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### Predicting Divorce in America

Divorce is so common in the American culture that we do not even think much of it nowadays. Shockingly, about 40-50% of married couples in the United States divorce (USA Today). This means that about half of the American population won't end up with the person that they marry. It is very unlikely that you have not come across at least one person in your lifetime that has been divorced, considering that there are around 100 divorces per hour (McKinley Irvin-Family Law). This really emphasizes how divorce has really started to become a social norm. In no way is this a bad thing. We are actually very lucky that we live in a country where we have the right to divorce and that we live in a culture where it is usually accepted for the most part. Since divorce is so common, there is a multitude of research that has been done to look at the different aspects that cause a majority of divorces. With this, it is possible that divorces could be predicted before two people even tie the knot. In fact, there are a multitude of factors that can be used to determine American's likelihood of divorce in their marriages. Age, family history, and the length of a dating period are all factors that can be used to predict people's likelihood of divorce.

Many researchers have found that there is a major trend between people's ages and divorce rates. Age can serve as a huge factor in people's likeliness of getting a divorce.

Researchers found that people who get married at younger ages are more likely to get a divorce than a couple who got married later in their lives (DiDonato). This is for many different reasons. For one, younger couples are usually not as financially stable as older couples which can cause a lot of arguments in a marriage. This is especially true for people who get married in their teen years. Not only are they not financially stable, but their brains are also not fully developed yet. Therefore, teenagers don't really know what they want out of life yet, especially when it comes to marriage. An attorney for family divorce wrote that people who wait to marry until they are over the age of 23 are less likely to get divorced (Irvin). Even though this is true, your chances of divorce actually decline as you age. A 40-year-old is way less likely to get divorced than a 30-year-old or 20-year-old etc. There is actually solid evidence already that proves how age really is a factor in divorce rates. Though many people would not assume this, millennials have actually shown trends of lower divorce rates. Millennials are waiting longer to get married which has shown a decrease in divorce rates (DiDonato). In addition to this, by the time millennials are getting married, they have an education and are financially stable. Millennials are being a lot smarter about getting married, and they are getting rewarded for it. They are proving research that has been collected over many years that shows how age has a clear impact on the chances of divorce.

Some factors that lead to divorce are simply unavoidable such as family history. Though you are not inevitably going to get a divorce if your parents are divorced, studies have shown that people are at higher risk for divorce if it runs in their family. There are many different reasons for this, however, I think that the most common is that people with divorced parents are less likely to learn important relationship skills to help them later on in their own relationships.

Parents serve as very important role models to children. Therefore, kids are going to be much more unlikely to learn good relationship skills if they have never watched their parents have a healthy relationship. Psychology today also argues, “growing up in a divorced family is likely to change your attitudes about marriage” (Dennison). This is because it is not something that is foreign to you. Once kids have experienced divorce in some way, it doesn’t seem as unnatural so they become more accepting of it and understand that it is an option early on in their lives. In fact, “many researchers have focused on parents as being important marriage role models. They argue that most of us model our own marriage after our parents’ marriage” (Dennison). I have seen this first hand. Many of my friends that have divorced parents have dramatically shorter relationships than those who don’t. Though this could be a coincidence, I think that family history really has an important role in people’s chances of getting a divorce later on in their lives.

Though there are countless factors that go into predicting people’s likelihood of getting a divorce, I think that another important one is the length of dating period. There has been a lot of different research that shows that couples who date longer have longer lasting marriages. This can be tied back to the age factor because the longer you date, the older you are when you decide to tie the knot. A study in the Journal Economic Inquiry found that, “couples who dated for one to two years were 20 percent less likely to later get a divorce than those who dated less than a year, and couples who dated for three years or longer were 39 percent less likely” (Romm). This makes a lot of sense when you think about it. The longer you date someone, the more you’re going to actually know each other and be able to gauge how you would get along in a marriage setting. Couples who have only date for about a year before they get married may have not even had their first fight yet so it’s hard to know if you would be able to stay with them when fights

eventually do come up in marriage. It's best to deal with those types of problems in a dating setting before a marriage setting.

Additionally, a shorter dating period is a sign of rushing into marriage most of the time. Alice Robb in *The New Republic* wrote that "Rushing into marriage might be a sign of impulsiveness or impatience...personality traits that could also lead couples to give up on each other" (1). Robb makes a really good point here. Dating is a time when you learn about each other's personalities. Not only can you get to know someone better by dating for a longer period of time, but dating longer can also be a sign of patience which is key in a healthy relationship. Once again, millennials are proving this to be correct through their relationships. Couples are waiting until they are older to get married, therefore, most of them are dating for longer periods of time as well. Also, couples who only date for short periods of times are still in the "honeymoon" stage of their relationship. They have faced no hardships together or had any conflict in their relationship, therefore, they really don't know if they are one-hundred percent compatible yet.

There are many countries where divorce is not accepted and only men get to make the decision to split from their spouse. We are very lucky to live in a country where we have the freedom to get a divorce for whatever reason it may be. This just goes to show that divorce is not always a bad thing. In addition to this, some of these factors are simply unavoidable. In the same way, divorce is not always avoidable either. However, being knowledgeable about the factors that could *possibly* increase the chances of getting a divorce could be very beneficial in the long run. If people become more educated on the factors that increase people's chances of divorce, the divorce rates could possibly decrease. There is an enormous amount of research on divorce and

marriages in America. It would be crazy to not take that research into consideration and see how it can be used in a positive way. However, everyone must take this research with a grain of salt. Every couple and relationship is drastically different so it may not be accurate for everyone. However, age, family history, and the length of a dating period are all good places to start when looking at the factors that may make you more likely to get a divorce in the future.

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