

SINE INSTITUTE
of POLICY & POLITICS



Young Americans and the Reimagined American Dream

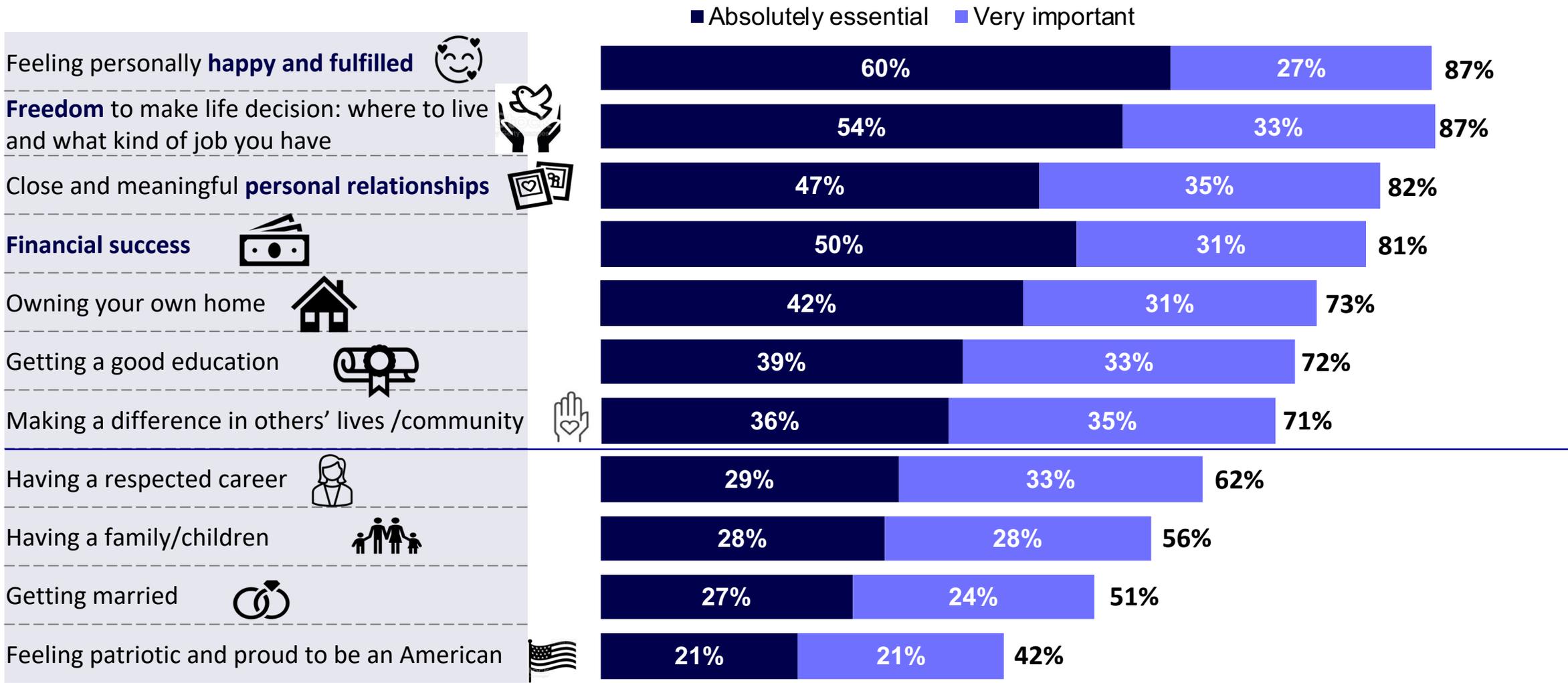
Key Findings

The reimagined American Dream that young Americans describe reflects both continuity and change. The changing social conditions they are witnessing and their own life experiences profoundly shape their goals for their future.

- The core of the American Dream for today's young Americans is largely rooted in more intangible feelings: being happy and fulfilled, having the freedom to make important life decisions, and building meaningful personal relationships are among their most important goals.
- More measurable and visible accomplishments—especially financial success—are still important, but the traditional “white picket fence” vision of marriage, children and home ownership are less central than they once were.
- Given the diversity of this generation, the commonality of the central touchstones that comprise the American Dream is remarkable; by gender, race and even partisan identification, there is tremendous overlap in how members of this generation prioritize and order their life goals and priorities.
- The online and mobile-friendly format of this survey was leveraged to design an original exercise in which respondents were asked to evaluate and rate visual images according to how they reflect the American Dream they have for themselves. The pictures that rose to the top are entirely consistent with their responses from more traditional rank-choice questions: freedom to chart one's own course and personal happiness are paramount.

What is the reimagined American Dream?

Happiness, freedom, quality relationships & financial success overshadow.



Young Americans' View of Reimagining the American Dream

For young Americans, the core components of the reimagined American Dream are largely shared across identities.

Three most important elements of the American Dream

Women	Men
Happy and Fulfilled	Happy and Fulfilled
Freedom for Life Decisions	Freedom for Life Decisions
Financial Success	Financial Success
Close Meaningful Relationships	Close Meaningful Relationships
	Owning a Home

Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
Happy and Fulfilled	Happy and Fulfilled	Happy and Fulfilled
Freedom for Life Decisions	Freedom for Life Decisions	Freedom for Life Decisions
Close Meaningful Relationships	Owning a Home	Financial Success
Financial Success	Financial Success	Owning a Home

In a time of heightened polarization, the core elements of the American Dream are shared across partisan divides.

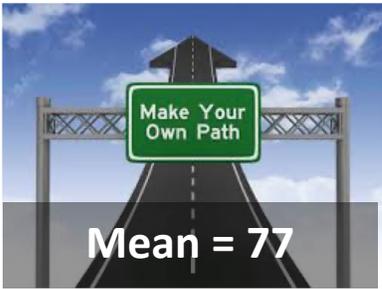
Three most important elements of the American Dream

Republicans	Independents	Democrats
Happy and Fulfilled	Happy and Fulfilled	Happy and Fulfilled
Freedom for Life Decisions	Freedom for Life Decisions	Freedom for Life Decisions
Close Meaningful Relationships	Financial Success	Close Meaningful Relationships
Financial Success	Owning a Home	Financial Success
		Making a Difference in my Community

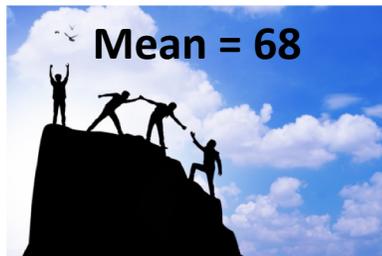
The images that young Americans choose to symbolize their American Dream are varied, but freedom & personal happiness rise to the top.

For these pictures of scenes that some people might associate with the American Dream, please rate your reaction.

(mean ratings on a 100-point scale*)



↑
This is the most resonant image among men, women, Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Democrats & Independents (and second most resonant for Republicans, after family moving to a home).



* 0 = does not at all fit into the vision of the American Dream I have for myself; 100 = very closely fits into the vision of the American Dream I have for myself