



The  
Marriage  
Foundation

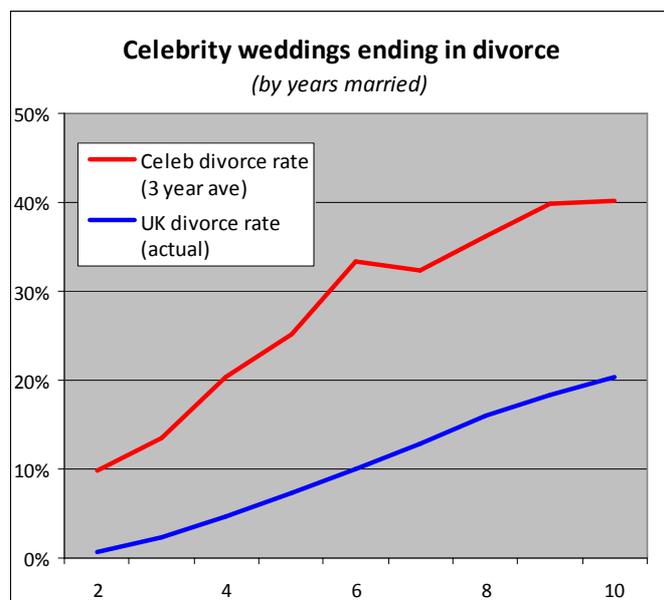
## Hello? Goodbye!

# Marriage and divorce amongst celebrities

Rehna Azim and Harry Benson

The Marriage Foundation, November 2012

- For many people, marriage is now the glitzy celebration that comes after having a baby and moving in together. *Hello!* and other celebrity magazines reinforce this focus on the event.
- But marriage is far more than a wedding: it is the commitment, the development of relationship skills and the working through issues together.
- The ingredients of marital success, however, are not dramatic or newsworthy. After the wedding it tends to be only the rows and splits that make the news.



- At the launch of the Marriage Foundation, Family Court judge Sir Paul Coleridge raised concerns about the image of *'Hello!'* weddings' and the experience of seeing many couples in court soon after the big day. Our research confirms that the glamour of celebrity weddings is a poor indicator of future marital success.
- Marriage Foundation has tracked 572 better-known celebrity couples whose weddings have taken place since 2000.
- Despite all the comforts and advantages of fame and wealth, these celebrities divorce at twice the rate of the UK population. After ten years of marriage, the divorce rate for celebrities is 40%, compared to 20% for the rest of us.

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## FOREWORD FROM SIR PAUL COLERIDGE

*This new research by **The Marriage Foundation** shows that the rate of divorce amongst celebrities is twice the national average. It is alarming for both them and us, as well as tragic. The deep rooted desire of every person to establish a long term healthy relationship is as alive and well today as it has ever been. The research shows that 70% of young people aspire to stable marriage.*

*There is no reason to believe that celebrities are any less keen on finding a stable partner, as is clear from the frequency of their marriages. Here is a group of individuals who provide the rest of us with enjoyment and diversion from the daily grind of life. But because of their particular occupation (on the screen or sports field or race track, or accident of birth), they are constantly under the gaze of the media. It is apparent that they pay the price by being even less able to sustain long term healthy relationships than the rest of us. Surely that is indeed tragic?*

*But what are the causes for the fragility of their relationships? We must be careful not to jump to superficial diagnoses. Without speaking to each of the casualties and establishing the real underlying cause of the failure we need to tread with caution in this area.*

*I offer one explanation. There are undoubtedly others but this may be part of the answer.*

*There is a disconnect between the nature of real long term relationships and the dramatised and apparently more exciting versions portrayed on screen or imagined for them by the rest of us. And this is surely exacerbated by huge, expensive fairy tale weddings attended by the icons of the day. All of us subconsciously want to believe that these beautiful people are living an idealised life which we can vicariously enjoy. Surely this must create a false expectation within the participants that in some way their relationships will be better, easier and, above all, more exciting than the average.*

*Unfortunately all men and women, glamorous or not, are riddled with the same weaknesses and shortcomings which surface even quite soon after the excitement of the wedding has died down. Coming down to earth with a heavier than usual bump must surely create added pressures. And material plenty, as they know only too well, does nothing to alleviate the stress except in the very short term.*

*The other worrying feature of these statistics is the picture they paint to those who regard the celebrity life style as something to be admired and copied for its own sake. These are, after all, the role models upon which many, especially young people, fashion their lives. Aspiration for happiness built on celebrity lifestyle is, it seems, dangerously flawed.*

*One of the main purposes of **the Marriage Foundation** is to champion the beauty and quality of real, long term, stable relationships especially within marriage. Married relationships are statistically most likely to remain intact longest, providing huge benefits to the individuals, the family, the wider family and the community. We also want to eradicate the dangerous fairy tales. The real thing is far, far better, in the end, than the fairy tale. It takes endless effort and selflessness to both attain and sustain. But it is worth it as we all know. And that is why we never stop trying to achieve it.*

**Sir Paul Coleridge**

## CELEBRITY WEDDINGS AND THE MARRIAGE FOUNDATION

When High Court judge Mr Justice Coleridge launched The Marriage Foundation in May 2012, he was most widely quoted for commenting on the *Hello!* magazine approach to marriage.

He suggested that celebrity magazines such as *Hello* promoted unrealistic expectations about marriage and people needed to understand the importance of working at relationships to make them succeed.

*"I normally find the people who are in there (Hello!) are in my court within about a year or two. What I criticise, what I call the Hello! magazine, Hollywood approach to this whole business, is that there is still, or maybe more than there was, a completely unrealistic expectation about long-term relationships and marriage in particular, that if you find the right ideal partner that's all that matters and things will just carry on from there on and you will be divinely happy."*

The judge made the point that he was not picking on *Hello* in particular. While it is indeed the home of the 'beautiful wedding' story, it doesn't promote the demise of relationships quite like many other tabloid magazines. *Hello!* is about celebration of all things beautiful; the lovely home, lovely wedding dress, lovely children. And it will also happily celebrate longevity in a celebrity relationship.

*Hello!* is one of the few magazines, for example, that writes positively about Hollywood power couple Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie. This couple has been together now for seven years. In their own words they 'did everything backwards.' They had six children; three biological and three adopted and have only this year become engaged to be married. Each often speaks, in interviews, of the importance of family and their wish and intention for a long-term commitment to each other.

For this they are rewarded in the tabloids with weekly stories, based on information from 'a source' about their imminent separation. The tabloids seem to be on a constant frenzied 'split watch' in respect of this family, bizarrely almost willing the break-up of a relationship in which six children would be affected, presumably because it would make a 'better' story. In the past seven years the tabloids have completely missed the impending break-up of many other shorter celebrity relationships whilst they have obsessed about Brad and Angelina.

Commitment, responsibility and stability simply don't make good headlines. That's why Cate Blanchett (happily married for 15 years) will always lose the *OK* cover to Katie Price. It's why more teenagers know Kim Kardashian (lavish televised wedding - marriage lasted 72 days) than triple Oscar winner Meryl Streep (whose marriage has lasted over two decades).

Years earlier it was a similar case with action hero Bruce Willis and his wife Demi Moore. That couple too stayed together for over a decade and raised a family but it was their eventual divorce which was most gleefully reported.

The trajectory of the tabloid money-spinner goes something like this: celebrity couple meet, announce the pregnancy, announce the engagement, split before the wedding, 'open their heart' about the agonising breakup to the tabloid in return for a cover story and eight page inside spread and then start all over again with a new partner before you can say 'commitment'.

The tabloids love nothing better than a good 'celeb' wedding. The build-up to the special day and the nuptials themselves are big sellers. It's just the 'happy ever after' that makes tabloid eyes glaze over. It's so, well, boring.

They appear to have an aversion to famous people remaining in long-term relationships, particularly marriages. They prefer, instead, the six month, (maximum one-year) headline grabbing celebrity relationship.

An American tabloid recently ran a story claiming that the one-year marriage of Prince William and Kate Middleton was ‘on the rocks’. As ever, the magazine relied on information from the ubiquitous ‘a source.’ The latter is a prolific contributor to tabloid stories about the famous. He seems to have unprecedented access to the most private moments of celebrities and is trusted by them to remain in the inner circle despite it being obvious that he has betrayed that trust.

The main message of ‘the source’ is usually that monogamy and marriage are boring.

Brad and Angelina have one other thing in common. They each married other partners in 2000, the year from which we at The Marriage Foundation have chosen to follow the trend of celebrity marriages and their subsequent journey.

Before we do that, let us start with some success stories.

## HELLO?

Success can only truly be measured over the very long term. Marriage is a promise for life.

So, notwithstanding that no marriage is ever completely secure, we applaud the many celebrities who take their marriage seriously and make it work well over the long term.

In the table below, we have included a handful of well known public figures, along with the theoretical risk of divorce they still face were they an average UK couple.

For example, “Bee Gee” Barry Gibb and his wife Linda have been married 40 years. After that length of time together, there should be virtually no risk of divorce. If they were a typical UK couple married that long, they would face a future risk of just 0.4%.

Or take two British Prime Ministers. Tony Blair has been married 30 years. His future risk of divorce is just 2%. Current PM David Cameron has been married 16 years. He still has a 12% risk of divorce. Not high. But one in nine couples married that long still get divorced.

All of this shows that marriage is a long-term business .Success can only be measured over many years.

<b>HELLO?</b>	<b>Some long lasting celeb marriages</b>	<b>% of UK couples who WILL STILL divorce after this duration of marriage</b>
58 years	Kirk Douglas and Anne Buydens	0%
40 years	Barry and Linda Gibb	0%
35 years	Jeff Bridges and Susan Geston	1%
31 years	Ringo Starr and Barbara Bach	2%
30 years	Tony and Cherie Blair	2%
20 years	Barack and Michelle Obama	8%
20 years	Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson	8%
16 years	David and Samantha Cameron	12%
15 years	Colin and Livia Firth	13%
15 years	Helen Mirren and Taylor Hackford	13%
15 years	Cate Blanchett and Andrew Upton	13%

## GOODBYE!

Alas, many celebs have a less robust view of married life. Surrounded by fame and fortune, celebs should be insulated from the difficulties of everyday life. Which gives more time for play. And some seem to treat married life as one of their play things.

Perhaps the most infamous marriage of recent times was that of Britney Spears, married for just 55 hours. Few non-celebs can match that kind of relaxed attitude to their marriage.

US TV and film stars have a special propensity for short “marriages”. Pamela Anderson, Kim Kardashian, Nicholas Cage and Jennifer Lopez have all had marriages lasting just a few months.

British TV stars are not exempt. Russell Brand lasted 14 months, after which time almost no UK marriages typically end in divorce.

So here are some striking examples of celeb failures.

		<b>% of UK couples who HAVE ALREADY divorced after this duration of marriage</b>
<b>GOODBYE!</b>	<b>Some very short celeb marriages</b>	
55 hours	Britney Spears and Jason Alexander	0%
18 days	Sinead O’Connor and Barry Herring	0%
30 days	Drew Barrymore and Jeremy Thomas	0%
60 days	Pamela Anderson and Rick Salomon	0%
72 days	Kim Kardashian and Kris Humphries	0%
3 months	Pamela Anderson and Kid Rock	0%
3 months	Lisa Marie Presley and Nicholas Cage	0%
4 months	Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Esposito	0%
8 months	Jennifer Lopez and Chris Judd	0%
13 months	Jennifer Lopez and Ojani Noa	0%
14 months	Russell Brand and Katy Perry	0%

## SUMMARY OF CELEBRITY MARRIAGES AND DIVORCES

Let us now look at how recent celebrity weddings have fared.

We have started by scanning websites for lists of celebrity weddings. ‘Celebrity’ is widely defined in this context. Some of the happy couples are simply related to famous people. Others are known only in their homelands. Others still had only the most tenuous connection with the worlds of show business, media and sport.

So we have selected from each list only those celebrities where one or other spouse was genuinely famous, being either a household name across the globe or in the USA or United Kingdom and the rest of Europe.

We have also used data specially commissioned by Marriage Foundation from the Office for National Statistics that allows us to calculate the UK divorce rate for each year of marriage. The full dataset will form a longer report on divorce rates from the Marriage Foundation.

Celebrities who married in the years 2000-2 have now been married for 10 years. After 10 years of marriage, 20% of UK couples have divorced.

The table below compares celebrity divorce rates with UK divorce rates.

## CELEBRITY WEDDINGS & DIVORCE RATES

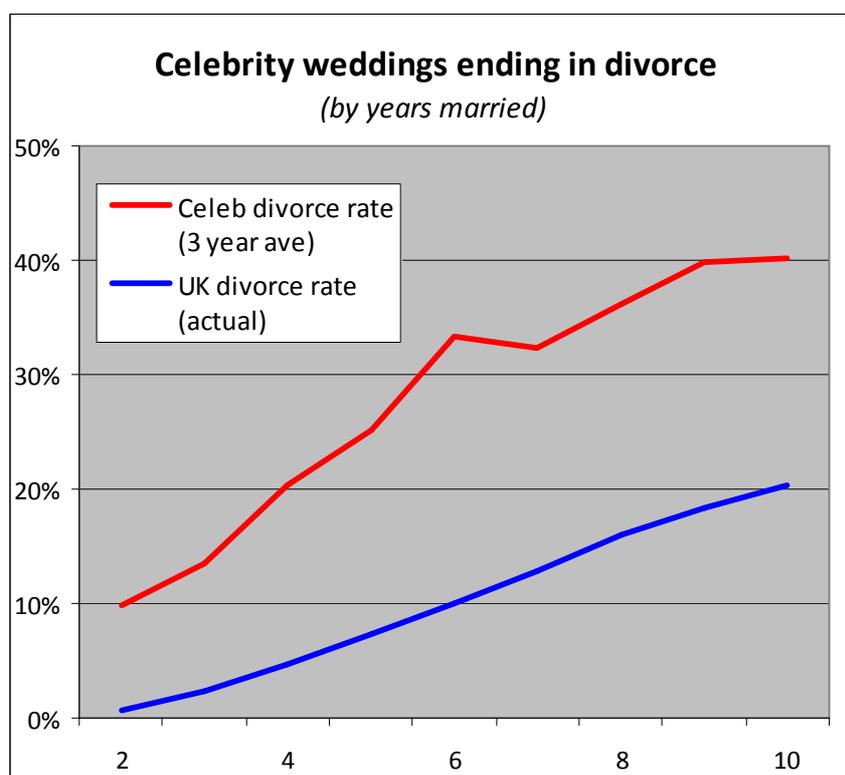
Year	All weddings	Top celeb Weddings	Top celeb Divorces	Divorce rate p.a.	Years married	Divorce rate (3yr)	Divorce rate (UK)
2000	708	73	23	32%			
2001	717	77	36	47%	10	40%	20%
2002	773	54	23	43%	9	40%	18%
2003	822	60	17	28%	8	36%	16%
2004	783	30	12	40%	7	32%	13%
2005	834	40	13	33%	6	33%	10%
2006	509	53	16	30%	5	25%	7%
2007	314	62	10	16%	4	20%	5%
2008	282	38	5	13%	3	13%	2%
2009	250	34	3	9%	2	10%	1%
2010	265	51	4	8%			

## CELEBRITY DIVORCE RATE IS EXACTLY DOUBLE

The chart below contrasts the celebrity divorce rate with the UK divorce rate. To smooth out year to year fluctuations in the celeb divorce rate, we have used a three year moving average (see table above, second column from right)

The chart shows the celebrity divorce rate remaining consistently above the UK divorce rate.

After 10 years of marriage, on average, the divorce rate for celebrities is 40% compared to a divorce rate for typical UK couples of 20%.



## SELECTED CELEBRITY MARRIAGES BY YEAR OF WEDDING

Still married

Divorced

### 2000

Catherine Zeta Jones and Michael Douglas  
Pete Sampras and Bridgette Wilson  
Gordon Brown and Sarah Macauley  
Jamie Oliver and Juliette Norton  
James Cameron and Suzy Amis  
Suzanne Khan and Hrithik Roshan

Madonna and Guy Ritchie  
Kate Hudson and Chris Robinson  
Angelina Jolie and Billy Bob Thornton  
Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston

### 2001

JK Rowling and Neil Murray  
Andre Agassi and Steffi Graf  
Pierce Brosnan and Keeley Shaye Smith  
Slash and Perla Ferrar  
Geena Davis and Reza Jarrahy  
Ice T and Nicole Austin

Drew Barrymore and Tom Green  
Justin Portman and Natalia Voldianova  
Jennifer Lopez and Chris Judd  
Diane Kruger and Guillaume Canet

### 2002

Gwen Steffani and Gavin Rossdale  
Julia Roberts and Danny Moder  
Claudia Schiffer and Matthew Vaughn  
Richard Gere and Carey Lowell  
Sarah Michelle Geller and Freddie Prinze Jr

Paul McCartney and Heather Mills  
Rebekah Wade and Ross Kemp  
Lisa Marie Presley and Nicolas Cage  
Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey  
Kym Marsh and Jack Ryder

### 2003

Chris Martin and Gwyneth Paltrow  
Olivia Williams and Rhashan Stone  
Mary J Blige and Kendu Isaacs  
Tess Daly and Vernon Kay  
Julianne Moore and Bart Freundlich  
Bridget Fonda and Danny Elfman  
Stella McCartney and Alisdhar Willis

Ben Kingsley and Alexandra Christman  
Kate Winslet and Sam Mendes

### 2004

Kevin Costner and Christine Baumgartner  
Diane Lane and Josh Brolin  
Dennis Quaid and Kimberly Buffington  
Nicolas Cage and Alice Kim  
Ruud van Nistelroy and Leontine Staats  
Mira Sorvino and Christopher Bacchus

Britney Spears and Kevin Federline  
Gillian Anderson and Julian Ozanne  
Tiger Woods and Ellen Nordegren  
Billy Joel and Katie Lee

## 2005

Prince Charles and Camilla Parker Bowles  
Robert Downey Jr and Susan Levin  
Melissa McCarthy and Ben Falcone  
Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood  
Leyton Hewitt and Beck Cartwright  
Tate Donovan and Corinne Kingsbury

Marilyn Manson and Dita Von Teese  
Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher  
Katie Price and Peter Andre

## 2006

Vanessa Redgrave and Franco Nero  
Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban  
James McAvoy and Anne-Marie Duff  
Robert Lindsay and Rosemary Ford  
Lara Flynn Boyle and Donald Ray  
Gina Lollobrigida and Javier Rigau

Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes  
Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Esposito  
Cheryl Cole and Ashley Cole  
Chantelle Houghton and Preston

## 2007

Aishwaray Rai and Abishek Bachchan  
Julie Christie and Duncan Campbell  
Ryan Giggs and Stacey Cook  
Ben Kingsley and Daniela Lavender  
Des O'Connor and Jodie Wilson  
John Barrowman and Scott Gill  
Harvey Weinstein and Georgina Chapman  
Kevin Pietersen and Jessica Taylor

Amy Whitehouse and Blake Fielder  
Pamela Anderson and Rick Salomon

## 2008

Gary Oldman and Alexandra Edenborough  
Woody Harrelson and Laura Louie  
Joe Walsh and Marjorie Bach  
Amanda Holden and Chris Hughes  
Mardy Fish and Stacey Gardner  
James Gandolfini and Deborah Lin  
KT Tunstall and Luke Bullen  
Vera Farmiga and Renn Hawkey

Scarlet Johansson and Ryan Reynolds

## 2009

Roger Federer and Mirka Vavrinec  
Andy Roddick and Brooklyn Decker  
Boris Becker and Sharley Kessenberg  
Claire Danes and Hugh Dancy  
Andrea Corr and Brett Desmond  
Jean Dujardin and Alexandra Lamy

Mark Wahlberg and Rhea Durham  
Shilpa Shetty and Raj Kundra  
Milla Jovovich and Paul Anderson  
Kevin Jonas and Daniela Deleasa

## **2010**

Harrison Ford and Calista Flockhart  
Hulk Hogan and Jennifer McDaniel  
Nicole Richie and Joel Madden  
Martina Hingis and Thibault Hutin  
Chris Hemsworth and Elsa Pataky  
Greg Norman and Kristen Kutner  
Roger Taylor and Sanna Potgietler  
Eddie Vedder and Jill McCormick  
Amanda Redman and Damien Schnabel

**Katy Perry and Russell Brand**