Party of One

For many people, living singly offers a chance to soar to new heights.

March 2, 2020 By Kate Ferguson

At the American Psychological Association's 124th Annual Convention, Bella DePaulo, PhD, a scientist at the University of California, Santa Barbara, who has spent decades studying single life, challenged the science behind the cherished notion that marriage makes people happier, healthier and less isolated.

"The preoccupation with the perils of loneliness can obscure the profound benefits of solitude," says DePaulo. "It is time for a more accurate portrayal of single people and single life—one that recognizes the real strengths and resilience of people who are single and what makes their lives so meaningful."

According to the U.S. Census, there were 110.6 million unmarried people older than 18 in America in 2016, representing 45.2% of this population. In contrast, in 2014, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 50.2% of the U.S. population identified as single. Findings suggest that a number of socioeconomic factors may be driving down these numbers. However, one reason is rarely acknowledged, DePaulo proposes.

"Increasing numbers of people are single because they want to be," she says. "Living single allows them to live their best, most authentic and most meaningful life."

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