

Highlights from Bella DePaulo's "*Singled Out*"

DEMOGRAPHICS

The Rising Tide of Single People

The demographic face of the nation has changed dramatically over the past several decades. There are now more than 87 million Americans who are divorced, widowed, or have always been single. That's more than 40% of the 18-and-older population.

Singlehood was once considered a transitional period, when people marked time until they were married or remarried. No longer. Americans now spend more years of their adult lives single than married.

In 1970, 40% of American households consisted of married parents and their children, while only 17% consisted of single people living alone. Now, in the opening years of the 21st century, there are more 1-person households (about 26%) than households comprised of mom, dad, and the kids (about 24%).

MYTHOLOGY

Just About Everything You've Heard About Single and Married People Is Wrong

Have you heard that marriage transforms people, making them far happier and healthier than they were when they were single? Have you also heard that people who get married live longer than people who stay single? There are lots of places where you could have seen claims like these – acclaimed newspapers such as *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*, widely touted books, and even some highly respected professional journals. There is only one problem with these claims – they are wrong. Bella DePaulo is a Harvard PhD who has taught social science research methods to graduate students for more than two decades. She uses that expertise to show how scientific claims about marriage and singlehood are often grossly exaggerated or just plain wrong.

SINGLISM

It Is the 21st Century Problem That Has No Name

People who stereotype, stigmatize, marginalize, or discriminate against people who are single are practicing singlism. Some important forms of discrimination against single people are legal. For example, when married workers can add their spouse to a health care plan at a reduced rate, while single workers cannot add any other adult to their plan, singles are receiving unequal compensation for the same work. Single men often get paid less than married men, even when they do the same work at the same level of seniority and competence. Many Social Security benefits and tax benefits favor people who are married. In fact, when a single person and a married couple filing jointly report the same taxable income, there is never a marriage penalty; single people always pay more. Single people subsidize married people in many smaller ways, too, as, for example, when married people get discounted rates on auto insurance, club memberships, and travel packages, while single people pay full price.

THE SINGLES TREATMENT

It Is Not Just For Single Women

When single people get stereotyped, stigmatized, marginalized, or ignored, they are getting “The Singles Treatment.” No matter how fabulously happy and successful you may be, you can still get the singles treatment. In fact, people who dole out the treatment sometimes seem especially miffed by singles who are not whining about their singlehood or pining for coupledness.

In *Singled Out*, Bella DePaulo shows how some of the most celebrated singles have been targeted with singlism when they dared to live uncoupled. In the world of entertainment and the media, Barbara Walters, Martha Stewart, Julia Roberts, Johnny Depp, Sheryl Crow, and many others have all gotten the singles treatment. In politics and government, people such as Condoleezza Rice, Ralph Nader, and David Souter have, too.

Singlism is practiced across the social, political, and intellectual spectrum. You can find it in *People* magazine as well as *The New Yorker*. It is in the movies and on cable TV and network TV.

Single women are the most popular targets of the singles treatment. But they are not the only ones. Single men, single parents, and older singles all get their very own servings. (Click on the Table of Contents for a preview.)

The flip side of singlism is matrimania. That’s discussed in *Singled Out*, too.

THE BOTTOM LINE

“Singled Out” is the untold success story of people who are single

Singlism matters. Politicians who practice it lose votes and businesses lose sales. The coworkers, neighbors, friends, and relatives who practice singlism in their everyday lives create less congenial (and less fair) workplaces, neighborhoods, social networks, and families.

Singled Out does not paint singles as put-upon victims. Yes, singles are stereotyped, stigmatized, marginalized, and ignored – but they still live happily ever after. *Singled Out* is about resilience; it is the untold success story of people who are single.