



Marriage Foundation

Celebrity divorce rates

Harry Benson & Rehna Azim
January 2016

- The huge publicity that surrounds celebrity weddings has done much to drive spiralling public expectations of what weddings should be like for the rest of us mortals. Marriage Foundation chairman and former high court judge Sir Paul Coleridge calls them *Hello magazine* weddings.
- But even if celebrities set the trend for extravagant weddings, their marriages are poor role models to follow.
- In our updated analysis of celebrity marriages, we look at 488 A-list couples who married between 2001 and 2010.
- We find that the celebrity divorce rate over the first fourteen years of marriage is 50%, double the current UK divorce rate over the same period of 25%.

Higher income cushions couples from the risk of family breakdown. Quite simply, more money makes life more comfortable and allows couples to look to the future rather than being stuck in the daily grind. For example, over the first five years of parenthood, stability increases linearly with income (*Benson, 2006*).

Celebrities, almost by definition, are individuals with the highest incomes. So it would be reasonable to expect celebs to have the lowest rates of divorce.

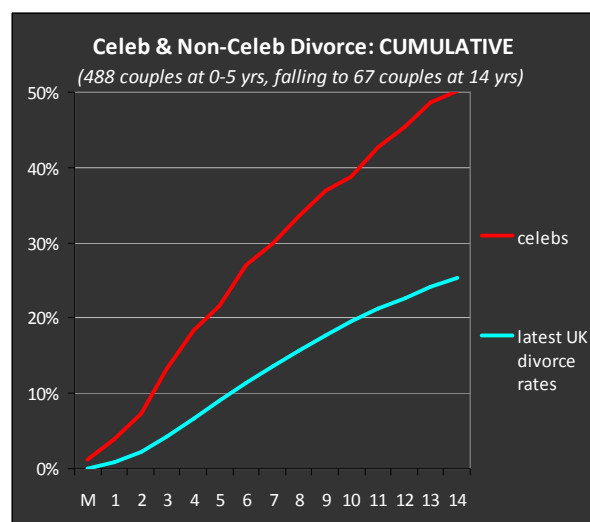
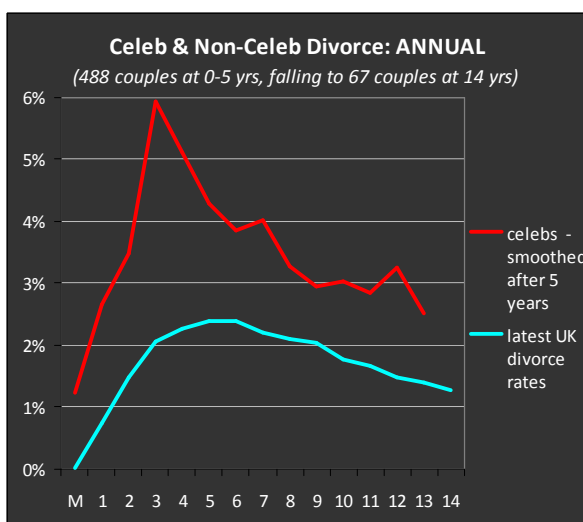
Yet the reverse is true. Our earlier analysis revealed that celebrities, as a group, divorce at roughly double the rate of us ordinary mortals (*Azim & Benson, 2012*).

In our new analysis – two years on – of 488 couples whose weddings feature in glossy magazines between

2001 and 2010, we have delved more deeply, looking at the duration of each individual celebrity marriage that ended in divorce – and therefore calculating a more accurate overall divorce rate for celebrities.

Our most striking observation is that celebrity divorces are especially prevalent in the earliest years: 4% end within the first year or so compared to 0.8% for ordinary UK couples; and 6% end in the third year alone, whereas the worst year for ordinary couples is 2.4% during the sixth year.

Those who aspire to fame and fortune should be careful what they wish for. Our current predicted divorce rate for ordinary couples over a lifetime is 38%. Celebrity couples exceed that in only ten years.



SELECTED LIST OF CELEBRITIES WHO HAVE DIVORCED, BY YEAR & DURATION OF MARRIAGE

Divorced	Married	Divorced	Years
Drew Barrymore and Tom Green	2001	2001	0
Lisa Marie Presley and Nicolas Cage	2002	2002	0
Jason Alexander and Britney Spears	2004	2004	0
Eminem and Kim Mathers	2006	2006	0
Kid Rock and Pamela Anderson	2006	2006	0
Anna Kournikova and Sergei Fedorov	2002	2003	1
Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Esposito	2006	2007	1
Ivana Trump and Rossano Rubicon	2008	2009	1
Cris Judd and Jennifer Lopez	2001	2003	2
Sheena Easton and John Minoli	2002	2004	2
Ben Kingsley and Alexandra Christmann	2003	2005	2
Gillian Anderson and Julian Ozanne	2004	2006	2
Jodie Kidd and Aidan Butler	2005	2007	2
Sean Bean and Georgina Sutcliffe	2008	2010	2
Katy Perry and Russell Brand	2010	2012	2
Andie MacDowell and Rhett DeCamp Hartzog	2001	2004	3
Keeley Hawes and Spencer McCallum	2001	2004	3
Sinead O'Connor and Nicholas Sommerlad	2001	2004	3
Steve Coogan and Caroline Hickman	2002	2005	3
Britney Spears and Kevin Federline	2004	2007	3
Charlie Sheen and Brooke Mueller	2008	2011	3
Gemma Arterton and Stefano Catelli	2010	2013	3
Charlie Sheen and Denise Richards	2002	2006	4
Emilia Fox and Jared Harris	2005	2009	4
Katie Price and Peter Andre	2005	2009	4
Cheryl Cole and Ashley Cole	2006	2010	4
Arun Nayar and Elizabeth Hurley	2007	2011	4
Denise van Outen and Lee Mead	2009	2013	4
Cat Deeley and Mark Whelan	2001	2006	5
David Walliams and Lara Stone	2010	2015	5
Chris Evans and Billie Piper	2001	2007	6
Heather Mills and Paul McCartney	2002	2008	6
Tiger Woods and Elin Nordegren	2004	2010	6
Katie Holmes and Tom Cruise	2006	2012	6
Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon	2008	2014	6
Khloe Kardashian and Lamar Odom	2009	2015	6
Ross Kemp and Rebekah Wade	2002	2009	7
Kate Winslet and Sam Mendes	2003	2010	7
Ashton Kutcher and Demi Moore	2005	2012	7
Jennifer Lopez and Marc Anthony	2004	2012	8
Danielle Spencer and Russell Crowe (Separated)	2003	2012	9
Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner	2005	2015	10
Stevie Wonder and Karen Millard-Morris	2001	2012	11
Carey Lowell and Richard Gere	2002	2013	11
Chris Martin and Gwyneth Paltrow	2003	2014	11
Nigella Lawson and Charles Saatchi	2003	2014	11
Ralf Schumacher and Cora Brinkmann	2001	2015	14

SELECTED LIST OF CELEBRITIES WHO ARE STILL MARRIED, BY YEAR & DURATION OF MARRIAGE

Still Married	Married	Years
Aled Jones and Claire Fossett	2001	14
Gabby Logan and Kenny Logan	2001	14
J.K. Rowling and Neil Murray	2001	14
Keely Shaye Smith and Pierce Brosnan	2001	14
Nick Faldo and Valerie Bercher	2001	14
Bjorn Borg and Patricia ostfeldt	2002	13
Christina Kiki Tholstrup and Roger Moore	2002	13
Kate Garraway and Ian Rumsey	2002	13
Richard Hammond and Mindy Etheridge	2002	13
The Edge and Morleigh Steinberg	2002	13
Emma Thompson and Greg Wise	2003	12
Mary J. Blige and Kendu Isaacs	2003	12
Michael McIntyre and Kitty Ward	2003	12
Stella McCartney and Alasdhair Willis	2003	12
Alice Kim Cage and Nicolas Cage	2004	11
Dennis Quaid and Kimberly Buffington	2004	11
Jermaine Jackson and Halima Rashid	2004	11
Kate Beckinsale and Len Wiseman	2004	11
Matthew MacFadyen and Keeley Hawes	2004	11
Camilla Parker Bowles and Prince Charles	2005	10
Donald Trump and Melania Knauss	2005	10
Jools Holland and Christabel McEwan	2005	10
Michael Owen and Louise Bonsall	2005	10
Robert Downey, Jr. and Susan Levin	2005	10
Ant McPartlin and Lisa Armstrong	2006	9
Denise Lewis and Steve Finan O'Connor	2006	9
Jack Black and Tanya Haden	2006	9
Keith Urban and Nicole Kidman	2006	9
Rob Brydon and Claire Holland	2006	9
Damian Lewis and Helen McCrory	2007	8
Holly Willoughby and Dan Baldwin	2007	8
Rod Stewart and Penny Lancaster	2007	8
Rupert Penry-Jones and Dervla Kirwan	2007	8
Steven Gerrard and Alex Curran	2007	8
Beyonce Knowles and Jay-Z	2008	7
Eddie Murphy and Tracey E. Edmonds	2008	7
Nelly Furtado and Demo Castellon	2008	7
Ulrika Jonsson and Brian Monet	2008	7
Wayne Rooney and Colleen McCoughlin	2008	7
Bruce Willis and Emma Heming	2009	6
Gisele Bundchen and Tom Brady	2009	6
Maggie Gyllenhaal and Peter Sarsgaard	2009	6
Rick Wakeman and Rachel Kaufman	2009	6
Roger Federer and Miroslava Vavrinec	2009	6
Dominic West and Catherine Fitzgerald	2010	5
Eamonn Holmes and Ruth Langsford	2010	5
Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem	2010	5
Sophie Dahl and Jamie Cullum	2010	5

DATA

Celebrity divorce rates

Years married	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Celebrities								
n=	488	488	488	488	488	488	437	403
Annual	1.2%	2.7%	3.5%	5.9%	5.1%	3.1%	5.5%	3.0%
Smoothed	1.2%	2.7%	3.5%	5.9%	5.1%	4.3%	3.8%	4.0%
Cumulative	1%	4%	7%	13%	18%	22%	27%	30%
UK population								
Annual	0.0%	0.7%	1.5%	2.1%	2.3%	2.4%	2.4%	2.2%
Cumulative	0%	1%	2%	4%	7%	9%	11%	14%
Years married	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Celebrities								
n=	364	303	251	212	182	122	67	
Annual	3.6%	3.3%	2.0%	3.8%	2.7%	3.3%	1.5%	
Smoothed	3.3%	3.0%	3.0%	2.8%	3.3%	2.5%		
Cumulative	34%	37%	39%	43%	45%	49%	50%	
UK population								
Annual	2.1%	2.0%	1.8%	1.7%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%	
Cumulative	16%	18%	20%	21%	23%	24%	25%	

References

- Azim, R., & Benson, H. (2012) Hello? Goodbye! Marriage and divorce amongst celebrities. Marriage Foundation
- Benson, H. (2006) The conflation of marriage and cohabitation in government statistics - a denial of difference rendered untenable by an analysis of outcomes. Bristol Community Family Trust.