousand divorces, marriage is a dynamic, rapidly changing institution. In the survey, a whopping 75 percent of the participating women said they think the U.S. institution of marriage is weaker than it was 10 years ago. The current divorce rate was cited as the number one reason why these women believe it is weaker. As one woman said, "Marriage is looked at like buying a new pair of shoes. When you are done with them, you get a new pair."

Ten percent of the women polled think that marriage in the U.S. is stronger than it was 10 years ago, mostly because of the emerging legality of same sex marriages. Only five percent of respondents cited same sex legality as a reason for the weakening of marriage as an institution, suggesting wide-spread acceptance.

"The opinions expressed by these women reflect the rapidly changing dynamics of marriage. The old 'norms', such as being anchored by a religion ceremony, are giving way to a new modernity," said Julie de Azevedo Hanks, licensed clinical social worker and

author. “The survey is also notable in that it reinforces our understanding of the disruptive nature of divorce, and demonstrates the growing acceptance of same sex marriage.”

### **Marriage as an U.S. Institution**

The SheByShe survey found that 83 percent of the participating women believe it is important a marriage be legally bound and with a marriage license, while 52 percent believe a religious ceremony is important when starting a marriage.

When it comes to divorce, there is widespread agreement about its negative impact on the institution of marriage. Women were open and honest about sharing their stories and feelings.

As one SheByShe respondent said, “People are lazy so they don't want to work on anything...they would just as soon get divorced.” Another said, “People get married just to do it, they don't realize the true meaning of love and they take it for granted. And, a third woman said, “People get married and then get divorced for little petty things instead of taking a break and letting the dust settle and then discussing the issue and working through it.”

Many women cited the growing lack of a religious foundation as the reason for the weakening of marriage. As one woman said, “The institution of marriage is no longer sacred. People throw it away like yesterday's garbage. People get married for convenience it seems instead of an everlasting promise to work together forever.”

### **Changing Definitions and Lack of Commitment**

Twenty-five percent of the women polled have recently changed their personal definition of marriage, largely due to personal experience or to growing maturity.

When asked to give their personal definition of marriage, women most commonly used these words: partnership of two people (47 percent); love (38 percent); commitment (29 percent); lifelong (22 percent); and union or bond, (22 percent).

Women commented that couples today often enter into marriage with a lack of commitment. As one woman said, “There is no value in marriage. Although it is a legal contract it can be left with very few ramifications.” And, another said, “Marriage today can be defined by any two people saying vows. I believe there used to be more commitment and not something that can be so easily dissolved.”

Other women cited the financial independence of women as a reason for the changing definition of marriage. As one said, “Women make their own living and do not need to depend on a man.”

Despite a lot of expressed negativity, many women are still optimistic and hopeful about marriage. “Marriage to me is a one-way street with no turning back. You just move forward with your spouse, enduring struggles but also the joyous times together,” is how one woman put it.

### **SheByShe is Providing Women a Voice**

The SheByShe “What Women Think About Marriage Today” survey questioned Internet-savvy, mostly millennial women from across America. Married and single women, working and non-working women across the nation and all household income levels responded to the survey.

A colorful, visual slideshow of full survey results can be found [here](#).

The survey was conducted in April and May of 2014 and represents U.S. women, ages 25-64, with 641 participants. Fifty percent of respondents are married, 26 percent are in a committed, live-in relationship, and 24 percent are single.

### **About SheByShe**

SheByShe is a women’s opinion site dedicated to sharing what women think about important issues. SheByShe is committed to being objective and transparent. SheByShe is not affiliated with any political party, religion or other group. Surveys are fielded to cover current social, lifestyle, economic, and political issues. Results are posted on SheByShe.com and are shared with key influencers and publicized through major media and information dissemination sources. Participating women feel satisfied that they are speaking up and sharing their point-of-view. For more information or to contact SheByShe please go to [www.shebyshe.com](http://www.shebyshe.com).

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