

New American Dream Survey

A Public Opinion Poll

This document provides the questions and answers to a nationally representative and census-balanced Internet and telephone study conducted in March and April 2014 among 1,821 Americans 18 years of age and older. The poll was conducted by PolicyInteractive of Eugene, Oregon for the Center for a New American Dream. Learn more about the project at www.newdream.org/poll2014.

1. Life Satisfaction

All things considered, how satisfied are you with life as a whole nowadays?	
	Percent
Not at all satisfied	2.5
2	3.5
3	6.0
4	6.3
5	19.2
6	9.3
7	16.3
8	20.7
9	9.4
Extremely satisfied	6.8
% combined 8, 9, & 10	36.9
Total	100.0

Here below is a short list of specific aspects of life satisfaction. For each category, please indicate your personal level of satisfaction with your own life.

		Not at all satisfied	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Extremely satisfied	% 8,9 & 10
Your available leisure time	%	3.5	3.6	5.2	6.4	14.7	10.5	13.1	16.5	9.5	17.0	43.1
Your work situation	%	9.4	5.2	7.3	7.7	14.3	6.6	11.4	12.8	8.6	12.8	34.1
Your relationships with others	%	1.7	2.2	2.9	5.2	13.5	8.0	15.1	20.7	14.8	15.9	51.4
Your personal comfort and material well-being	%	2.6	2.6	5.9	6.1	15.1	9.8	15.4	18.9	11.8	11.5	42.3

2. The American Dream

Compared to 10 years ago, do you think it is harder or easier for Americans today to achieve the American Dream?

	Percent
Harder	79.8
Easier	5.5
The same	11.9
Don't know	2.8
Total	100.0

Below is a list of possible reasons it is harder to achieve the American Dream. Please indicate which you think are MAJOR reasons why it is more difficult to achieve the American Dream today. Check each of the following that is a major reason.

	Percent
The high cost of education.	72.2
The high cost of health care.	71.8
Wages for workers are too low	67.2
We have a materialistic culture.	58.0
Current society favors the rich.	56.8
Technology and foreign competition are squeezing people out of jobs.	55.6
Too many people expect to have a good life handed to them.	54.3
Advertising seduces us into buying things we don't really need.	40.7
Americans have to work too much.	35.2
Too many people lack patriotism.	29.4

Now think about YOUR OWN ideal vision of the American Dream — in other words, what you think the American Dream should be. For the following statements, please indicate how important or unimportant each is to your ideal American Dream.

		Not at all important	2	3	4	Moderately important	6	7	8	9	Extremely important	% 8,9 & 10
Personal freedom of choice to do or to believe what one chooses.	%	0.7	0.9	0.4	0.9	6.5	4.1	8.5	14.7	16.6	46.7	77.9
Security or having all my basic needs met.	%	0.7	0.5	0.6	1.2	8.3	3.9	10.0	16.2	16.1	42.5	74.8
To achieve one's potential regardless of class or wealth.	%	0.9	0.4	0.9	1.9	9.4	5.4	10.4	16.3	15.5	38.8	70.6
Enough free time from work to enjoy life.	%	0.9	0.6	1.1	1.9	11.2	6.1	11.0	20.2	16.4	30.3	67.0
Living in harmony with the natural environment.	%	2.4	1.9	2.4	3.6	15.1	8.9	12.0	17.4	12.6	23.7	53.7
Communities built on a shared sense of social responsibility.	%	3.0	2.1	2.5	4.2	16.8	8.4	12.9	18.4	11.9	19.5	49.8
The U.S. is the most militarily powerful country.	%	10.9	4.6	5.8	5.6	17.3	7.1	10.0	12.3	8.9	17.2	38.3
Achieving an affluent or wealthy lifestyle.	%	6.8	4.4	7.2	10.3	24.1	11.3	12.6	9.6	5.3	8.2	23.1

Do you think you will be able to achieve your idea of the American Dream in your lifetime?

	Percent
Yes	46.6
No	26.0
Don't know	27.4
Total	100.0

How close to achieving your idea of the American Dream are you now?

	Percent
Very far away	15.9
2	21.6
3	31.8
4	17.4
I've already achieved it	13.2

3. Work, Income, and Time Freedom

What is your current employment situation? Check each which applies:	
	Percent
Employee	49.3
Self-employed	16.9
Unemployed	12.3
Retired	18.3
Homemaker	13.0
Student or in-training	9.8
Other	2.4

How many hours per week do you normally work for pay?	
	Percent
0	28.4
Less than 10	5.6
10 to less than 20	6.8
20 to less than 30	8.6
30 to less than 40	14.7
40 to less than 50	25.9
50 to less than 60	5.1
60 or more hours per week	4.2

How much do you agree or disagree with this statement: I would be willing to give up one day's pay per week in exchange for one day off per week to spend more time with family and friends.	
	Percent
Strongly agree	23.4
Somewhat agree	31.0
Somewhat disagree	24.4
Strongly disagree	18.2
Don't know	3.0
Total	100.0

Considering the number of hours you work, please indicate which of the following statements best describe your own view:	
	Percent
I would prefer to work fewer hours, even if I made less money.	18.2
I would prefer to keep the same number of hours and make the same amount of money.	43.1
I would prefer to work more hours and make more money.	34.7
Don't know	4.0
Total	100.0

In the last five years, have you voluntarily made changes in your life which resulted in making less money?	
	Percent
Yes	38.0
No	60.7
Don't know	1.3
Total	100.0

From this voluntary change you made, check each box below which applies in your situation.	
	Percent
Quit working outside the home	39.3
Changed to a lower paying job	28.4
Reduced work hours	35.4
Reduced the number of jobs you held	19.8
Moved	21.6
Other	13.1

Which one of the following statements best describes how you feel about the decision you made to change your lifestyle?

	Percent
I'm happy about the change and I don't miss the extra income much	21.2
I'm happy about the change, but I miss the extra income	39.2
Losing the income was a real hardship, but I'm still happy about the change	25.9
I'm unhappy about the change	10.8
None of them, or Other	2.5

For these next questions, please think about how your life is different since you made the choice that resulted in you making less money. Please rate how much you agree or disagree with each of these statement.

	strongly disagree %	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %	Strongly agree %
My life is more stressful now.	17.7	32.5	16.4	22.4	10.8
I have more time to pursue my own goals now.	5	9.7	17.9	47.7	19.7
I have more time to be with the people I care about now.	3.7	6.1	16.3	40.5	33.3
I have a less materialistic lifestyle now.	3.7	11.8	24.7	38.5	21
I am physically healthier now.	6.4	20.5	26.4	35.3	11.1

4. Evolving patterns of ownership

**How much do you agree or disagree with this statement:
 I would like to share more things, such as tools and household items.**

	Percent
Strongly disagree	14.7
Disagree	15.7
Neutral	37.2
Agree	23.8
Strongly agree	8.5

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree %	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %	Strongly agree %
Sharing saves money.	4.0	5.2	14.1	48.4	28.0
I don't know people who I can share with.	18.0	29.8	19.1	21.5	11.3
Sharing is inconvenient.	15.3	23.2	25.4	25.8	10.3
Sharing builds friendships and relationships.	3.0	7.5	17.5	45.7	26.2
Sharing lowers environmental impacts.	6.2	7.9	21.0	42.8	21.3

Below is a list of different forms of sharing goods and services. Some are quite new and others are very established. For each type of service, please indicate if you are not familiar with this, if you are interested or not in this type of sharing, or how frequently you use it.

List of activities		Do Not Use Service			Do Use Service				Total use (descending order)
		Not familiar with	Not interested	Interested but not practiced	Use yearly, more or less	Use about monthly or so	Use about weekly	Use daily or several times a week	
Public parks or playgrounds	%	3.8	9.2	13.9	22.9	26.4	16.8	6.9	73
Used merchandise store, such as thrift stores or garage sales	%	3.3	12.7	13.1	27.6	30.7	9.2	2.9	70.4
Public library (books & indoor public space)	%	2.9	9.9	17.2	24.3	26.2	13.5	5.8	69.8
Used merchandise websites, such as Craigslist	%	8.4	16.5	20.4	23.6	19.9	6.7	4.2	54.3
Food-buying cooperative (group purchasing of groceries)	%	32.3	22	27.5	5.6	6.9	4.2	1.5	18.2
Community garden	%	19.2	27.1	40.6	4.8	3.5	3.1	1.6	13
Tool lending library	%	44.3	17.6	25.7	5.7	3.6	1.8	1	12.2
Peer-to-peer lodging services, such as Airbnb or Couchsurfing	%	47.6	27.1	15.6	4.6	2.7	1.7	0.5	9.5
Carsharing services, such as Zipcar or RelayRides	%	37.1	31.3	22.2	3.2	2.8	1.8	1.3	9.2
Bicycle sharing services	%	35.3	35.3	20.8	3.7	2.3	1.5	0.9	8.5
Internet-based ridesharing services, such as Lyft	%	50.6	24.5	16.6	3.6	2.2	1.2	1.1	8.1

5. Attitude toward Consumption and Advertising

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree %	Somewhat disagree %	Somewhat agree %	Strongly agree %	Don't know %
The way we live produces too much waste.	2.2	5.0	31.0	60.0	1.8
We focus too much on getting what we want now and not enough on the needs of future generations.	2.5	6.5	35.0	53.7	2.2
Buying and consuming is the American way, there's nothing wrong with that.	14.4	32.7	32.9	17.9	2.1

In your opinion should there be more limits on advertising to children?

	Percent
Yes	71.6
No	16.5
Don't know	11.9

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly against %	Lean towards against %	Lean towards support %	Strongly support %	Don't know %
A 1% tax on all broadcast advertising, with revenue dedicated to K-12 education	13.1	11.1	33.8	34.3	7.8
Prohibition of advertising on children's television programs and websites	12.9	22.5	29.0	27.7	7.9
Prohibition of advertising in or on public property like parks and public transportation	13.5	25.9	28.3	24.2	8.1
Prohibition on advertising in schools, textbooks, and school buses	15.1	13.2	22.4	43.6	5.7

6. Views about the Environment

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree %	Somewhat disagree %	Somewhat agree %	Strongly agree %	Don't know %
Protecting the environment will require most of us to make major changes in the way we live.	4.5	9.3	40.1	44.5	1.5
My own buying habits have a negative effect on the environment.	17.2	30.0	37.6	11.6	3.6
Americans are responsible for many of the world's environmental problems because we consume more resources and produce more waste compared to other countries.	9.9	16.2	35.2	35.0	3.7