The Life of a Wife

1962

Surveying the Past

Questions:

What changes do you see in the women of today as compared to your mother's day?

Top Mentions

- More active, have activities outside the home, less interest in their homes and families (34%)
- More independent, have more freedom, are more carefree (25%)
- Better educated, smarter (18%)
- More attractive, more conscious of appearance, have better styles (17%)
- Have easier life, have modern conveniences, smaller families (11%)

Note: Multiple responses were allowed.

Questions:

Today in America, who, in your opinion, has the most to say about the following decisions—the husband or the wife?

Women's Opinions

- Which church to go to: 69% for wife
- Which neighborhood to live in: 62% for wife
- Which school or college children will attend: 46% for wife
- Which town to live in: 20% for wife
- Which car to buy: 9% for wife
- Which candidate to vote for: 8% for wife

Men's Opinions

- Which church to go to: 26% for husband
- Which neighborhood to live in: 34% for husband
- Which school or college children will attend: 47% for husband
- Which town to live in: 77% for husband
- Which car to buy: 89% for husband
- Which candidate to vote for: 87% for husband

Percent Responding More Say in Future

- Which church to go to: 80% for wife
- Which neighborhood to live in: 69% for wife
- Which school or college children will attend: 69% for wife
- Which town to live in: 58% for wife
- Which car to buy: 58% for wife
- Which candidate to vote for: 87% for wife

Questions:

In your opinion, what problems arise in their homelife where a wife has had more education than the husband?

Top Mentions

- Husband feels inferior, inadequate, jealous (40%)
- Wife feels superior, is critical (22%)
- Leads to family disputes, quarrels, etc. (19%)
- Husband has inferior job, low income (13%)
- Wife wants to make big decisions, boss husband (10%)

Note: Multiple responses were allowed.

Source: All data on this page are from a survey of women who have ever been married, the Gallup Organization/Saturday Evening Post, June-July, 1962.

Pretty Little Head

Questions:

Do you think these changes are a good or bad thing?

- Good thing: 66%
- Bad thing: 31%
- Neither/Some good, some bad (vol.): 9%

In general, who do you think is happier—the girl who married and has a family to raise, or the unmarried career girl?

- Married girl with family: 96%
- Unmarried career girl: 4%

Note: Multiple responses were allowed.
For Better or for Worse

Questions:

What do you like best about being a woman?

**TOP MENTIONS**

- Being a mother, having children, raising them 43%
- Having a husband, caring for him, having him care and provide for me 22%
- My family, caring for them, being a housewife 18%
- Having freedom: time is own, not having to go out to earn a living, staying home 15%
- Female clothes, frilly things, perfume, hair styles, beauty 10%
- Everything 10%

What do you like least about being a woman?

**TOP MENTIONS**

- Nothing disliked 31%
- Housecleaning, housework, home responsibilities 20%
- Inferior female status, dependence, work twice as hard as men, must put up with more 13%
- Being tied down, unable to get out to meet people, isolated existence 10%
- Monthly periods, menopause 9%
- Male attitude toward women—impoliteness, consider them stupid, etc. 9%

Note: Multiple responses were allowed.

Questions:

At any timesince your marriage, have you ever wondered— even for a moment— whether you would not have been better off to have become a career woman instead of getting married?

Yes: 63%
No: 37%

Questions:

How do you feel now? Do you wish you had become a career woman, or are you satisfied now to be as you are?

Career woman: 7%
Satisfied now: 93%

Questions:

What do you view as the chief purpose of your life?

**TOP MENTIONS**

- Be a good mother, do a good job raising children 60%
- Be a good wife 32%
- Make a good home for family 20%
- Be religious, lead a good, moral life 17%
- Help and serve others (neighbors, friends, church) 15%

Note: Multiple responses were allowed.

Questions:

Are you satisfied with what you have achieved up to this point in your life?

- Extremely satisfied 25%
- Fairly satisfied 63%
- Not so well satisfied 12%

Questions:

As your daughter grows up to your age, what would you like her to do differently from what you have done?

- Get more education, go to college, finish college 34%
- Wait longer to get married, marry later 12%
- Nothing different 10%
- Be more social-minded, entertain more, join more groups, bring friends home, have more poise, social grace 6%
- Be more independent, mature, do what she wants 5%

Note: Multiple responses were allowed.

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