

Singlehood

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Singlehood is defined as a state of being unmarried, either with or without a partner. For some singlehood is a choice to remain unmarried as an adult, or it can be a stage that is passed through temporarily when a spouse dies, or even when an adult is between partners. Singlehood is experienced differently depending on which of those groups a person finds themselves in or chooses to be part of. The experience is also varied by a person's cultural and ethnic heritage. People in both the married group and the unmarried group are able to identify benefits and drawbacks to being in their respective group. Often times they also fantasize about being in the other group. Whichever the case may be, singlehood can be both rewarding and frustrating, enlightening and lonely. However, some would say the same about marriage.

Singlehood is becoming more and more socially acceptable. More adults are choosing to remain unmarried, whether in a relationship or not, than ever before. However one arrives at the state of being single, there are challenges. Some of the benefits to being single include being able to do what one wants when one wants and not having to consider a partner or spouse's schedule or needs. There are no arguments about household chores or about how the finances should be managed, or even how the home is decorated.

There are also drawbacks to being single. Living expenses and other bills are not shared and therefore the financial responsibilities of life can be overwhelming at times. There seem to be few situations where a friend could not stand in for a spouse, such as when one needs or wants comforting, a date for a special occasion, help with moving, or even someone to spend time with and share mutual interests and activities with. In addition, many singles now achieve the same milestones as couples, such as having children or buying a home.

There are differences in how singlehood is experienced by and entered into by men and women. Multiple sources have found that men have greater difficulty remaining single and are more likely to marry. Whereas women, especially those who are highly educated, are more likely to remain single. These trends tend to be more along traditional lines for the men and non-traditional for women. The trend to remain single for both genders is growing, despite going against the traditional American view that marriage is a better option and a fulfillment of healthy adult roles.

Many single adults face discrimination and negative bias from others in the form of ‘singlism’, an overt reaction to a person being single or specifically unmarried. Terms like ‘bachelor’ are used for men, which has a more positive connotation than that for women, like ‘spinster’. Beyond the use of terms to describe a single person that may be flattering or offensive, many singles find that they are treated differently by employers who favor married workers, or by couples they know. They may also be experiencing the relentless pursuit of a partner by “concerned” friends or family, those who are constantly trying to set up the single person with a potential dating partner or future spouse.

Singles have varied reasons for their decision to remain unmarried. While some may be waiting to find the right person, others may be cohabitating with a partner and not making their relationship legal, while others believe that no one person can meet all of their partnering needs. Also, singles who are in a same sex relationship may live in a country where legal marriage is not an option for them. Many singles also believe that marriage would hinder their career goals. Some view marriage as a means to stifle their independence and freedom. Since the sexual revolution in the 70’s, many adults are now feeling more comfortable with having multiple partners, whether at the same time or spread over a lifetime. There are many singles who

identify as part of a minority group, such as a person with a disability, and claim they are single due to not finding a compatible or accepting partner. These, and other, reasons vary by gender, age, and culture. Many older adults choose to remain single after a divorce or death of a spouse. They've experienced marriage and now want to experience what it is like have independence and freedom. Some reports state that married people are healthier and have greater buffers to stress, and as a result they tend to live longer. The choice, or circumstance, that leads one to be single is as individual and ultimately must be understood based on that individuals unique circumstances and personality.

Further Readings:

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