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Life Reimagined Survey Indicates Money Can Buy Happiness

Practicality plays a lead role in achieving life's goals and New Year's resolutions; Life Reimagined launches tools to help

WASHINGTON, D.C.—According to a survey conducted by [Life Reimagined](#), in association with Luntz Global, financial security tops the list of changes that would increase one's happiness. With the New Year in sight, Life Reimagined conducted an online survey to determine the priorities of Americans, ages 40-59. Though the majority of the 1,000 respondents defined their self-worth by their family and relationships, the results emphasized the importance of money and a successful career to a person's overall happiness.

- Financial security tops the list of changes that would most increase happiness (39%), and is the most commonly cited obstacle to prioritizing things that would make people happier (33%).
- When given a choice, 71% of respondents prefer extra money to extra time in the day.
- In reflecting on their choices to date, the one thing 21% of respondents wish they had done differently is make smarter financial decisions. Furthermore 12% wish they had pursued a career path with more financial security.

What is a Life Budget?

The primary goal of the Life Reimagined study was to understand people's current and ideal "Life Budgets" – how they allocate their time, energy and passion across various areas of their lives. People were able to identify one "budget" that was their reality and another that was their preference, bringing to light the differences between what we want and what we do. Unsurprisingly, one's aspirations do not always match reality, and this is primarily a result of the pursuit of financial security.

"This is often the time of year when we start to reflect on our lives and see that what we are doing and what we want to be doing are two different things," says Emilio Pardo, Executive Vice President at AARP and President of Life Reimagined. "Our goal is to give practical and useful advice to help make changes – one small step at a time. The holidays and a new year can be overwhelming, and we are here to help."

The study showed several examples of the differences between current priorities and ideal ones:

- Out of nine designated categories, the average person aged 40-59, budgets 21% of their time, energy, and passion to their job or career.
- However, the preference is only 12%, ranking below significant other (23%) and children (18%), and tying with health and wellness (12%).
- In contrast, when asked how one derives self-worth, 71% responded family and close friends, while only 29% indicated that their job defined their self-worth.

Life Reimagined Takes Action

Just in time for the New Year, Life Reimagined offers new, free tools and content, developed by Life Reimagined Institute's thought leaders, focused on making and keeping resolutions. According to Dr. Christine Whelan, professor of sociology, author and Life Reimagined expert, the reason so many people fail to keep their resolutions is because they are making the wrong ones. With the platform's two newest programs, Whelan takes a two-step approach, first with "[Resolutions in Focus](#)," which invites users to ask *why* they want to make a change and ensures that goals are based on one's values and priorities, not outside influences. Whelan's second program tackles the next step – now that users know the right resolutions to make, "[Complete Your Goal With Self Control](#)," shares best methods for harnessing the self-control necessary to commit to those resolutions and bring about positive change.

Knowing that financial woes are top-of-mind as the Life Reimagined community reassesses its "life budgets," leading financial expert Jean Chatzky offers advice on the best ways to successfully transition their careers after having already established themselves in a specific field. As the keynote speaker at multiple Reimagine Work events across the country, Jean shared insights into how to be fiscally responsible when changing jobs or launching a business. For those who were not able to see her presentation in-person, she shares her best tips on how to budget for your next big career move on [LifeReimagined.org](#) in a signature article, "[Money is the Answer. What's the Question?](#)"

While 69% of survey participants responded saying they were satisfied with what they had accomplished in life,

the discrepancies between respondents' actual and ideal "life budgets" indicate that the Life Reimagined community overall would like to make changes to improve their happiness. The central idea of Life Reimagined is the belief that small steps are necessary to bring about change – no matter how easy or difficult, big or small they may seem. With targeted programs and content developed, based on the knowledge gleaned from this survey and years of research and experience coming from the Institute, Life Reimagined continues to uphold its commitment to delivering a one-of-a-kind online experience aimed at guiding people through life transitions and helping them discover new possibilities.

Full survey results are available on LifeReimagined.aarp.org/media-kit.

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About Life Reimagined

Life Reimagined was launched by AARP in 2013 to provide a personal guidance system to help people navigate transitions and live their lives to the fullest. By offering online and offline experiences made up of tools, experts and community, Life Reimagined helps people reflect, evaluate priorities and take action to navigate transitions and new life phases. Learn more at <http://lifereimagined.aarp.org>.

About AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of more than 37 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; www.aarp.org; AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity of AARP that is working to win back opportunity for struggling Americans 50+ by being a force for change on the most serious issues they face today: housing, hunger, income and isolation. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.

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