

Life Budget Survey

November 18, 2014

Life Reimagined[®]

 Real Possibilities

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Life Reimagined

Life Reimagined was launched by AARP in 2013 to provide a personal guidance system to help people navigate transitions and live their lives to the fullest. By offering online and offline experiences made up of tools, experts and community, Life Reimagined helps people reflect, evaluate priorities and take action to navigate transitions and new life phases. Learn more at <http://lifereimagined.aarp.org>.

Executive Summary

Life Reimagined seeks to be a resource to help guide people through life transitions by helping them discover new possibilities. To gain insight into how people in their 40's and 50's live and assess their lives, Life Reimagined commissioned an online survey of people ages 40-59. The survey addresses how they move toward their goals and what they would change if they could. A key element of understanding priorities is what Life Reimagined has labeled a "life budget" – how people allocate their time, energy, and passion across various areas of their lives. The survey explores people's current "life budget" as well as their ideal. Key findings from the survey follow.

- **Overall, most people are happy and are satisfied with their accomplishments in life – despite many who have at least a somewhat stressful life and some who have fallen short of where they had expected to be in life.** As shown in this survey: 79% are happy, 69% are satisfied with what they have accomplished in life, 42% have fallen short of expectations, and 66% have at least a somewhat stressful life.
- **However, current Life Budgets (i.e., how people allocate their time, energy, and passion across various categories) do not always match ideal ones.** The biggest gap can be seen in the allocation devoted to job/career. On average, people devote 21% of their time, energy, and passion to their job or career, while they see 12% as the ideal. Analysis of Life Budgets by parental status shows that 40-59 year-olds with children devote most of their Life Budget to their children (24%), followed by their spouse/partner/significant other (20%), and their job or career (19%). This is close to their ideal for children (25%) and spouse/partner/significant other (23%), but nearly double what they would like to devote to work (11%). Among those without children, the largest budget categories are job or career (24%), spouse/partner/significant other (17%), family (16%), and health/wellness (15%). These are close to their ideal levels for family (14%) and health (18%), but slightly lag their ideal for spouse/partner/significant other (23%) and exceed their ideal for work (13%).
- **Although people are split on what is most important in life (between money, meaning/purpose, and lack of fear/worry), most agree they would rather have extra money than extra time.** About 4 in 10 people feel it is most important to have a life of meaning and purpose (39%), while roughly 3 in 10 feel it is most important to have enough money to do the things they want (31%) and to have a life without fear and worry (30%). Nevertheless, when asked to choose between extra money and extra time in the day, 71% choose money.

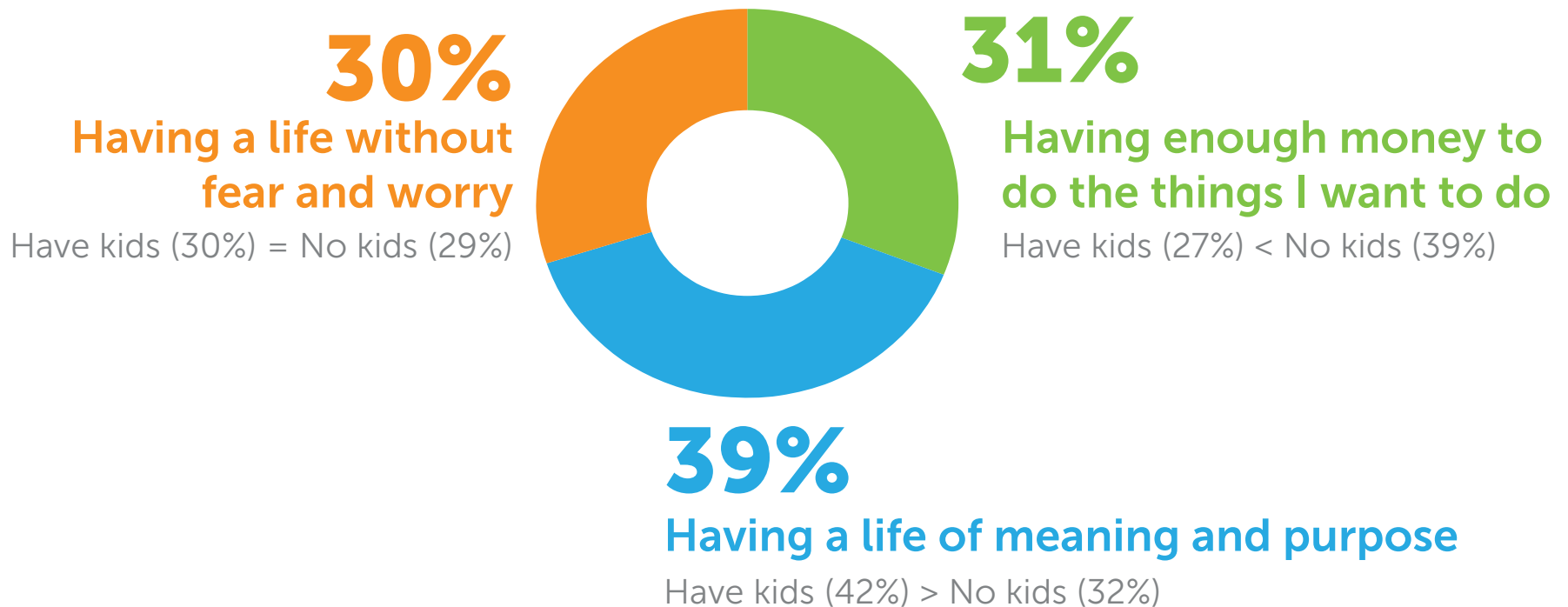
Executive Summary

- **More financial security tops the list of changes that would increase one's happiness. Similarly, the top things people would have done differently in their lives pertain to finances. In addition, people feel lack of financial security is the top obstacle to prioritizing things that would make them happier.** When asked to select what would most increase their happiness, nearly 4 in 10 say more financial security (39%). Moreover, when people are asked what one thing they would have done differently in their life, 21% wish they had made smarter financial decisions and 12% wish they had pursued a career path with more financial security. Thirty-three percent say lack of financial security is the main obstacle to prioritizing things that would make them happier, followed by 20% who say lack of enough time, and 14% who say job demands.
- **In addition to financial security, relationships matter and will play a key role in priorities over the next ten years.** For parents, 47% say their children brought them the most happiness, followed by their spouse or partner (23%). Over the next ten years, their top priority is family (38%), followed by relationship with spouse/partner/significant other (16%). For those without children, their spouse or partner brought them the most happiness (22%), followed by their friendships (20%). Their top priority over the next ten years is health (25%), followed by relationship with spouse/partner/significant other (17%). In addition, regardless of parental status, more people derive their self-worth from family and close friends (71%) rather than from their job (29%).
- **Although few made a New Year's resolution last year, nearly all value reflection and envisioning change.** Only 1 in 4 people (25%) made a New Year's resolution last year. However, 92% appreciate the value of reflecting on how their life is going and imagining ways they could change or improve it. If a resolution were made this year, the most popular topics would be saving more money (20%), developing good habits (17%), and spending more time with loved ones (16%). Fewer than 4 in 10 people who made at least one New Year's resolution last year kept all of them (36%).
- **Character/integrity, money, and relationships are most often cited as the most important element of "a good life."** Consistent with the emphasis on financial security and relationships, the top element of "a good life" is having strong character and living life with integrity (22%), followed by having the money to live the lifestyle you want and pursue your passions and hobbies (19%), and maintaining strong ties with friends and family (19%).

The survey was written by Luntz Global, LLC in collaboration with Life Reimagined. It was fielded by Global Marketing Research Services from October 7 to October 9, 2014. A total of 1,000 online interviews were completed with adults ages 40-59 in the United States. The results from the study were weighted to be nationally representative. The margin of sampling error for the sample is $\pm 3.1\%$.

Detailed Findings

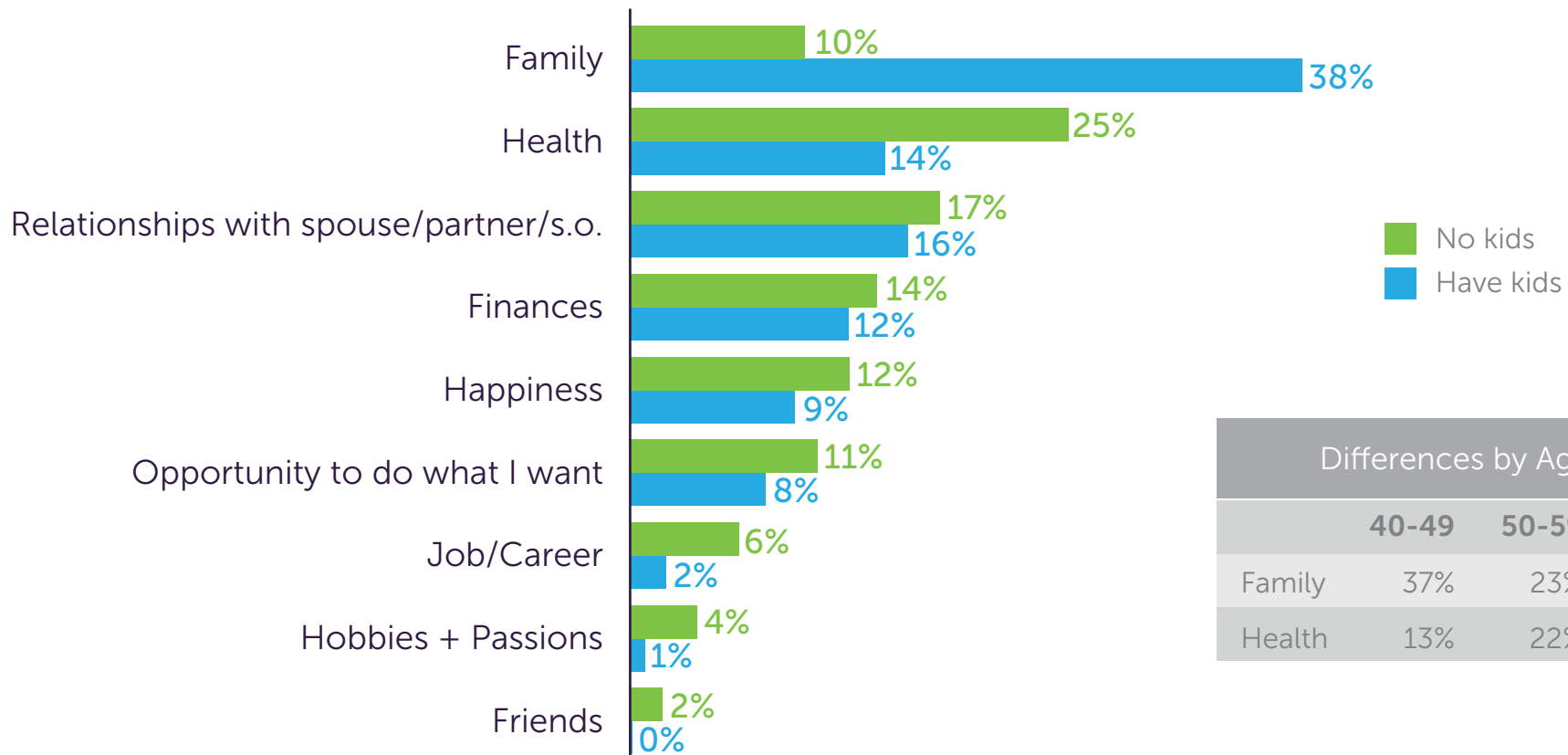
People are split on what is most important to them and answers differ for parents



Q5. Overall, which of the following is most important to you?

Family is the highest priority for those with kids; Health tops the list for those without kids

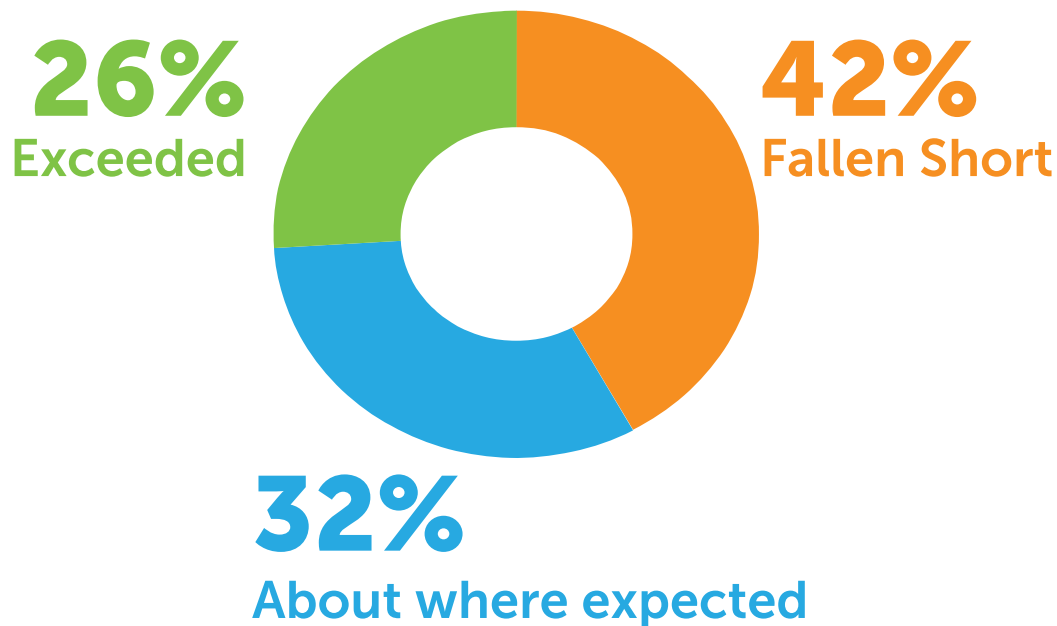
Highest priority over the next 10 years



Differences by Age		
	40-49	50-59
Family	37%	23%
Health	13%	22%

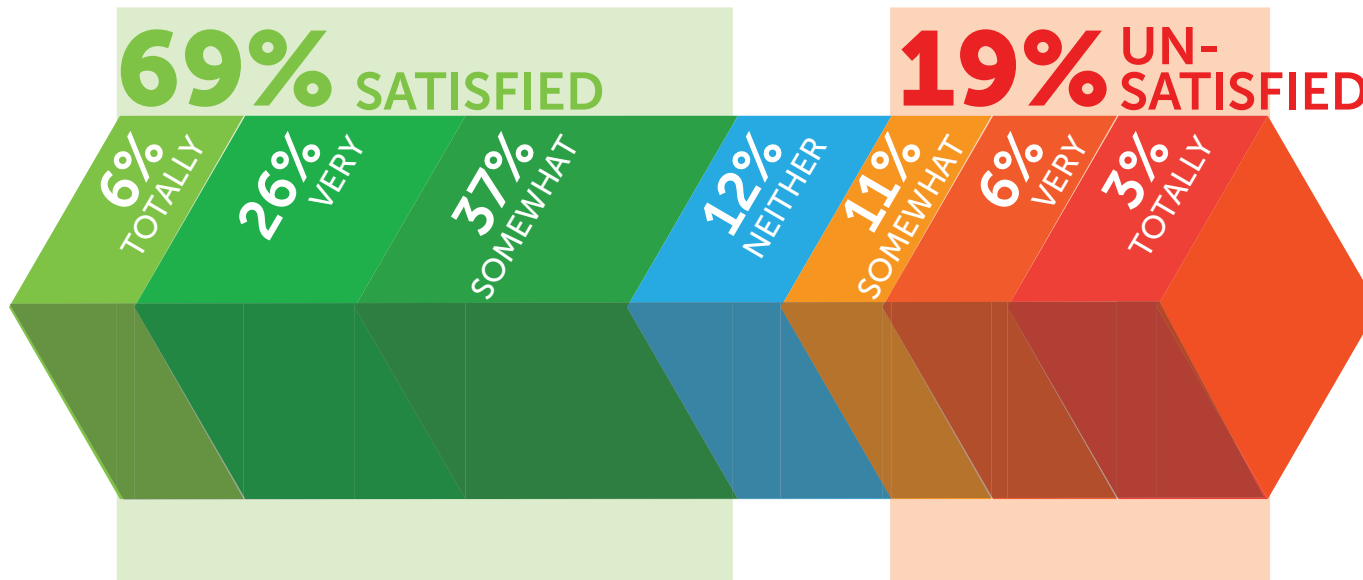
Q6: As you look ahead over the next 10 years, which of the following is your highest priority?

4 in 10 Have Fallen Short of Expectations They Had for Their Life When They Were 21 Years Old



Q8. Think back to when you were 21. Overall, have you exceeded the expectations you had for your life back then, fallen short of your expectations, or are you about where you expected to be at this time in your life?

Most people are satisfied with what they've accomplished in life – although few totally



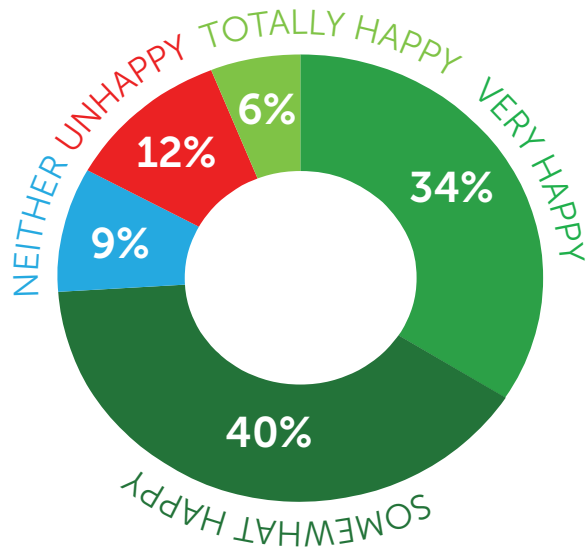
Differences by Relationship Status and Parental Status

	Married or living with partner	Widowed or divorced	Never married	Have kids	No kids
Satisfied	76%	58%	50%	74%	57%
Unsatisfied	15%	29%	27%	17%	26%

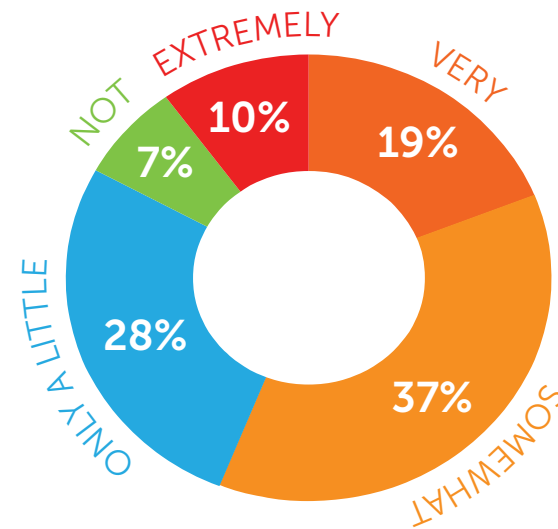
Q9. Generally speaking, how satisfied or unsatisfied are you with what you've accomplished in life so far?

Most people are happy, despite having at least a somewhat stressful life

**79%
HAPPY**



**66%
STRESSED**

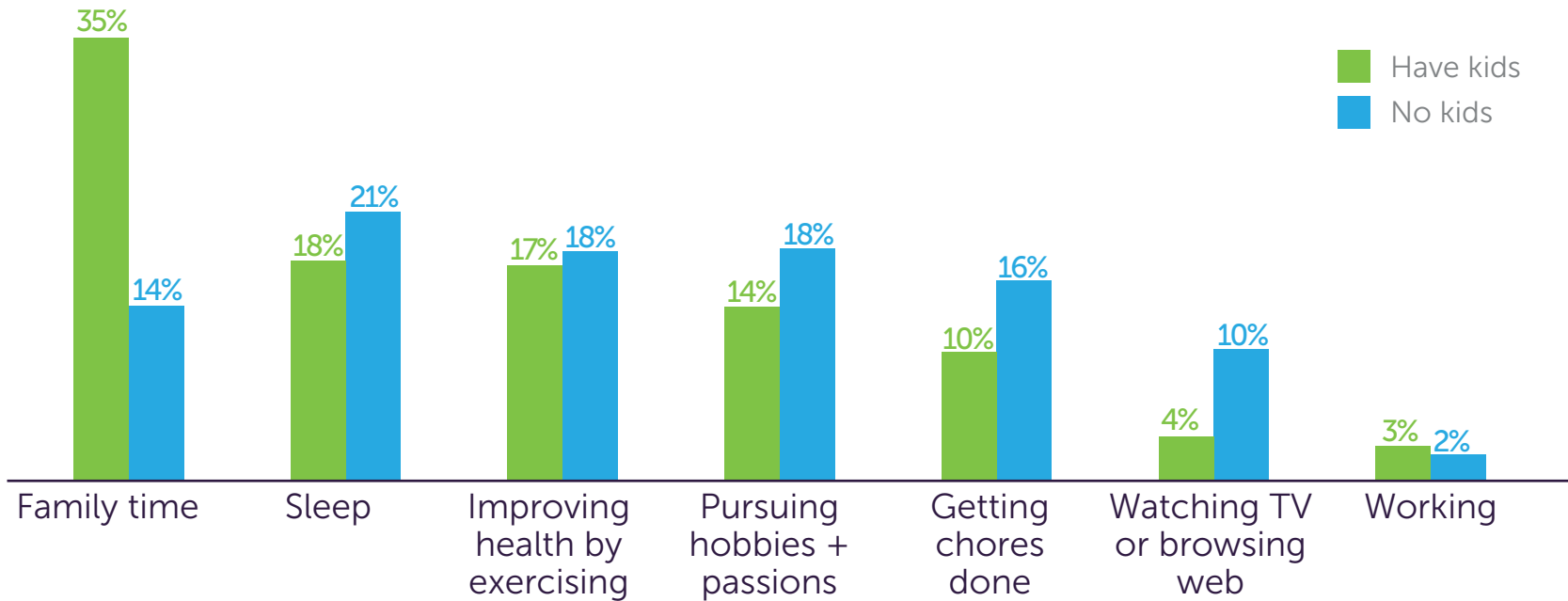


Totals exceed 100% due to rounding.

Q10. Generally speaking, how happy would you say you are?

Q11. Generally speaking, how stressful would you say your life is right now?

If given an extra hour in the day, family time tops list for parents; sleep tops list for those without

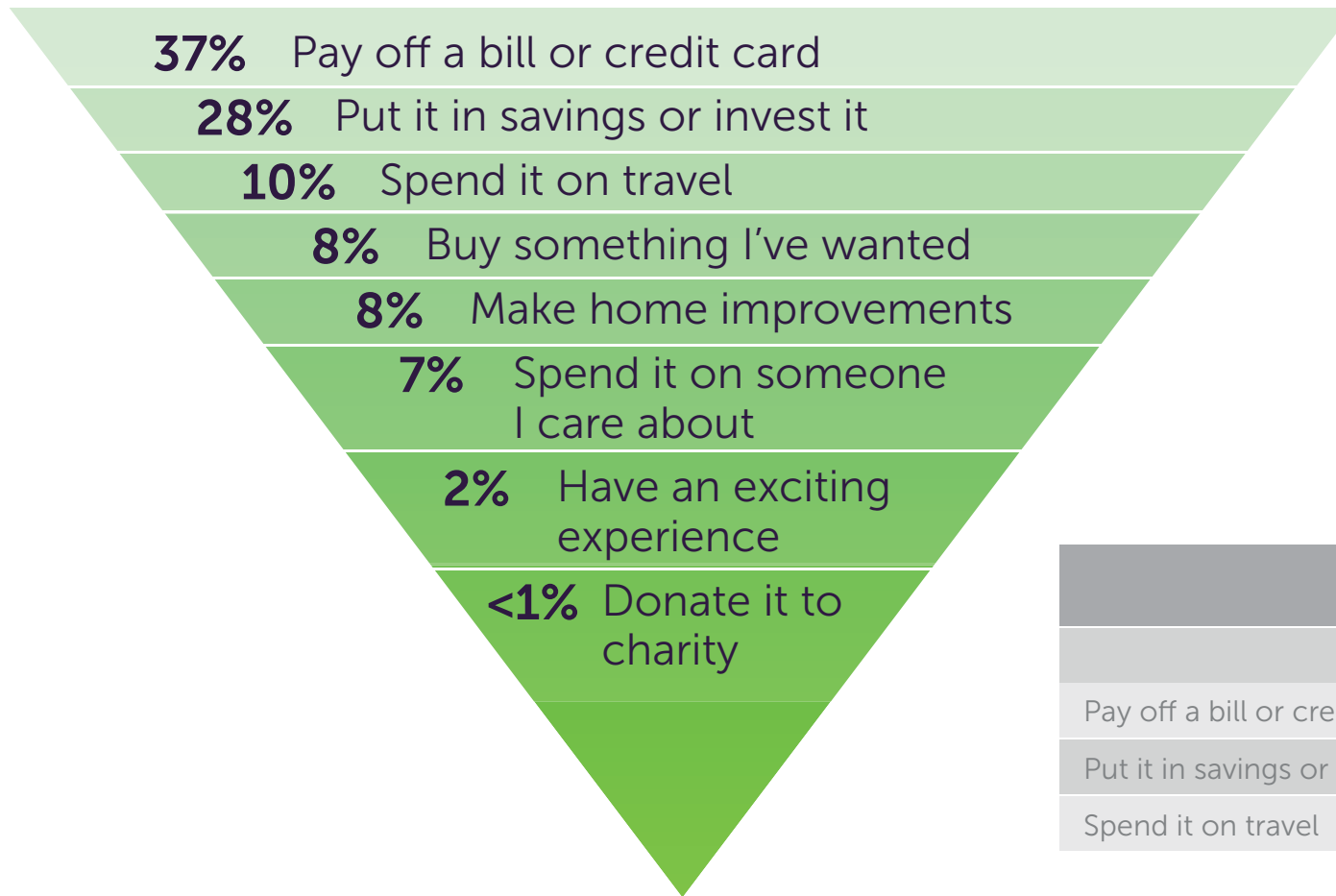


Differences by Gender		
	Male	Female
Pursuing hobbies + passions	19%	11%
Watching TV or browsing web	9%	3%

Differences by Age		
	40-49	50-59
Family time	37%	23%
Pursuing hobbies + passions	13%	22%

Q12. If you had an extra hour in the day, which of the following would you be most likely to use it for?

If given an extra \$1,000 bonus at work, most would be practical: paying off a bill or saving/investing it



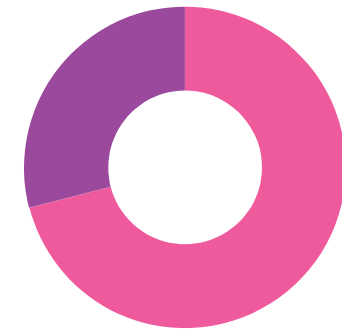
Differences by Gender		
	Male	Female
Pay off a bill or credit card	31%	43%
Put it in savings or invest it	35%	21%
Spend it on travel	7%	12%

Q14. If you got an extra \$1,000 bonus at work, which of the following would you be most likely to do with it?

Job/Career shows the biggest gap in current vs. ideal allocation of time, energy, and passion

Mean percentage of time, energy and passion allocated to each category

	HAVE KIDS		NO KIDS	
	CURRENT	IDEAL	CURRENT	IDEAL
My job or career	19%	11%	24%	13%
My children	24%	25%	1%	2%
My parents, siblings, or other extended family	9%	9%	16%	14%
My spouse, partner, significant other	20%	23%	17%	23%
My friendships	6%	7%	9%	10%
My faith or religion	5%	7%	6%	6%
My hobbies or leisure time	8%	9%	12%	14%
My health and wellness	9%	10%	15%	18%



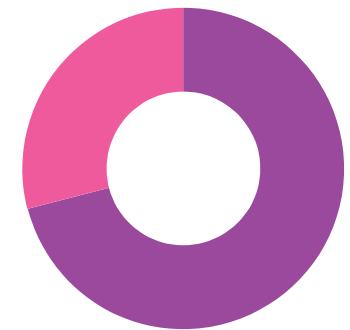
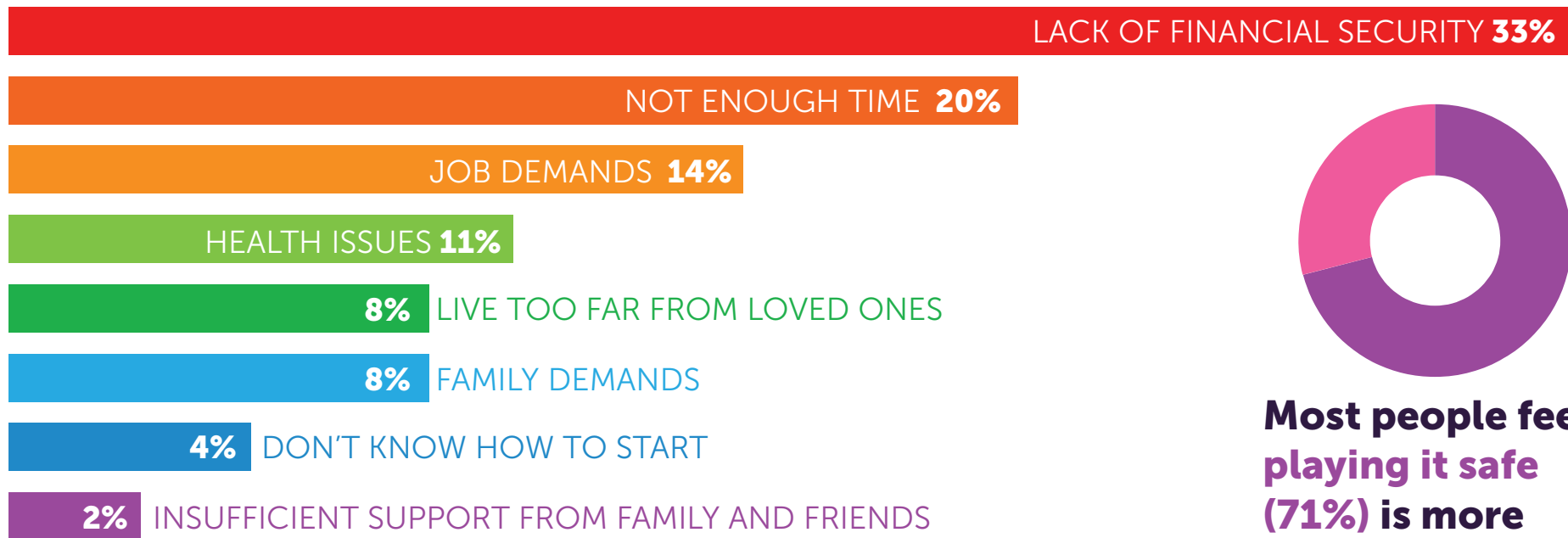
Most (71%) are generally satisfied with their priorities over the past 20-30 years

Q16-Q23. Below is a list of priorities you might have in your life. We would like to understand how you currently allocate your time, energy, and passion across these priorities. Assign a percentage to each category from 0-100%.

Q24-31. Now focus on the way you want your life to be. Imagine life at perfection. Here's the same list. Assign a percentage from 1-100%.

Q32. Looking back over those same parts of your life, are you generally satisfied with the way you prioritized them over the past 20 or 30 years, or would you do things differently?

Finances and time are the top obstacles to prioritizing things that would make people happier

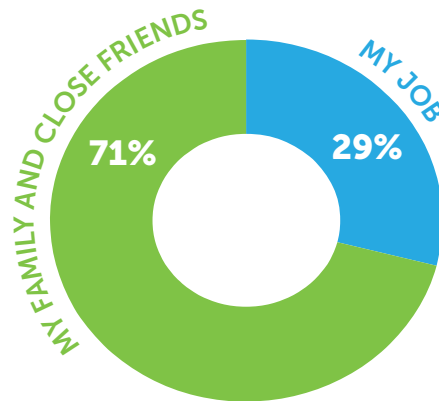


Most people feel playing it safe (71%) is more important than taking risks (29%) in life.

Q32. Which of the following has been the main obstacle when it comes to prioritizing the things in your life that would make you happier?
Q35. What is more important in life, playing it safe or taking risks?

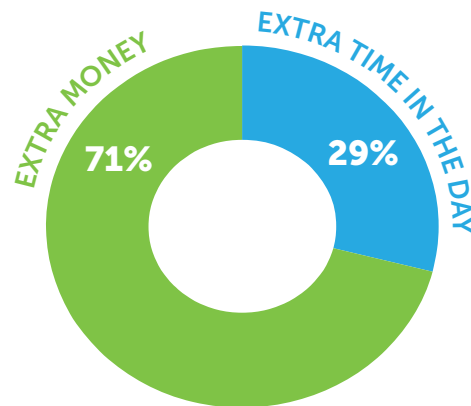
Although most would prefer extra money to time, most also feel their self-worth comes from relationships, not their job

Most of my self-worth comes from...



Differences by Gender		
	Male	Female
Job	39%	19%
Family & close friends	61%	81%

I would rather have...

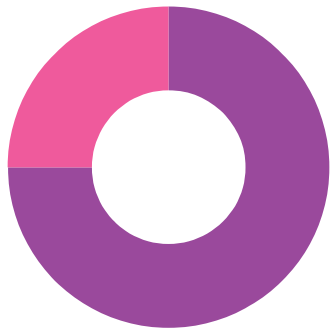


Differences by Gender		
	Male	Female
Extra money	66%	76%
Extra time	34%	24%

Q36. Which statement do you agree with more? I derive most of my self-worth from my family and close friends: How much time I can spend with them, the strength of the bonds I grow, and the close connections I create with the ones I love. OR I derive most of my self-worth from my job: How productive I am, how successful I am at it, and how much impact my work has on the lives of myself and others.

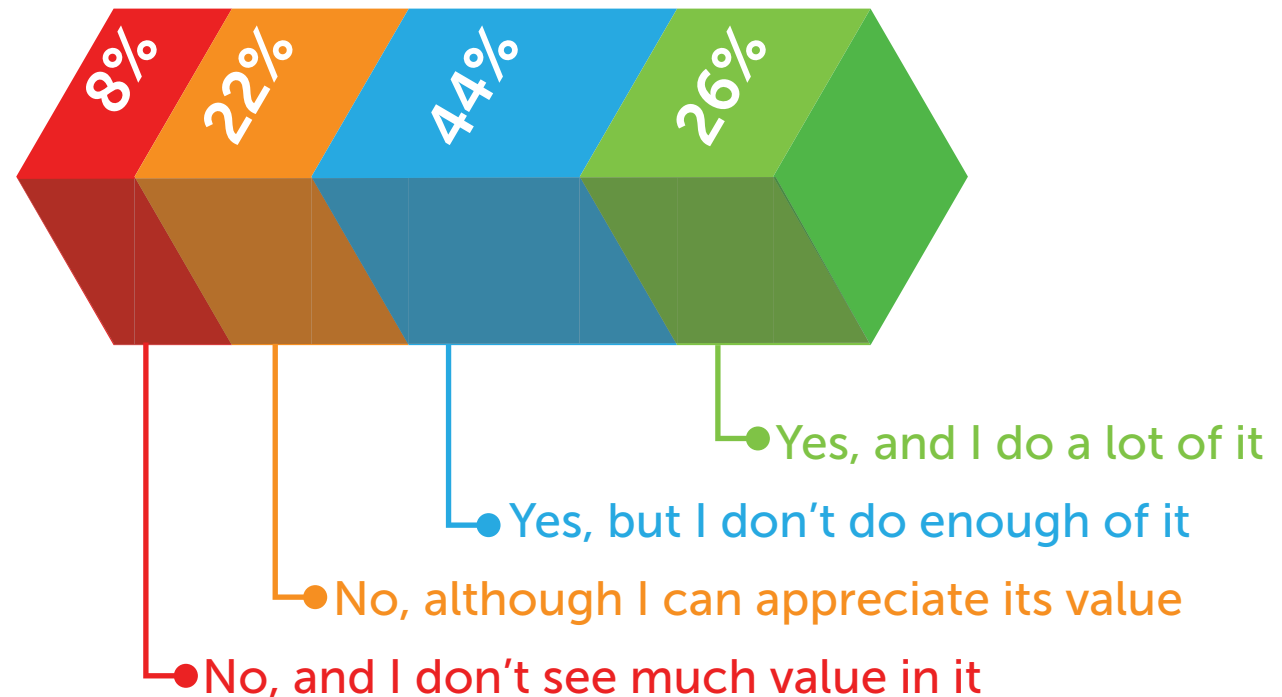
Q36. Which would you rather have? Extra money. Or Extra time.

Although few made a New Year's Resolution, nearly all value reflection and envisioning change



Only 1 in 4 (25%) made a New Year's Resolution last year.

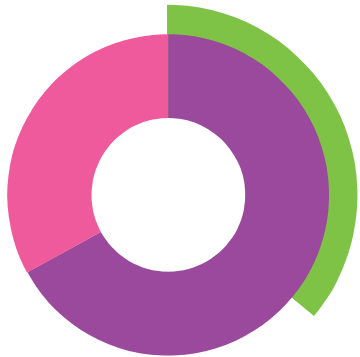
Generally speaking, do you reflect on how your life is going and imagine ways you could change or improve it?



Q38. Did you make at least one New Year's resolution last year?

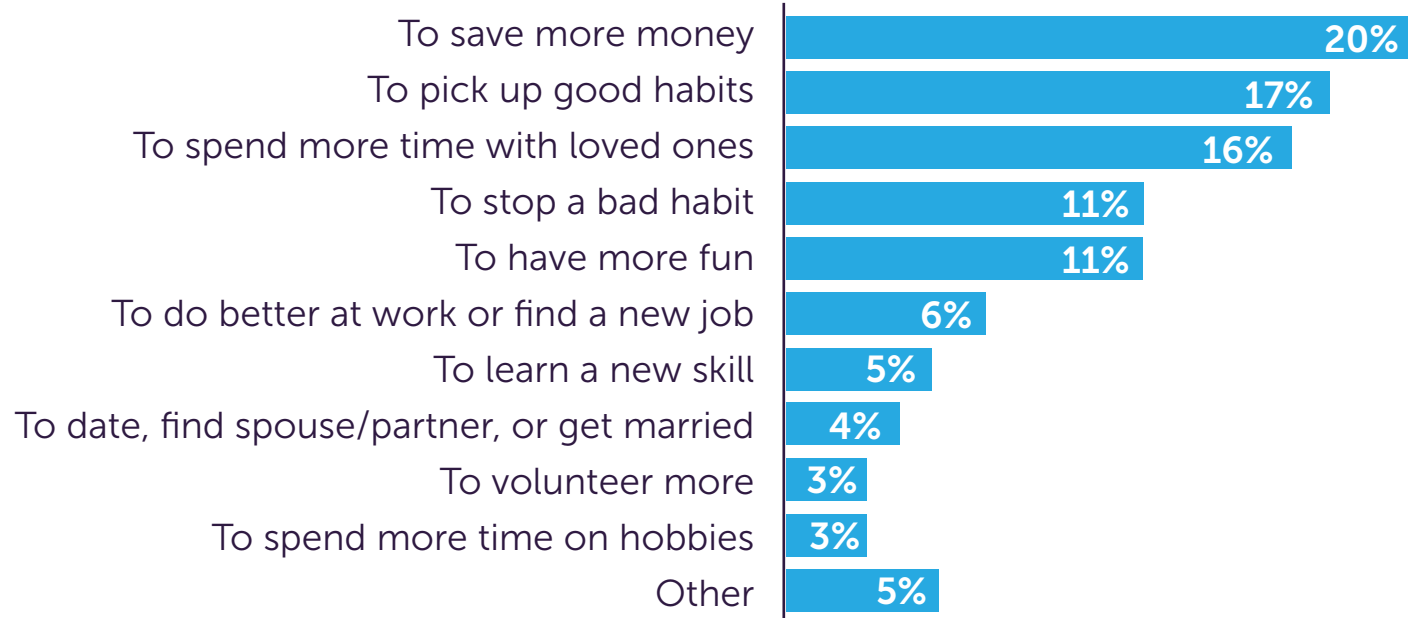
Q53. Generally speaking, do you reflect on how your life is going and imagine ways you could change or improve it?

Of those who made New Year's Resolutions last year, fewer than 4 in 10 kept all of them



While most people believe keeping a New Year's resolution is more likely than winning the lottery (67% vs. 33%), only about a third of people who made at least one New Year's resolution last year have kept all of them (36%).

Most likely area if you were to make a New Year's resolution this year

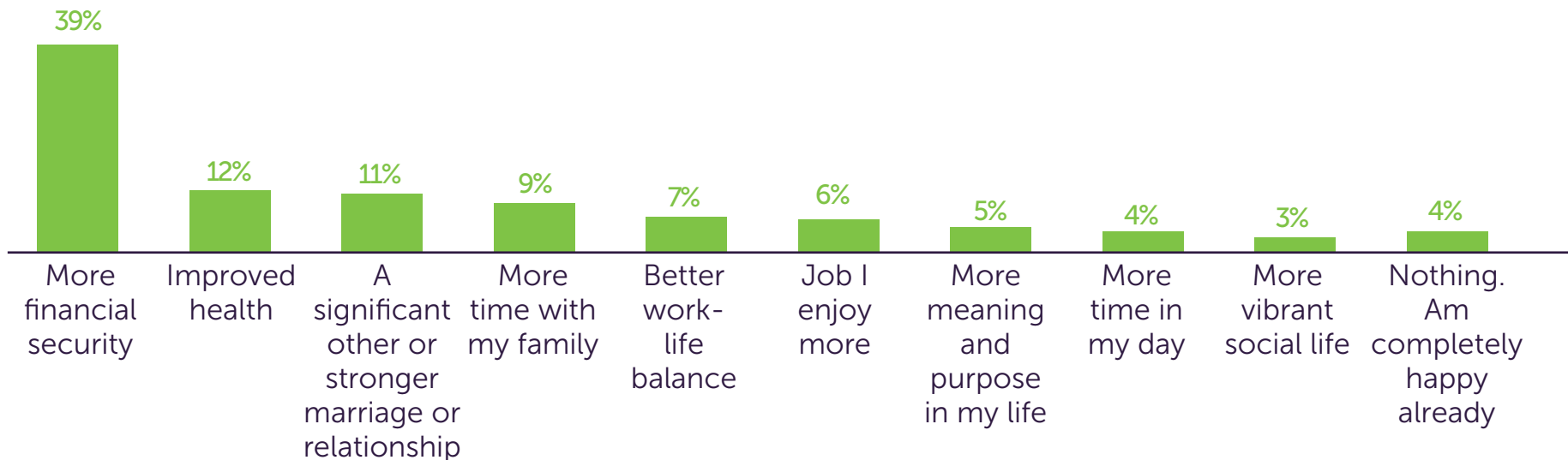


Q39. [BASE: Have made a New Year's resolution this year] Have you kept all of the New Year's resolutions you made last year?

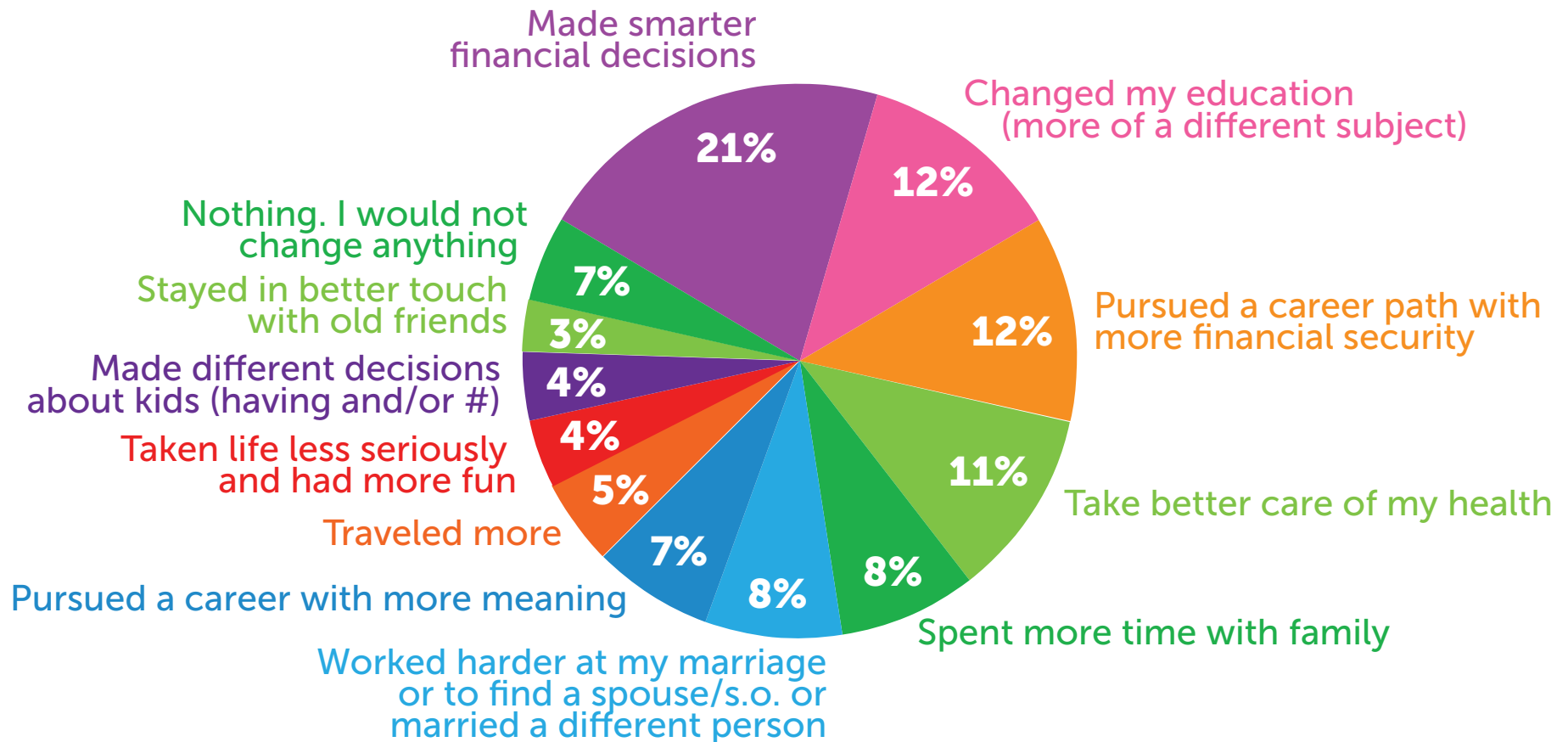
Q40. If you were to make a New Year's resolution this year, which of the following is it most likely to be?

More financial security tops the list of changes that would most increase happiness

Right now, which one of the following changes would MOST increase your happiness?

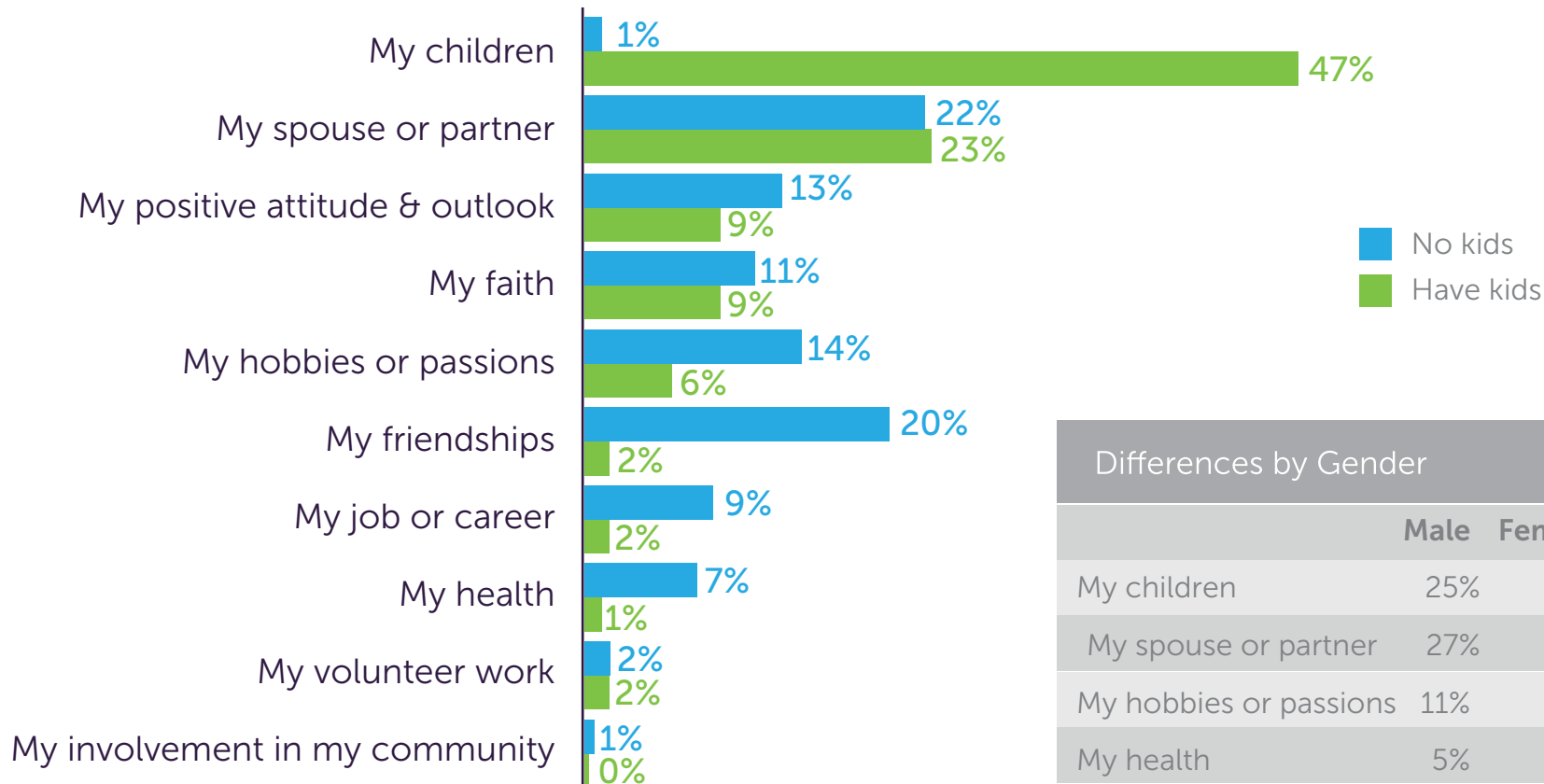


Finances tops the list of things people would have done differently in their life



Q45. If you could change one thing in your life, which of the following would you have done differently?

Children and relationships have brought people the most happiness

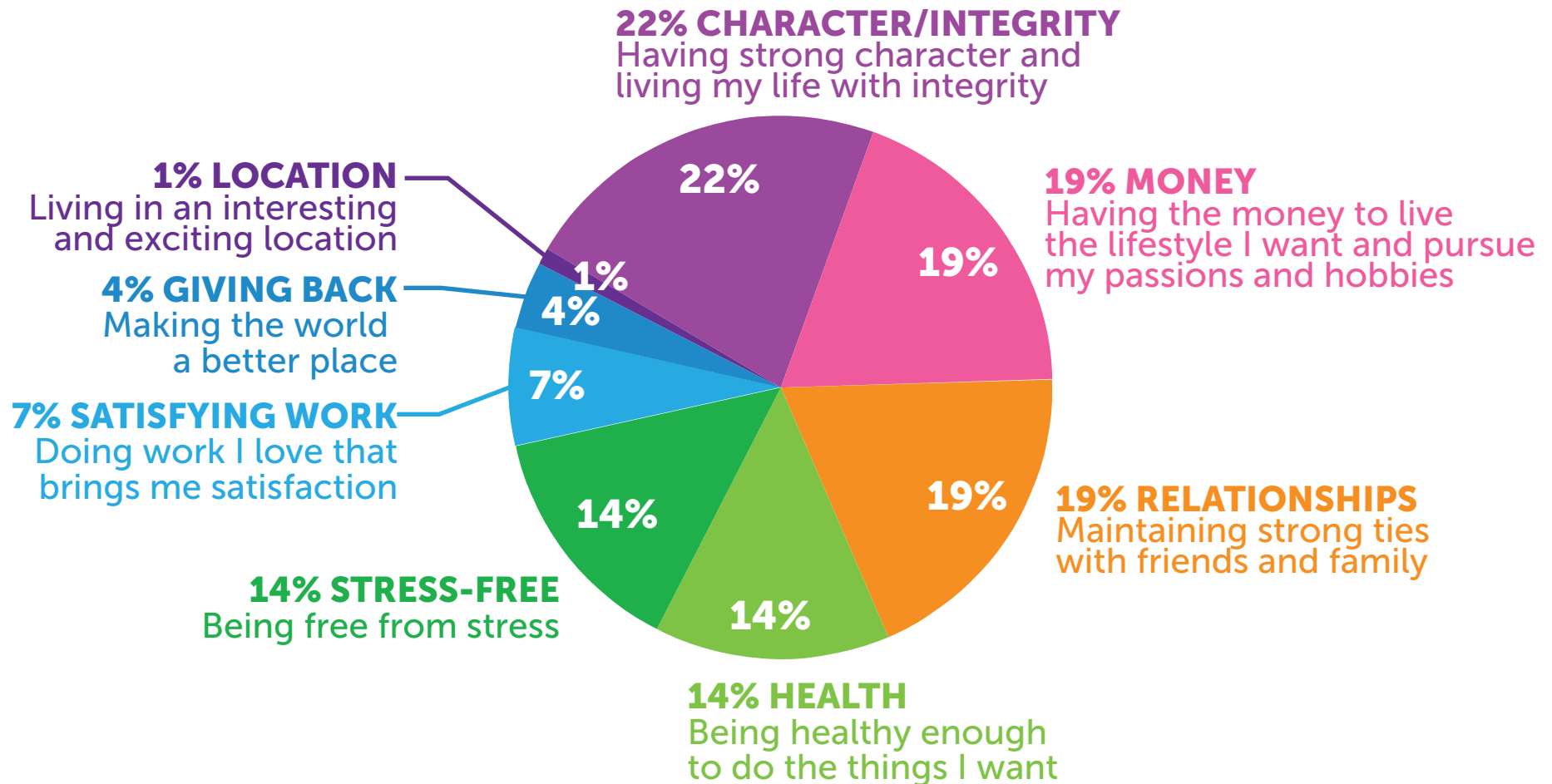


Differences by Gender

	Male	Female
My children	25%	42%
My spouse or partner	27%	18%
My hobbies or passions	11%	6%
My health	5%	1%

Q48. Which of the following do you think has brought you the most happiness over the course of your life?

Character/Integrity, Money & Relationships top list of the most important element of "A Good Life"



Q50. Which of the following is the most important to your personal definition of "a good life?"

Nearly half feel writing a novel is easier than changing careers after age 50



Q52. Which do you think is easier? Changing careers after age 50 or Writing a novel?

Appendix

Methodology

The survey was written by Luntz Global, LLC in collaboration with Life Reimagined. It was fielded by Global Marketing Research Services from October 7 to October 9, 2014. A total of 1,000 online interviews were completed with adults ages 40-59 in the United States. The results from the study were weighted to be nationally representative. The margin of sampling error for the sample is $\pm 3.1\%$.