

COMPANIONSHIP IS THE RELATIONSHIP KEY: NEW POLL SHOWS

The latest *Relationships Indicators Survey*, launched today, reveals that life-long companionship is what Australians most want from their partners and marriages.

When asked what the best thing was about the relationship they had with their spouse or partner, 38 per cent of respondents said 'friendship and companionship', compared with just 17 per cent who gave the second most popular response, 'love'.

The 'friendship and companionship' responses were also 10 percentage points higher than when the same question was asked in the Indicators Survey in 2003.

Other responses about the best thing in people's relationships were 'support' (13%), 'communication' (12%), 'trust' (11%), 'compatibility' (10%), 'intimacy' (8%) and 'enjoying each other's company' (8%).

Why Marry?

When asked the main reasons why people marry these days, life-long companionship rated highly, with 68 per cent of respondents naming 'to signify a life-long commitment' as a main reason for marriage. Other frequent responses were 'to make a public commitment to each other' (63%) and 'security for children' (62%).

According to Anne Hollonds, Vice President, Relationships Australia: "Young respondents were more likely to nominate life-long commitment as the reason for marriage compared to older age groups. Women were more likely to give reasons such as 'to provide security for children', 'because of religious beliefs' or as a response to 'family pressure'."

Commitment Issues?

When asked the main reasons for not getting married, the top response was 'bad previous experience' (72%). Others included 'avoidance of commitment' (67%), 'strong commitment does not need marriage' (63%), 'fear of making a mistake' (61%), 'fear of divorce and what goes with it' (59%) and 'desire for a singles lifestyle' (57%).

When it came to improving or enhancing a partner relationship, the top two responses were to 'try to communicate better' (31%) and 'spending time together' (29%). Men tended to nominate romantic actions, such as 'doing nice things', 'cooking a favourite meal' or 'leaving notes', whereas women tended towards more practical measures like 'trying to get issues out in the open'.

The survey shows we are optimistic. Despite divorce affecting about one in three couples, only 10 per cent were worried about the future of their relationship, 22 per cent were 'not very worried' and 68 per cent were 'not at all worried'.

In general, the survey shows Australians place high value on the importance of family in defining who they are. Nine out of 10 said being a good parent was important to who they were, as was being a good husband, wife or partner.

ENDS

A full report of the Indicators Survey 2006 is on the Relationships Australia website: www.relationships.com.au
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