



PRESS RELEASE FROM MARRIAGE FOUNDATION AND MARRIAGE WEEK

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For better, for worse: staying in an unhappy marriage could be the best thing you do

With rates of family breakdown at an all-time high in the UK, new research shows unhappiness in a marriage is often just a short-term and fixable problem

New Marriage Foundation research reveals the majority of couples who are unhappy when their first child is born are happy ten years later if they stay together.

Of parents who are unhappy at the time of the birth of their first child, seven in ten stay together and of these the majority (68 per cent) are happy ten years later.

Twenty seven per cent of unhappy parents who stay together end up 'extremely happy,' rating happiness with their relationship a top mark of seven out of seven.

With rates of family breakdown at record levels in the UK, the research suggests too many couples are giving up on their marriages before they have given them a chance to succeed.

Harry Benson, research director of Marriage Foundation, commented: "Contrary to popular belief, staying in an unhappy marriage could be the best thing you ever do.

"Most marriages have their unhappy moments, but apart from the fortunately extremely rare cases where the relationship involves abuse, most couples can work through the difficulties to be happy later on.

"There is much a couple can do to get through a rocky patch in their relationship together. My own marriage faced such a crisis and twenty years on my wife and I have written a book, *What Mums Want and What Dads Need to Know*, to help other couples to avoid the unnecessary quagmire of misunderstandings we went through.

"A simple change a couple can make is to go on regular – but not routine – date nights. Previous research by Marriage Foundation showed that married couples who go on date nights every month have 14 per cent lower odds of their relationship breaking down than those who did not.

"Next month is Marriage Week, the perfect time to kick off the good habit of a regular time together dedicated to your marriage."

Sir Paul Coleridge, former High Court Judge and founder of Marriage Foundation commented: "With family breakdown especially in the first ten years at peak levels, this is really important, myth busting research.

“This study shows that because a couple is having a tough time adjusting to the demands of children, does not mean they will not come through it and end up with a really high quality, high satisfaction relationship in the long term.

“The problem lies in the misconceptions around the nature of long-term relationships. They do not just happen. Just because each party is passionate about the other at the start does not automatically mean they will remain for ever at that high octane level without effort and without periods of unhappiness.

“Talk to anyone who has a satisfying relationship twenty years on and they will tell you that it has had to be forged by sensitive, hard work by both sides over time. And success brings a reward beyond price which the whole family benefit from, especially the children.

“Keeping your relationship working and going forward is the far and away the best and most important ingredient in your child’s development.”

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Notes to editors

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About Marriage Foundation

Marriage Foundation was founded by Sir Paul Coleridge, a High Court Judge, moved by his personal experience in 40 years as a barrister and judge specialising in family law. The Foundation seeks to improve public understanding of marriage reduce the numbers of people drawn into the family justice system – some 500,000 children and adults each year.

Marriage Foundation has highlighted the crisis of family breakdown. Their research has found that a child born today only has a 50 per cent chance of living with both parents by the time they reach fifteen.

Foundation research has also found that 93 percent of parents who stay together until their child’s fifteenth birthday are married.

A source of statistics on marriage, cohabitation, commitment, divorce and family breakdown can be found on the [Marriage Foundation website](#).

About Marriage Week

Marriage Week is an annual event for couples to take time to pause and learn some new skills to take their marriages from good to very good. The wedding day is only the start and all marriages can get better and better with each passing year.

Marriage Week UK is coordinated by Marriage Foundation – the national champion for marriage. It is widely supported by charities and individuals who believe that healthy marriages bring benefits for all of society and should be encouraged and supported wherever possible.

Marriage Week is a primary preventative campaign which seeks to highlight the benefits of healthy marriage to society, media and governments, whilst seeking to educate and inform couples

regarding the benefits of an ever improving relationship, through largely local events, and media coverage.

Marriage Week UK runs both through local events put on by marriage champions and churches across the country, and through national events coordinated by Marriage Foundation. Please see the events page to see how you can get involved.