



Women Well or Wasted?

A study on Women, their lives, their satisfaction and happiness





Foreword

We all have physical and emotional needs. How these are met has an impact on our level of life satisfaction and happiness.

Imagine being in control, living in a safe environment, having rewarding relationships, a positive self-esteem and a feeling that life is meaningful.

That would feel pretty good, wouldn't it?

At Morgan Redwood we help individuals to understand their needs and how to change from the negative to the positive. Our methods go beneath traditional theories and partial observations, to the level of nature itself and our evolutionary inheritance. By doing this, it then becomes apparent that conditions such as security, connection to others, status and acknowledgement of achievement, being in control, mental stretch and stimulation are not just pleasant things to have, but are **'Essential Needs'**. We need to have these met in a balanced way in order for us to lead a more meaningful and rewarding life.

Given the right conditions, we can learn, develop and grow to achieve our full potential. If we are constantly fighting a rearguard action against the stresses created by conditions that are less than ideal, we do not have the spare capacity to do this.

Many people today are unhappy at one time or another, the problems and levels of such things as anxiety, anger, depression and addiction are often well documented, but how serious is the problem?

We felt it was time to find out for ourselves, so we asked a range of women throughout the UK their attitudes and thoughts on family life, work, relationships and so forth, to see if they were 'Well or Wasted?'

Their answers are in this report and I hope it gives you the opportunity to reflect on and perhaps re-shape the way you view women, either in the work place or at home.

In response to the findings we have now developed tailored services to support both women and men. These services help individuals to positively tap into their motivation and deal with whatever challenges they face with both inspiration and belief.

Of course, if you would like to share your own thoughts on the report with us, or if you would like a tailored presentation of the findings, I'd love to hear from you.

Kind regards,
Janice Haddon

Method

This report is based on a detailed online survey amongst 237 women conducted by independent research organisation Cogent Research & Analysis Ltd. The participants reflect a mix of backgrounds and demographics.

Executive Summary

- The study provides an interesting snapshot into the lives of women today. Overall the majority of those consulted were **very content with many aspects** of their lives, however, **some facets remained where improvements could be made.**
- Contentment for many was derived from their **relationships with others**, those who were married or had long term partners were generally happier than single participants, as were those who were close to their children and enjoyed a good relationship with their extended family.
- A major issue identified for participants was a perceived **lack of control** over their own destiny. For those who wanted to change their lives, **a shortage of finance** (93% stating this) was felt to be the biggest barrier followed by simply **not knowing how to make a change** under their own steam and then the adverse attitude of others around them (59% agreeing to this).
- Whilst overall happiness appeared to be a culmination of contentment with all aspects of both **home life and their career**, mostly it was the **relationships** women enjoyed **with their friends** that underpinned their overall happiness.
- Children provided a great source of contentment. Raising them led to feelings of **fulfilment, achievement and well-being**, as well as offering women breathing space to rethink their career options. However, the converse was that having children also led to feelings of isolation and a **loss of workplace confidence.**
- Perhaps as a reflection of the current economic climate, women were concerned about their wider financial situation. Interestingly, tenure of property did not impact on contentment.
- Overall the participants tended to be happy with the amount of **'me time'** enjoyed, with those aged 45 and over being most satisfied.
- Encouragingly the majority of participants involved felt **positive about** their **future prospects**, offering a welcome respite to the current climate of economic doom and gloom.
- Unmarried women aged 25 to 34 year olds were most likely to hold a full time job, which also impacted on higher levels of **overall life satisfaction.**



The Detail

Lifestyle

Marital Status

Just over half of the overall sample of women surveyed (57%) were married. Of those who were not married, around three in five (58%) were involved in a long term relationship.

Significantly more unmarried women were in full time employment (55% versus 43% overall) however, more married women were employed on a part-time basis (73% versus 57% overall). Respondents from Socio Economic Groups (SEG)* A and B were more likely to be married (63% versus 57% overall), whilst unmarried women tended to comprise SEG group C1 (45%) and DE (50%). Suggesting that those who are not in managerial positions or even unemployed were most likely to be single.

Table 1: Marital status by employment type

	Overall %	Full-time %	Part-time %	Unemployed %	Home-maker %	Not working %	Retired %
Married	57	45	73	25	92	47	50
Unmarried	43	55	27	75	8	53	50

**AB - Managerial and professional, C1 -Supervisory and clerical, C2- Skilled manual, DE-Unskilled manual and unemployed*

Figure 1: Marital status by overall contentment

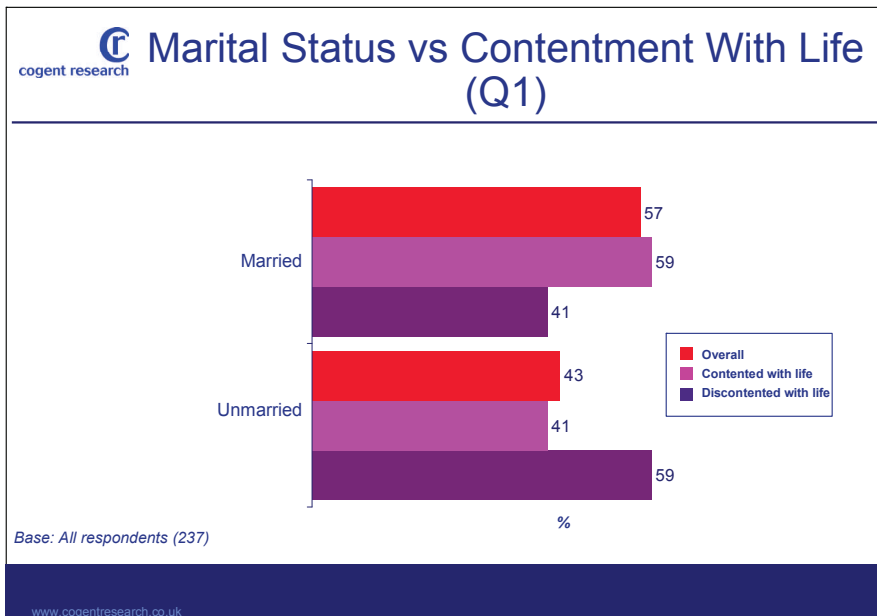
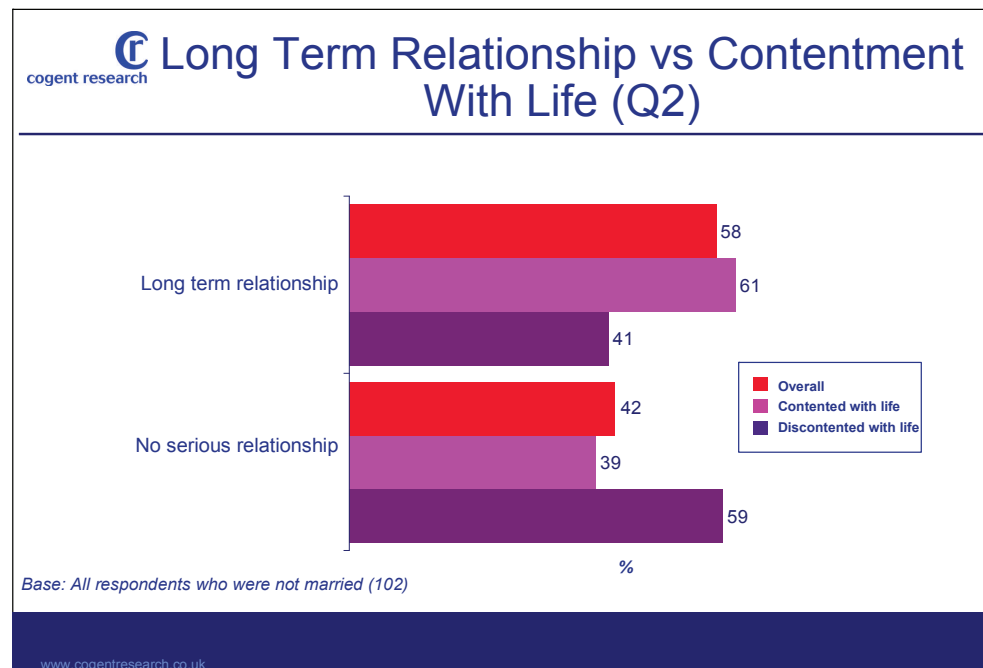


Figure 2: Relationship by overall contentment

As Figures 1 and 2 show, relationship status can be directly correlated with satisfaction with life. Both married women and those in long term relationships were generally more contented with life than single participants. 59% of women contented with life overall were married, compared to 41% of contented unmarried women. Similarly, 61% of unmarried women in a long term relationship were contented with life overall compared with 39% of those who did not have a long term partner.





Family

Seven out of ten women surveyed reported having children of their own (70%).

Corroborating the media headlines that women are delaying starting a family, our survey found twenty-five to thirty-four year olds were the least likely age groups to have children of their own, with 52% of this age group reporting to be childless compared to an average figure of 30% across all age groups.

Having children appeared to impact on the working lives of respondents. 95% of women in part-time employment had children of their own. Also almost three quarters of women not working at the time of being surveyed (73%) had children. 63% of those who were unemployed also had children.

Table 2: Children by employment status

	Overall %	Full-time %	Part-time %	Unemployed %	Home-maker %	Not working %	Retired %
With children	70	50	95	63	100	73	70
Without children	30	50	5	38	0	27	30

Amongst those questioned, along with a long term relationship or marriage, children contributed greatly to overall satisfaction levels. Around three quarters of women (73%) who stated they were contented with life overall, had children of their own, whilst 52% of those who were discontented did not.

Table 3: Children by overall contentment with life

	Overall %	Contented with life %	Discontented with life %
With children	70	73	48
Without children	30	27	52

Less than one fifth of those surveyed (16%) had stepchildren. Women aged forty-five to fifty-four years of age were more likely to have stepchildren than all other age groups (29%). In addition, women from SEG* group DE were more likely to have stepchildren than other economic groups (26% versus 16% overall).

Employment

Overall, just under half of women surveyed (46%) were in full-time employment. A quarter worked part-time, 10% were home-makers, 8% retired, 6% not working with the remaining 3% being currently unemployed and looking for work.

Differentiators included life stage, with unmarried women (59%) and twenty-five to thirty-four year olds being more likely to hold a full-time post (71%). Women in full-time posts were also more likely to report having no children aged under sixteen living at home (57%), whereas women in part-time posts were more likely to have one (41%), two (44%) or three (38%) children aged under sixteen living at home.



Employment appeared to impact on overall satisfaction levels as women who were discontented with life in general were more likely to be unemployed and looking for work (10%) or not working at all (14%).

Of the females surveyed who were currently in employment, around two thirds (64%) described their employment as 'a job,' whilst the remaining 36% felt they had 'a career.'

Women considering themselves as having a career were also found to be more content with life overall (39% versus 29% who were discontented with life).

The profile of women viewing their employment as 'a job' included being aged forty-five years and over (73%), those working part-time (82%), SEG* groupings C2 (85%) and DE (96%), those earning up to £19,999 (88%) and being discontented with life in general (71%).

Table 4: Perceptions of work by age group

	Overall %	25-34 %	35-44 %	45-54 %	55-64 %	65+ %
Job	64	61	53	79	73	67
Career	36	39	47	21	27	33



Home Ownership

The majority of those surveyed (two thirds) owned or were buying their property. Of the remainder, 14% rented from a housing association/Council, 15% rented privately and 3% were living with parents/friends/family. Owning their own property only made a marginal difference to respondents overall level of contentment with life.

Attitudes to Life and Career

Respondents were questioned about their attitudes to a range of statements concerning life, career and future aspirations. For each question, respondents were prompted to answer based on their level of agreement with the statement and using a rating scale of Agree strongly, Agree slightly, Disagree slightly or Disagree strongly. A summary chart of all aspects measured can be found at the end of this section.

Having children allowed me to rethink my career

Overall circa two thirds of women with children (63%) felt that having children had offered them the opportunity to rethink their career and/or what they wanted to do with their life, with 28% agreeing strongly, 35% agreeing slightly.

Salary levels were a factor, with women earning between £20,000 and £39,999 being more likely to agree that having children had offered them an opportunity to re-evaluate their options, with 78% of these income earners in agreement with this statement. Agreement levels were lower amongst SEG* group DE (46%) and those earning more than £40,000 (40%).

Table 5: Agreement/Disagreement with statement by SEG*

	Overall %	AB %	C1 %	C2 %	DE %
Agreement	63	71	70	73	46
Disagreement	37	29	30	27	54

Fulfilment and well being from raising children

Respondents with children were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement that having children had given them a feeling of fulfilment with a sense of well-being.

The vast majority of women with children agreed that having children had contributed markedly towards their sense of fulfilment and well-being, indeed 91% of respondents agreed with this statement (64% strongly and 27% agreeing slightly).

Agreement levels peaked amongst women aged thirty-five to forty-four (90%) and forty-five to fifty-four (96%). Agreement was also higher amongst those who were unemployed (100%), home-makers (96%) and women not working (100%) yet lower for women in full-time work (87%), part-time employment (91%) and those who were retired (86%). All levels of agreement show a high response.



Table 6: Agreement/Disagreement with statement 'having children has given me a feeling of fulfilment with a sense of well-being by employment status'

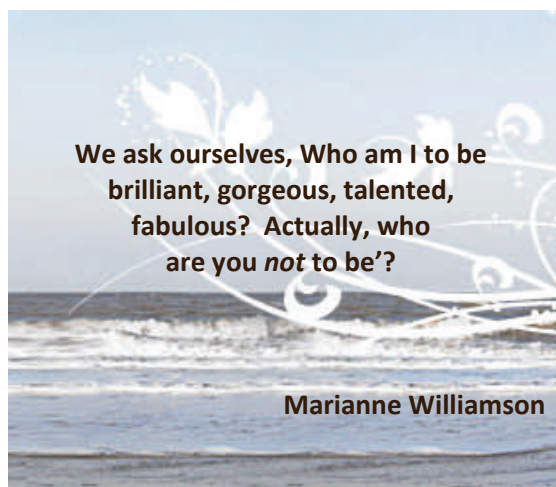
	Overall %	Full-time %	Part-time %	Unemployed %	Home-maker %	Not working %	Retired %
Agreement	91	87	91	100	96	100	86
Disagreement	9	13	9	0	4	0	14

Isolation associated with raising children

Despite the earlier positives associated with having children, just over half of respondents who had experienced having children (54%) said there were some drawbacks. This cohort agreed that the experience had made them feel isolated at times (16% agreeing strongly, 39% agreeing slightly). Those most in agreement included, twenty-five to thirty-four year olds (77%), fifty-five to sixty-four year olds (63%) and women with two (60%) or three (75%) children under sixteen at home.

Interestingly, both full-time employed (60%) and unemployed women (60%) were equally likely to cite this response. Other characteristics of those agreeing included SEG* C2 (64%), income up to £19,999 (61%) and those women discontented with life in general (71%).

Loss of Workplace confidence post children



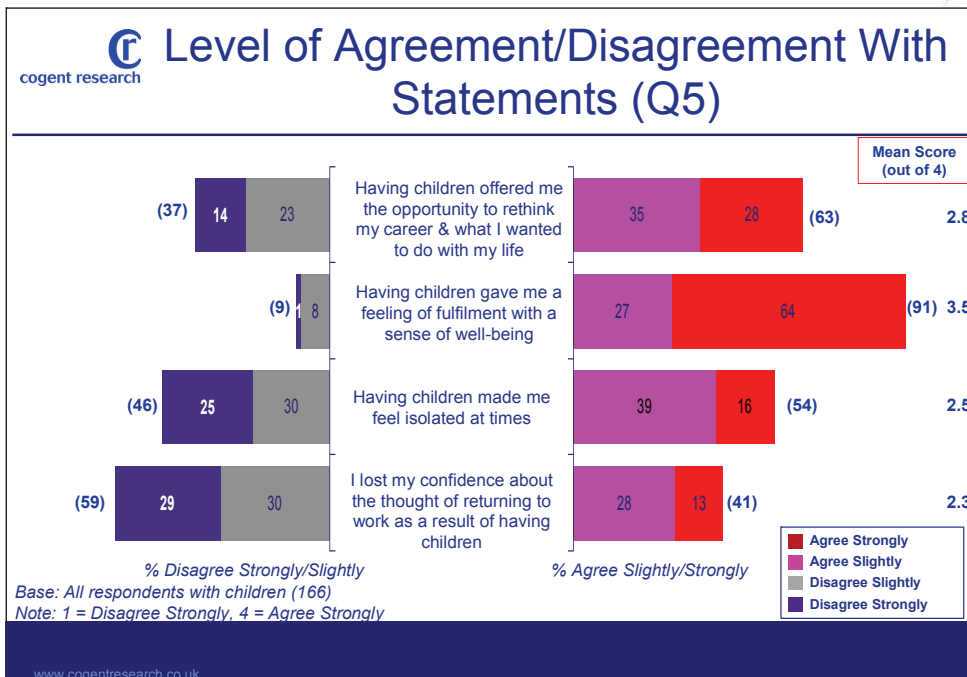
Another issue identified by those who had had children, was the loss of workplace confidence they had experienced. Collectively, two fifths of women with children reported to having lost confidence as a result of having a family (13% agreeing strongly, 28% agreeing slightly). This was more prevalent amongst women aged thirty-five to forty-four (48%) than all other age groups.

Home-makers were most in agreement that they had lost workplace confidence with 71% of these women agreeing with this statement. Similarly, 55% of those women not currently working and 60% of those classed as unemployed also agreed that they had lost this confidence. This potentially having considerable impact on their current employment status.

Women in lower salaried positions were also more likely to be in agreement with this statement with 47% of women earning up to £19,999 agreeing that they lost confidence returning to work compared with 35% of women earning over £20,000.

Not all those surveyed experienced this loss of confidence however, women in full-time (69%), part-time employment (61%) and those who were now retired (79%) were the most likely to disagree with this statement.

Figure 3: Attitudes to life and career – Summary of statements



Me Time

Respondents were asked to what extent they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the amount of 'me time' they had - that is time to relax or to devote to activities they enjoyed or would like to try. Participants were asked to respond on a rating scale of Very satisfied, Quite satisfied, Fairly dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied.

Overall, just over two thirds of respondents (69%) reported they were satisfied with the level of 'me time' they have (18% saying very satisfied and 51% saying fairly satisfied).



Figure 4:
Satisfaction with 'Me' time received

Those most satisfied with the time received to devote to their own pursuits included married women (74%), those aged forty-five years and over (84%), those with no children under sixteen present at home (76%), women not currently working (80%) or retired (90%), socio-economic grouping DE* (76%) and

women contented with life in general (73%).

Conversely, 31% of respondents overall were dissatisfied with the level of 'me time' received (24% fairly dissatisfied, 6% very dissatisfied). These women predominately included:-

- Unmarried women (37%)
- Twenty-five to forty-four year olds (39%)
- One or two children aged under sixteen living at home (41%)
- Income band £40,000 plus (45%)
- Women discontent with life in general (55%)

Level of Contentment for Different Aspects of Life

Respondents were questioned regarding their level of contentment or discontentment with various aspects of their life and asked to respond on a rating scale of Very contented, Quite contented, Fairly discontented or Very discontented.

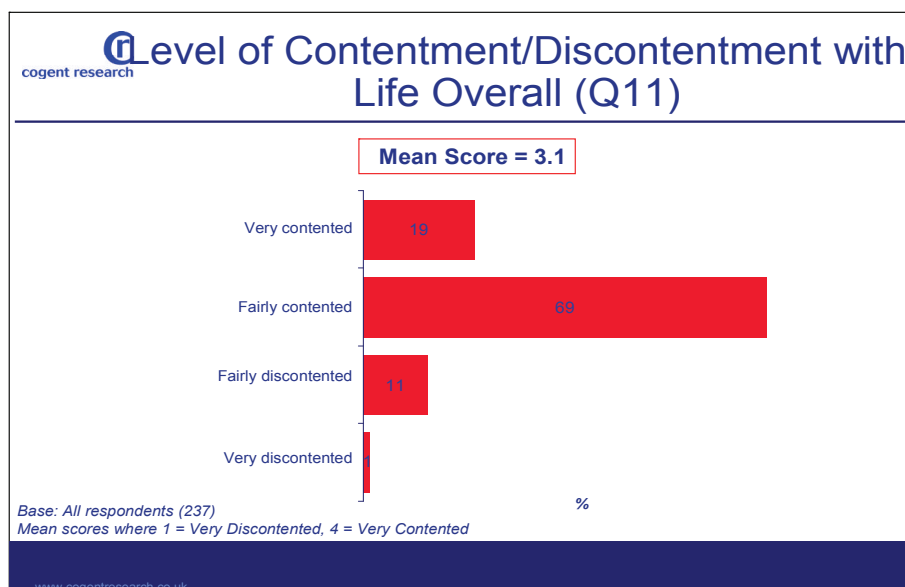
Contentment with life overall

Around nine out of ten women (88%) expressed contentment with their life overall (19% saying very contented, 69% saying fairly contented).

Drawing parallels with other areas surveyed, those most positive about their life in general were married women (91%), fifty-five year olds and above (95%), women with children (96%), women in the AB demographic (95%), those in receipt of salaries in excess of £20,000 per annum (93%).

Women least contented with life overall tended to be unmarried women (17%), forty-five to fifty-four year olds (16%), childless women (16%), those who were unemployed (38%) or not working (27%), C1's* (17%), C2's* (18%) and DE's* (15%) and women in receipt of salaries up to £19,999 per annum (18%).

Figure 5: Extent to which women are contented with life overall



Their job

Those women currently in employment were asked to comment on the extent to which they were contented with the actual job they perform.

Overall, 80% of women surveyed were content with their job (19% very content, 61% fairly content). Raised levels of contentment were particularly noted amongst:-

- Married women (85%)
- Thirty-five to forty-four year olds (86%)
- Part-time employed (90%)
- SEG* AB (80%) and C2's (100%)
- Women content with life in general (83%)

Conversely, women found to be more discontented with their work included:- unmarried women (27%), twenty-five to thirty-four year olds (25%) and fifty-five to sixty-four year olds (36%), women with no children under sixteen living at home (24%), home-makers (67%) or not working (100%), SEG* C1 (25%) and women discontented with life in general (44%).

Salary

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the amount they earned from their employment. Just over half of women overall (53%) were content with their salary (7% very content, 46% fairly content). Women in full-time posts also appeared more contented with their salary (58%) as were socio-economic grouping* AB (63%). There seemed to be an obvious correlation between the amounts earned and the level of satisfaction expressed as increased earnings led for increased satisfaction. Women earning £20,000-£39,999 (67%) and in excess of £40,000 (82%) were most satisfied. Again perhaps relating status to earning power, more women who showed greater contentment with life in general tended to be satisfied with their salary (56%).

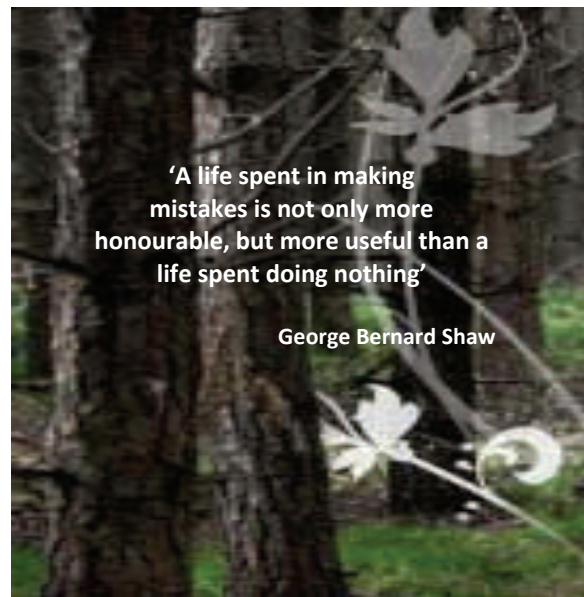


Table 7: Contentment/Discontentment with salary by contentment with life overall

	Overall %	Contented with life %	Discontented with life %
Contented with salary	53	56	30
Discontented with salary	47	44	70

Women least content with their salary were typically:-

- One child at home (53%) or no children under sixteen living at home (48%)
- C1's* (52%) and DE's* (61%)
- Women earning less than £19,999 (59%)
- Women discontented with life overall (70%)

Wider financial situation

In addition to their personal salary, respondents were also questioned about the extent to which they were content with their wider financial situation.

Women were found to be least contented with their wider financial situation considering all measures tested, with just over two fifths of respondents (42%) expressing contentment with their overall financial position (just 3% very contented and 39% fairly contented with finances). As might be expected, SEG* AB respondents were significantly more content with their financial situation than individuals from the lower economic groups, with 62% of AB's* reporting their contentment compared with contented C1's* (34%), C2's* (31%) and DE's* (26%).

Women most content with their wider financial situation were more likely to be earning £40,000 plus per annum (73%).

Respondents who felt least satisfied with their wider financial situation maybe unsurprisingly, included:- those aged sixty-five plus (80%), unemployed females (75%), those not currently working (75%) and to a lesser extent home-makers (64%). SEG* DE (74%) and to a lesser extent C1's* (66%) and C2's* (69%) along with those earning less than £19,999 (66%) and those less content with their life in general (85%).



Relationship with partner

Respondents who were married or in long term relationships were asked how contented they were with their relationship with their spouse/partner.

This measure received some of the highest contentment scores. Overall, the vast majority of those surveyed were satisfied with their current relationship with their partner. 91% of women claimed to be contented (56% saying very contented, 36% saying fairly contented).

Married women in particular exhibited higher levels of contentment compared with their single counterparts. 94% of married women expressed contentment with their partner compared with 85% of unmarried women.

AB's* in particular were also found to be more content with their partner relationship than other socio-economic groupings* (96% versus 91% overall). Women content with life in general were found to be more likely to express contentment with their current relationship also. 94% of those content with life in general expressed contentment with their partner compared with just 61% of those discontented with life in general expressing contentment with their partner. Others who expressed lower levels of contentment with their spouse/partner tended to include those earning up to £19,999 per annum (11%), and those who were discontented with life in general (39%). ***The results signifying that positive relationships contribute to higher levels of life satisfaction and happiness.***

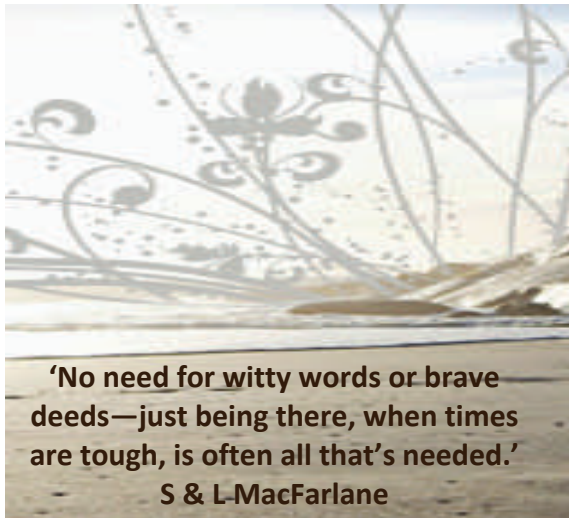
Relationship with children

Next under scrutiny was respondent's level of contentment with the relationship they have with their children.

Relations with children received the second highest contentment levels of all aspects of life measured. Indeed, women were overwhelmingly positive about the relationship held with their children with 96% overall expressing contentment (68% saying very contented and 29% saying fairly contented).

Satisfaction with the relationship enjoyed with their children spanned all age bands, however slightly higher levels were expressed amongst the lower socio-economic groupings of C2* (100%) and DE* (98%). Again those content with life overall were also more likely to be satisfied with the relationship with their children. 98% of those expressing contentment with life in general also felt contented with the relationship held with their children, whilst this figure dropped markedly to 80% for those discontented with life in general.

Relationship with wider family



Respondents were asked to state how content they were with their relationships on a broader basis, encompassing their wider family.

Replicating the findings for spouses/partners, women were extremely positive about their family relationships with 91% of the sample expressing contentment with this aspect of their life (39% very contented, 53% fairly contented). Contentment levels appeared to tail off slightly with age however, with 92% of twenty-five to thirty-four year olds expressing contentment with this aspect of their life compared with a reduced figure of 82% of those aged sixty-five or above.

Furthermore a correlation existed between contentment with life in general and contentment with the relationship with the wider family. 93% of those contented with life overall were content with their family relationship compared with 77% of those discontented with their lives.

Table 8: Contentment/Discontentment with family relations by contentment with life overall

	Overall %	Contented with life overall %	Discontented with life overall %
Contentment with family relations	91	93	77
Discontentment with family relations	9	7	23

Relationship with friends

Interestingly, this aspect of life received the highest level of contentment of all. 97% of women surveyed expressed contentment with the relationships held with friends (44% saying very contented, 52% saying fairly content). Levels of contentment were consistent for most of the demographic differentiators, however, the individuals most content with life in general were found to be more contented with their relationships with friends versus those who were less content overall (98% versus 89%, respectively). Again, supporting the 'Essential Need' of connection with others, and positive relationships increasing satisfaction levels and happiness.

Future prospects

Overall, women were fairly content with their future prospects. Around two thirds in total (68%) exhibited satisfaction with this aspect of their life (9% very contented, 59% fairly contented).

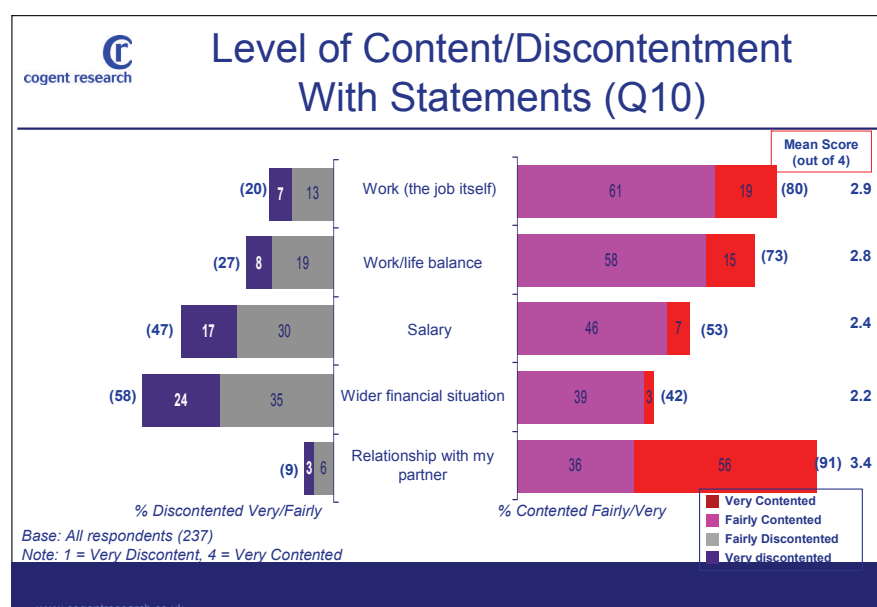
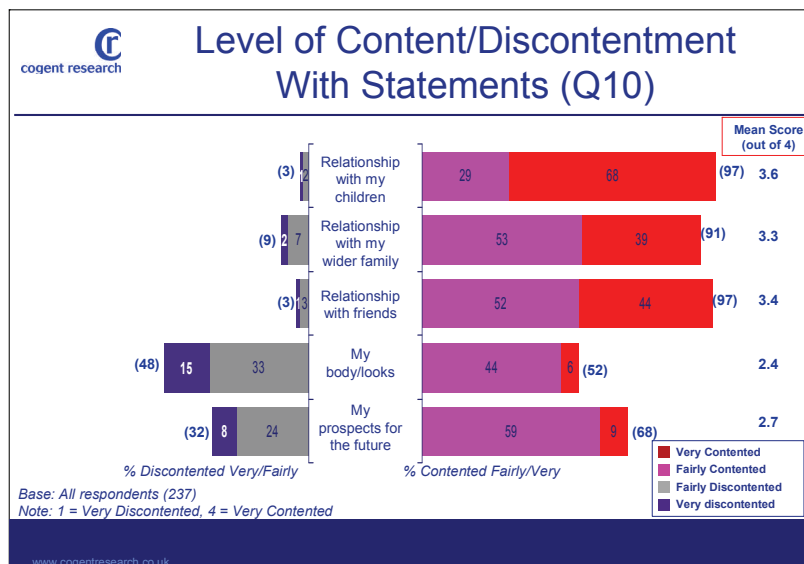
Married women (73%) and the younger age group of twenty-five to thirty-four year olds were more positive about their future prospects when compared with the older age groups (77% versus 68% overall). Women in full-time employment were significantly more positive about their future prospects (76%) as too were socio-economic group* AB's (84%). Women in receipt of salaries exceeding £20,000 per annum were also found to be amongst the most positive about future prospects (84%). Three quarters of women contented with life overall were also found to be amongst the most positive towards future prospects (75%).

Table 9: Contentment/Discontentment with future prospects by marital status

	Overall %	Married %	Unmarried %
Contented with future prospects	68	73	61
Discontented with future prospects	32	27	39

As indicated, in Table 9, unmarried women were amongst the least content with future prospects (39%). Unemployed women (50%), women not working currently (50%), home-makers (42%) and women in receipt of annual salaries below £19,999 (43%), featured amongst those most pessimistic about their future prospects. Also, those discontented with life in general were significantly more likely to express worries about their future prospects (86%).

Figure 6 & 7: Contentment with aspects of life - Summary



Feelings and Emotions experienced

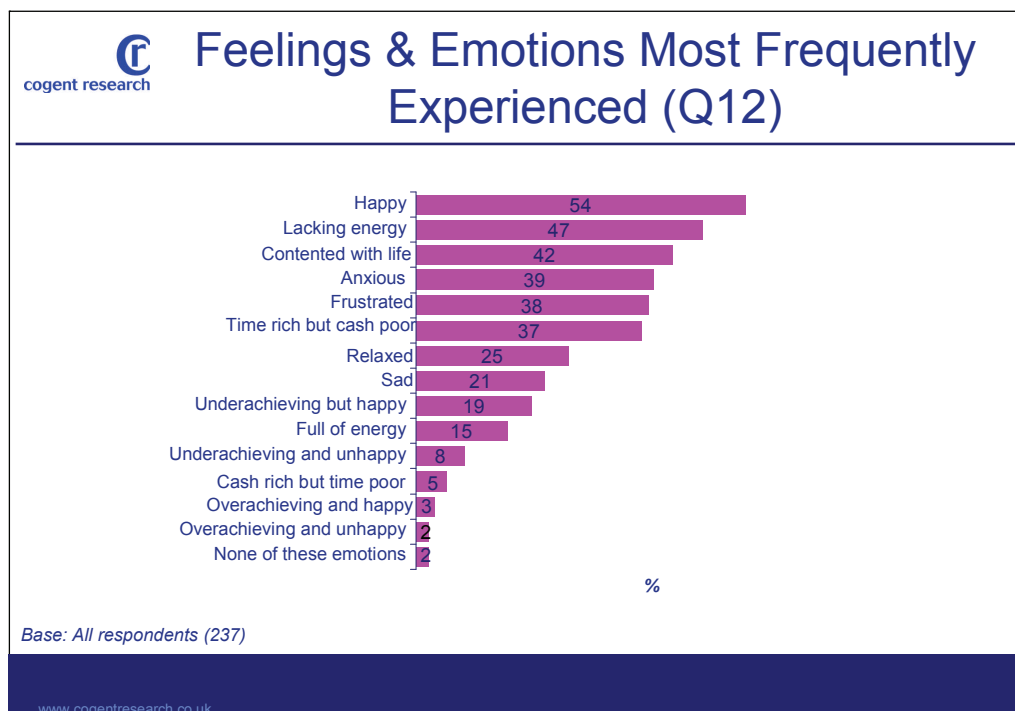
Respondents were asked to indicate from a prompted list, which feelings and emotions they most frequently experienced.

Of the emotions most frequently experienced, 'happiness' was cited the most frequently by just over half (54%) of the participants. These females tended to be married (61%) and earning circa £20,000 to £39,999 per annum (63%). Around two fifths (42%) of women reported feeling contented with life. Typically these included AB's* (53%), and again these women also tended to be married (47%). A quarter of the females sampled frequently reported feeling relaxed, whilst 15% often felt full of energy.

Women frequently experienced negative feelings also. The most frequently cited of which was lack of energy (47%) – typically reported by those with incomes of up to £19,999 per annum (59%). Frustration was also cited by around two fifths of respondents (38%). Those reporting feeling sad was a result cited by two fifths of the sample. 8% frequently felt they were underachieving and 2% of respondents overall felt that they were overachieving but were unhappy.

In addition, around two fifths of women (37%) claimed to regularly experience being time rich but cash poor and conversely, 5% claimed to experience being cash rich but time poor—a much smaller percentage of respondees.

Figure 8: Feelings and emotions frequently experienced



Making Changes

Respondents were asked to comment on the level of ease of which they could make changes to their lives. Just over half of the sample, 53%, reported that they found it either very difficult (5%) or quite difficult (47%) to make these changes. This was a particular issue for women aged thirty-five years and upwards (56%), socio-economic grouping DE* (65%) and those earning below £19,999 per annum (61%). There was also a strong link with those individuals that were discontented with their life generally (86%).

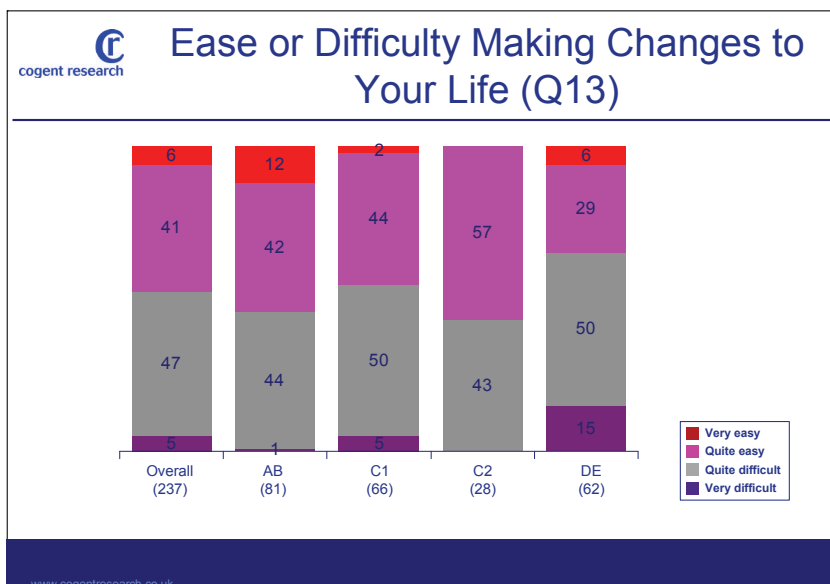
Women who found making changes to their lives came easily to them, included:- twenty-five to thirty-four year olds (54%), those in full-time employment (56%), AB's* (54%) and C2's* (57%), women earning £20,000 to £39,999 per annum (58%) and women who were currently contented with their lives (52%).

With regards to the twenty-five to thirty-four year olds (54%), this younger age group being less likely to have children at home, and perhaps having more earning potential and less ties, results in a stronger confidence in being able to make changes.

Table 10: Level of ease/difficulty in making changes by income

	Overall %	Up to £19,000 PA %	£20,000 - £39,999 PA %	£40,000 Plus PA %
Easy to make changes	47	39	58	41
Difficult to make changes	53	61	42	59

Figure 9: Level of ease/difficulty in making changes by SEG

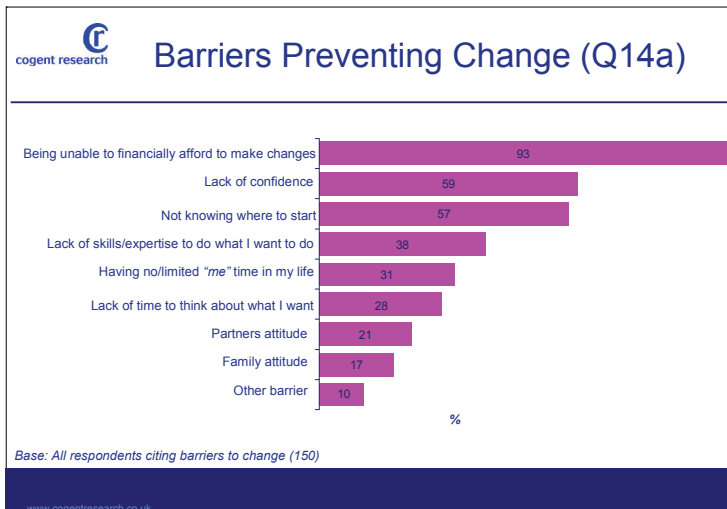


Respondents were questioned about the barriers preventing them from making changes to their lives. Prompted by a pre-coded list of potential reasons, women were asked to select the reasons which constrained them.

Just under two thirds of all women surveyed (63%) reported barriers which prevented them from making changes to their lives. As Figure 10 reveals, being unable to financially afford to make changes was the main reason cited by more than nine

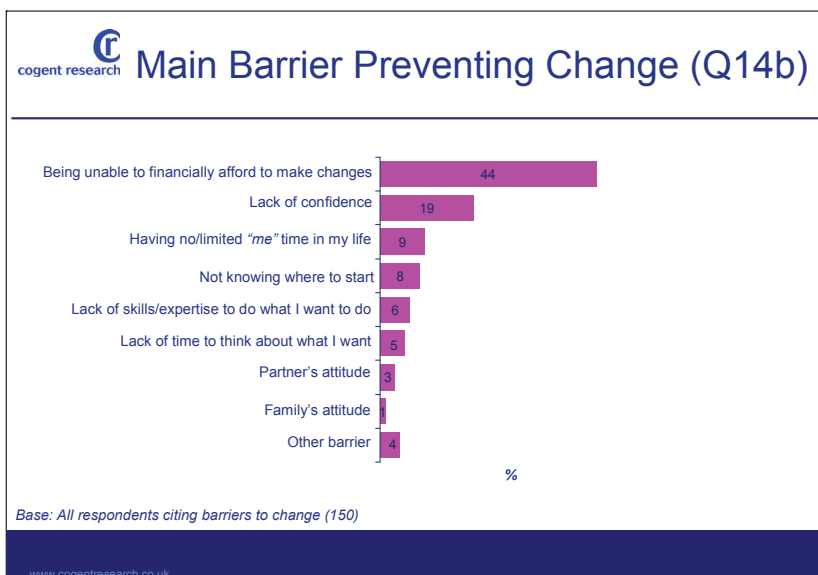
out of ten (93%) of these women. For some, simply not knowing where to start (59%) or a lack of confidence (57%) prevented them altering their life's course. Two fifths of women felt that they lacked the skills or expertise to do what they wanted to do whilst one third reported that they had no or limited 'me time' in their lives. 28% of women citing barriers simply lacked the time to think about what they wanted to do. Other reasons cited included their partners' attitude (21%) and their familys' attitude (17%).

Figure 10: Barriers preventing change



When asked to isolate the one key barrier which prevented women from making changes to their lives, lacking the financial ability to afford the changes was the most commonly cited response, reported by 44% of those identifying barriers to change followed by 'lack of confidence' (59%) and 'not knowing where to start' (57%).

Figure 11: Main barrier preventing change



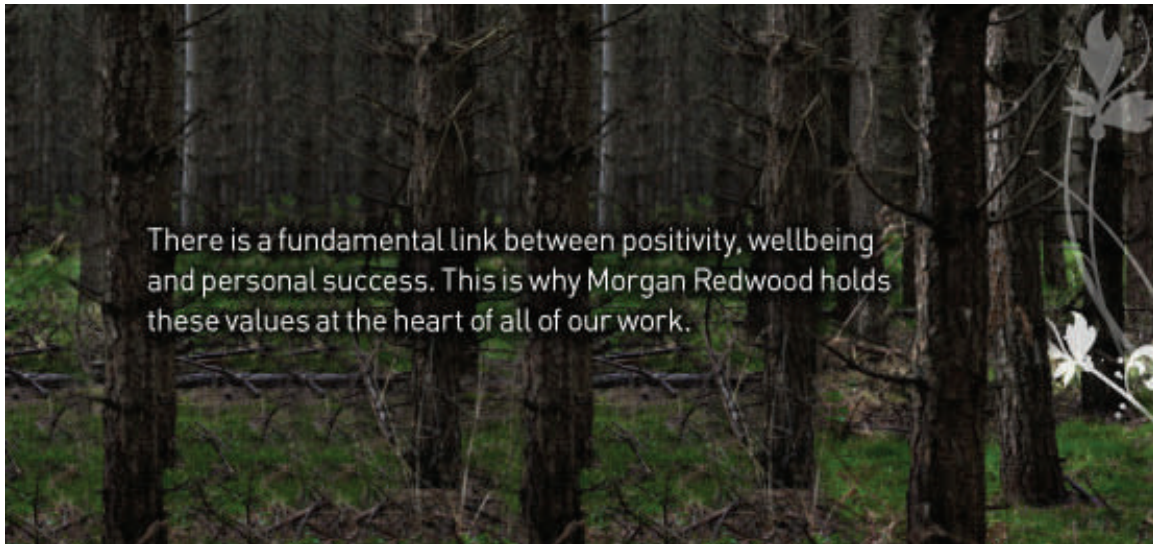
The results of the survey support that levels of life satisfaction and happiness are strongest when we get our 'Essential Needs'* met, ie when we feel safe and are free from extremes of financial pressure; When we have control over what we do, when we are stretched and enjoying our role in life, when we feel recognised for our contribution, when we have a strong connection with loved ones, family and friends and when we can enjoy private time and relaxation.

It is indeed—**essential**—that each of us find ways to get our needs met and to feel happy with our life balance and personal satisfaction levels.

AB - Managerial and professional, C1 -Supervisory and clerical, C2- Skilled manual, DE-Unskilled manual and unemployed

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