

Happy Singlehood: The Rising Acceptance and Celebration of Solo Living

Elyakim Kislev

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People live as singles in mounting numbers, even in tradition-oriented countries. In *Happy Singlehood*, Elyakim Kislev brings a researcher's eye to bear on this world-shifting trend.

Defining happiness as the degree to which people judge their lives favorably, the book argues that happiness is not dependent on one's marital status but on making the right choice for the right reasons. After listing numerous factors that gave rise to the singles boom, the book flows easily into an exploration of both the positive and negative features of singledom.

The cited sources cover a broad range and are amplified by findings from 142 original interviews. The result is a broad and illuminating panorama, with enough references to contemporary culture to bring underlying themes alive.

The book tackles both practical and emotional issues. On the negative side, scaled-for-one houses and mortgages are hard to find, and while singles in their twenties are viewed as enviable, singles in their forties are often seen as self-centered or socially maladroit. Still, fewer people marrying for the wrong reasons means fewer divorces, a benefit to the entire culture. Singles who choose fulfilling but less secure careers over the requirements of family life are poised to enrich the arts, dedicate themselves to medical breakthroughs, start new businesses, and fuel leaps in technology.

A concluding chapter suggests ways that governments, planners, and employers can better meet the needs of singles. Tax codes that reward families at the expense of singles, the lack of single-friendly housing in ex-urban communities, and the expectation that single employees will pick up the slack when those with family commitments drop the ball: all are long-ignored issues called for reexamination.

Happy Singlehood thoughtfully explores the unacknowledged increase in single living. Its serious consideration could result in greater freedom of choice, happier individuals, and more efficient economies.

SUSAN WAGGONER (March/April 2019)

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