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## 55% of Teenagers View Marriage Positively - Which Means Many Don't



YORK, Pa., March 29, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- With the wedding season kicking off in mid-spring, [StageofLife.com](#)—a resource and blogging website for high school students, Baby Boomers, and every life stage in between—asked its teen and college visitors, "What is the value of marriage?" This question is part of StageofLife.com's ongoing monthly [blogging contest](#) series.

(Logo: <https://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20100929/DC73342LOGO>)

Over 4,520 students from all 50 US states visited the marriage writing contest page. From those who submitted a blog entry to StageofLife.com on the topic, 55% of the teenagers shared a positive view about marriage, 28% had a negative view, and 17% took a neutral, unbiased, or more academic approach. In less than 30 days, over 41,500 words were uploaded to StageofLife.com as students shared their opinions and feelings about marriage.

The winning college student essay, [You're Stuck With Me](#), came from Kaleigh Somers, a Creative Writing minor at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA. When asked why she submitted an essay, Somers explained, "As soon as I read the contest description, I had this strong visceral reaction to it. I knew that I wanted to remind people that college students haven't lost sight in marriage. Some of us, myself included, still believe in the sanctity of marriage. Writing it out was the best method to express that."

Outside of the positive or negative emotional reaction, five common themes/trends about marriage emerged from the scores of essays written by high school and college students:

1. **Religion:** Students used religion—mostly Christianity—to describe the importance of the sacrament of matrimony. However, some students took an anti-religious tone.

York College of Pennsylvania junior Michelle Pease confessed in her essay, [A Word](#), "I don't care much for the religious undertones in the word marriage. Words don't belong to certain groups of people, and so there is no reason for the religious to "triumph" the non-religious in the gay marriage debate."

2. **Parents:** Students' parents' marriages affected how these students viewed marriage. If the parents' marriage was successful, then the student viewed marriage positively; if not, then the students often resented marriage.

StageofLife.com blogger purpleoveralls broke away from this trend in the winning high school essay, [Let me keep my childhood dream](#). She wrote, "I know from personal experience the effect divorce has on children, and I would never put my own child through that misery. But instead of giving up on marriage...I will take the risk because I'm a fighter. I will get married, stay married, and raise my children with the one thing I lacked: the assurance that yes, marriages do last."

3. **Marriage definitions:** Most students summed up marriage using the same, or similar, words—that marriage involves both love and commitment. These two values were also detrimental in defining a successful marriage.

High school contest finalist luvsleepcandy wrote in her essay, [Key to Success](#), "Ever since I've been able to hold comprehensible conversations, my mom has drilled into my head: 'Don't ever rush into marriage. A good marriage ALWAYS needs a strong foundation, and it can't be built entirely on love alone. Successful marriages can only happen when a couple is compatible; the husband and wife's personalities balance each other out.'"

4. **Reality strikes:** Many students wrote about the "reality" of marriage as much as they wrote about the idealism and romanticism of marriage. These students understand the commitment involved in marriage. Not one student wrote about the positivity of divorce.

Maddie Ann Cramer, a 10th grader in the International Baccalaureate program at Lakewood High School in Lakewood, CO, busted Disney's bubble in her essay, [Stay Strong](#), when she wrote, "When picturing marriage, every little girl imagines the sensational Cinderella reunited with the glittery, but obviously uncomfortable glass slipper. She is gliding down the palace steps, arm in arm with the preppiest prince the kingdom had ever seen. She is escorted into a bedazzled carriage that disappears into the sunset with a staged kiss. But the little girl does not know that as soon as the curtain falls, Cinderella pushes our Preppy Prince off, wipes her lips, and demands to know why his breath smells like rotten tuna."

5. **Marriage is Serious:** The majority of the essays submitted all revolved around one common thread: marriage is serious.

Dozens of students echoed one student's thoughts: Desiree van Arkens, a graduate from Horizon Honors High School, wrote in her essay, [I Gotta Watch You Get Old?](#), "The value of marriage is decreasing rapidly in society today unfortunately, but if everyone knew the deeper meaning of marriage, I believe more couples would remain married."

StageofLife.com organized a summary page from its findings on the "Value of Marriage" writing contest, which features links to

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more than 80 of the teen StageofLife.com essays on marriage at <http://www.stageoflife.com/marriage.aspx>.

For the March [writing contest](#), StageofLife.com asks its student bloggers, "What form of media impacts your life the most, and why?" Students have until Midnight (PDT) on March 31, 2011 to submit their 500 word essay. Winners receive a gift card or cash prizes from national sponsors, along with swag from StageofLife.com.

Previous StageofLife.com teen writing prompts addressed topics such as [teens and stress](#), [teens and money](#), [teens and heros](#), [teens and education](#), and more.

About Stage of Life®: [StageofLife.com](#) is a free, non-partisan, grassroots online community that hosts blogs, information, and resources for teens, Millennials/Gen Y, Gen X, and Baby Boomer generations. Its specialized content allows users to share and archive their life stories. StageofLife.com includes [free lesson plans](#) and writing prompts for Language Arts teachers, monthly [writing contests for high school students](#) and college students, blogging resources, a platform that [helps people promote their blogs](#), teen white papers, custom news feeds for each stage of life, and [My Life Rewards](#), an area dedicated to providing relevant coupons and discounts exclusively geared towards each stage of life.

If you'd like more information about StageofLife.com or an interview with CEO/Founder Eric Thiigs, please call (717) 244-0006, or use the [Contact Us](#) form on the website. You may also contact PR/Marketing Coordinator Megan Colyer at (717) 654-9554 or [megan.colyer\(at\)stageoflife.com](mailto:megan.colyer(at)stageoflife.com).

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