

RESULTS OF THE AMERICAN REGRET PROJECT

Sample size: Weighted sample of 4,489 Americans, selected from online panels assembled by Qualtrics and queried in June 2020.

Text of the survey and the results are below.*

(Note: The survey began with demographic questions that were subsequently used to weight the sample to ensure representativeness. The demographic information is presented at the bottom of this document.)

We are conducting research on how people think about the past and the future. In the questions that follow, there are no right or wrong answers. We just want to know what you think.

The entire survey should take less than 10 minutes. Your responses are anonymous.

Please click the forward arrow to continue.

Q1. *So far today have you spent the most time thinking about the past, the present, the future?*

Past (any time before the current day)	9.1%
Present (current day)	37.5
Future (any time after the current day)	31.5
I've thought about all these in roughly equal amounts	21.8

Q2. *Do you consider yourself more of an introvert or an extrovert?*

More of an extrovert	27.4%
More of an introvert	52.5
Neither	20.1

Q3. *Do you consider yourself more of an optimist or a pessimist?*

More of an optimist	64.0%
More of a pessimist	22.1
Neither	13.8

* Questions? Email dp@danielpink.com.

Q4. *Regrets are part of life. We all have something we wish we had done differently — or some action we wish we had taken or not taken.*

Please look back on your life for a moment. Then describe in 2 or 3 sentences one significant regret you have.

OPEN ANSWER

Q5. *Does your regret mostly involve your:*

Finances	13.5%
Career	15.1
Partners (spouses, significant others)	19.2
Education	15.6
Health	6.6
Family (parents, children, grandchildren)	21.8
Friends	2.7
Something else	5.5

Q6. *Sometimes people regret what they did -- their actions. Sometimes people regret what they didn't do -- their inactions. Overall, does your regret involve mostly on an action or an inaction?*

Action – something I did	35.9%
Inaction – something I didn't do.	57.1
Not sure	7.0

Q7. *For this question, we would like you to imagine a real-life scenario:*

Julia gets sick after eating at a restaurant she goes to all the time. Maria gets sick after eating at a restaurant she has never visited before.

Who do you think regrets her restaurant choice more?

Julia	16.5%
Maria	66.0
No difference	17.5

Q8. *Imagine you are taking a multiple choice test. On question 14, you mark B as the correct answer. Several minutes later, you begin to think that C might actually be the correct answer.*

Do you change the answer to C or do you go with your first instinct and keep the answer as B?

Change the answer.	32.0%
Go with your first instinct	56.0
Not sure	12.0

Q9. *Do you believe that most things in life happen for a reason?*

Yes 78.7%
No 10.8
Not sure . . . 10.5

Q10. *How often do you look back on your life and wish you had done things differently?*

Never 1.1%
Rarely 16.5
Occasionally 38.9
Frequently 22.7
All the time 20.8

Q11. *How important is it in life to think positive?*

Not at all important 0.6%
Not very important 0.8
Moderately important 9.7
Very important 38.2
Extremely important 50.7

Q12. *Do you believe that people have free will – that they largely control their decisions and choices?*

Yes 84.9%
No 6.2
Not sure . . . 8.9

Q13. *In general, is it harmful or helpful for people to think about their regrets?*

It's extremely harmful 8.0%
It's somewhat harmful 20.2
It's slightly harmful 25.5
It's slightly helpful 25.1
It's somewhat helpful 17.2
It's extremely helpful 4.0

Q14. *Which of the following best describes your beliefs?*

I believe in God 71.9%
I'm not sure if I believe in God 17.4
I don't believe in God 10.7

END

Demographics used to create survey weights, based on 2019 United States census estimates of the adult population (ages 18 and older):

D1. *Age*

18-30	22.7%
31-45	24.8%
46-60	24.6%
61+	27.6 %

D2. *Gender*

Male	48.7%
Female	51.3%

D3. *Race and ethnicity*

White, non-Hispanic	62.9%
Black or African-American, non-Hispanic ...	12.2
Asian, non-Hispanic	6.0
Hispanic or Latinx	16.4
Other (e.g. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, America Indian or Alaska Native, etc.)	2.5

D4. *Highest level of education achieved*

Less than high school or high school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent)	38.9%
Some college but no degree or Associate degree in college	27.8
Bachelor's degree in college.	21.3
Master's, Doctoral, or Professional (JD, MD) degree ..	12.3

Additional demographic information:

D5. *Information about income is very important to understand. Would you please give your best guess? Please indicate the answer that includes your entire household income last year before taxes.*

Less than \$25,000	15.8%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	19.2
\$50,000 to \$74,999	24.8
\$75,000 to \$99,999.	13.8
\$100,000 to \$149,9999 ..	16.7
Over \$150,000.	8.0
Prefer not to say.	1.9

D6. *Which of the following best describes your relationship status?*

Married	52.7%
Separated	3.2
Widowed	4.3
Divorced.	8.7
Never married . . .	31.1

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