

A Survey of Orthodox Jewish Family Life, Marriage & Divorce

July 2025



This is Nishma Research's 22nd broad Orthodox community survey since its founding in 2015.
All reports are free, available and downloadable at <http://nishmaresearch.com>

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Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

When Nishma Research presents its findings in shuls and other venues, we ask for suggestions relating to communal issues worthy of further exploration. Recently, we have received a number of requests to explore the causes of divorce in the Orthodox (observant) community. This research attempts to address that need.

Sample Approach, Methodology, Issues Explored

As there are few lists of Orthodox divorcees available to researchers, we opted for the approach of conducting this survey among the entire Orthodox community and expanding the topics to include the experiences of married individuals and single individuals. In addition to asking divorcees about their experiences and what they see as the causes of the dissolution of their marriages, we also asked married individuals for the factors to which they attribute the success of their marriage, and we asked single individuals how divorces in their community affect their dating views and approaches.

This survey focuses on the causes of divorce and successful marriage. Exploration of post-divorce issues (including get, bet din, agunot, etc.) may be explored in a follow-up study.

This survey was distributed by email to the Nishma Research Online Survey Panel (past survey respondents who opt to receive surveys), some organizations and social media groups, and to shul rabbis asked to share the survey link with their congregants.

Respondents

The survey generated 1,736 responses from May 18 to June 20, 2025, of which 351 are current or past divorcees (making this the largest survey ever of Orthodox Jewish). The divorcees included 224 who are currently divorced, and 127 previous divorcees who remarried.

Our aim is to report on not only the overall Orthodox community, but also to show and compare data for key sectors. In this survey, 809 identified as currently Modern/Centrist Orthodox (often denoted as "M.O.") and 660 as Haredi. Appendix I provides more detail on the numbers of respondents. For many survey questions, the responses of M.O. and Haredi were quite similar, and we do not break them out in these instances.

Responses were mandatory to some, but not all, questions, and the number of responses to questions are shown on each page, corresponding to the data shown.

Verbatim Responses

We include many open-ended questions in our surveys, as they provide important insights that complement the quantitative data. In the interest of readability, we present representative random (via Excel randomization function) samples, and these are presented unedited for grammar and spelling (but may be minimally redacted of any content that might compromise anonymity). Additional verbatim responses are available upon request.

Thanks to Our Advisors and Supporters

Nishma Research sponsored this study and directed all aspects of it on a pro bono basis, as a service to the community.

Earlier this year, we surveyed our Online Survey Panel, asking for suggestions of issues people think we should explore. 310 people responded, and that helps us in developing the initial draft survey questionnaire.

The survey was further fine-tuned with the help of a thoughtful and enthusiastic group of community advisors: Rabbi Prof. Michael Broyde, Deborah Chames, Esther Eisner, Michael Feldstein, Ilana Kelman, Betzalel Rothstein, David Sheril, and Rabbi Dr. Ari Sytner.

We also thank the following shuls that since our last study have invited us to present findings to their communities. Their honoraria donations helped to cover some of the study expenses:

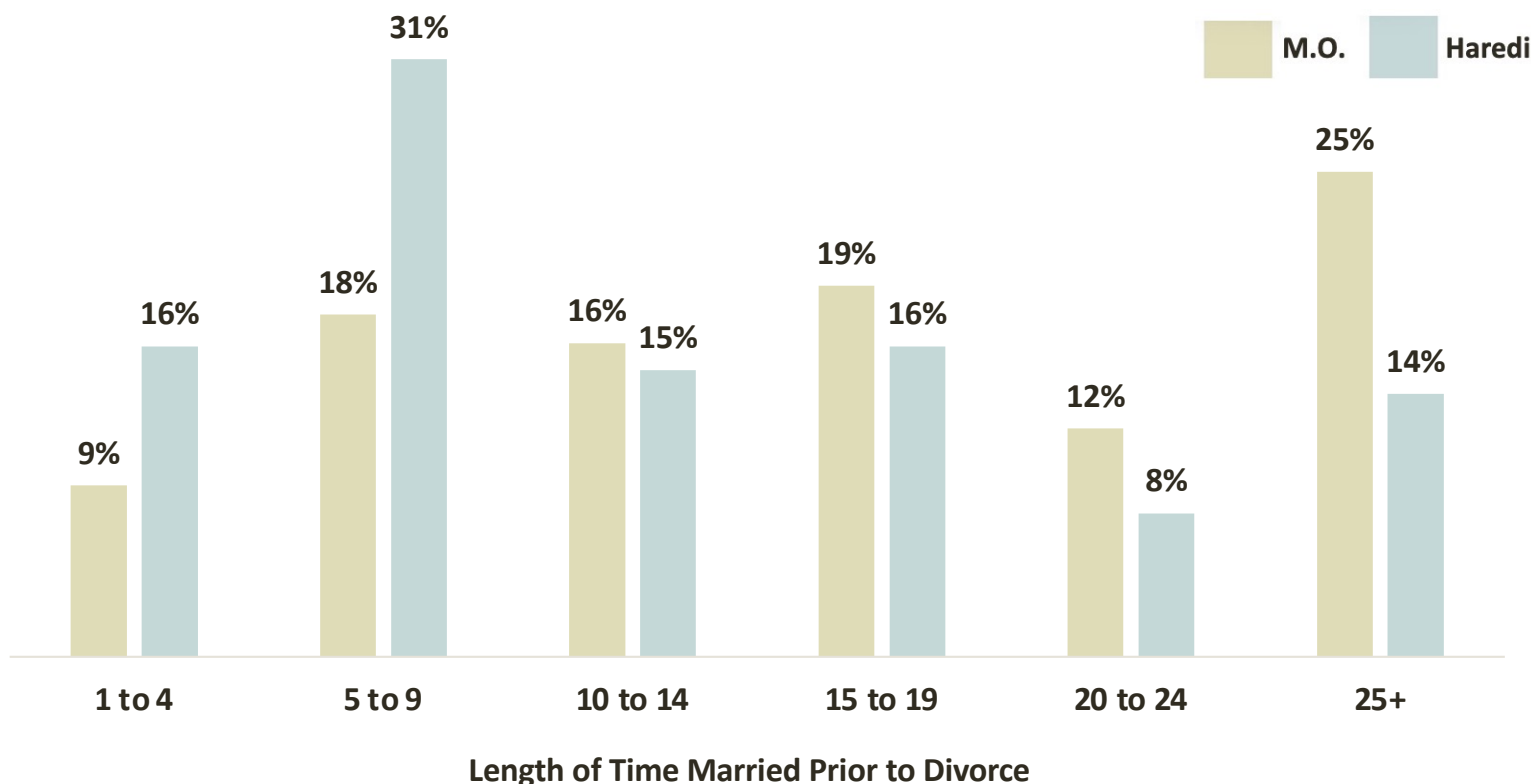
- United Orthodox Synagogue, Houston, TX, Rabbi Yitzchak Sprung
- Baron Hirsh Congregation, Memphis, TN, Rabbi Ian Lichter
- Oheb Zedek Cedar Sinai Synagogue, Cleveland, OH, Rabbi Noah Leavitt
- Keneset Beth Israel, Richmond, VA, Rabbi Dovid Asher

Our hope is that the information obtained through this research will benefit our community

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July 8, 2025 – 12 Tammuz, 5785

Divorces and Their Causes

Divorcees' Length of Marriage & Numbers of Children – Relatively few Orthodox divorces (9% of Modern Orthodox and 16% of Haredi) take place within the first four years of marriage. On average (median), divorcees had been married 16 years (M.O.) and 11 years (Haredi) at the time of their divorce, and were ages 43 and 34, respectively.



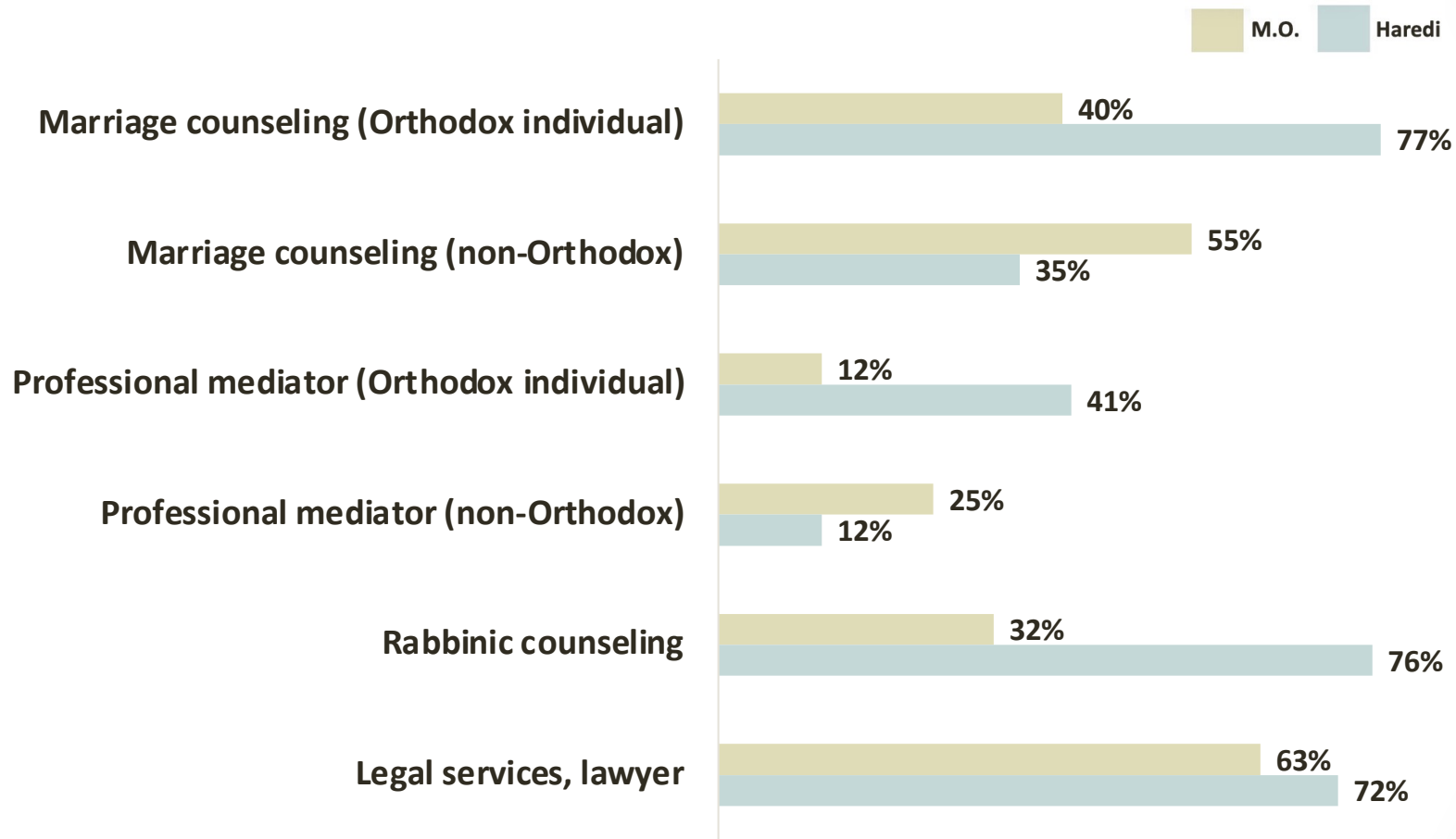
About 80% of all Orthodox divorcees had one or more children under age 18 at the time of their divorce; with over 60% having had one or more children under age 10. (M.O. and Haredi combined; with little difference).

Note; Above data are for those currently divorced. It excludes those who remarried (as they are an older sector).

Q. How many years were you married? (n = M.O. 67, Haredi 80). Q. How old were you at the time of your divorce? (n = M.O. 72, Haredi 84).

Q. Did you have any children under the age of 18 at the time of your divorce? Q. Were your children in the following age groups? (n = M.O. 72, Haredi 84).

Pre-Divorce Counseling – A very substantial majority of couples used various forms of pre-divorce mediation or counseling services ... Haredim even more so than Modern Orthodox, as they more often used services offered by rabbis and Orthodox advisors. Haredim also spent more time in counseling (median of 19 months, compared to 14 months for Modern Orthodox).



Q. Before and during your divorce process, did you use any of the following services or advisors? Please check all that you used ... [Marriage counseling (Orthodox individual); Marriage counseling (non-Orthodox); Professional mediator (Orthodox individual); Professional mediator (non-Orthodox); Rabbinic counseling; Legal services, lawyer]. (n = M.O. 60, Haredi 78).

Q. For how long did you get some form of counseling, before you decided to get a divorce? [6 months or less; 6 months or more, less than a year; A year or more, less than 2 years; 2 years or more] (n = M.O. 56, Haredi 72).

The Helpfulness of Pre-Divorce Counseling – Sample Verbatim Responses –

Among those who assessed the helpfulness of counseling that they had received, about 55% felt it was helpful and 45% found it unhelpful.

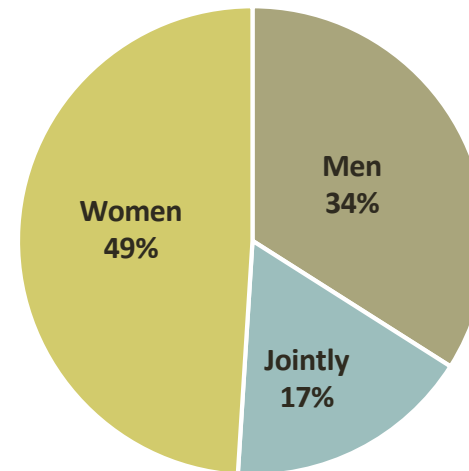
- *Rabbis & professionals (marriage counselors with professional degrees & experience) were helpful in that they tried to create understanding of the other party & a framework to develop shalom. All ultimately (some immediately, some after several weeks or months) came to the same conclusion: a person must recognize that there is a problem, and want to improve it, in order to work on a solution. A person who isn't willing (or able) to self-regulate, or to recognize the legitimacy of anyone's needs besides their own, or that adult life requires a level of consistent and responsible behavior (we can't not pay bills because "I don't want to"/ become angry when spouse does "waste \$" paying rent & utilities. Note we were (I was) well-able to cover all expenses; I "don't have to" be even minimally responsible / consistent /reliable (self care, showing up to work or learn or else informing other party.) is not ready / willing to stay married to someone who expects stable, normal adult behavior.*
- *My ex would not consider any marriage counseling from a professional or rabbinic support*
- *At a certain point it was clear that I would not be able to "save the marriage" and everyone around me, my Rav and personal therapist encouraged me to let go but our marriage therapist kept brining us in for more sessions. Those sessions did so much harm to me and my self worth and it took many years of personal therapy to work through that*
- *None. Ex is a narcasist*
- *Rabbinic counselling was the best. We ended up in a safe house as divorce process took a very negative turn*
- *None. My wife had severe depression and it was very difficult to live with her. I was young and I just wanted a simple life.*
- *Nothing was helpful. I think my ex just wanted to get divorced and was following the steps needed to get divorced. Going to marriage therapy at that time for me was literally a waste of time and money. There was no chance that my ex would decide to remain married.*
- *Therapy was helpful but he didn't want to change. Mediation is helpful but takes a long time*
- *Counseling and rabbinic advice was not helpful because my ex, although highly credentialed was/is a deceiving, manipulative narcissist/addict. He takes advantage of and abuses the trust other people place in him because of his professional accomplishments.*
- *My individual counseling was extremely helpful. The marriage and family counseling was not. He did not actively participate in the sessions. And the kids were not supported. They just made fun of it*
- *The therapist was not helpful He made things worse*
- *Lawyer was necessary Had marital therapy decades before divorce, not really pertinent*
- *All confirmed my decision to get divorced*
- *Not so helpful. Either my ex husband refused to go in a certain point or the therapist was not good (for example : she agreed with my ex that when his mom calling me names and insulting me, it's because she feels close to me,Ä¶ which is crazy because she was close to her daughters and never insulted them)*
- *Rabbinical services were helpful he knew both of us . Husband was using drugs*
- *Finally found a great psychologist who met with us both and individually, clearly identified our relationship struggles, and helped me navigate divorce fears.*

Q. Which of the services, if any, did you find helpful? Not helpful? Why? (n = 206; M.O. and Haredi similar and combined)

Initiation of the Divorce – Men and women both state that it was the woman who more often initiated the divorce. Combining all responses, women initiate almost half (49%) of the divorces, while the remainder are initiated by men (34%) or jointly (17%).

Who Made the Decision to Get a Divorce	Respondents	
	Men	Women
All my decision	23%	39%
Mostly my decision	12%	16%
Joint decision	22%	12%
Mostly spouse's decision	16%	15%
All spouse's decision	27%	18%
Subtotal: My decision	35%	55%
Joint decision	22%	12%
Subtotal: Spouse's decision	43%	33%
Subtotal: Man's decision	35%	33%
Joint decision	22%	12%
Subtotal: Woman's decision	43%	55%

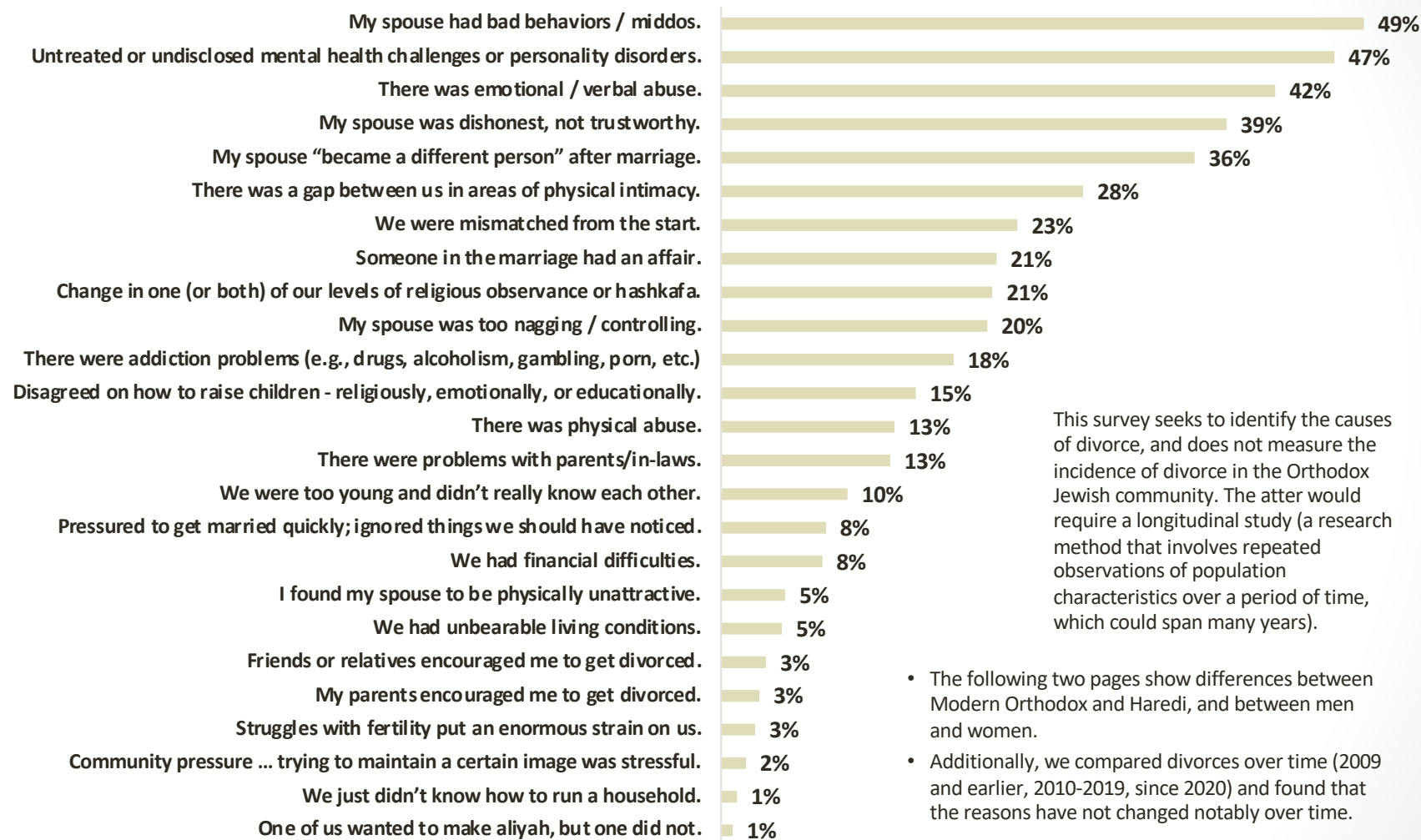
Divorce Initiators
(Based on Men's & Women's
Combined Responses)



Q. Please check the sentence below that you think best describes your divorce, in terms of who initiated the decision to get divorced. [All or nearly all of the decision to get divorced was my decision; Most of the divorce decision was mine; The divorce decision was pretty much jointly made with my spouse; Most of the divorce decision was my spouse's; All or nearly all of the decision to get divorced was my spouse's decision.] (n = Men 93, Women 161). M.O. and Haredi responses were relatively similar. The data shown above apply weighting to M.O. and Haredi of 36% and 64%, respectively, based on population estimates by Nishma Research and other demographers. The pie chart data reflect the average responses of men and women, irrespective of the fact that more women responded to the survey.

Reasons for Divorce: Overall Orthodox Community – The top reasons are bad behaviors / middos (49%), untreated or undisclosed mental health challenges or personality disorders (47%), emotional / verbal abuse (42%), dishonesty (39%), and a spouse having “become a different person” after marriage (36%).

(% Responding “Major reason for divorce”)



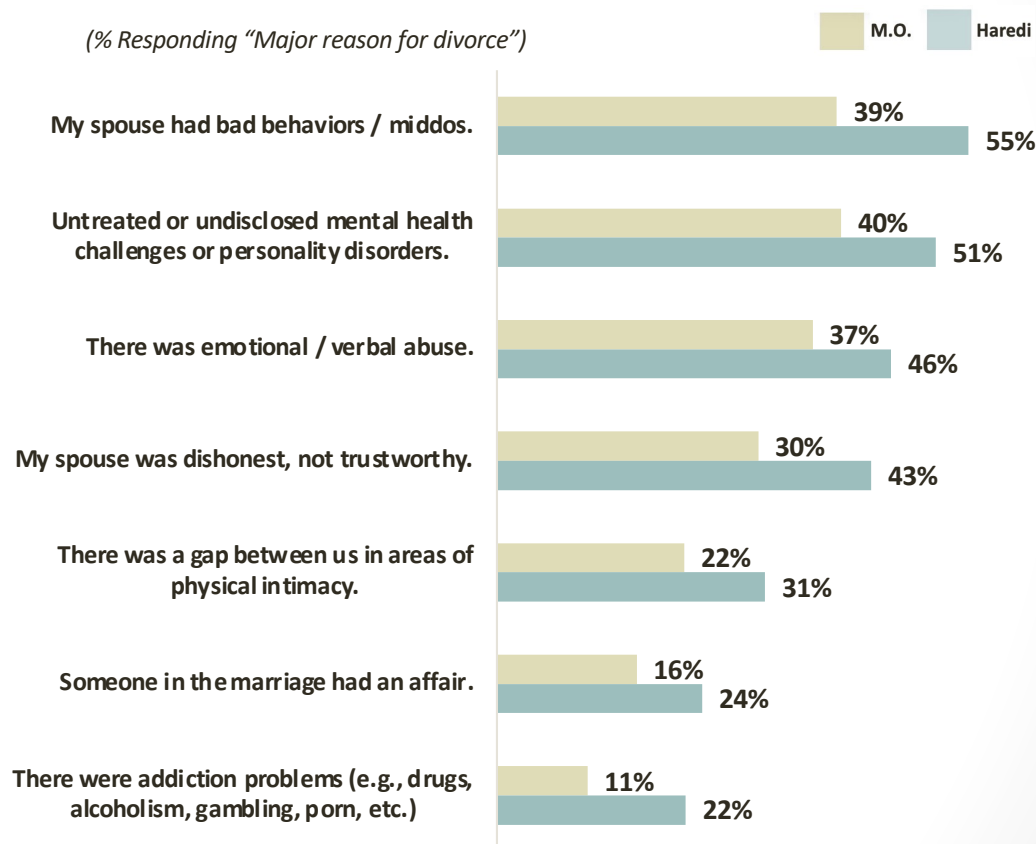
Q. Do you see any of these as reasons why your marriage ended? Please check one box on each row. [Response Options for Each Row/Item: Major Reason for Divorce; Somewhat a Reason; Don’t Think It’s a Reason; Not Sure] (n = M.O. 145, Haredi 106). These data, representing all of Orthodoxy, are weighted averages of M.O. and Haredi, with weights of 36% and 64%, respectively, based on population estimates by Nishma Research and other demographers.

Reasons for Divorce: Differences Between Modern Orthodox and Haredi – while the rankings of reasons for divorce given by Modern Orthodox and Haredi are virtually identical*, the Haredi tend to check a few more items as major reasons.**

TOP REASONS FOR DIVORCE – M.O.	%
Mental health challenges	40%
Bad behaviors / middos	39%
Emotional / verbal abuse	37%
Spouse “became a different person”	32%
Dishonest / not trustworthy	30%
Gap in physical intimacy	22%
Mismatched from the start	21%

TOP REASONS FOR DIVORCE – HAREDI	%
Bad behaviors / middos	55%
Mental health challenges	51%
Emotional / verbal abuse	46%
Dishonest / not trustworthy	43%
Spouse “became a different person”	38%
Gap in physical intimacy	31%
Mismatched from the start; An affair	24%

Reasons for Divorce – Differences Between Modern Orthodox and Haredi***



n = M.O. 145, Haredi 106

* Correlation coefficient = +0.97.

** M.O. checked 3.7 items on average as major reasons for divorce; Haredi checked 4.7

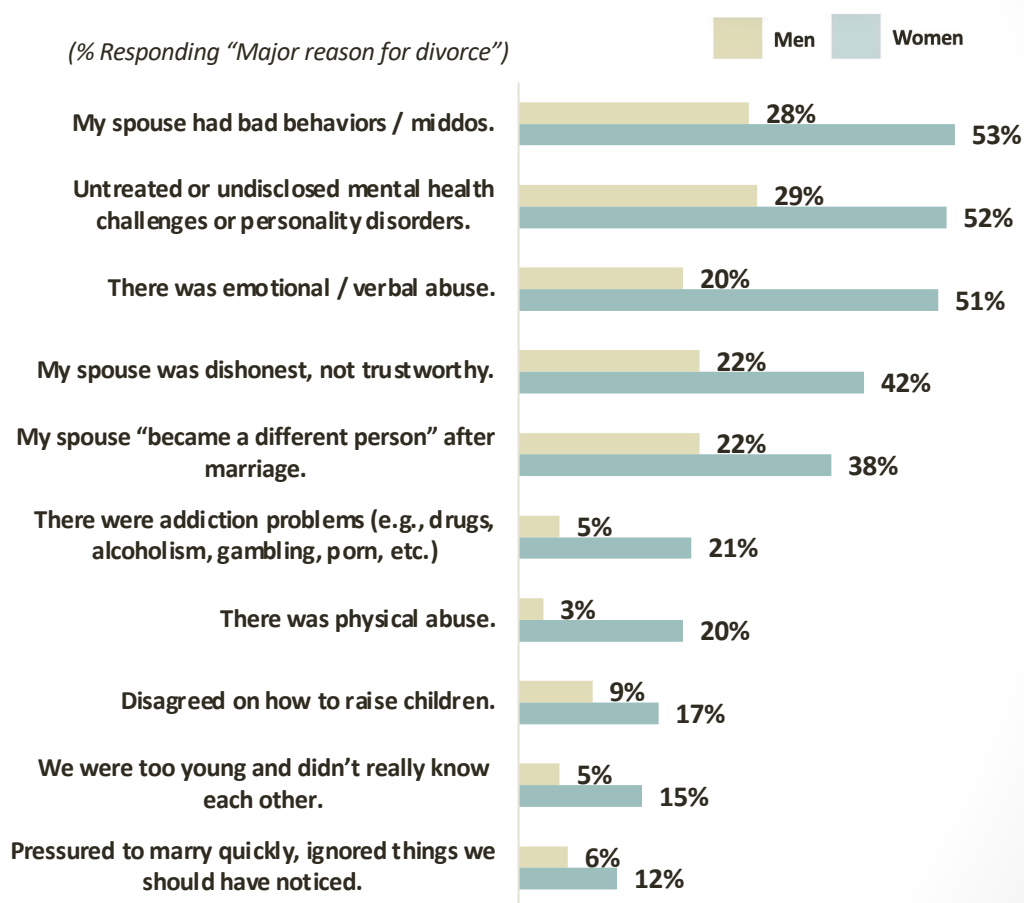
*** Given the small samples, the test for statistical significance was generally set at $p \leq 0.1$.

Reasons for Divorce: Differences Between Men and Women – While the rankings of reasons for divorce given by men and women are generally similar*, women tend to check many more items as major reasons.**

TOP REASONS FOR DIVORCE – MEN	%
Mental health challenges	29%
Bad behaviors / middos	28%
Mismatched from the start	23%
Dishonest / not trustworthy; Gap in Physical Intimacy Spouse “became a different person”	22%
Emotional / verbal abuse	20%

TOP REASONS FOR DIVORCE – WOMEN	%
Bad behaviors / middos	53%
Mental health challenges	52%
Emotional / verbal abuse	51%
Dishonest / not trustworthy	42%
Spouse “became a different person”	38%
Gap in physical intimacy	28%
Mismatched from the start	26%

Reasons for Divorce – Differences Between Men and Women***



n = Men 105, Women 197.

* Correlation coefficient = +0.87.

** Men checked 2.8 items on average as major reasons for divorce; women checked 4.7.

*** The test for statistical significance was set at $p \leq 0.05$.

Other Reasons (Explanations) for Divorce – Sample Verbatim Responses – The responses track those shown on page 9, with the most-cited being mental illness and untreated psychological conditions, abuse (emotional, physical, sexual, financial), infidelity and sexual incompatibility, mismatched religious level or values, and emotional immaturity or marrying too young.

- I believe the divorce could have been prevented if only the therapists, rabbis, etc *believed* me when I described my spouse's mental illness/abusiveness. Then they would have been able to intervene sooner, and in an appropriate way.*
- Loss of our only child due to reasons outside our control. Overwhelming grief. Unexpected realization that without children we had no connection. He didn't want more.*
- My husband had mental health issues that I thought we could overcome but he got worse and life became too difficult. I also wanted children and couldn't imagine bringing children into such a chaotic situation.*
- The main reason was my ex-husband's affair coming to light, but I don't think it would have been a happy marriage in the long run because of other issues.*
- Used my mild mental health challenges that magically disappeared once we were separated as an excuse for manipulation, controlling and abusive behavior*
- This survey is slanted towards younger divorces as many of the items are not geared towards my age bracket. That's probably your target audience.*
- My husband was mentally ill and had major sexual dysfunction*
- I say he initiated the divorce, but only inasmuch as he made it impossible to stay. He summoned me to Bais Din. But he didn't want a divorce. Just clarifying.*
- We actually took turns asking for a divorce. He asked first when we were married barely 2 months. I actually filed when we were together 18 years. It felt like it took 7 years to finalize the divorce. We were already in house separated when I filed. We also both spoke about aliyah but he always had an excuse not to. It wasn't that he changed. I kept changing to try to be what he wanted but all that accomplished was me losing myself.*
- Spouse is gay. He was in the closet even to himself when we got married.*
- Gambling, cheating with my best friend, laziness and lack of understanding of what a marriage means. in addition to physical emotional and sensual abuse*
- Too young naive unprepared for adulthood Was not presented w other options continue seminary college job Community Parent conflict*
- He was unfaithful with non Jewish employee and started drinking and using drugs*
- Reasons became apparent after the divorce. Overall I was happy in the marriage until the end.*
- My ex-husband was unsure he wanted to get married at all, he was just raised in a yeshivish environment where that was the expectation after a certain period of dating. Once we got married he decided that he didn't want to be married anymore. I was still all in so he made my life miserable until I agreed to let go of the marriage.*
- We were similar in college. After college, and the birth of our first, she changed dramatically and became like her parents. Her father was reason #1 and #2 for the divorce. Her mother was reason #3.*
- Yes, I would like to mention some reasons, such as communication issues, financial stress, or incompatibility.*
- My ex-husband was an abusive narcissist, and he still is, even in divorce.*
- Husband had anger issues, was frequently negative.*
- I took my marriage vows seriously - until death do us part, even if it meant my death at the hands of my husband. Hashem saw the suffering and trauma to my children and me and intervened. My husband had numerous affairs, loved another woman for years who passed away, was having an affair before we separated condoned by the rabbi and cantor, filed for divorce, made it horrific for my children and me, remarried and had a child with her at age 50. My children remain traumatized. We all suffer from PTSD. My children both have serious autoimmune diseases that are more prevalent where there is abuse. I did make certain I got a Get from a highly esteemed and accepted orthodox Rabbi.*
- He was a controlling person. His parents hit their kids and he wanted (and did it to our kids) his parents didn't care about him or us. He was manipulative. He didn't want to be touched if it wasn't in bed. I worked and he studied. When he got his 1 st job with good pay, he decided to divorce*

Q. Are there any other noteworthy reasons for your divorce that you would like to mention? (n = 151 verbatim responses; M.O. and Haredi responses are similar and are combined.)

Assessment of the Divorce and Its Outcome – Divorces in general tend to be more hostile (47% across all Orthodoxy) than amicable (28%). Modern Orthodox women see their divorces as much more hostile than do men. Still, there is strong agreement that getting the divorce was good (76%), and people were happier (69%); with mixed feelings on whether their children were better off.

Divorce Was ...	M.O. Men	M.O. Women	Haredi Men	Haredi Women	All Men	All Women	All Orthodox
Very amicable / friendly	22%	3%	15%	8%	17%	7%	12%
Mostly amicable / friendly	22%	15%	12%	17%	16%	16%	16%
Somewhere between	23%	27%	24%	26%	24%	26%	25%
Mostly hostile / angry / unfriendly	23%	31%	28%	23%	26%	26%	26%
Very hostile / angry / unfriendly	10%	24%	21%	26%	17%	25%	21%
Subtotal: Amicable	44%	18%	27%	25%	33%	23%	28%
Between	23%	27%	24%	26%	24%	26%	25%
Subtotal: Hostile	33%	55%	51%	49%	43%	51%	47%

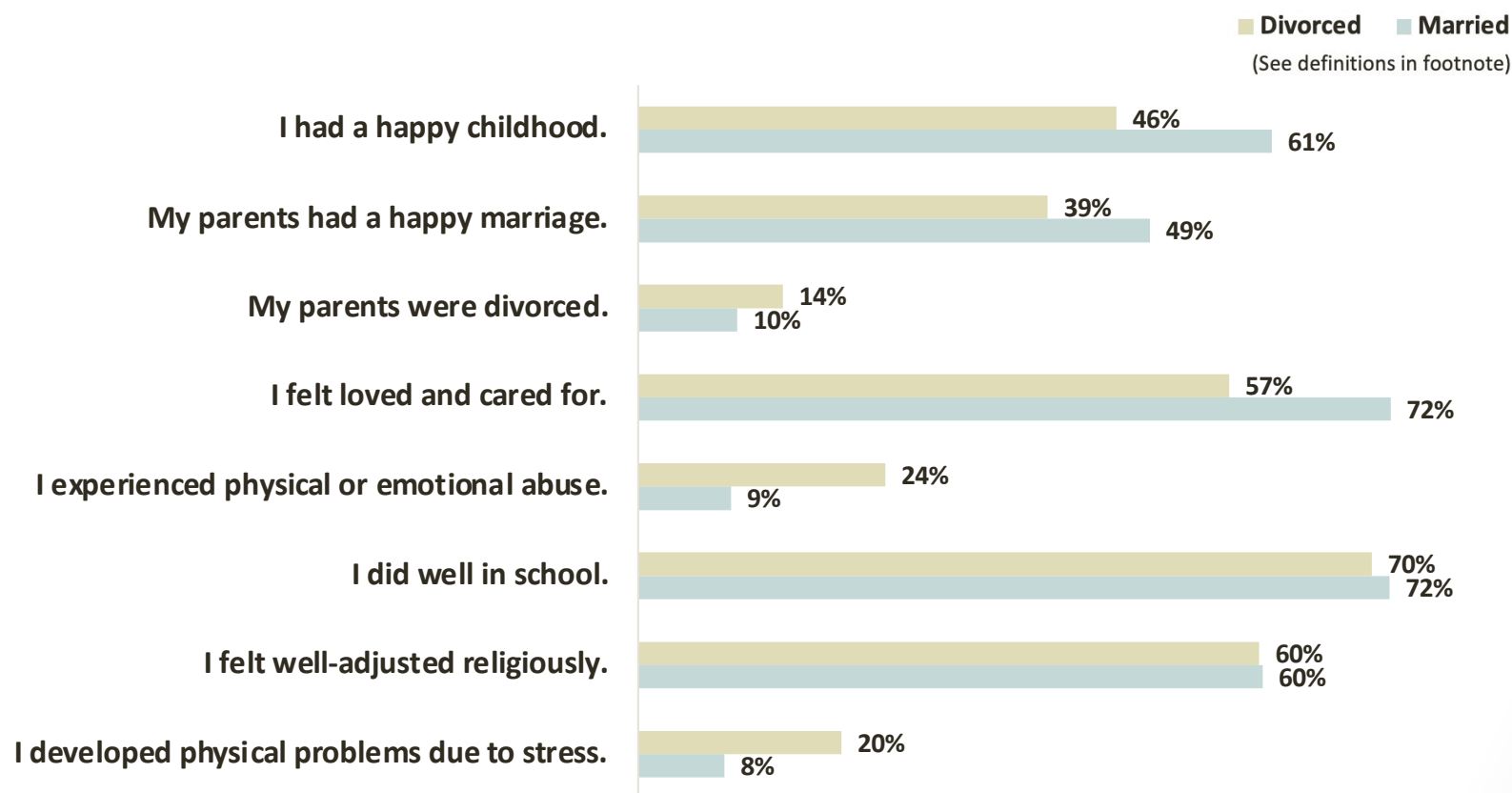
% Strongly Agree	M.O. Men	M.O. Women	Haredi Men	Haredi Women	All Men	All Women	All Orthodox
It was good that I got divorced	60%	76%	76%	84%	70%	81%	76%
I am happier now than in that marriage	62%	74%	67%	73%	65%	73%	69%
My children were better off after divorce	23%	50%	22%	55%	22%	53%	38%

Q. How would you describe your divorce? [Very amicable / friendly; Mostly amicable / friendly; Somewhere between; Mostly hostile / angry / unfriendly; Very hostile / angry / unfriendly.] (n = M.O. Men 60, Women 88, Haredi Men 33, Women 73)

Q.. Do you agree with the following statements? [It was good that I got divorced; I am happier at this time than I was in that marriage; My children were better off after the divorce (if had child(ren))] [Response Options: Strongly agree; Somewhat agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat Disagree; Strongly Disagree; Don't know]. (n = M.O. 148 for first two items and 95 for third item (had children); Haredi 107 for first two items and 69 for third item (had children)).

The data shown above apply weighting to M.O. and Haredi of 36% and 64%, respectively, based on population estimates by Nishma Research and other demographers. The pie chart data reflect the average responses of men and women, irrespective of the fact that more women responded to the survey.

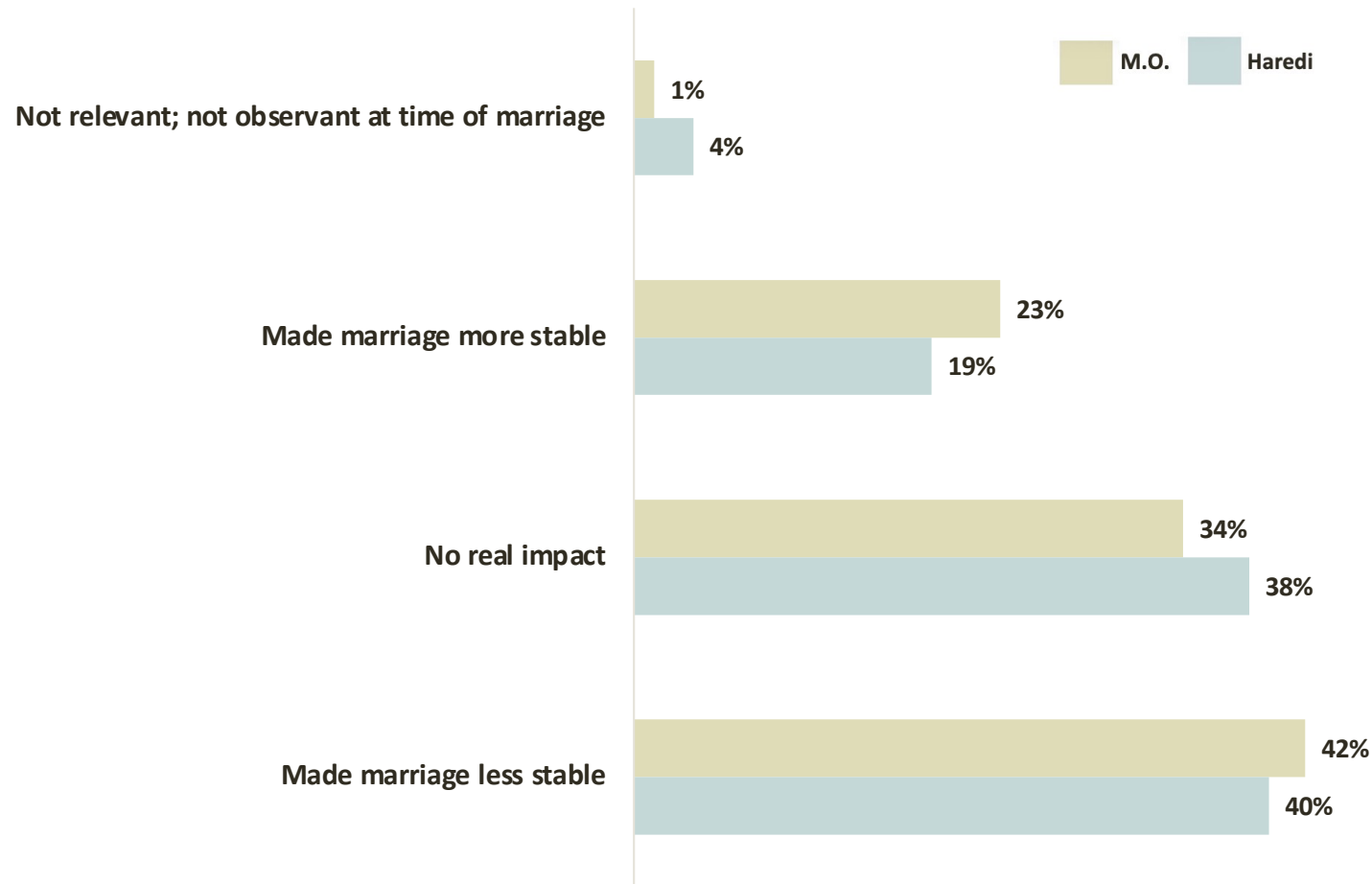
Childhood Trauma Effect on Divorce – While not quantifying causation, the incidences of childhood trauma are much higher among divorcees. For example, 24% of divorcees say they experienced childhood physical or emotional abuse, compared to 9% of marrieds who had never been divorced. Raising awareness of how childhood trauma can affect marriage should encourage parents, rabbis, *Shadchanim*, as well as those who are dating to promote and seek individual therapy proactively, and to help people address and resolve trauma and attachment injuries before marriage.



Q. ... a few questions about your childhood. Would you agree with these statements? [I had a happy childhood.; My parents had a happy marriage.; My parents were divorced.; I felt loved and cared for.; I experienced physical or emotional abuse.; I did well in school.; I felt well-adjusted religiously.; I developed physical problems due to stress.] (n = Divorced (currently or in the past) 319, Married (defined as currently married or widowed, and never divorced) 1,122)

Except for the “did well in school” and “well-adjusted religiously” items, all of the other differences between divorcees and marrieds are statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

Impact of Orthodox Jewish Life on Divorcees' Marriage – Modern Orthodox and Haredi divorcees respond similarly: About 20% say that Orthodox Jewish life (practices, halacha, community, etc.) made their marriage more stable, but 40% say it made their marriage less stable.



Can you please explain why you say that? ➡

Q. Do you think Orthodox Jewish life (practices, *halacha*, community, etc.) had an impact of your marriage? [Not relevant - not observant at the time of our marriage; It made our marriage more stable; No real impact; It made our marriage less stable.] (n = M.O. 79, Haredi 81).

Impact of Orthodox Jewish Life on Divorcees' Marriage (Continued) – Sample Verbatim Responses

Made Marriage More Stable

- *It gave me a community to be part of. A set structure to the week and year.*
- *Orthodox life have structure and boundaries that were healthy for marriage*
- *Shabbat as family time. Holidays as ritual*
- *The Torah understanding that marriage has a purpose, including continuation of the Jewish people, and is not just for the self-interest of the people who are married.*
- *We participated in orthodox practices consistently.*
- *I think I got the wrong idea about dating in seminary (I "drank the coolaid" about idealistic ways to date), but actual Jewish life was a stabilizing force, even if the marriage ultimately could not be saved.*
- *I had built in supports. My husband barely spoke to me and had little interest in our children. I never could have held it together for as long as I did without my women friends in the community.*
- *When we had challenges when we were newly frum, we benefited from community support, frum therapists and the structure of Halacha to keep us together.*
- *It's easier to be married in my community than to be divorced; and not having my kids half the shabbatot and chagim is heartbreaking so I stayed in the marriage longer than I might otherwise have*
- *We followed laws of family purity it made our relationship stronger*
- *I was able to turn to a rav for guidance.*
- *I stayed in the marriage far longer than I would have because I believed in the marriage, even though my husband was abusive. I should have divorced long ago but I was very devoted to giving the marriage every chance. I held on to a fairy tale of who my husband was because I had the ideals instilled in me by my frum upbringing. On one hand, being frum helped me weather a lot of the pain in my marriage. But it also led me to enable my husband in his abuse when I should have told him his actions weren't acceptable. And my hopes for him to change kept me in the marriage for a long, long time.*
- *Gave our family strong rituals and practices to structure ourselves around.*

Made Marriage Less Stable

- *There is much less "community" in the yeshivish crowd. Socially and religiously there is too much pressure on top of making a marriage work.*
- *I had a very hard time continuing to live a status quo life. I was feeling like there was a lot of issues within the community and I didn't feel aligned with any longer*
- *We had different priorities and I felt that he only cared about the community standards and disregarded the actual spirituality or ethics*
- *My ex-wife completely changed religiously and is no longer religious / observant*
- *He wasn't i was, i was top strict he was frustrated*
- *Husband became more religious and I became less so.*
- *There is much less "community" in the yeshivish crowd. Socially and religiously there is too much pressure on top of making a marriage work.*
- *because i was forcing ultra orthodox practices at my orthodox wife*
- *Religious issues we're not at the core of the relationship issues, but differences in religious levels were brought into play to distract from the real issues.*
- *Husband used Halacha to control*
- *Financial pressure - school, camps, shul/other memberships, entertaining on weekends, pressure to keep up "with the Jones"*
- *We were not on the same page hashkafically*
- *Ex wife did not grow up orthodox and grew up in small community. She did not have a realistic understanding of completely observant life as it relates to community expectations. Some frum people were not so nice to her, and this was a challenge that weighed heavily on her as she expected more grace given her background.*
- *My ex-husband wanted to be less observant*
- *My ex husband engaged in Spiritual Abuse, twisting halacha or Torah to prove his superiority or rightness.*
- *He wasn't i was, i was top strict he was frustrated*

How Change in Religious/Halachic Observance Affected Divorce – 21% of divorcees cite “a change in one (or both) of our levels of religious/halachic observance or hashkafah” as a major reason for the divorce (see page 9). The following verbatim responses provide insights on how this occurred.

- *Spouse decided not to be religious.*
- *When we left NYC and moved my ex suddenly didn't want to be religious at all.*
- *He did not want to be frum and viewed marriage as a life sentence*
- *While not the main reason, the great divergence between us exacerbated our problems.*
- *Differences in religious or halachic observance, or divergent hashkafah created challenges in our relationship that contributed to the breakdown of our marriage. These differences affected key aspects of daily life, values, and decision-making, making it difficult to maintain harmony and mutual understanding*
- *She wasn't nearly as religious as I would've liked She changed after about ten years of marriage not wanting to be as religious*
- *He acted much more religious and convinced me he was until we got married - he wasn't. It was all a game of conquest and control*
- *She changed*
- *I was more orthodox in my Judaism while my former spouse was not into it anymore.*
- *Ex wife faded in religiosity to the point of no longer wanting to be shomer shabbat or seeing the point of being orthodox*
- *When we married I was tough as nails. The man she married, me, was a 'rambo' kind of guy. Then I started doing Teshuvah and over time I became a softer, far more religious man. As my observance increased so did her frustration over what I was becoming.*
- *Ex wife faded in religiosity to the point of no longer wanting to be shomer shabbat or seeing the point of being orthodox*
- *My ex completely changed religiously*
- *My ex husband used chumras and halachot to control me. He was so stuck on Jewish law and had no flexibility with how it affected me. He wanted me to be extra modest and not wear a wig and extra large loose baggy clothing. He wanted the kids to only read Jewish books. He thought he was a better person because he was more religious and religion makes you know it all and be better.*
- *She switched which community she identified with and made fun of my halachic world*
- *We were never fully on the same page and as I began to find myself and my hashkafos they didn't vibe with him. He's more traditional and follows community standards*
- *I became OTD*
- *Created problem with schooling, Hashgachas*
- *I had it put in the divorce decree that the children were orthodox children and they were not to be disparaged by their father for this*
- *He did not seem to maintain what was expected.*
- *I no longer wanted to be observant*

Q. Can you explain how religious/halachic observance or hashkafah were a factor in your divorce? (M.O. and Haredi responses are similar and combined above.)

What Divorcees Say They Should Have Done Differently – Sample Verbatim Responses –

Most often cited themes are: would not have married (wrong person, time, or reasons; would have paid more attention to warning signs); would have ended it sooner; would have sought better self-awareness or maturity before marriage; would have sought help sooner (therapy, support).

- *Be more patient and thoughtful*
- *It was a terribly unhealthy situation and it needed to end. I could say I suffered much longer than I should have, but I have amazing children and I don't regret one minute of my life or decisions.*
- *Better understanding of raising a child with difficulties.*
- *Would have advocated more for myself. I felt sorry for her, and she took advantage of that.*
- *I think I drank too much and it was a cause of a lot of problems. But I think I was too forgiving of wife's affairs maybe should have moved on. Now it's worked out ok but I can't drink without a fight and it's tough*
- *The only thing I could've done differently would've been to tell people immediately that he was suicidal, not keep it a secret. And I guess I could've gone on birth control for the first 6-12 months which would've given me time to leave him. I was pregnant 4 months into our marriage, when I had just turned 21. Realistically what would've changed is we would've gotten divorced within that first year, and I never would have had my kids, who are the light of my life. So if I could go back in time, I'd probably do the same thing, except if I knew exactly how it turned out, I'd leave as soon as I got pregnant with my second child - no need to stick it out another 4 years. So the short answer is - one way or another, I would've gotten divorced sooner.*
- *I would have gotten to know myself better before dating and would not have married him.*
- *I would not have gotten married.*
- *I would have gotten to know myself better before dating and would not have married him.*
- *I would not have gotten married*
- *shot my mother-in-law lol*
- *Divorced earlier Gotten birth control*
- *Not have gotten married in the first place!*
- *it was the right time for both of us.*
- *I would have left much earlier- I used to think that I would've made sure that we would've discussed certain issues before my second marriage financially and otherwise that if we would've communicated properly, we would've been OK,Ä¶ But I realize that he probably would have lied and deceived me anyway- and would have sent things that I wanted to hear.*
- *I got support and a therapist as soon as I realized what was going on, and told my ex he needed to get help if he wanted to stay married. I understood my worth and understood what a beautiful marriage looked like, and knew I deserved more. Do I wish I had been less naive and known more? There's always space for whatifs. But I think I did all the right things with the tools I had at that time.*
- *I would have done it sooner*
- *I would have been stronger on child support and visitation*
- *I would have told my family I was being abused and in danger for my life. Sadly, the police saw nothing wrong with the physical violence and bruises.*
- *Learn about emotional and social skills much earlier*
- *Taken more time to decide if marriage was appropriate*
- *Decades sooner*
- *Not let in-laws get involved as much as they did*
- *Gotten a better lawyer to represent me. Had a private investigator find out joint \$*

Q. If you could go back in time, is there anything that you would have done differently that might have affected your divorce? (n = 154 verbatim responses; M.O. and Haredi responses are similar and are combined.)

Advice From Divorcees Who Remarried – Sample Verbatim Responses – Most often cited themes are: heal first (therapy, reflection, and self-work are essential; date slowly and wisely (be intentional, don't rush, and watch for red flags), know your values (prioritize what matters most, and be flexible on the rest; avoid old mistakes (understand your past and don't repeat it); communicate clearly (be direct, honest, and willing to listen; embrace differences (compatibility matters more than sameness).

- *Most importantly, while being single is lonely, don't get sucked into the singles life. Stay determined to remarry. When getting remarried, if kids are involved, do a lot of planning, kids / stepkids will impact your life. Be sure to leave enough time between marriages to heal.*
- *I had different focuses on what was important to me the second time around*
- *Many people are afraid to remarry due to the poor statistics about 2nd marriages. But to the right person, second marriages can really work.*
- *Being a divorcee made me very clear on the type of spouse and relationship I wanted and also made me feel even more committed to having a successful relationship*
- *Don't badmouth ex spouse. Describe how their behavior affected you and what can be triggering as a way to learn about best ways to build relationships. Find a trustworthy person who can provide potential mates with what they need to know about the divorce without resorting to "lashon hara"*
- *Communication, Tolerance, and Listening - the three most important words, (at least I think so), that are required for a successful marriage. No matter what the issue is, it generally can be resolved with the two parties sitting down and explaining their individual wants, and needs. Listening, AND Hearing - two entirely different words which are BOTH required for a positive relationship.*
- *We usually make the same poor decisions that we did when we were married the first time. If I had to do it again, I would not have married the 2nd time.*
- *Daven Give tzedaka Learn Try to stay positive Be kind to yourself Be proactive in Shidduchim Be grateful and as happy as possible Reach out to friends and family*
- *Find a teacher who has the experience to guide you through the process and understands the pain, damage, and concerns one has the 2nd time around.*
- *I learned that inasmuch as I can't change the other person I need to be flexible and accommodating for us both to have a meeting of the minds*
- *Hang in there! It gets better, promise. Take the time you need when remarrying trust your intuition and don't rely on others to make the decision to marry Be willing to take a risk and jump in once you've done your research and dated enough to feel fairly comfortable*
- *Don't ignore any red flags the second time around Make sure you feel you are being heard and acknowledged*
- *I learned some things from that failed marriage about how to focus on goals and results, and not to get caught up in tit-for-tat thinking. I am a better husband now than I was then. However, no matter how good a husband I would have been, we would have divorced anyway.*
- *You can rethink the type of person you would date. Ie, if you're yeshivish you can think about chasidish. So long as you are not going to have children to raise. That you would need to be on the same page about. But you should definitely think out of the box.*
- *I appreciate my current husband much more because of the history we both went thru. You need to be able to not make a big deal about things that don't matter too much. And it's important to build relationships with everyone in your spouses immediate family. If all the children and parents can't have at least a cordial relationship the marriage will be hard. And financially. Don't expect your husband to rescue you. He has his own child support to pay or other expenses. Maybe your saving on rent by getting married but you must discuss the division of finances and how it is going to be worked out.*
- *There's still love out there*

Q. As a married person who had previously been divorced, can you share any thoughts you may have on the "remarrying process" ... what you learned, did differently, advice to other divorcees, etc.? (n = 72 verbatim responses; M.O. and Haredi responses are similar and are combined.)

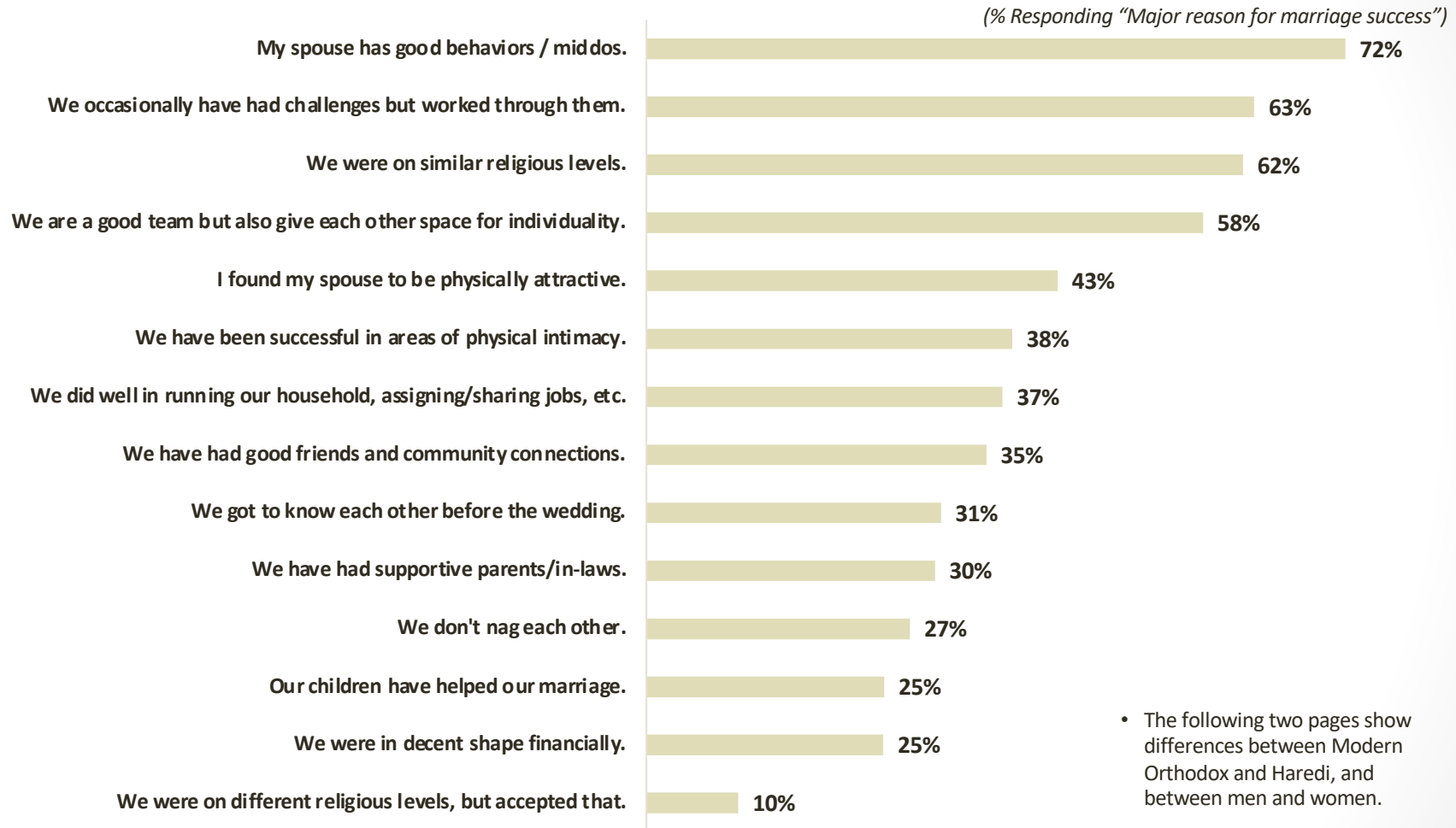
Some Comparisons of the Divorce Findings With Outside Studies – Many studies are done among divorcees, both quantitative (surveys with checklists of causes and verbatim responses), and qualitative (interviews among a smaller number of people). The studies employ varying methodologies and language, and generate an array of results, precluding exact comparisons of our Orthodox community findings to U.S. society. But we offer observations for some of our most-cited reasons for divorce, and we do find some similarities.

- **Initiation of Divorce** – A 2015 American Sociological Association study found that 68% of divorces were initiated by women. This compares to 58% in our study (if we evenly divide those who said “jointly.”)
- **Bad middos (behaviors), not trustworthy** (cited by 49% in our survey as a major reason for divorce) – This is cited as a major reason in many studies. For example, the 2015 University of Denver National Divorce Decision-Making Project (a sample of over 3,000 divorced individuals) found that many divorcees “described patterns of ‘immature’ or ‘selfish’ behavior, including lying, defensiveness, and irresponsibility, and many participants said they could no longer “trust” their spouse with finances, parenting, or emotional support.”
- **Untreated or undisclosed mental health challenges or personality disorders** (cited by 47% in our survey) – Mental health is cited as a major reason in many studies. For example, in the University of Denver study, verbatim responses indicated that many respondents mentioned untreated depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, or PTSD as central to their marital breakdown, and personality-related issues like emotional dysregulation, narcissism, or borderline traits came up frequently. Our survey prefaced this with “Untreated or undisclosed,” and we might speculate that incidence is higher among Orthodox Jews due to shidduch and shorter dating practices, especially among the Haredi.
- **Emotional or Verbal Abuse** (cited by 42% in our survey) – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention surveys between 2010 and 2018 have found that 47% of women and 47% of men (married or divorced) report experiencing psychological aggression by an intimate partner during their lifetime. Abuse can include name-calling, threats, coercive control, Isolation from friends/family, and is strongly correlated with relationship instability and divorce.
- **Gaps in areas of physical intimacy** (cited by 28% in our survey) – A 2016 Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy Study found that 52% of men and 40% of women said dissatisfaction with sexual intimacy was a significant contributor to their divorce; while the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy reports that sexual dissatisfaction is cited in 15–20% of divorces directly but often plays a background role in many more.
- **Affairs** (cited by 21% in our survey) – The Institute for Divorce Financial Analysts (IDFA) has conducted several studies and has reported that infidelity / cheating is a factor in 28% of the divorces.

Marriage Success Factors

(This section presents the views of those who are currently married and have not been divorced)

What Leads to a Successful Marriage: Overall Orthodox Community – Paralleling what was seen as the top reason for divorce (spouse's bad behaviors / middos), it is good behavior that most contributes to a lasting marriage (71%), followed by willingness to work through challenges, and the couple being on similar religious levels.



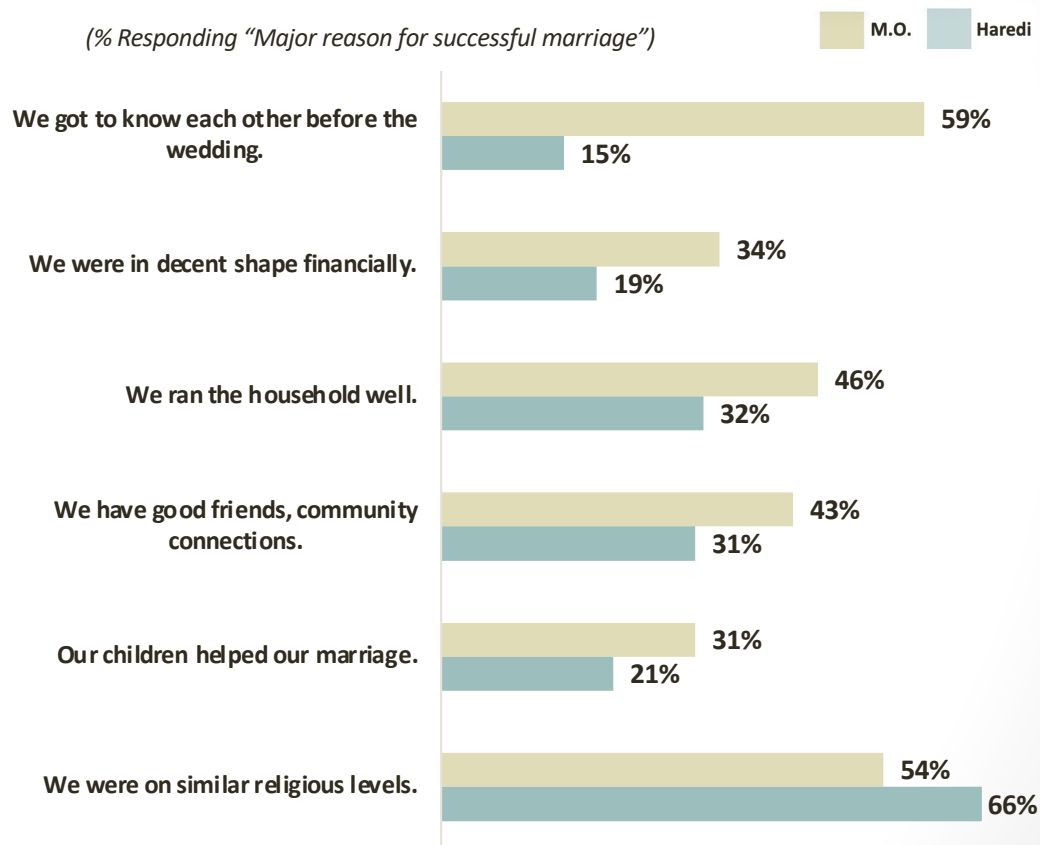
Q. Below are some reasons given for why marriages succeed. Thinking about your marriage, do you see any of these as reasons why your marriage succeeds? Please check one box on each row. [Response Options for Each Row/Item: Major Reason for Marriage Success; Somewhat a Reason; Don't Think It's a Reason; Not Sure]. (n = M.O. 473, Haredi 417). These data, representing all of Orthodoxy, are weighted averages of M.O. and Haredi, with weights of 36% and 64%, respectively, based on population estimates by Nishma Research and other demographers.

Reasons for Successful Marriage: Differences Between Modern Orthodox and Haredi – While the rankings of reasons given by Modern Orthodox and Haredi are fairly similar*, the Modern Orthodox cite several reasons more often than do the Haredi, with the biggest difference (perhaps not surprisingly) being in the area of getting to know each other before marriage.

TOP REASONS FOR SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE – M.O.	%
Good behaviors / middos	70%
Work through occasional challenges	62%
Good team, with space for individuality	61%
Knew each other before the wedding	59%
Similar religious levels	54%
Found spouse physically attractive	47%
We ran the household well	46%

TOP REASONS FOR SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE – HAREDI	%
Good behaviors / middos	74%
Similar religious levels	66%
Work through occasional challenges	64%
Good team, with space for individuality	56%
Successful in areas of physical intimacy	40%
Found spouse physically attractive	40%
We ran the household well	32%

Reasons for Successful Marriage – Differences Between Modern Orthodox and Haredi**



n = M.O. 473, Haredi 417

* Correlation coefficient = +0.73.

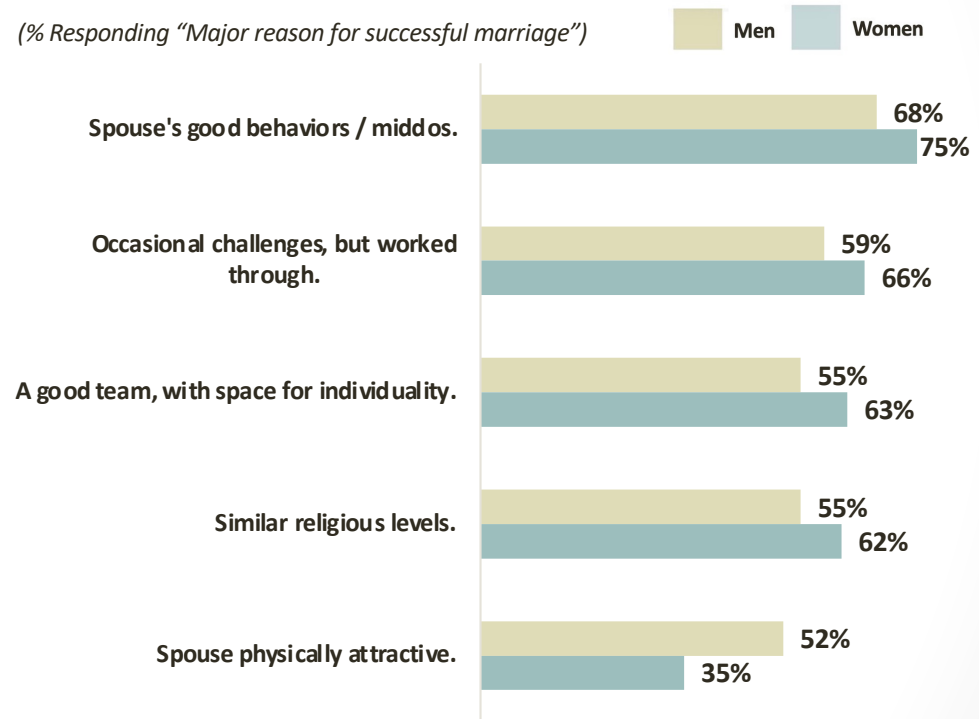
** Differences are statistically significance at $p \leq 0.01$.

Reasons for Successful Marriage: Differences Between Men and Women – The rankings of reasons given by men and women for their successful marriage are very similar.*

TOP REASONS FOR SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE – MEN	%
Good behaviors / middos	68%
Occasional challenges, but worked through	59%
Similar religious levels	55%
A good team, with space for individuality	55%
Spouse is physically attractive	52%

TOP REASONS FOR SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE – WOMEN	%
Good behaviors / middos	75%
Occasional challenges, but worked through	66%
A good team, with space for individuality	63%
Similar religious levels	62%
Good friends and community connections	40%

Reasons for Successful Marriage – Significant Differences Between Men and Women**



n = Men 487, Women 490.

* Correlation coefficient = +0.97.

** Differences are statistically significance at $p \leq 0.01$.

Impact of Orthodox Observant Life on Stability of Marriage – Over 70% of all marrieds strongly believe that Orthodox Jewish life (practices, halacha, community, etc.) helps to make their marriage more stable. Compare this to how divorcees responded to a similar question (see pages 15-16; about 20% said that Orthodox Jewish life made their marriage more stable, but 40% said it made their marriage less stable)

Views of Marrieds on Whether Orthodox Jewish life helps to make marriage more stable



Can you please explain why you say that? ➡

(25)

Q. Do you think Orthodox Jewish life (practices, *halacha*, community, etc.) helps to make your marriage more stable? (Asked of those married, never divorced, and observant at time of marriage) [Yes, very much so; Somewhat; Slightly; No] (n= M.O. 491 (Men 270, Women 221), Haredi 465 (Men 221, Women 244)).

Impact of Orthodox Observant Life on Stability of Marriage – Summary and Sample Verbatim Responses

The 70% Who Responded “Very Much So”

Shared Structure, Routine, and Family Time

- Shabbat, Yom Tov, and shared rituals offer predictable, regular quality time that strengthens bonds.
- The rhythm of observant life (meals, synagogue, holidays) creates family-centered routines.

Quotes:

- *“Shabbos is a huge boon to our relationship.”*
- *“Having a more rigid schedule means I can always count on time with my husband.”*
- *“We both find the structure meaningful and satisfying.”*

Social Pressure and Stigma as a Deterrent to Divorce

- Community norms strongly discourage divorce, especially for women.
- This increases stability but may trap people in unhappy marriages.
- Fear of stigma and isolation, particularly for single mothers, is a major factor.

Quotes:

- *“Divorce is so stigmatized... scary and lonely to be a single mom.”*
- *“Community life makes it harder to leave than stay.”*
- *“They’ve been trapping me in a marriage I’ve been considering leaving.”*

Halacha provides shared values, goals, and structure.

- A religious view of marriage encourages commitment through difficulty, viewing struggles as spiritual growth.
- Halacha and Torah values provide a moral framework, supports fidelity.

Quotes:

- *Sometimes halacha and traditional practices help keep the routine of marriage and parenting. Rituals and customs provide a base to build off of or to center us.*
- *Shabbat and chagim.*
- *when following halacha of nidda etc, it makes for a refreshing experience and with things like shabbos and YT makes family time/marriage time important.*

The Minority Who Responded “Slightly” or “Not”

The most common theme was that Orthodox practice adds more stress than stability.

- Orthodox observance introduces financial, emotional, and interpersonal strain due to cost of living (kosher, tuition, holidays), halachic pressures (especially niddah and mikvah), and gender role expectations and religious mismatches.

Quotes:

- *“It makes more tension and makes it worse.”*
- *“Orthodox lifestyle adds tons of pressure.”*
- *“Hasidism has robbed me from real authentic intimacy.”*
- *“My husband is much more religious than I am.”*

Stability Comes from Personality, Not Orthodoxy

- Many emphasized that marital strength is based on communication, values, and personality, not religion.
- Jewish observance is seen as neutral or incidental to relationship quality.

Quotes:

- *“Nothing to do with it.”*
- *“Each person is different and that’s what matters most.”*
- *“Stability is more related to individual personalities.”*

Additional Notable Themes:

- Rigid roles and lack of flexibility in halacha undermine emotional connection.
- Loss of authentic intimacy due to religious rules.
- Difficulty accessing mental health help due to reliance on rabbinic guidance.

Creating a Successful Marriage – Sample Verbatim Responses (Page 1 of 2) –

Successful Orthodox marriages are rooted in communication, respect, shared values, and constant effort. Empathy and friendship are powerful tools. Problems arise, and success is the willingness to face them and deal with them together. Support, possibly including therapy, might be of value.

- *had good freinds outside of the marriage*
- *Being determined to make it work and not just throw in the towel is a major component to being able to work through snags and bumps successfully. Financial success cannot be the reason since we are struggling financially. It may aggravate a snag, but could not have contributed to our success in overcoming it.*
- *disclose mental health problems*
- *Strong communication is helpful in creating a successful marriage.*
- *Empathy and generosity with each other*
- *consistency between us as to our values (family, religious observance, finances, career, etc.)*
- *Knowing failure is not an option. Costs more to get divorced and not stupid to think the next one will be better*
- *Mutual caring, understanding. Making the other person feel important, heard. Takes teamwork to be a good couple. Important to build each other up, support their goals, help them become a better version of themselves. Accept outside help, guidance, suggestions, therapy.*
- *This is all way too complicated for a survey*
- *Flexibility, communication*
- *Takes effort and willingness to work at it.*
- *I think if high schools taught kids more about relationships instead of torah learning there would be less divorces. Teaching about being responsible with finances would be huge. Teaching psychology and how genders are typically wired would also be huge*
- *having independent solid careers that were gratifying*
- *Lucky not to have faced major health challenges*
- *A sense of working towards same goals and valuing same approaches to things like materialism, travel, and more*
- *We are not doing well in our marriage. Main reason is anxious/avoidant dynamic. We have respect for each other, financial stability, friends outside marriage, beautiful children, success w household chores, etc but none of that makes a difference.*
- *Our values and priorities -- not just religious -- are remarkably compatible. We respect each other's judgment/opinion.*
- *We are best friends*
- *I don't think we have a successful marriage. I think we are just married.*
- *We enjoy each others' company. We speak to each other and have a good time together.*
- *Think about each other, and play the long game.*
- *We have similar viewpoints on major issues and with how we want to deal with difficulties.*
- *Knowing that difficult stages will pass with time. Laid back, not trying to keep up with the "jones's". Modest shul community.*
- *In a second or late marriage: recognize the history lived before you showed up.*
- *We took a communication course and have sought guidance for how to manage stress. These issues are an open conversation.*
- *The success of my marriage is 100% due to the fact that my husband has impeccable middos. He is a caring husband and makes time for me and is an involved father. He manages to do this while being a successful rebbe and tutoring outside of work hours to provide for our family.*

Q. Is there anything else you would add relating to creating a successful marriage? N = 438 verbatim responses.

Creating a Successful Marriage – Sample Verbatim Responses (Page 2 of 2)

- *Not having to be "right" all the time. Don't say "you never do x" thank each other for the little things. If you don't like the way the other does something say "could we try...x? Stay calm and don't bicker or yell. It doesn't solve anything.*
- *We both recognize how frustrating we each can be and hold patience for each other and appreciation for the patience our spouse has for us.*
- *Trusting each other, backing off and being pleasant even when you aren't feeling it. Compliments for no reason on the same page parenting even if you disagree*
- *We are both committed to trying to keep a short memory and not hold on to grudges I am far from perfect on it but I know it helps*
- *Strong communication skills. We are both approachable*
- *I think there is a lot of fear for me as a male to become naked about my feelings and honestly discussing everything and putting all the hard stuff on the table, going through therapy has helped a lot*
- *Meeting with couples therapists and rabbis about our fears and concerns about each other before getting married. Open communication with each other. Trusting each other. Being able to be just friends before being married. Sharing non-Jewish values in addition to Jewish values*
- *Knowing when 100% honesty is called for. Knowing when to compromise without frustrating self-sacrifice. Keeping in mind that your spouse doesn't have the same life experience that you do, so it's a good idea to try to see things from his/her perspective.*
- *Having empathy and being able to listen and understand another's perspective is key in avoiding conflict.*
- *Patience, tolerance of each other's shortcomings- Communication- expressing feelings. Developing individual interests on the one hand, and finding mutual interests to work on together as well.*
- *Each spouse must continuously learn about how to be a good spouse and absolutely must always work on their marriage - every single day. If you stop watering a plant, it will die.*
- *We share overall values even though we are very different*
- *Acceptance and allowing the other freedom to change*
- *Our greatest success is our children, which made us a family, versus a couple*
- *It's important to be willing to grow together.*
- *Mutual respect and commitment*
- *It's good to have space from parents/in laws. I like having our own bubble :) Our privacy. Our space. Etc*
- *We've had major issues. The midda of perseverance and also wanting the best for the children have helped me stick with it.*
- *- Willingness to attend relationship therapy when things started to fray. - Shared commitment to making it work. - Shared 'big life goals'*
- *Being part of a community*
- *Common goals ie children are a priority while they are young and dependent, working towards house purchase, decorating,*
- *I know the Myers-Briggs and Enneagram well. I appreciate my husband for who he is and don't blame him for what he's not*
- *Trust, commitment, similar backgrounds, respect*
- *Respect your spouse as an individual and give him/her space*
- *A lot of tefillos, hard work, and siyata dishmaya. And a very good support system, especially when things are challenging. Being able to pay for out of network therapists, when needed, also helps - even if you have to occasionally reach out to tzedaka organizations or take out a loan.*
- *To understand the important and the fulfillment that a real soul union can provide. More than any success in life, as long as the person found his partner, the life project can only be perfect as long as you are well accompanied. And to achieve that, people have to invest (their time, their head, their money...etc) in order to make this longlife project work.(project that evolves all the time): spend a lot of time together (or quality time) to learn about one another, to grow together, to communicate, to share.*

Advice to Those Considering Divorce – Sample Verbatim Responses – The advice most often given was to exhaust every avenue before divorcing (“Try everything first;” “Only consider it after therapy, separation, reflection, and real effort.”); consider the impact on children (“Move heaven and earth to stay together for the kids;” “Divorce affects children more than you think.”); get advice and think carefully (“Make sure you’re doing it for the right reasons;” “... not just emotional impulse or outside pressure.”); but note that abuse and danger are valid grounds.

- *Fight for the marriage when you can. The grass isn't always greener on the other side. There are some times when divorce is necessary, but make it a very last resort.*
- *Do everything you can to avoid it unless in cases of abuse*
- *Last resort . Please exhaust all other options*
- *What are the reasons for staying together and what are the reasons for separating? Mental health is key.*
- *Go for counseling before you make that decision*
- *Depends on the problems but it's really hard to stay fully engaged in your kids lives and in the community.*
- *Staying married takes a lot of work. The end is worth that work, if you succeed in staying together. Most importantly, communication is key!*
- *Try counseling. Ask yourself, are you better off without him/her?*
- *Not really possible to give advice without knowing any particulars. I guess to be cautious, try to step away and cool off if things become emotional, and take things very seriously*
- *Don't be ashamed to try therapy, but also don't be ashamed if--after trying to fix the marriage--you discover that it is irreparable. Divorce can be an opportunity for you each to grow in positive ways.*
- *Take some time away from each other to get a different perspective on the issues affecting your marriage*
- *If for petty reasons, it's worth the work to work it out. It's not better on the other side. If for good reasons, that's why it's an option.*
- *Is the addition happiness you *think* this will give you really worth the suffering that your children will almost inevitably undergo?*
- *work, at least until they are adults.*
- *Prepare very well- mentally, financially, legally- before announcing you want a divorce. Also, strongly consider that in many states your ex will have 50/50 custody of your children and make sure that that would be better for your children than staying married.*
- *If you don't have any kids yet, make a decision very quickly whatever it is. If you do have kids with your spouse, then I'm sorry you're suffering, by all means get help, but move *heaven and earth* to stay together for those kids. Short of tolerating abuse, neglect, or other forms of danger (do divorce in those cases), you owe it to your children to make this Try anything to save the marriage, but if it cannot be saved, find a menschlekh way to get out.*
- *Hang in there.*
- *If it's early marriage and there are no kids yet then the very best thing could be to end a relationship that isn't working. I don't think having a child will fix an underlying dysfunction.*
- *Unless your spouse is a bad person, divorce comes with a terrible package of its own with no guarantees the next marriage will be any easier.*
- *Go to therapy, think of kids.*
- *Make absolutely sure, beyond shadow of doubt, that it is truly, unarguably impossible to make it work...*
- *Do what you need to do. Some marriages weren't meant to be. No shame in admitting that.*
- *Get a support system, make sure you're doing this for yourself and possibly for the kids as well.*
- *Go for counseling! Find your common ground and work with that.*
- *make sure you have exhausted all external support sources before making a final decision*
- *I don't think I can really comment on this because I'm not divorced nor have I considered it seriously, but what I might suggest is to be really clear with yourself about what you absolutely tolerate in your life versus areas where you may be willing to compromise*
- *Try harder to make relationship work. Divorce does not usually lead to greater happiness*

Q. As a married person, what advice would you give to people considering divorce? (n = 567 verbatim responses).

Concerns of Single Individuals

Views of Single Individuals – Singles are aware of divorces but are not overly anxious. Still, a majority feel pressure (very much or somewhat) to ensure their future marriage as “divorce-proof.”

Have you witnessed divorces in your family or among close friends?	
Many	10%
Some	36%
Just a few	33%
None	21%

Has the level of divorce influenced how you approach dating and thinking about marriage?	
Very much so	15%
Somewhat	22%
Just a little	23%
Not really	40%

Do you feel pressure to make sure your future marriage is "divorce-proof"?	
Very much so	28%
Somewhat	26%
Just a little	30%
Not really	16%

Do you think your community adequately educates singles about how to have healthy marital relationships?	
Very much so	5%
Somewhat	40%
Just a little	15%
Not really	40%

Can you explain why?
(If very much or somewhat)

Sample Verbatim Responses

- *I think people need to be more open/honest when dating. Lots of hidden diagnosed mental illness that spouses do not find until after the wedding. Much more difficult to be open when dating at 19 vs 30.*
- *My parents were divorced, my mom was an aguna. I don't want to EVER go through that so I'm a bit picky when it comes to dating, and thus unmarried at 30*
- *I was careful to consider many factors. I didn't rush into any commitments. I was engaged once, but there were problems. I broke it off & have never regretted it. I never had a serious boyfriend after that. I never regretted that either.*
- *Since it's very prevalent it does make you wonder what has been going wrong with people who thought they would be happily married*
- *I want a Jewish husband and children but at almost 40, with the lack of good men, I'd rather be single than marry a bad man*
- *Today's divorce rate demonstrates the ease of dissolving a marriage. This coupled with the emphasis on individualistic narcissistic personal needs and desires makes it all too easy to remain single.*
- *Regardless of other intervening factors, I have always wanted a stable, secure-feeling relationship before marriage to minimize the chance of divorce.*
- *have seen lots of people marry folks they never should have been with. often ignored warnings from friends. usually felt pressured by parents or community to settle down and married the first person who seemed ok.*

Data in this section are based on responses of 119 single individuals (M.O. 69, Haredi 30, Other observant 19). Given the relatively small sample, we report findings for all single individuals combined, with some broken out by gender.

Q. Have you witnessed divorces in your family or among close friends? [Many; Some; Just a few; None] (n=112)

Q. Do you think your community adequately educates singles about how to have healthy marital relationships? [Very much so; Somewhat; Just a little; Not really] (n = 108)

Q. Has the level of divorce influenced how you approach dating and thinking about marriage? [Very much so; Somewhat; Just a little; Not really] (n = 112)

Q. Q38. (Ask if “very much so” or “somewhat”) Can you please explain why you say that. (n = 20 verbatim responses)

Q. Do you feel pressure to make sure your future marriage is "divorce-proof"? [I don't really think about it; Very much so; Somewhat; A little, None] (n = 109)

Final Thoughts

Final Thoughts Relating to Divorce – Sample of Verbatim Responses (Page 1 of 2)

- *A must to do personal development courses for anyone who wishes to get married.*
- *make it friendly not confrontational*
- *Talk about everything before getting married. Be truthful . Check on the family ahead of time. Baruch HaShem I was given a second chance from HaShem . I have has w good life with present husband .*
- *More on marriage and healthy relationships. Divorce is necessary, but by not talking about healthy relationships and forcing people to marry too young and too soon, we're settling couples up to fail and/or be miserable*
- *Take care of the kids! Don't leave them behind, emotionally.*
- *Make sure to maintain relationships with your friends, not just your partner*
- *First work on yourself, your approach, your actions and reactions,Ä¶..you can't influence another to change by nagging,Ä¶..it must be through love, respect, communication and changing yourself first.*
- *Don't judge others or assume you know their story Be kind to all*
- *There are situations where divorce might be the best path to take. Certainly when there is abusive behavior. Otherwise it is best to wait to be sure it is a good choice. You may someday look back and thank G-d you did not get divorced. Of course one aspect of divorce to always consider is the effect on your children if you have them.*
- *Think twice, three times. .*
- *Reach out to people in your community that you trust, or find a coach or mentor. Sometimes a third party can help you see where you causing the other pain.*
- *My wish is that pre nuptial agreements would be totally acceptable. Being friendly and helpful to people is must important when they are going through difficult times.*
- *It is a challenging process - family and community support is key... I know it is often unavoidable, but try not to waste money on custody evaluations, parent coordinators, and lawyers,- it drains any money you need and takes up too much physical and emotional time away from your kids.*
- *This is the time to be selfish! Don't let anyone pressure you in any way, ultimately it's you who will have to live with this decision.*
- *Dont fear the stigma.*
- *Give the other person 100% without trying to get something in return and see what happens*
- *do it amicably and put your children first*
- *Unfortunately - don't put too much faith in Bais Din or in Court. Neither was too helpful.*
- *Many people are looking elsewhere because they think other people have it better or have better marriages. Thats a favßade. All relationships take work.*
- *None- having not been through it, I can't begin to understand it*
- *I feel many divorces nowadays could be avoided if people put in the work.*
- *Best to be on a similar mindset re: faith*
- *Try to iron our your differences. Divorce is not always the beat answer*
- *No one truly knows what happens within a marriage except for the two people within it, and even they may not always be as self-aware as might be helpful. People going through a divorce should be shown compassion and their privacy respected.*
- *See past your pain to realize the impact on everyone involved.*
- *Perhaps the divorce crisis stems from the shidduch crisis. Maybe if people didn't focus on getting married, but rather on being married to the right person, we wouldn't be rushed into things. Also, we need to accept divorce. The toxicity in frum divorces is far greater than that of non-frum and non-Jewish people. It does not have to be characterized as the other person being evil. It does not have to devolve into familial feuds. Children should never be alienated from their other parent.*
- *I try to be understanding for friends who have gone through it. But I am careful and feel strongly about not taking sides or playing favorites. Just to be there for a friend in need.*
- *For women, bring a woman with you when you get your gett. And know that's what's right/fair has little to do with what the courts may say.*
- *Need community support to go through the process.*
- *People who divorced are in pain. Be kind. Don't take sides..no one really knows what happened. Include others kids with yours..children are in pain too.*

Q. Finally, are there any thoughts or advice you would like to offer to people in your community relating to any aspect of the issue of divorce? (n = 616 verbatim responses)

Final Thoughts Relating to Divorce – Sample of Verbatim Responses (Page 2 of 2)

- *As much as we already focus on trying to help divorcees and their children, we should keep pushing to do more for them.*
- *Divorce should always be an option. It's a mitzvah and shouldn't be a social taboo.*
- *I feel for any divorced women who doesn't have the support of a husband, the logistics are difficult, but not having someone to care and love her is terrible.*
- *Try to think about what the future might be like in the present.*
- *Be open and loving to more people. Thank Gd liked seudas home alone BUT had several families that had me. One couple had new people and regulars. Felt comfortable asking to join them b4 marriage 2nd time.*
- *Deal with problems early. Your spouse is not a mind reader. If they can't be dealt with take action compassionately and cleanly*
- *There should be no stigma attached. Not every marriage will work. If both parties in a marriage are unhappy, it's better to divorce than to be miserable for years on end.*
- *If you're in the wrong relationship, don't waste your time or you spouse's time being miserable.*
- *Yes. One of the most important things a community can do is not forget the divorced parent and their family. Divorce can be incredibly isolating, and it's easy for families to fall through the cracks socially and emotionally. Include divorced individuals in Shabbos and Yom Tov meals just as you would any other couple or family. Don't treat them differently or with pity, treat them with dignity and warmth. Be mindful not to speak about the divorce or speculate about what "really happened," especially in front of children. Kids repeat what they hear, and those words often travel into classrooms and playgrounds, causing pain and embarrassment. Protecting the dignity of both parents is also in the best interest of the children. Avoid taking sides or badmouthing one parent over the other, even if you feel closer to one of them. Your role is to support, not to judge. Silence can be more compassionate than shared opinions or gossip. Ultimately, communities should strive to be sources of healing, not division. Sensitivity, inclusion, and a commitment to preserving the humanity of everyone involved go a long way in making a difference.*
- *Especially for men: your wife comes first*
- *Life is better after divorce than in an unloving marriage. Carpe diem.*
- *You can work through having very different level of observance from your spouse.*
- *Make sure you have a good kallah teacher/marriage coach, etc., who will follow up with you after marriage.*
- *Don't be rigged*
- *Don't remarry*
- *Divorce itself is not the problem. The problem is loveless marriages that result in divorce. Close marital relationships need to be a higher priority in our community.*
- *Set boundaries within laws*
- *Make sure you make a good team with your spouse before getting married and that you truly love them as a person beyond just how they look or what talents they have. Everything else is secondary.*
- *Make sure you get proper legal counsel.*
- *Meditation and mindfulness for repair*
- *I believe marriage is somewhat socially conditioned in our culture, and not enough thought process truly goes into making sure that there are long-term safety mechanisms in place to support the couple in having a happy marriage. I would say most people getting divorced is not all due to the couples themselves, though due to a failure of the environment as well.*
- *Have a mindful mindset of acceptance.*
- *It is better to be alone and happy than married and miserable.*
- *look into your middos first, it might change your perspective*
- *Divorce can be hard and painful but does not signify failure. We should de-stigmatize it. We should want couples to thrive together, and should support them to work toward this, but if they can't, we should make space for the idea that divorce is sometimes the healthiest choice. Staying married is also a choice, which is a more empowering notion than the idea that couples stay together partly out of fear of being stigmatized or transgressing a norm.*
- *Be sensitive and caring for divorced parents and their children, especially for younger children. Include them in family and social gatherings.*
- *Trying to act "frum", not admitting that we both had sexual desires, lack of money (half Koleh half work) didn't make ends meet, zero financial education by either of us in yeshiva/ Beis Yaakov setting was a contributing factor*

Appendix I: Respondent Demographics

Summary of Key Respondent Demographics

Current Jewish Self-Identification

Sector	Number	%
Modern/Centrist Orthodox/Observant; or leaning toward Modern/Centrist	809	50%
Yeshivish/Agudah/Litvish; or leaning toward Yeshivish/Agudah/Litvish	418	26%
Chasidic, including Chabad; or leaning toward Chasidic, including Chabad	242	15%
Subtotal Haredi	660	41%
Jewish observant, other	161	10%
Total Orthodox observant respondents	1,630	100%

Those self-identifying as “Jewish observant, other” described themselves with all sorts of labels. For consistency, we have excluded them from the Modern Orthodox and Haredi categories in this report, noting also the adequacy of the samples of these two large sectors.

Age	M.O.	Haredi
18-29	9%	16%
30-44	30%	45%
45-64	32%	25%
65+	29%	14%
Median	51	40

Age	M.O.	Haredi
Male	51%	44%
Female	49%	56%
Total	100%	100%

Marital Status, Currently Orthodox Observant

Marital Status	Number	%
Married	1,248	77%
Divorced	203	13%
Separated	24	1%
Widowed	31	2%
Single	118	7%
Total	1,624	100%

In addition to those currently divorced, 119 reported a previous divorce, and these are included in the analysis of divorces.

The analysis of divorces also includes some who were observant at the time of their marriage but are no longer so. The fact that people may have shifted in their religious identification during their marriage is a logistical wrinkle in such a study but also presents data and an opportunity for future analysis. For starters:

- Among divorcees who identified as Modern Orthodox when they got married, 90% currently identify as Modern Orthodox.
- Among divorcees who identified as Haredi when they got married, 66% currently identify as Haredi and 21% currently identify as Modern Orthodox.

Appendix II: Survey Questionnaire

Survey Questionnaire (Page 1 of 6)

SURVEY OF ORTHODOX JEWISH FAMILY LIFE, MARRIAGE & DIVORCE

INTRODUCTION

This survey explores community issues relating to family life, marriage, and divorce. The survey is open to all persons aged 18 or older, regardless of current marital status (although the questions will vary depending on marital status).

This survey is conducted and fully sponsored by Nishma Research as a service to our community and should take between 6 and 12 minutes to complete. The survey can be taken on a desktop, laptop or smartphone; it will take a few minutes longer on a smartphone. Some questions (denoted with an asterisk*) require a response, but we ask you to please reply as fully as possible.

All responses are confidential.

At the end of the survey, you will have the opportunity to enter a drawing to win one of five \$50 Amazon Gift Cards. If you have any questions please contact Mark Trencher at mark@nishmaresearch.com.

DEMOGRAPHICS

[ASK OF ALL]

***Q1. What is your current marital status?**

- Married
- Divorced
- Separated
- Widowed
- Single

[ASK IF Q1 = MARRIED]

***Q2. How many years have you been married?** [NUMERIC ENTRY]

[ASK IF Q1 = MARRIED, SEPARATED, OR WIDOWED]

***Q3. Have you ever been divorced?**

- Yes
- No

[ASK OF ALL DIVORCED ... Q1 = CURRENTLY DIVORCED OR Q3 = YES BEEN DIVORCED IN PAST]

***Q4. How many times have you been divorced?**

- Once
- Twice
- Three or more times

[ASK OF ALL]

***Q5. What is your age?**

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 29
- 30 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 or 74
- 75 or older

[ASK OF ALL]

***Q6. What is your gender?**

Male
Female
Would rather not say

RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION

[ASK OF ALL]

***Q7. Which of the following best describes how you identify Jewishly at this time?**

- Modern/Centrist Orthodox/Observant; or leaning toward Modern/Centrist
- Yeshivish/Agudah/Litvish; or leaning toward Yeshivish/Agudah/Litvish
- Chasidic, including Chabad; or leaning toward Chasidic, including Chabad
- Jewish observant, other – Describe [TEXT ENTRY]
- Jewish not observant – Describe [TEXT ENTRY]
- Other – Describe [TEXT ENTRY]

Survey Questionnaire (Page 2 of 6)

[ASK IF MARRIED AND NEVER DIVORCED ... Q1 = MARRIED AND Q3 = NO]

***Q8a. Which of the following best describes how you identified Jewishly at the time you got married?**

- Modern/Centrist Orthodox/Observant; or leaning toward Modern/Centrist
- Yeshivish/Agudah/Litvish; or leaning toward Yeshivish/Agudah/Litvish
- Chasidic, including Chabad; or leaning toward Chasidic, including Chabad
- Jewish observant, other – Describe [TEXT ENTRY]
- Jewish not observant – Describe [TEXT ENTRY]
- Other – Describe [TEXT ENTRY]

[ASK IF CURRENTLY DIVORCED AND DIVORCED ONCE ... Q1 = DIVORCED AND Q4 = ONCE]

***Q8b. You indicated you are divorced. Which of the following best describes how you identified Jewishly at the time you got married?**

- Modern/Centrist Orthodox/Observant; or leaning toward Modern/Centrist
- Yeshivish/Agudah/Litvish; leaning toward Yeshivish/Agudah/Litvish
- Chasidic, including Chabad; or leaning toward Chasidic, including Chabad
- Jewish observant, other – Describe [TEXT ENTRY]
- Jewish not observant – Describe [TEXT ENTRY]
- Other – Describe [TEXT ENTRY]

[ASK IF CURRENTLY DIVORCED AND DIVORCED MORE THAN ONCE ... Q1 = DIVORCED AND Q4 = MORE THAN ONCE]

***Q8c. You indicated you are divorced. Please think of your most recent spouse. Which of the following best describes how you identified Jewishly at the time you got married to that individual?**

- Modern/Centrist Orthodox/Observant; or leaning toward Modern/Centrist
- Yeshivish/Agudah/Litvish; leaning toward Yeshivish/Agudah/Litvish
- Chasidic, including Chabad; or leaning toward Chasidic, including Chabad
- Jewish observant, other – Describe [TEXT ENTRY]
- Jewish not observant – Describe [TEXT ENTRY]
- Other – Describe [TEXT ENTRY]

BASIC DETAILS OF DIVORCE

[DISPLAY MESSAGE IF Q4 = DIVORCED MORE THAN ONCE]

PLEASE NOTE: There are questions in this survey dealing with your divorce experiences. Please answer all such questions as they relate to only your most recent spouse/divorce.

[ASK OF ALL DIVORCED ... Q1 = CURRENTLY DIVORCED OR Q3 = YES BEEN DIVORCED IN PAST]

***Q9. How many years were you married?** [NUMERIC ENTRY]

[ASK OF ALL DIVORCED ... Q1 = CURRENTLY DIVORCED OR Q3 = YES BEEN DIVORCED IN PAST]

***Q10. How old were you at the time of your divorce?**

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 29
- 30 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 or older

[ASK OF ALL DIVORCED ... Q1 = CURRENTLY DIVORCED OR Q3 = YES BEEN DIVORCED IN PAST]

***Q11. In what year were you divorced?** [NUMERIC ENTRY]

[ASK OF ALL DIVORCED ... Q1 = CURRENTLY DIVORCED OR Q3 = YES BEEN DIVORCED IN PAST]

Q12. Did you have any children under the age of 18 at the time of your divorce?

- None
- One
- Two
- Three or more

[ASK IF Q12 = ONE OR MORE]

Q13. Were your children, at the time of your divorce, in the following age groups? [Response Options for Each Row/Item: Yes; No]

- 5 or under
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 17

Survey Questionnaire (Page 3 of 6)

IMPACT OF OBSERVANT LIFE

[ASK IF Q1 = MARRIED AND Q3 = NO – NEVER DIVORCED AND Q8a = OBSERVANT AT TIME OF MARRIAGE]

Q14. Do you think Orthodox Jewish life (practices, halacha, community, etc.) helps to make your marriage more stable?

- Yes, very much so
- Somewhat
- Slightly
- No

[ASK IF Q14 ANSWERED]

Q15. Can you please explain why you say that. [OPEN-ENDED]

[ASK IF Q1 = DIVORCED]

Q16. Do you think Orthodox Jewish life (practices, halacha, community, etc.) had an impact of your marriage?

- Not relevant; not observant at the time of our marriage
- It made our marriage more stable
- No real impact
- It made our marriage less stable

[ASK IF Q16 ANSWERED (OTHER THAN NOT RELEVANT RESPONSE)]

Q17. Can you please explain why you say that. [OPEN-ENDED]

CHILDHOOD

[ASK OF ALL]

Q18. Before we get into marital issues, just a few questions about your childhood. Would you agree with these statements? [Response Options for

Each Row/Item: Yes; Somewhat; No; Not Sure]

[RANDOMIZE ORDER]

- I had a happy childhood.
- My parents had a happy marriage.
- My parents were divorced.
- I felt loved and cared for.
- I experienced physical or emotional abuse.
- I did well in school.
- I felt well-adjusted religiously.
- I developed physical problems due to stress.

DIVORCE COUNSELING

[ASK OF ALL DIVORCED ... Q1 = CURRENTLY DIVORCED OR Q3 = YES BEEN DIVORCED IN PAST]

Q19. Before and during your divorce process, did you use any of the following services or advisors? Please check all that you used ...

- Marriage counseling (Orthodox individual)
- Marriage counseling (non-Orthodox)
- Professional mediator (Orthodox individual)
- Professional mediator (non-Orthodox)
- Rabbinic counseling
- Legal services, lawyer

[ASK IF ANY OF Q19 ANSWERED, EXCLUDING LEGAL SERVICES]

Q20. For how long did you get some form of counseling, before you decided to get a divorce?

- 6 months or less
- 6 months or more, less than a year
- A year or more, less than 2 years
- 2 years or more

[ASK IF ANY OF Q19 ANSWERED]

Q21. Which of the services, if any, did you find helpful? Not helpful? Why?

[OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

REASONS FOR DIVORCE

[DISPLAY MESSAGE TO ALL DIVORCED ... Q1 = CURRENTLY DIVORCED OR Q3 = YES BEEN DIVORCED IN PAST]: **REMINDER: All responses are confidential. Please remember that in the event you've been divorced more than once, answer questions as they relate to your most recent divorce.**

[ASK OF ALL DIVORCED, CURRENTLY OR IN THE PAST]

Q22. Please check the sentence below that you think best describes your divorce, in terms of who initiated the decision to get divorced.

- All or nearly all of the decision to get divorced was my decision.
- Most of the divorce decision was mine.
- The divorce decision was pretty much jointly made with my spouse.
- Most of the divorce decision was my spouse's.
- All or nearly all of the decision to get divorced was my spouse's decision.

Survey Questionnaire (Page 4 of 6)

[ASK OF ALL DIVORCED, CURRENTLY OR IN THE PAST]

Q23. How would you describe your divorce?

- Very amicable / friendly
- Mostly amicable / friendly
- Somewhere between
- Mostly hostile / angry / unfriendly
- Very hostile / angry / unfriendly

[ASK OF ALL DIVORCED, CURRENTLY OR IN THE PAST]

Q24. Do you agree with the following statements? [Response Options for

Each Row/Item: Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Don't know]

- It was good that I got divorced.
- I am happier at this time than I was in that marriage.
- [SHOW IF Q12 = HAD ONE OR MORE CHILDREN] My children were better off after the divorce.

[ASK OF ALL DIVORCED, CURRENTLY OR IN THE PAST]

Q25. Below are some reasons that are given for why marriages end. Do you see any of these as reasons why your marriage ended? Please check one box on each row. [Sorry about the long list ... we know this is a complicated issue.] [Response Options for Each Row/Item: Major Reason

for Divorce; Somewhat a Reason; Don't Think It's a Reason; Not Sure]

- We were mismatched from the start.
- We were too young and didn't really know each other.
- We were pressured to get married quickly and ignored things we should have noticed.
- We just didn't know how to run a household.
- We had unbearable living conditions.
- We had financial difficulties.
- There was a change in one (or both) of our levels of religious/halachic observance or hashkafa.
- My spouse "became a different person" after marriage.
- My spouse was dishonest, not trustworthy.
- My spouse had bad behaviors / middos.
- Someone in the marriage had an affair.

(Continued)

- There was a gap between us in areas of physical intimacy.
- I found my spouse to be physically unattractive.
- One of us wanted to make aliyah, but one did not.
- There were untreated or undisclosed mental health challenges or personality disorders.
- There were addiction problems (e.g., drugs, alcoholism, gambling, porn, etc.)
- There was emotional / verbal abuse.
- There was physical abuse.
- My spouse was too nagging / controlling.
- There were problems with parents/in-laws.
- My parents encouraged me to get divorced.
- Friends or relatives encouraged me to get divorced.
- Struggles with fertility put an enormous strain on us.
- We disagreed about how to raise children — religiously, emotionally, or educationally.
- Community pressure ... trying to maintain a certain image was stressful.

[ASK OF ALL DIVORCED, CURRENTLY OR IN THE PAST]

Q26. Are there any other noteworthy reasons for your divorce that you would like to mention? [OPEN-ENDED]

[ASK IF Q25 OBSERVANCE OR HASHKAFAH ITEM = A MAJOR OR SOMEWHAT REASON]

Q27. Can you explain how religious/halachic observance or hashkafah were a factor in your divorce? [OPEN-ENDED]

[ASK OF ALL DIVORCED, CURRENTLY OR IN THE PAST]

Q28. If you could go back in time, is there anything that you would have done differently that might have affected your divorce? [OPEN-ENDED]

[ASK OF MARRIEDS WHO HAVE BEEN DIVORCED ... Q1 = MARRIED AND Q3 = YES]

Q29. As a married person who had previously been divorced, can you share any thoughts you may have on the "remarrying process" ... what you learned, did differently, advice to other divorcees, etc.? [OPEN-ENDED]

Survey Questionnaire (Page 5 of 6)

MARITAL SUCCESS & ADVICE – MARRIEDS

[ASK OF MARRIEDS NEVER DIVORCED ... Q1 = MARRIED AND Q3 = NO]

Q30. Below are some reasons given for why marriages succeed. Thinking about your marriage, do you see any of these as reasons why your marriage succeeds? Please check one box on each row. REMEMBER THAT ALL SURVEY RESPONSES ARE CONFIDENTIAL.

[Response Options for Each Row/Item: Major Reason for Marriage Success; Somewhat a Reason; Don't Think It's a Reason; Not Sure]

- We got to know each other before the wedding.
- We did well in running our household, assigning/sharing jobs, etc.
- We were in decent shape financially.
- We were on similar levels in terms of religious/halachic observance or hashkafa.
- We were on different levels in terms of religious/halachic observance or hashkafa, but accepted that.
- My spouse has good behaviors / middos.
- I found my spouse to be physically attractive.
- We have been successful in areas of physical intimacy.
- We occasionally have had challenges but worked through them.
- We don't nag each other.
- We are a good team but also give each other space for individuality.
- We have had supportive parents/in-laws.
- We have had good friends and community connections.
- Our children have helped our marriage.

[ASK OF MARRIEDS NEVER DIVORCED ... Q1 = MARRIED AND Q3 = NO]

Q31. Is there anything else you would add relating to creating a successful marriage? [OPEN-ENDED]

[ASK OF MARRIEDS NEVER DIVORCED ... Q1 = MARRIED AND Q3 = NO]

Q32. As a married person, what advice would you give to people considering divorce? [OPEN-ENDED]

MARITAL SUCCESS & ADVICE – WIDOWED

[ASK OF WIDOWED NEVER DIVORCED ... Q1 = WIDOWED AND Q3 = NO]

Q33. Below are some reasons given for why marriages succeed. If you are comfortable thinking about this, can you see any of these as reasons why your marriage succeeded? Please check one box on each row. REMEMBER THAT ALL SURVEY RESPONSES ARE CONFIDENTIAL.

[Response Options for Each Row/Item: Major Reason for Marriage Success; Somewhat a Reason; Don't Think It's a Reason; Not Sure]

- We got to know each other before the wedding.
- We did well in running our household, assigning/sharing jobs, etc.
- We were in decent shape financially.
- We were on similar levels in terms of religious/halachic observance or hashkafa.
- We were on different levels in terms of religious/halachic observance or hashkafa, but accepted that.
- My spouse had good behaviors / middos.
- I found my spouse to be physically attractive.
- We occasionally had challenges but worked through them.
- We didn't nag each other.
- We were a good team but also gave each other space for individuality.
- We had supportive parents/in-laws.
- We had good friends and community connections.
- Our children helped our marriage.

[ASK OF WIDOWED NEVER DIVORCED ... Q1 = WIDOWED AND Q3 = NO]

Q34. Is there anything else you would add relating to creating a successful marriage? [OPEN-ENDED]

[ASK OF WIDOWED NEVER DIVORCED ... Q1 = WIDOWED AND Q3 = NO]

Q35. What advice would you give to people considering divorce? [OPEN-ENDED]

Survey Questionnaire (Page 6 of 6)

CONCERNS OF SINGLE INDIVIDUALS

[ASK IF Q1 = SINGLE]

Q36. Have you witnessed divorces in your family or among close friends?

- Many
- Some
- Just a few
- None

[ASK IF Q1 = SINGLE]

Q37. Has the level of divorce influenced how you approach dating and thinking about marriage?

- Very much so
- Somewhat
- Just a little
- Not really

[ASK IF Q37 = VERY MUCH SO OR SOMEWHAT]

Q38. Can you please explain why you say that. [OPEN-ENDED]

[ASK IF Q1 = SINGLE]

Q39. Do you think your community adequately educates singles about how to have healthy marital relationships?

- Very much so
- Somewhat
- Just a little
- Not really

[ASK IF Q1 = SINGLE]

Q40. Do you feel pressure to make sure your future marriage is "divorce-proof"?

- I don't really think about it
- Very much so
- Somewhat
- A little, or None

FINAL THOUGHTS

[ASK OF ALL]

Q41. Finally, are there any thoughts or advice you would like to offer to people in your community relating to any aspect of the issue of divorce? [OPEN-ENDED]

OPT-INS

[ASK OF ALL]

Q42. Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts. Your response is very important to us.

- Check here if you would you like to be entered into the raffle for a chance to win one of five \$50 gift cards.
- Check here if you would like to get email invitations to occasional future research on Jewish topics, including follow-up research on the topic of divorce.
- [SHOW IF CURRENTLY DIVORCED] Check here if you would like information of a new divorce support group that is being creatEd.
- Check here if you would you like to get a free report of the results of this survey.

[SHOW IF ANY BOX IN Q42 IS CHECKED]

Please let us know your email address, so that we can contact you as appropriate. Your email will be totally confidential and will not be attached to your survey responses. Thank you! [EMAIL FORMATTED TEXT ENTRY]



<http://nishmaresearch.com>



Nishma Research and other Jewish communal studies are discussed at the Orthonomics podcast.