

Experts Share the Truth Behind Why the Divorce Rate Is Dropping

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A recent analysis of marriage and divorce data by researcher Phillip Cohen of the University of Maryland reveals an 18 percent reduction in the country's divorce rate between 2008 and 2018, reports news site [Slate](https://www.slate.com).

But why is that? Are millennials too focused on YOLO, self-care, or manic swiping on dating apps to go off and get married? Is it because their standards for an acceptable spouse are different from generations of the past?

Read on to hear how three experts have explained the divorce rate taking a turn down, down, *down*.

1. Cohabitation leads to a yes or no *before* marriage.

You learn a lot about people when you finally decide to live with them, which is why Alexandra Poolt, a licensed clinical social worker who specializes in therapy and divorce-coaching services, says this is the main rationale behind the plummeting divorce rate. If things aren't working out in the home, couples never make it down the aisle in the first place.

"During this period of living together, individuals learn more about each other and eventually either break up or get married," Poolt says. "Most tend to break up, as there are fewer strings—financial and otherwise—that keep the relationship entrenched."

2. People are getting pickier.

Dating apps can complicate things by giving people an overwhelming amount of options. The FOMO (fear of missing out) when it comes to actually committing to one person is real. (Dave in finance is great, but Prince Charming could be a thumb flick away!) Consequently, people double and *triple* check that a partner has what they are looking for prior to settling down.

Furthermore, Kryss Shane, a licensed master social worker and LGBT relationship expert, says people are spending more time getting to know themselves and building their own careers before getting boo'd up, and that results in a heavier vetting of potential partners.

"Individuals become clearer in who they are and in what traits they want in a partner," Shane says. "This results in stronger matches, which leads to fewer divorces."

3. There's not as much of a rush.

As millennials spend more time working on themselves and furthering their career, the idea of marriage and starting a family feels less urgent to them. Shane says that many people aren't getting married young anymore because they don't feel like it's a requirement.

"This results in people only marrying because they choose," says Shane, not because outside forces of society are pressuring them to do so. "When this occurs, more time is spent learning one another before marrying," she continues, "to ensure a strong match with

shared values and goals.”

4. There are options other than divorce.

For those who *are* married, divorce is no longer always the first option when things don't feel like they're working out.

“Marriage retreats and other intensive marriage programs are growing, so there is more impactful help available than your typical weekly hour-long session,” says Slatkin, “which may not do much—even with a competent therapist.”

In Stalkin's experience, he's seen “couples on the brink of divorce turn everything around in marriage retreats because ultimately most people want to stay together; they just don't have the tools,” he says. “Once they learn how to grow and heal, they can create a healthy relationship.”