

## **"NO STRINGS ATTACHED"**

**By Shirley A. Pascual**

"I am happy and contented with what I have and what I do right now. I am free!!" this is what a friend of mine, a successful young woman in her thirties, will say if you will come by and ask her about her current status, being single. According to American Psychologists, Etaugh, C.A. & Bridges, J.S. (2004), being single means not having a romantic partner. Single people may be unmarried, divorced, widowed, or without a partner; the term encompasses a wide range of lived experiences, and no single definition applies to everyone. Being single affects people differently; for some, being single is a source of happiness, while for others, being single is a source of stress or sadness. Singleness has a variety of psychological effects that are influenced by other aspects of a person's life.

In today's society, singlehood is now seen very differently. Some would even say that singlehood is a blessing as many people would actually prefer to stay single because of the benefits they perceive in being one. To mention some, here are a few of the main reasons why single men and women in their late twenties prefer to stay single. Although some women become single for a time after their marriage ends, others remain unmarried permanently. In the Philippines, the Philippines Statistics Authority reported that there are 34.8 million single persons in the Philippines and 54.1 percent of these are females.

Despite a recent increase in singlehood, single people today face stigma and shame because they do not conform to the traditional view that marriage is the gold standard for living happily ever after. Women, in particular, are looked down upon and put under pressure to find a mate and bear children. The "marriage gap" is closing as more people recognize that those who are not married are entitled to the same treatment and rights as those who are.

Most of us, especially women have a standard and factors in choosing a lifetime partner. They all want those good characteristics for sure. But why do others prefer to stay single? The thought of living single has a certain appeal to it, but is it all that it is cracked up to be? Many singles, both men and women, wouldn't have it any other way and they love every moment of their freedom, not having to answer to anyone but themselves.

Cruz, C.A.T & Ramiro, LS (2009) conducted a study to better understand the various life issues confronting Filipino single, never married women aged 40 and up, particularly in terms of happiness and quality of life. This study included 221 women who were chosen on purpose. According to the findings, 80.50 percent of middle-aged, never-married women respondents reported being happy or very happy with their current situation. The primary source of happiness is family, followed by friends and a relationship with God. Overall, respondents reported having a "good quality" of life, particularly in the psychological domain. While there was a significant difference in happiness between those who chose to be single and those who were forced to be, the quality of life was the same for both groups. As a result, contrary to popular belief, single never-married women can enjoy a high quality of life that includes physical, emotional, and social status, though level of happiness may differ between those who sought it voluntarily and those who did not. Which coincides with Timonen, V. &

Doyle, M. (2014) stating that understanding the reasons for singlehood is also important because the participants' later-life experiences were influenced by the degree of control they felt they had over their marital status in the past. Those who had purposefully and contentedly chosen the single status were happier with their lives and had no major regrets about their life path. They had no desire to marry later in life and were mostly preoccupied with hobbies, volunteer work, and socializing with friends and relatives.

A single lifestyle lets you come and go as you please, spend your time as you chose, and gives you the opportunity to date and go out without the pressure of having to answer to others. Most people who chose to go through life alone and it is not because they can't find a mate, but because they cherish the freedom and the idea of not having to worry about what someone else might think or say. It is not the thought of marriage that turns them away from making a long-term commitment. For many individuals, it is more of a conscious decision to stay single and they feel that getting married would mean going through drastic changes in their lifestyles. They like the single lifestyle that they are living and marriage would take them out of their comfort zone.

As they age, they may feel that their lives have passed them by because they didn't cultivate a meaningful relationship with someone else or settle down and have children. Although many married people envy those who are single, the same is true for many single people who think married couples have a lot to smile about. Although many married people, when asked, say that they miss being single, but they admit that they enjoy the married life, too

#### References:

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