

Childfree Trend on the Rise: Four Reasons Why!

More young people than ever are making the choice to skip parenthood.

Ellen Walker for *Psychology today* website - Jan 19, 2014

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/complete-without-kids/201401/childfree-trend-the-rise-four-reasons-why>

It seems that news about more and more adults deciding to opt out of parenthood is popping up everywhere. I chuckled recently as I read that economists are blaming this trend on the financial state of the world and proclaiming that the declining birthrate is a sure sign that the recession lingers on. What these over-the-hill “experts” don’t realize is that young people today actually view having children as a choice, not an obligation. Being a parent is no longer considered an essential stage of life.

Below are a few reasons for this shift:

- Increased awareness of the environmental impact of overpopulation in our fragile world. Young adults frequently tell me that their concern about the state of the world is huge, and they hesitate to bring a child into an overpopulated, environmentally challenged future.
- Belief that children will interfere with career advancement and job security. A new study examining this issue came up with clear findings for women. Researchers found that parenthood appeared to result in lower productivity while the children were 12 and younger, with mothers averaging a 17.4% loss. This research involved economists and concluded that a woman with three children, working in the field of economics, loses, on average, four years of research output by the time her children become teenagers.
- Finding alternative means of meeting the need that most of us have for nurturing. Dogs are the new “children” for many couples these days, and most pup owners strongly insist that the bond they feel with their pet is as close as the one that many parents have with their children. One study showed that pet owners actually have greater sadness over the loss of their beloved non-human companions than over the loss of human loved ones.
- People are more aware than ever of the possible negative impact of having a child on the relationship with their partner. Recently published research out of England revealed that couples without children are more content with their relationship and partner than married parents are. The study found that mothers were less satisfied with their relationships with their partners than fathers or childfree women. A further twist was the finding that mothers say they find the most joy and satisfaction from their children, not their partners. Fathers, on the other hand, were much more likely to regard their partners as the most important person in their lives. Finally, parents spend less time nurturing their relationships than couples without children, and they have less couple time.

What about you? Do these or other factors fit in with your decision to skip the parenting stage of life?