

50th Reunion Class Survey



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On the whole, the Class Survey shows our 369 respondents to be a happy and contented bunch of guys. Seventy-seven percent say they are either “very” or “extremely” happy, and 1% say they are not very happy. Only a small percentage (3%) are not very satisfied with themselves. Eighty-seven percent are in good/excellent health. They are overwhelmingly satisfied with their career choices (93%), and only 4% describe their current economic situation as less than comfortable. Most importantly, 95% look back favorably on their undergraduate years at Yale!

Only 34% feel their age, and 52% don't worry about aging. Our question about rating your libido compared to when you were in college drew some interesting responses. At the two ends of the spectrum, 5% (most impressively) said their libido was 100% of what it was back then, and 4% said it was 0%. The biggest grouping was at 25% of their college levels (37% of respondents), followed by 35% of respondents at 50% and 19% of respondents at 75%. Similarly impressive is the 44% who say they and their spouse/partner are sexually active (down, however, from 53% in the 45th Reunion Survey) – especially given the fact that only 29% state that they use Viagra regularly or occasionally.

The responses to our political questions were also noteworthy. Forty-eight percent say they consider themselves Democrats, 23% consider themselves

Republicans, and 26% consider themselves independent. Thirty-five percent say that in their adult lives they have moved to the left, while 20% say they have moved to the right. In the 2012 election 67% voted for Obama and 32% for Romney. This compares with the national popular vote of 51% to 47%. Can we say that coming of age in the 60s has had a discernible effect on our politics?

On social/political issues we favor progressive positions even more notably. Examples are the indicated percentages favoring the following:

pro-choice on abortion	83%
gay marriage	85%
stricter gun laws	84%
limits on amounts that can be spent in Federal elections	84%
limits on amounts spent in political campaigns by corporations and unions	88%

The responses to our global warming questions, however, were not quite as progressive. Thirty-five percent worry about global warming only a little or not at all, and only 22% worry about it a great deal. Seventy-three percent feel the increase in the earth's temperature has primarily resulted from pollution caused by human activities, while 20% feel this has resulted from natural changes in the environment.

Before exploring further the responses to the survey questions, we should point out that the complete set of answers can be viewed on the Class website, Yale66.org. Just click "Survey results" at the top left of the Home page. One perhaps unnecessary note of caution in viewing and reviewing these results: out of some 900 living classmates, only 369 responded. This has very likely affected the results, but to an extent which is unknowable.

WORK

Fully 43% of our respondents are retired, and 29% are working only part time. This reflects a major change from the 45th Reunion, when only 27% were fully retired, and 28% were working part time. Age does have its

benefits! Ten years ago, for the 40th, only 14% were retired. Of those responding to our current survey who are retired or partly retired, 78% are happy with their retirement, but a relatively significant 21% are ambivalent. Of those who are still working, 23% say they will never retire, 38% will retire only when they can no longer work at a satisfactory level, and 40% do have plans to retire at some identifiable date in the future.

Forty-four percent of our respondents never changed careers, 22% made only one career change, and the remaining 34% made two or more such changes. The responses to our question as to how many employers did you have varied all over the lot. The largest grouping was at two or three, the answer given by 33%.

A huge percentage of our respondents obtained a professional (73%) and/or other graduate degree (28%) after Yale. Other interesting answers were that 36% served in the military; 53% worked for a small business or professional firm (lots of doctors and lawyers!); 17% worked mostly in the non-profit sector; 7% worked mostly for the Federal Government; and 32% have been mostly self-employed.

FAMILY MATTERS

Among the respondents to our questions in this category, 4% never married; 57% only married once; 24% are in their second marriage, and 8% are in at least their third marriage. Only 2% are widowers, and 0.5% are in same-sex marriages. Only six of our respondents held off marrying until their 50s, with the oldest reported at 70. As for everyone else, the age range for first marriages was from 20 to the late 30s, with the largest groupings spread relatively evenly between 21 (right after graduation) and 29. The most first marriages occurred at age 23 (12%).

Our 369 respondents reported an aggregate of 797 children. By far the largest percentage (42%) had two children, and 21% had three. Worth noting are one classmate with nine children and another with ten! Most responses to the question: "What is the age of your youngest child?" ranged from 23 to 45. The largest number (24) were for age 36. Notably, there was one response for one year old and one for two years old. Three

respondents even answered "0," which we take as meaning they each had one "on the way"!

Eighty-nine percent of our respondents' children have a four-year college degree, and 49% have a graduate or professional degree. Of the college grads, 103 (31%) went to Yale, and 100 were turned down by Yale. Three hundred twenty-two of our respondents report a total of 913 grandchildren (47 respondents did not answer). Two report an amazing 16 grandchildren, and one each reports 15, 14, 13 and 12, respectively. The answers to our question about the number of great grandchildren do not seem credible (one with 6, and one with 12!), but who knows?!

HEALTH

Generally we are a pretty healthy group. Eighty-seven percent rate their health as good/excellent; 12% as fair; and only 1% as poor. Like everyone else, however, we are getting heavier. While 44% say their weight is within 10 pounds of their graduation weight, or less, 43% say their weight is more than 10 pounds over their graduation weight, and a full 13% say they weigh "a lot more than that." Our respondents get a lot of sleep. Thirty-three percent get eight hours of sleep a night, and another 58% average at least six or seven hours. On top of that, 33% nap at least a few times a week!

The survey asked if classmates had been diagnosed with any of all sorts of specified illnesses. The most frequently cited were high blood pressure (42%), prostate problems (33%), arthritis (29%), hearing problems (25%), hernia (24%), and cancer (25%). Fourteen percent have had joint replacements, mostly hips (65% of those who have had joint replacements) and knees (41%); the fact that the total exceeds 100% presumably indicates that more than one lucky classmate has had both replaced!

HABITS

We appear to be a class of non-smokers. Forty-five percent have never smoked, and 48% smoked at one time but have given it up. No one has

said he is a heavy smoker. Looks like those Surgeon General's warnings worked! We do drink more, but not a lot. Sixty-eight percent say they drink moderately, and 19% say they rarely drink. Only 5% say they drink heavily. As to drugs, 51% have tried marijuana, and 14% have tried cocaine or worse.

Neckties for most of us are a thing of the past. Forty-nine percent wear them only a few times a year, and 24% wear them a couple of times a month. But a full 19% still wear them every working day. Nor do we wear tuxedos very often. Forty-six percent wear them from one to four times a year, and 49% never wear them.



ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES

On the whole, our respondents seem to have been successful financially,

but it is hard to be precise about numbers within each range since 12% of the 369 who responded chose not to answer our question about income. At the high end, six classmates report that their highest annual income exceeded \$5,000,000. Below that, the number of respondents in the following ranges are somewhat evenly split, with the exception of one significant bulge:

Classmates	Annual Income
39	\$50,000 to \$100,000
115	\$100,001 to \$250,000
67	\$250,001 to \$500,000
49	\$500,001 to \$1,000,000
44	\$1,000,001 to \$5,000,000

As to net worth, of the 303 respondents who chose to answer the question, the greatest number (148, or 49%) fall in the \$1,000,001 to \$5,000,000 category. Above that are 99 respondents (eight above \$50,000,000). Below are 50 respondents. These net worth numbers are no doubt affected by the fact that 66 respondents chose not to answer.

Ten percent describe their current economic situation as "thriving;" 40% as "quite comfortable;" 46% as "comfortable;" and only 4% as "struggling" or "suffering." One of the more telling responses is that 35% spend part of the year in a second home. Ninety-four percent own their principal residence, and only 1% live in an assisted living facility. For most respondents (78%) their principal residence is a single-family home. Most of the others (18%) live in a townhouse or apartment.

Interestingly, the type of community in which most respondents live is split somewhat evenly among a large city (23%), a medium-sized city (17%), a small town or small city (26%) and a suburb (24%). The remaining 10% live in the country. Fifty-one percent of our respondents make annual donations to charitable organizations in the range of \$2,001 to \$20,000. Of the remaining 49%, approximately half give more, and half give less.

POLITICS

We discussed some of the results for this section earlier, but there are several other very interesting sets of responses. As noted above, our political party preferences favor Democrats over Republicans by 48% to 23%, but with a significant (26%) showing of Independents. Our parents' politics leaned the other way: 48% Republican, 34% Democrat and only 11% Independent.

One of our questions was "Since 1960 who has been the best President?" Three hundred fifty-six respondents answered the question, and the results were as follows:

Reagan	102	29 %
Clinton	78	22 %
Obama	60	17 %
Johnson	47	13 %
Kennedy	37	10 %
George H.W. Bush	19	5 %
Carter	7	2 %
Nixon	4	1 %
Ford	1	0.3%
"W"	1	0.3%

Even though Reagan had almost one-third more support than his nearest competitor, adding up all the "votes" for the two parties show the Democrats with 229 and the Republicans with 127.

SOCIAL/POLITICAL ISSUES

Most of the responses to the questions in this section have been discussed earlier, but there are some very interesting additional results here as well. In reaction to the statement: "The U.S. is adjusting well to its increasingly diverse population," our respondents were divided. The "agree" and "strongly agree" responses totaled 36%, and the "disagree" and "strongly disagree" totaled 51%, while 8% were "not sure." Reactions to the

statement: "Current U.S. immigration trends pose a threat to traditional American values" were much more strongly in the negative: 69% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while only 23% agreed or strongly agreed. (These responses came in before the sharp rise in anti-immigrant sentiment that followed the Syrian refugee crisis in the late fall of 2015.)

The next statement as to which the survey asked for comments was "The U.S. government is doing a good job in combating terrorist threats." The results (again, as of early November, 2015) were as follows:

Strongly agree	3 %
Agree	60 %
Disagree	20 %
Strongly disagree	7 %
Not sure	9 %

We also asked respondents to address the statement: "The U.S. has come a long way in coming to grips with its racial problems." Most responses were favorable:

Strongly agree	6 %
Agree	63 %
Disagree	23 %
Strongly disagree	4 %
Not sure	4 %

These responses came in during the summer and early fall of 2015, following several shootings by white policemen of black men.

One of the most controversial statements for which we sought comment was "President Obama is doing a good job." The responses were more favorable to the President than national polling (in an April 2015 CNN poll, for example, 48% said yes, and 47% said no):

Strongly agree	20 %
Agree	37 %

Disagree	16 %
Strongly disagree	23 %
Not sure	4 %

The reactions to our final statement in this section, "Congress is doing a good job," were even more negative than national polling (in a November 2015 Gallup poll, 11% approved the job Congress is doing, while 86% disapproved):

Strongly agree	1 %
Agree	3 %
Disagree	32 %
Strongly disagree	64 %
Not sure	1 %

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Our respondents are involved in a myriad of types of community service, including the following (note that there is clearly some significant overlap):

Educational/cultural	49 %
Religious	33 %
Civic improvement	23 %
Health	22 %
Environmental	19 %
Recreational	15 %
Youth oriented	14 %
Residential	12 %
Other	15 %

Most service is at the neighborhood, town, and city levels, but with service at the state, national, and international levels at a meaningful 43% of such local levels. Our community service is performed mostly at the rate of five hours per week or less.

LIFESTYLE

In this section the survey asked several questions about religion, living and traveling in foreign countries and electronic communications. Consistent with the national trends, most of our respondents seem to have fallen off the wagon as far as religion is concerned. Eighty-six percent of our respondents say they were raised in a religious tradition. However, when asked how important is religion in your life today, the answers showed a marked lack of enthusiasm:

Very	20 %
Somewhat	24 %
A little	24 %
Not at all	32 %

Similarly, 68% said they attended organized religious services less than once a month, and only 14% attend four or more times a month. Nevertheless, 60% of our respondents said they considered themselves adherents (no matter how loosely) of an established religion. The religions named varied dramatically. The largest percentages were Episcopalian (24%) and Judaism (21%). Roman Catholics were at 10%, and mainstream Protestants (Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Methodists, etc.) were at 23%. There were no Mormons, and 3% stated they were atheists.

We seem to be quite an internationally oriented group. A noteworthy 48% have at one point lived abroad. Of those, 93% say they have lived in from one to five foreign countries. The cities which have attracted the most respondents are, predictably, London (40% of those respondents having lived abroad) and Paris (33%).

We also travel a lot. The answers to the question "In how many foreign countries have you traveled?" are illustrative:

1 – 5	7 %
6 – 10	23 %
11 – 20	37 %
21 – 30	15 %
more than 30	17 %

The survey asked a couple of questions regarding our use of electronic media. We suspect our answers show much less facility with such media than if we asked the same questions of our kids. As an example, only 26% of us use Facebook, and only 25% use Skype or Face Time. Fourteen percent say they use LinkedIn, and only minuscule percentages use Instagram or Twitter. A full 57% say they use none of the above. When communicating by electronic messaging over the Internet, our respondents overwhelmingly favor email (97%), with texting in second place.

MORE ABOUT YOU

In this section the survey asked a variety of questions of a personal nature. The first asked our respondents to identify their current interests and activities. As one would expect, the answers varied immensely. Those that received the greatest notice were:

Reading	84 %
Traveling for pleasure at home or abroad	83 %
Dining in restaurants	75 %
Taking walks	69 %
Exercise in a gym or home	63 %
Going to museums	60 %
Going to movies	56 %
Listening to music or the radio	55 %
Watching TV	54 %
Going to theater	52 %
Going to concerts	48 %
Arts and other diversions	42 %
Helping others	36 %
Going to lectures	35 %
Giving dinner parties	25 %

The big winners of the "If I could do it over, I would choose" question were:

To have read more books	52 %
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To exercise more	50 %
To be more computer literate	37 %
To have spent more time with my family	28 %
To have married later	11 %

Hard to believe, but 15 respondents (5%) say they would have chosen a different college!

In response to a question asking how many close friends do you have, the greatest percentage (44%) answered five to ten. Fewer than five was the answer of 32% of our respondents, and 15% answered eleven to fifteen. Ten percent are the principal caregivers for a family member.

The survey included three questions about the frequency of different forms of exercise. Sixty-five percent said they did walking/light exercise at least three times a week. An impressive 40% said they did vigorous aerobic exercise at least three times a week, but only 24% replied that they did weight training that often.

The final question in this section was "Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of our society?" The optimists (26%) and pessimists (19%) were more or less evenly divided. "Some of both" attracted the most answers – 55%.

READING AND VIEWING

We are avid readers. Thirteen percent of our respondents say they read over 30 books a year. The largest percentage (55%) read between 6 and 20 a year. We are also avid moviegoers, but slightly less so than readers. Eleven percent see an average of more than 30 movies a year. The greatest percentage (63%) go to the movies 10 or fewer times a year. Although with the standards being so different it is hard to compare, it appears that we are less enamored of television. Only 2% watch more than 30 hours a week, and 70% watch 10 hours or less a week.

Eighty-four percent of our respondents follow the news quite closely.

Newspapers (ranked #1 by 62% of our respondents) remain our preferred method of obtaining the news. Television and the Internet are close competitors for second choice. The former is ranked in the top 3 of news sources by 73% of our respondents, and the latter in the top 3 by 77% of our respondents.

YALE

As mentioned earlier, our respondents overwhelmingly (95%) look back on their undergraduate years as a positive experience. One of our questions effectively asked if they would have liked that experience to have been somewhat different: would you have liked Yale to have admitted women back in our day? A majority (58%) said yes; a significant minority (20%) said no; and the remaining 22% said they were indifferent.

Asked about their relationships with other classmates, 31% said they see/communicate with 3 or more classmates often; 33% said they see/communicate with 1 or 2 classmates often; and another 37% reported no such classmate interaction.

VIETNAM

Since this topic is covered extensively in another part of this book, we need not say much about it here. Suffice it to say, the Vietnam War had a major impact on our class. A full 45% of our respondents served in the armed services or another U.S. government agency during the war years. And that figure does not include the many whose career plans were altered as a result of the war.

SUCCESS

We all had dreams back in our undergraduate days of how life ought to turn out. One of the questions we asked in this section was "Were yours: realistic? unrealistic? or unformed?" The responses were 51%, 11% and

38%, respectively. In response to the next question, "Or have things gone in a totally unexpected direction?" only 33% said yes. Finally, we asked: "Are you satisfied with yourself?" The responses were basically positive: 47% said "a lot;" 50% said "more or less;" and only 3% said "not very much."



"I can tell you one thing. Being rich beyond one's wildest dreams doesn't go as far as it once did."