

# what do **WOMEN** want?

CHOICES | MONEY | HEALTH | SAFETY



As the leading media and marketing company inspiring 75 million women, Meredith is committed to understanding and supporting the needs of women at every life stage. Meredith partnered with NBC Universal to delve deeper into the minds of women across the nation, ages 18 - 64, to ask the provocative question—What Do Women Want?

The *2008 What Do Women Want?* study highlights the actions, attitudes and aspirations of women surrounding four critical topic areas: health, money, safety and life choices. The findings provide marketers with deep insights on the female psyche and implications for effectively targeting their best customers at every life stage.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## SOCIAL ANALYSIS: PATTERNS OF RESPONSE

### Women & Money: Spend Now, Save Later

- While the majority of women are concerned about financial stresses, they are more likely to express anxiety about their financial future (retirement, Social Security threats, etc.) than their current state of debt and ability to “make ends meet”
- Women’s deeper concern about their long-term financial security rather than their existing debt directly contrasts with their feelings regarding health-related issues, where their greatest concerns are most immediate and short-term
- Moms indicate greater concern surrounding family finances than non-moms. They also report having significantly higher levels of debt than non-moms. Nearly half say that they feel “overwhelmed by financial burdens”

### Women & Health: Looking Good is Feeling Good

Women are far more concerned about physical appearance and weight than they are about disease and mortality.

- Women want to take care of themselves but are unlikely to do very much until they absolutely have to. Predictably, as women age and encounter a greater frequency and severity of physical ailments, their concerns about actual health issues and disease prevention increases
- All generations of women maintain a high degree of concern about appearance and weight. Moms are more likely than non-moms to have higher levels of concern about weight, as are older women

### Women & Safety: Family Fears Over Societal Threats

American women are more worried about immediate physical threats to their children and families, such as drunk drivers, child predators, Internet safety and school violence, than about more abstract threats to society at-large, such as natural disasters, aging infrastructure and viral pandemics.

- Concrete, local and easily imaginable dangers loom larger than national or global problems
- They do worry about Internet safety, particularly when their children are in their teenage years

### Women & Life Choices: Balancing is Not An Act

Surprisingly, most women do not appear to have major difficulties in balancing the multiple roles and responsibilities in their lives. They are confident in their abilities to handle life’s various challenges.

- Despite some concerns about their physical appearance and about certain financial issues, women are proudest of their relationships with family members and of who they are as a person
- Women who are stay-at-home moms are more likely to express higher levels of life satisfaction than working mothers. Non-moms, however, tend to be happier with their relationships than mothers

### Satisfied and Self-Assured

The responses of over 3,000 American women indicate that most women are currently more satisfied with their lives than many might think.

- Women are far more likely to positively assess most aspects of their lives, their personal relationships, their life choices and their families, than they are to express regret, complaint or desire for radical or even minor changes
- Overall, women are happy with things the way they are

### Satisfaction Heightens with Age

As women move through life stages, this tendency to express personal comfort with their choices and satisfaction with their lives only increases.

- Older women (“Boomers”) are much more likely to be comfortable with who they are and the life choices they have made than younger women (“Gen Y”)



“I make time to do the things that are important to me.”

# MONEY

## KEY FINDINGS

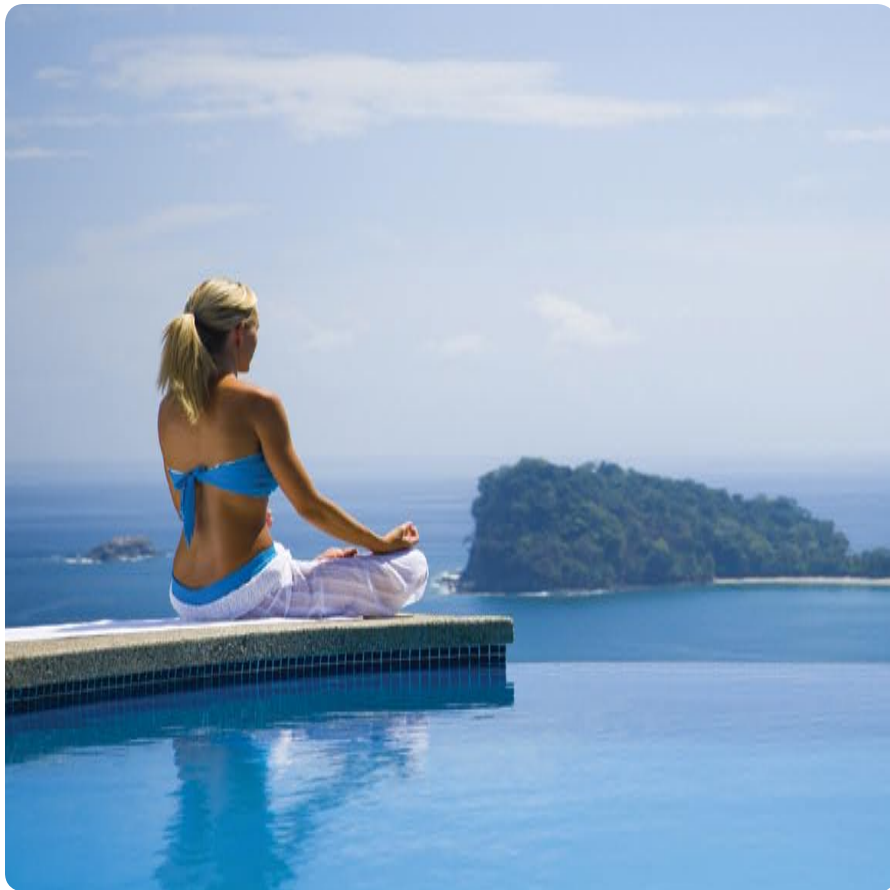
- Women's greatest financial concerns are about the future of the Social Security system (77%) and about having enough money for retirement (75%)
- 44% of American women currently have over \$10,000 in debt (not including home mortgages)
- 1 in 5 women admit to occasionally hiding purchases from their spouse



# HEALTH

## KEY FINDINGS

- Women are overwhelmingly more concerned about diet/weight control (56%) and nutrition (36%) than they are about serious diseases such as cancer (23%), heart disease (20%) or Alzheimer's (8%)
- To achieve a healthy lifestyle, women "drink more water" (80%), compared to the more difficult options of avoiding fatty foods (47%) or exercising regularly (43%)
- The majority of women feel that schools should play a more active role in fighting childhood obesity



“Over the years I have learned to prioritize—family always comes first.”



# CHOICES

## KEY FINDINGS

- 94% of American women say they feel successful at balancing roles and responsibilities in their lives
- Who's most satisfied? Gen Y, stay-at-home moms, couples, women with children under age 7, empty nesters, Republicans and pet owners. The least satisfied are singles and Gen X
- Although most women are happy with their life choices, 79% of working women want a change in their work situation, specifically, to acquire new skills to achieve a higher-paying job

# SAFETY

## KEY FINDINGS

- The top three issues that American women feel most threatened by are (1) drunk driving, (2) child predators and (3) violence in schools
- Women consider drug and substance abuse to be the greatest threat to American families and a major cause for social concern
- 40% of moms think it is unsafe to have a profile on a social networking site





## METHODOLOGY

Meredith and NBC Universal commissioned Applied Research & Consulting to administer an online survey of 3,069\* female respondents between the ages of 18 and 64, with household incomes of \$20,000 and higher.

The overall margin of error is +/- 2.5% at the 95% confidence level. The sample was weighted by age and region to conform to U.S. Census data, and the findings are therefore projectable to all households nationally.

\*Some sections were administered to a split sample to accommodate the length of the survey. Demographics are available upon request.



For more information, please visit  
[www.WhatDoWomenWantStudy.com](http://www.WhatDoWomenWantStudy.com) or contact:

**Paula Foundeur**  
Executive Director, Marketing Solutions  
Meredith Corporation  
Paula.Foundeur@meredith.com  
212-499-1830

**Janet Gallent**  
V. P., Consumer Insights & Innovation Research  
NBC Universal  
Janet.Gallent@nbcuni.com  
212-664-2087

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