

EURO RSCG WORLDWIDE

# Prosumer Report

Vol 9, 2010

**GENDER SHIFT:**  
Are Women the New Men?



**"I'M NOT A FEMINIST.  
I HAIL MEN, I LOVE MEN."**

**- Lady Gaga**



The millennials are a generation like no other. They are more mobile, more multicultural, and more fluid adopters – and adapters – of new technologies than any generation that has come before. They live in a world without roadmaps or commonly recognized authorities, creating their own content, communication channels, and life paths. They differ from earlier generations in at least one other important way as well: In much of the West, they have grown up in the “postfeminist” era, with women broadly acknowledged as men’s equals – if not always treated as such. The civil rights protests and demonstrations these young people have witnessed in their lifetimes haven’t been about women versus men but about the rights of immigrants or people with minority sexual orientations. The notion of “women’s liberation” is a dusty artifact, of no relevance to young people other than as a source of humor or historical context.

In this paper, we examine the millennial generation through the prism of gender, seeking to understand the direction in which this cohort will advance society in years to come. In addition to abundant secondary research, Euro RSCG surveyed 600 adults in each of five markets: China, France, India, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The sample in each market was made up of 500 millennials (aged 18 to 25) and 100 Gen Xers/baby boomers (aged 40 to 55), for a total of 3,000 respondents. For the purposes of this report, we focus only on findings from millennials in the three developed nations in the West, a decision based on the very different cultural, political, and economic realities of China and India. Findings from those markets will be shared separately.

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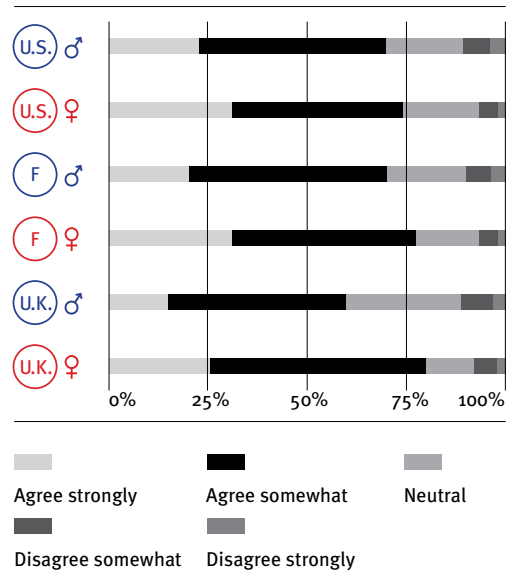
# Millennial Women: A Break from Feminism

Young females in the developed markets of the West are out of step with the world built by their mothers. They simply cannot conceive of a time when most universities and job opportunities would have been beyond their reach. They have always had access to “the pill” and reproductive freedom, and, for the most part, they have grown up expecting to work outside the home and be on equal footing with their romantic partners. The notion that they would ever need a man’s “permission” to buy or sell property or enter into a legal contract is absolutely alien to them.

Young women have, of course, had to struggle – to gain the respect of older male teachers and colleagues, against sexual harassment, to earn equal pay. It’s no surprise, then, that large majorities of men and women in our sample believe gender barriers still exist. As we’ll explore, however, the struggles today’s young women face are on a plane far removed from the hand-to-hand combat in which their mothers engaged. The notion of an outright battle of the sexes is no longer relevant for young women. They don’t consider their rights a cause to be fought, nor do they perceive their decisions and life choices as having an impact on women as a whole. Where there was once common cause, there is now a focus on individual achievement and satisfaction.

So what is the big issue and objective for young adults today? In a word: happiness – how to define it, how to gain it, how to keep it. And this doesn’t just apply to women: Euro RSCG’s New Consumer study, fielded in late 2009, found that half the global sample (and 63 percent of leading-edge Prosumers) were actively trying to figure out what makes them happy. In our new Millennials survey, we asked respondents what happiness means to them. Their answer was unequivocal: Happiness means “love” – selected by a majority of women

**There are still barriers for the genders**



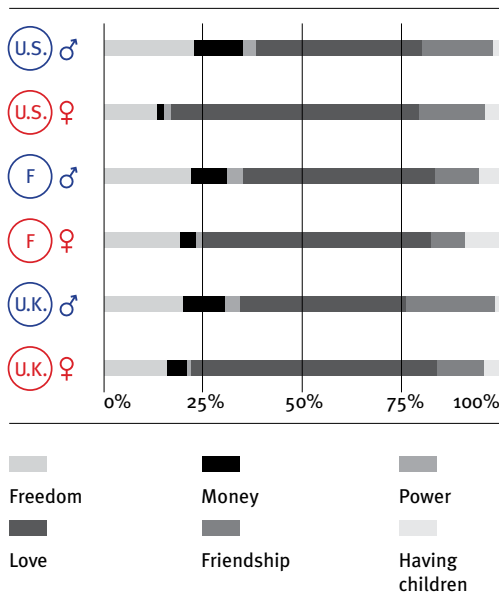
**Symbol key**

(U.S.) ♂	U.S. Male	(U.S.) ♀	U.S. Female
(F) ♂	France Male	(F) ♀	France Female
(U.K.) ♂	U.K. Male	(U.K.) ♀	U.K. Female

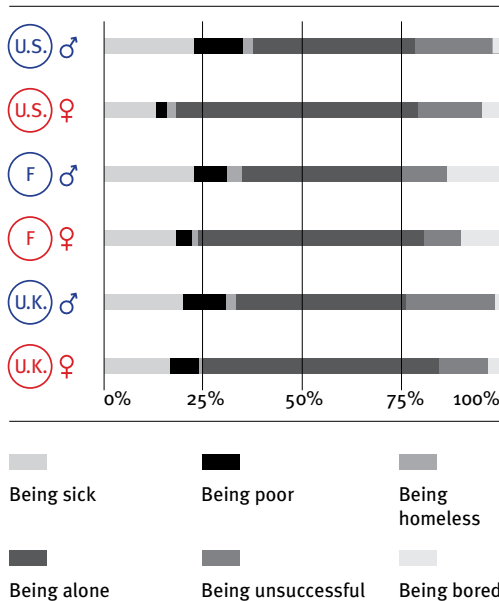
# "THERE IS A SPECIAL PLACE IN HELL FOR WOMEN WHO DO NOT HELP OTHER WOMEN."

– Madeleine K. Albright,  
U.S. Secretary of State (1997–2001)

Which of the following best describes what "happiness" means to you?



What is your biggest fear for the future?



and a plurality of men in each of the three markets on which we are focused. When we look at love and friendship combined, those selections tower over the percentages that chose the options of "freedom," "money," and "power." That's an important shift: It appears men and women are moving away from what have long been considered the coveted prizes at the end of the rat race – namely, money and power – in favor of love and friendship, which perhaps earlier generations took for granted. And whereas baby boomer women in the feminist era were all about gaining new freedoms, that has become much less of an issue for millennial females, who are far less likely than their mothers to have struggled against life and work restrictions. What young women want today is something their mothers may have taken for granted.

We also asked the millennials their biggest fear regarding the future. Once again, love and friendship come to the fore: By far the greatest fear afflicting both males and females is "being alone." That fear trumped being sick, poor, homeless, unsuccessful, or bored.

This intensive quest for love and friendship may hit some snags along the way. As this paper will show, millennial opposite-sex couples have some issues to resolve on their way to "happily ever after."

**"BUT LET ME  
TELL YOU, THIS  
GENDER THING  
IS HISTORY. YOU'RE  
LOOKING AT A GUY WHO SAT  
DOWN WITH MARGARET THATCHER  
ACROSS THE TABLE AND TALKED  
ABOUT SERIOUS ISSUES."**

**- George H. W. Bush**  
*U.S. President (1989-1993)*



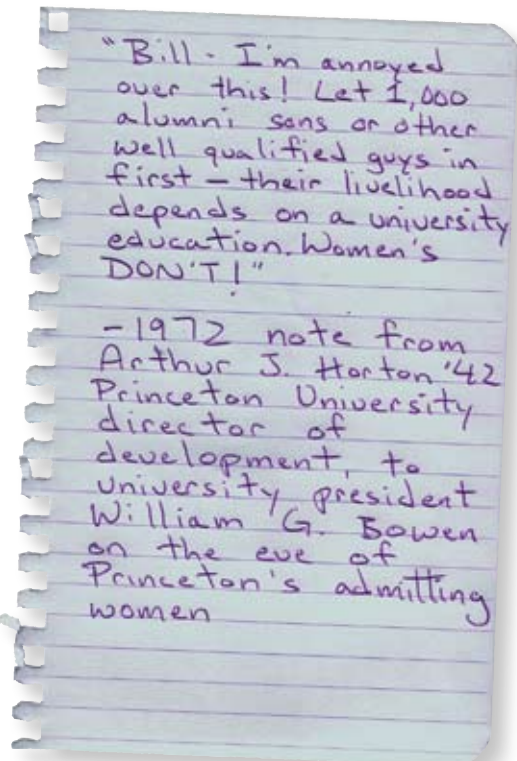
**DON DRAPER: "LET ME ASK YOU SOMETHING: WHAT  
DO WOMEN WANT?"**

**ROGER STERLING: "WHO CARES?"**

from "Mad Men"

# Rethinking the “Weaker Sex”

In the era of the women’s movement during the second half of the 20th century, girls and women had the odds stacked high against them. Males were considered better suited to everything from academics to athletics – and to just about all careers. Those females who managed to break through gender barriers found themselves surrounded by (not often welcoming) males. Vanderbilt University School of Medicine in Tennessee admitted but one woman to the Class of 1959. By 1977, the number of female students had increased to a whopping...nine. At Harvard University in 1972, only six of the 421 tenured professors were women. Normally progressive San Francisco didn’t accept its first female firefighter until 1987 – and only after a lawsuit forced its hand.



“Bill - I'm annoyed over this! Let 1,000 alumni sons or other well qualified guys in first - their livelihood depends on a university education. Women's DON'T!”

-1972 note from Arthur J. Horton '42 Princeton University director of development, to university president William G. Bowen on the eve of Princeton's admitting women

How different the situation is today: In the United States, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women now earn 60 percent of master’s degrees, about half of all law and medical degrees, and 42 percent of M.B.A.s. And the aforementioned Vanderbilt University? In 2010, for the first time, its medical school enrolled a class made up of more women (60) than men (44). In the workplace, women hold 51.4 percent of managerial and professional jobs – up from 26.1 percent in 1980. About a third of America’s physicians are now women, as are 45 percent of associates in law firms. And these strides are not limited to the U.S. or even the West: In China, women own more than 40 percent of private companies. In March 2010, *Forbes* titled an article “Why China Is an Incubator for Female Billionaires,” noting that the first fortunes in China were amassed by women such as Xiu Li Hawken, owner of the country’s first commercial real estate company.

As significant as specific educational and career successes is the fact that women in general are seen as being on an upward trajectory, while men are perceived to be moving in the opposite direction. Famed biologist Ronald Ericsson, who has been accused of misogyny in the past, says

today “it’s the women who are driving all decisions.” He explains “Women live longer than men. They do better in this economy. More of ’em graduate from college. They go into space and do everything men do, and sometimes they do it a whole lot better. I mean, hell, get out of the way – these females are going to leave us males in the dust.”

In most of the Western world, the Great Recession has served to further exacerbate men’s decline. Of the 11 million U.S. jobs destroyed since December 2007, 66 percent were held by men. Moreover, men dominate just two of the 15 job categories projected to grow the most over the next decade. In all likelihood, a growing number of men will be obliged to stay at home and count on their wives to support them and their children.

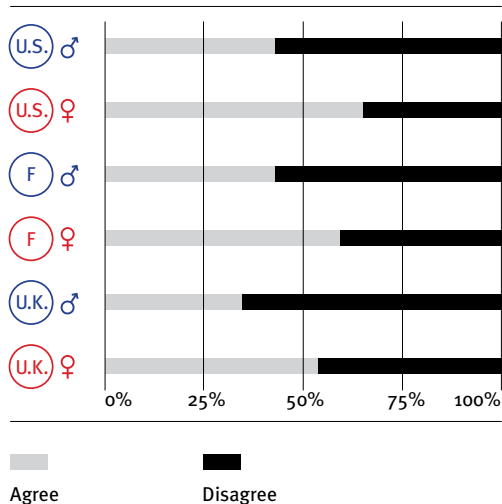
To some extent, **women have become the new men – and vice versa.** In an article in *The Atlantic* entitled “The End of Men,” journalist Hanna Rosin reminds us that “man has been the dominant sex since the dawn of mankind,” before adding that “for the first time in human history, that is changing – and with shocking speed.” The primary reason? “The global economy is evolving in a way that is eroding the historical preference for male children, worldwide.”

Rosin posits that women’s increased economic power has led many would-be parents to believe a daughter would have a better life than a son. When couples look at society, they see a virtuous circle for girls (more successful education, more stable employment, more opportunities, staying closer to parents/family), while, for boys, they see a vicious circle marked by lesser academic and career achievement, more drugs and/or alcoholism, and perhaps even criminal activity.

As a consequence, more parents, if allowed to choose the sex of their child, would choose a girl. This is an enormous change for traditionally patriarchal societies. In South Korea as recently as 1985, about half of all women in a national survey said they “must have a son.” That in itself was a departure from a time when “many wives who failed to produce male heirs were abused and treated as domestic servants,” according to Rosin. But

that percentage continued to fall, slowly until 1991 and then plummeting to just over 15 percent by 2003. Rosin reports that this shift is now beginning in other rapidly industrializing countries, including China and India.

**It will be women who lead change in the world**



“ALL SOCIETIES ON THE VERGE OF DEATH ARE MASCULINE. A SOCIETY CAN SURVIVE WITH ONLY ONE MAN; NO SOCIETY WILL SURVIVE A SHORTAGE OF WOMEN.”

– Germaine Greer

And yet...

Women’s Productivity an Important Driver of U.S. Economy	Women Continue to Face Discrimination and Other Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Women are the primary or co-breadwinner for 2/3 of American families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Almost 50 years after the Equal Pay Act, women are still paid an average of 77 cents for every dollar paid to men.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– In addition, women are the primary caregivers to children and often aging parents, subsidizing the economy with free or underpaid labor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Of companies in the <i>Fortune</i> 500, only 2.6 percent are led by a female CEO and only 15.2 percent of board seats are occupied by women.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Between 1997 and 2007, the number of women-owned businesses grew 44 percent, twice as fast as men-owned firms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– At the country’s top 100 law firms, only 17 percent of equity partners are women.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Forty years ago women owned 5 percent of all small businesses. Today they own 30 percent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Only 1 in 14 women earns more than \$100,000 a year, compared with 1 in 7 men.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Total sales of women-owned, privately held firms exceeded \$1.2 trillion in 2007.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– In industries in which women’s share of total employment is greater than 50 percent, median weekly earnings are less than in industries in which their share of total employment is less than 50 percent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Women make up more than 3/4 of jobs in the education and healthcare sectors.</li> </ul>	

Source: *Jobs and Economic Security for America’s Women*, National Economic Council (U.S.), October 2010

# Where Does That Leave Gender Relations?


The millennial woman has a new, self-defined “place” in the world – a place of her own choosing and making. The women who have gone before her have pushed through most of the barriers of old, giving her generation far more control over their destinies. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in human biology: In the course of mere decades, women have gone from hostages to their reproductive systems to overlords. As she works her way up the career ladder, a young woman can freeze her eggs and/or arrange for artificial insemination, rechanneling biology to suit her purposes. A male partner is optional. Meanwhile, the millennial male, who in previous eras would have had the luxury of having a woman at home (first mother and sisters, then wife) to tend to his every need and support his career advancement, now is on his own. Rather than enjoy the automatic fruits of a male-dominated world, he must compete against men *and* women for a shrinking piece of the pie. And he must behave in a way that may go against his very nature – sublimating his natural tendencies toward sexual conquest and aggression in a world now full of rules, restrictions, and consequences.

## The Perennial Question: What Do Women *Really* Want?

Our study has found that millennial females are pulled in many directions by a multiplicity of needs and objectives. No surprise there. In looking at the archetypes, however, two opposite aspirational figures appear: the Veronicas versus the Bettys. (For those deprived of *Archie* comic books in their youth, Veronica is the self-centered, take-no-prisoners rich girl, while Betty is the quintessential “girl next door”: wholesome and hard-working.)

**“I don’t care if men find it hard to know what women want these days; I don’t care if they are angry or frustrated because someone (us) changed the rules while they weren’t looking and forgot to send them a goddamned memo. Get used to it, guys. Or get a cat.”**

– Victoria, on Heartless Bitches International

An illustration of a woman sitting in a bright yellow, modern-style chair. She is wearing dark, wide-leg trousers and white, strappy high-heeled sandals. Her right hand is raised near her face, and her left hand rests on her lap. The background is a simple, light-colored wall with a window showing a grid pattern. A white speech bubble with a black border is positioned in the lower-left quadrant, containing a quote in bold, black, uppercase letters. The overall style is flat and graphic.

**"SOME OF US ARE  
BECOMING THE  
MEN WE WANTED  
TO MARRY."**

**—Gloria Steinem**

A minority of young women (Veronicas), excited by their new power, admire dominant females, as seen in the form of Madonna in her video “Express Yourself” or Beyoncé in “Telephone.” They enjoy depictions of women in power and envision the feminine ideal as the sort of women who populated Hollywood during the film-noir years: calculating women of mystery and beauty who could more than hold their own against men. In Veronica’s world, the men are but bit players, there to be manipulated and used.

The majority of millennials, in contrast, appear more inclined to be Bettys. They see themselves as wholly equal to men and look forward to a life marked by career success (for them *and* their partners) and the sort of life-work balance that eluded their mothers, who ultimately realized in the 1980s and 1990s that “having it all” really meant “doing it all.”

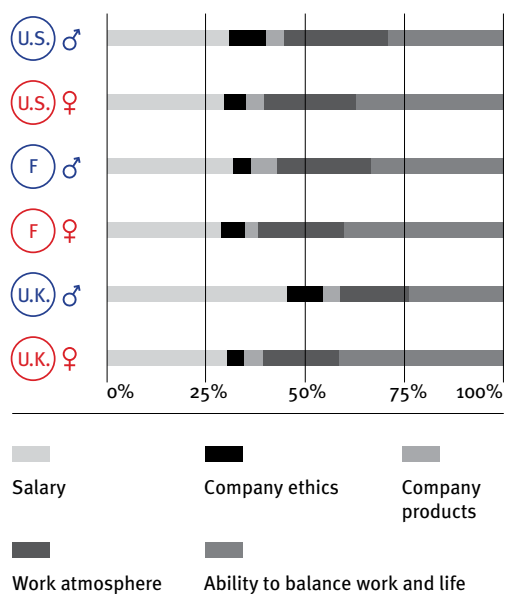
Looking at our survey findings, we see that millennial females are significantly more likely than males to emphasize life-work balance over salary when choosing a job. This gender divide is particularly apparent in the United Kingdom, where only a quarter of men but more than four in 10 women cite life-work balance as their top priority. And while women, like men, are most likely to link work with earning money, they are slightly more likely than men to say work is mostly about personal fulfillment. Interestingly, they are less likely than men to value work as a means of being useful to society, suggesting a more insular focus on self and family.

What we are seeing among many millennial females is that their vision of *ideal womanhood* is somewhat more traditional than that of their feminist mothers. They, too, want it all, but their definition of *all* highlights family and personal time at least as much as career. These women are far less likely than their mothers were to feel they have something to prove in the workplace, and they are conscious of the high costs of the sexual revolution. Without wanting to trade in any of the respect or freedom women have earned, they look back wistfully to a time when men were ready and able to take on the role of protector and provider. In a world of Jon Gosselins and Judd Apatow

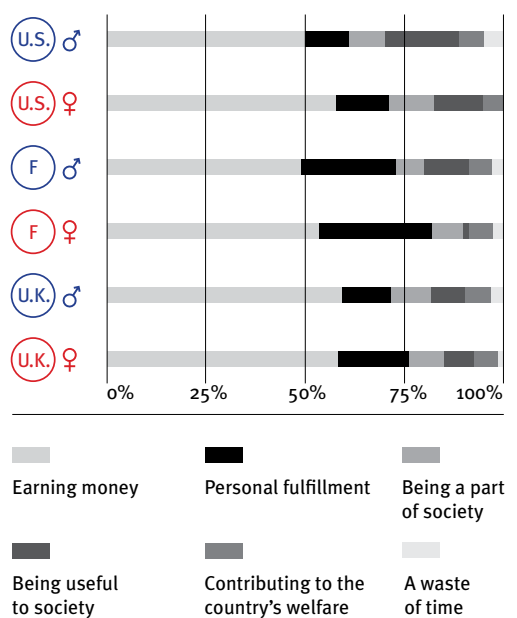
**“Men have called me a man-hater, a feminazi, frigid, a bitch...but in my mind it always translates as ‘You don’t need me to validate your existence, and that scares me.’”**

– Kim, on Heartless Bitches International

**What do you look at first when looking for a job?**



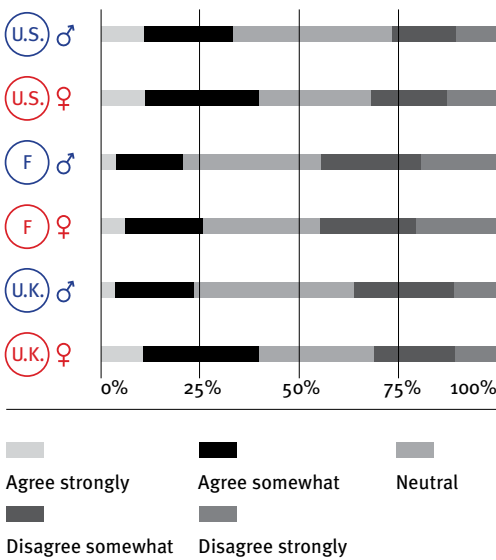
**What does work mean to you?**



"WHY DO YOU HAVE TO BREAK UP WITH HER? BE A MAN. JUST STOP CALLING."

- Joey, on "Friends"

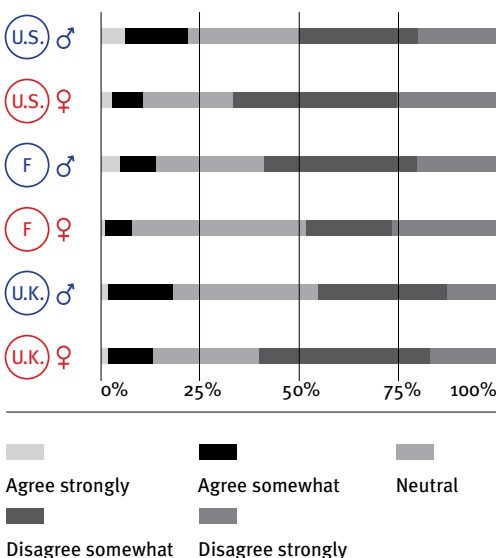
**Men should be the ones to lead and initiate in romance**



characters (men frozen in the Adolescent Age), women are looking for controlled masculine strength (not aggression), self-assurance, and competence – a man on whom they can count no matter what. In other words, they are looking for Edward or Jacob from the *Twilight* series. They want the fantasy, the chance to be loved and taken care of instead of constantly feeling they are the ones taking care of everything and everyone.

We see this desire for tradition in responses to the statement: "Men should be the ones to lead and initiate in romance." In each market, females were significantly more likely to agree than disagree with that statement, whereas men in two of the three markets were much more apt to disagree. [The exception was U.S. males, who were fairly evenly split between those who agreed (33 percent) and those who disagreed (29 percent).]

**I don't have any common values with the previous generations**

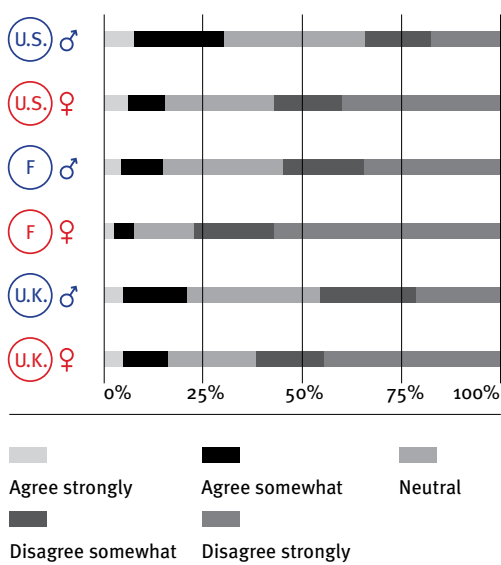


When we say young women want a return to some aspects of traditional gender roles, we are not suggesting they want to return to gender inequality. Far from it. What they seek, to varying degrees, is a **return to gender distinctions**. They want to celebrate the sexes' differences and enjoy the yin and yang that makes both parties stronger. They want men to act like, well, men! But this doesn't mean they want men to dominate – at home *or* at work.



**"I'M NOT  
GOING BACK  
TO WORK".**

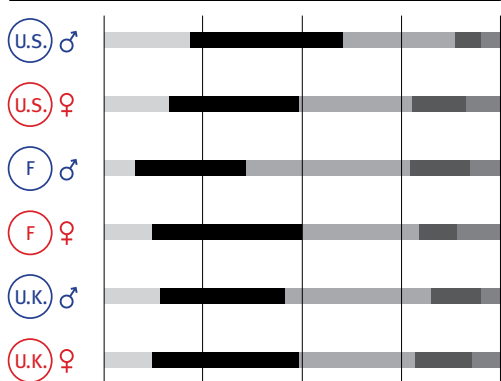
**A man should earn more than his female partner**



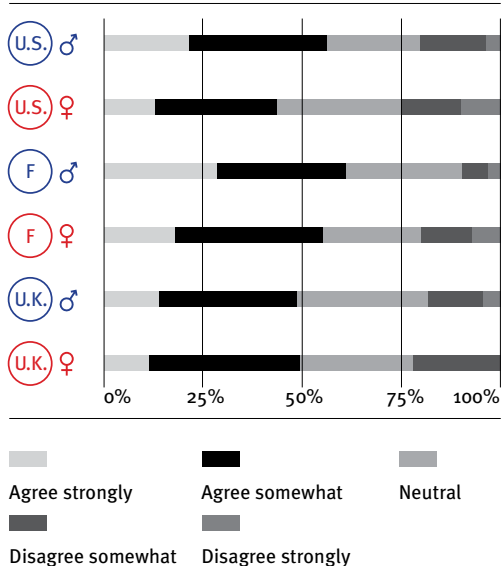
In our survey findings, females were significantly more likely than males to say they share common values with previous generations. Those traditional values don't extend to the content of pay stubs, however. Only a minority of millennials believe a man should earn more than his female partner. This sentiment was most common among American men (30 percent of whom feel this way) and least in evidence among women in France (6 percent).

When we asked the respondents whether men should be masculine and women feminine, we found some interesting cultural distinctions. Men in the United States were most likely to cling to gender stereotypes, with nearly six in 10 believing men should be masculine and women should be feminine. In both cases, they were significantly more likely than U.S. females to agree with the statements. In the United Kingdom, men and women had relatively similar responses to both statements, with nearly half of both sexes wanting to see traditional images maintained. It was very different in France, especially looking at the figures for men. Whereas just more than one-third of French males believe it's necessary they be masculine, nearly two-thirds believe women must be feminine. A clear double standard, and one that is not in evidence among French women.

**A man should be masculine**



**A woman should be feminine**



# Parenting and Partnering: Relationships Redefined

The male-female relationship has undergone fundamental change in the past four decades, and nowhere is this more apparent than within the home. The experience of parenting and coupling is a far cry from what it was when the baby boomers first wed. For many couples, parenting has become the focal point of the marriage, as children have moved out of the shadows of “seen and not heard” and onto center stage. We’ve all heard the terms *helicopter parents* (parents who constantly hover), *curling* or *lawnmower parents* (who vie to smooth out all of life’s obstacles), and even *Black Hawk parents* (who will do anything and everything to ensure their children’s success) – each one used to describe different aspects of this phenomenon. Parenting has grown from a biological function into an all-consuming passion. Where once the husband and father sat at the center of the family, now his offspring have assumed the throne.

For women, motherhood has been reinvented – no longer so much an expectation or obligation as a choice and source of feminine bliss and self-discovery. In 1991, when actress Demi Moore appeared pregnant and clad only in body paint on the cover of *Vanity Fair*, it was a scandal. Twenty years later, no one would bat an eyelash. That’s because over the past two decades, we have entered the Age of Narcissus. Having a baby has become a source of erotic pleasure (the body blossoming) and channel of self-promotion and family branding. The fashion industry has brought out lines not only for pregnant women but also for their bambini. Baby Dior worldwide and Bon Point in Europe are but two examples. Having a child is now the ultimate in personalization, as celebrities and others turn their babies into “Mini-Me’s.” Katie Holmes’ daughter Suri as baby doll – the American Girl doll brought to life. Time that once would have been spent catering to hubby’s every need is now devoted to posting

“THE TWO WOMEN EXCHANGED  
THE KIND OF GLANCE  
WOMEN USE WHEN NO  
KNIFE IS HANDY.”

– Ellery Queen

photos of the little (and not-so-little) ones on Facebook and blogging about virtually every moment of motherhood, from first kicks in the womb to college dormitory décor and beyond. A 2010 international study by Internet security firm AVG found that 81 percent of children under age two have an online presence, including fully 91 percent in the United States and 73 percent in Western Europe. Nearly a quarter of parents share images from prenatal sonograms on the Web.

### Partners, Inc.

Where couples once were “man and wife,” now they are full-fledged partners, sharing resources and responsibilities as they work toward common goals. It is marriage as merger.

Marshall: “OK, I’m just saying that it’s my wedding, too, and I should have a say in it.”

Lily: “But I’m the bride. So, I win.”

Marshall: “But I thought marriage is about two equal partners, sharing a life together.”

Lily: “Right, but I’m the bride. So, I win.”

– from “How I Met Your Mother” (U.S. television show)

Within this equal partnership, however, we find that women are the “deciders” in some important respects. When men were the acknowledged heads of household, major decisions were largely theirs to make. These days, it seems more and more that women are calling the shots on the home front – and that is at least partly because they have more life decisions to make. Though there has certainly been an increase in stay-at-home dads in recent years (sometimes due more to economic realities than free will), men for the most part are expected to stay the course in the work force from schooling’s end all the way to retirement. Women, in contrast, are seen as having options. They can work through their pregnancies, take minimal maternity leave, and keep their focus on career. They can spend a few (or more) years at home when their children are young and then try to re-assimilate into the paid work force. Or they can craft some sort of compromise, juggling career and childrearing with part-time work, flexible hours, job sharing, or the like. By and large, what these women choose determines what their male partners need to do. If a couple decides it’s best for the woman to stay home with the kids, the onus is on the male partner to pick up the slack financially. If the woman opts to return to paid work full-time, there is pressure on the man to take on more household responsibilities, from cleaning and grocery shopping to ferrying the kids to robotics club and tai chi.

What this means is that men have to be able to slip in and out of the role of provider according to the *woman’s* needs.

## From Gilded Cage to Guilt-Filled Age

Having more life choices isn't always an advantage for women. Every choice involving employment and childrearing has heavy implications for the family – and potentially dire consequences. At least that is how women are made to feel.

When baby boomer women stormed into the work world, they traded the world of homemaking for a life riddled with uncertainty, second-guessing, and copious amounts of guilt. The modern mother more often than not sees the downside of every compromise she makes – not enough time for her kids, not enough time for work, a home not as spotless as she remembers from her own childhood, meals not sufficiently nutritious or made from scratch. And society – including other women, political and religious figures, and the media – has done its best to stoke that guilt, constantly questioning women's choices and blaming all manner of social ills on mothers who work too much, love too much or too little, or otherwise don't manage to fulfill the divergent expectations of neighbors, relatives, and random commentators. Mothers have been blamed for everything from the rise in childhood obesity to increased rates of attention deficit disorder and autism. A recent cover story in *Time* magazine was entitled, "How the First Nine Months Shape the Rest of Your Life." In it, author Annie Murphy Paul tells us one's experiences as a fetus may prove more life-affecting than childhood experiences or even one's genetic makeup: "The nutrition you received in the womb; the pollutants, drugs and infections you were exposed to during gestation; your mother's health and state of mind while she was pregnant with you – all these factors shaped you as a baby and continue to affect you to this day." Great. Citing work in the field of "fetal origins," she goes on to say: "...the nine months of gestation constitute the most consequential period of our lives, permanently influencing the wiring of the brain and the functioning of organs such as the heart, liver and pancreas. The conditions we encounter in utero...shape our susceptibility to disease, our appetite and metabolism, our intelligence and temperament." No pressure there.

Bottom line: Mothers can't win. Whatever choices they make, whatever path they choose, someone somewhere will be pointing the finger of blame. As often as not, that finger belongs to the woman herself. Guilt is a powerful emotion.

This leads to important questions: As the new generation of women become older and more millennials enter into parenthood, will they have stronger defenses against social criticism of their life choices than their boomer or even Xer mothers did? Are we reaching a point at which women will refuse to be lured into the myth of the "perfect wife and mother," content simply to do the best they can? And will the postfeminist era see less of a divide between women who make different life choices? Perhaps the next gender movement won't be about rights but mutual respect.

**"WHEN WOMEN KISS,  
IT ALWAYS REMINDS  
ME OF PRIZE  
FIGHTERS  
SHAKING HANDS."**

**- H.L. Mencken**





# And What of Men? The Masculine Miasma

In 1963, Betty Freidan wrote the seminal book *The Feminine Mystique*, based on a survey of her fellow alumnae from the all-female Smith College Class of 1942. In it, she made the argument that women were victims of a false belief system that required them to find their life's meaning – and identity – through their husbands and children. Nearly half a century later, our thesis – what might be called *The Masculine Miasma* – posits that where men once found identity and meaning through their roles as head of household, sexual aggressor, protector and provider, and decision-maker, now they have lost that identity and are faltering even as women are growing stronger and more confident.

Earlier, we discussed the impact of women's employment decisions on both the household and expectations for her partner. As some women seek to restore a better life balance by stepping out of the work force to focus on family and self, many are finding their partners unwilling (and often unable) to step up and close the lost-income gap. Raised in a post-women's lib world, these young men don't consider it their obligation to provide sole financial support for the family. Working elbow to elbow with girls at school and women in the workplace, they have come to expect shared responsibility and shared duties. And though household incomes are well above what they were in the 1950s and 1960s (thanks in large part to two-income households), the proportion of incomes needed to cover necessities has skyrocketed. For instance, the average American family now spends more than half its total income (52 percent) on housing and transportation alone, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This makes it far more difficult for a man to shoulder the financial burden of a household singlehandedly, even if he were inclined to do so. And that means many women who otherwise may have chosen to return to the home simply don't have that option.

Another changed reality is that men have a new role within the home. In some ways, the realignment of the sexes has been a real boon for the modern man. Just as women have dialed up the "mommy experience," men, too, have plunged into parenthood, with young fathers taking on tasks and responsibilities their own fathers would have rejected as women's work. The new dynamic of households is allowing men to bond with their children in a way that used to be reserved almost exclusively for women. It is no longer automatically assumed that fathers know best, but neither is he relegated to the outskirts of the family's emotional core. That's to the benefit of the entire family, but also serves as a source of conflict. Not every woman is willing to allow her partner equal parenting status. Deep down – or even at the surface – most moms believe that when it comes to the children, they truly do know best.

# Conclusions

We are at a point at which the roles of both sexes have changed dramatically – and likely for good. The question remains whether men and women can move forward in a way that is mutually fulfilling now that gender roles and traditions have been turned on their head. One very positive sign is that, even in the midst of the global recession, a majority of the young men and women surveyed in the three markets are achieving their most important goal: They are happy.

## What It Means for Marketers

A lot has changed in the decades since the baby boomers first entered adulthood. Their children's attitudes are testament to that. And marketers must change right along with each generation, constantly repairing disconnects created over time. A few thoughts on tone and content:

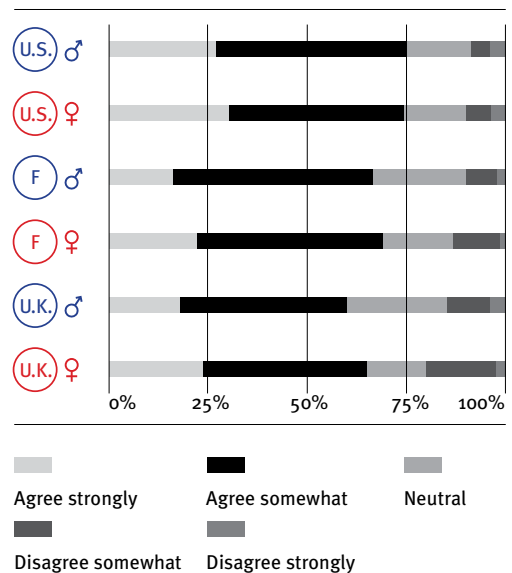
### Stop Man-Bashing:

Judging from the content of TV commercials and sitcoms, men are a sorry lot. It's a wonder they're able to brush their teeth without the supervision and assistance of their far-more-capable wives. While the bumbling, skill-deficient guy may be good for a laugh, young people want to see demonstrations of male strength and responsibility. Let's show more role models and fewer buffoons.

### Toss out Gender Prescriptions:

It's hard to imagine who at the U.K. supermarket chain Sainsbury's thought it was a good idea to label a line of children's dress-up costumes by gender. But there they were: the pilot, superhero, and soldier costumes labeled "Boy" and the princess, beautician, and nurse costumes labeled "Girl." No sexism there. Pinkstinks and other advocacy groups are calling for an end to the "culture of pink" – which puts girls into a box centered on beauty rather than brains or aptitude – and challenges the tendency to create separate boys' and girls' versions of even the most basic products (pink world globe, anyone?). Let's listen to them.

I consider myself happy



### **Reflect the Blurring of Gender Lines:**

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Gender distinctions are no longer set in stone. The NFL is targeting women. Men are enjoying herbal wraps at their local day spa. It only makes sense to move away from “either/or” in favor of “and.” Dolce & Gabbana’s Anthology fragrance line, for men and women, includes five scents based on the Tarot, each one intended to reveal a particular side of the wearer’s personality: le bateleur (the seducer), l’impératrice (the star), l’amoureux (the charmer), la roue de la fortune (the player), and la lune (the dreamer). The fragrances are for men, for women and mixed. The print and the TV advertising features well-known models of both sexes.

### **Let Women Be Human:**

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Trashy and trendy brand Diesel shows both young males and females in its last ad campaign: “Be Stupid.” The ads speak to a state of mind that’s all about a carefree attitude and enjoying life. The ads stand out, in part, because of their inclusion of women. Sometimes a woman really is “just one of the guys.”

### **Don’t Count Out Courtliness:**

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Just because we’re living in a more egalitarian society doesn’t mean women – and men – don’t value a chivalrous turn. Young males and females appreciate those everyday acts of courtesy that create a connection between two strangers – extending a hand to someone who has fallen, offering a seat on the bus, doing some small act that reminds us of our shared humanity and of what really matters in our frantically paced world. Chivas Regal, maker of premium scotch whisky has created a campaign under the tagline, “Live With Chivalry.” One piece of copy reads, “Millions of people. Everyone out for themselves. Can this really be the only way? No. Here’s to honor and to gallantry (depiction of man in tuxedo carrying a woman over muddy terrain in a rainstorm)...Here’s to a code of behavior that sets certain men apart from all others. Here’s to us.” A welcome reminder that chivalry and gallantry are not the sole province of vampires.

### **Acknowledge the New Couples Paradigm:**

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Speak to the new reality of male-female household partnerships by spotlighting the couple as successful brand or company – depicting how the two work together to manage the day-to-day workload (home, kids, jobs), keep the venture (family) moving forward, and increase profits (family happiness/satisfaction). Rather than depicting a dominant/subordinate or capable/incapable scenario, show how each person’s strengths combine to create a stronger whole.

**"IT WAS A  
MAN'S WORLD.  
THEN EVE  
ARRIVED."**

**– Richard Armour**

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