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# Study: Millennial generation more educated, less employed

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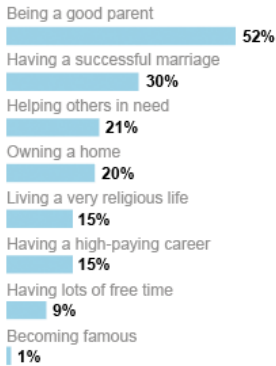
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By [Sharon Jayson](#), USA TODAY

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### Millennials' priorities

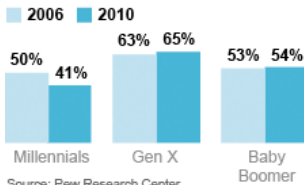
Percentage who say the following is one of the most important things in their lives:



Note: Based on adults ages 18-29

### Full-time employment by generation

Percentage of each generation employed full time:



Source: Pew Research Center  
By Karl Gelles, USA TODAY

The most detailed study to date of the 18- to 29-year-old Millennial generation finds this group probably will be the most educated in American history. But the 50 million Millennials also have the highest share who are unemployed or out of the workforce in almost four decades, according to the study, released today by the Pew Research Center.

"It's a very consequential generation," says Pew's Paul Taylor, the report's co-editor. "It has made its mark in some fairly dramatic ways."

Pew's analysis includes its own data, such as a new survey of 2,020 adults, including 830 Millennials, conducted by landline and cellphone last month. It also analyzes data from other sources, such as the Census, which shows 40% of those 18-24 were in college in 2008, a higher percentage than any previous generation at those ages.

Pew's report also includes comparisons of Millennials with other generations, based on more than two decades of Pew surveys.

David Morrison of Twentysomething Inc., a Philadelphia-based consulting and research firm, says Pew's data are important because so much research on Millennials is market-based. "Pew's data is not just the gold standard but is also quite unusual in that it's willingly shared," he says. "Most (research on Millennials) is company-driven and proprietary to the organization."

Overall, Pew says, Millennials are confident, upbeat and open to change. They're more ethnically and racially diverse than their elders and also less religious. Although there is no one-size-fits-all description of the individuals within a generation, Pew says its findings show clear, distinctive traits for this group, particularly in certain areas.

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•**Political and social.** In 2008, 66% of Millennials voted for [Barack Obama](#) for president, compared with 50% of those 30 and older. That's the largest disparity between younger and older voters in four decades of exit polling.

"Millennials, compared to [Generation X](#) and prior to that, vote at a rate higher than other generations at their age," says David Smith of the non-profit National Conference on Citizenship. He adds that they volunteer at higher rates than previous generations, too. "Civic trends have always risen with age. This generation is now emerging as being much more involved at a much younger age," he says.

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•**Lifestyles and technology.** From the way they were raised to their views on marriage, Pew found, Millennials are a world apart from their elders. For example, 61% grew up in a two-parent household, a smaller percentage than the three previous generations. And just 21% are married (half the percentage of their parents' generation at the same ages) and 34% are parents.

Among other findings:

•38% have a tattoo (and half of those with tattoos have two to five; 18% have six or more). But 72% say they are hidden by clothing.

•41% use only a cellphone and have no landline.

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"In terms of technology, social values, political values and behavior, they've made quite a mark at such young age," Taylor says.

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