

WTF IS HE WAITING FOR?!

An analysis of the American male mind
as he considers marriage proposal

The holidays might seem like a distant memory, but for thousands of women across the U.S., it seems like only yesterday that they were eagerly waiting to unwrap gifts...particularly those of the round, sparkling variety. According to Brides.com, [40% of women in 2018 expected](#) a holiday proposal, and nearly 800,000 proposals were estimated to take place during Christmas last year. But that left tens of thousands of women empty handed (or should we say empty fingered?)

Many women (and men!) who thought they found the right guy ended up with nothing more than a sweater and a gift card to their favorite restaurant. Talk about a let down. So, WTF is he waiting for?

[The Pearl Source](#) and [Laguna Pearl](#), two leading independent providers of alternative engagement rings and bridal decor, decided to investigate why men always seem to take a little too long to propose. So we asked some guys, 1001 of them, to be precise.

As it turns out, it's a little complicated.



The Pearl Source and Laguna Pearl are two of the nation's largest online jewelry retailers in the alternative gemstone market, specializing in pearls. Combined, they've sold thousands of rings and bridal jewelry pieces representing over \$1 million in sales in 2018.



Methodology Notes

We surveyed 1,001 American men ages 18 and older across a wide range of educations, household incomes, and careers. We asked them a number of different questions pertaining to their tendencies, worries, and considerations when it came to proposing and marrying their partner. We decided to survey men at different relationship stages - single, in a committed relationship, divorced - to see if there were any patterns or trends among their answers.

Survey demographics



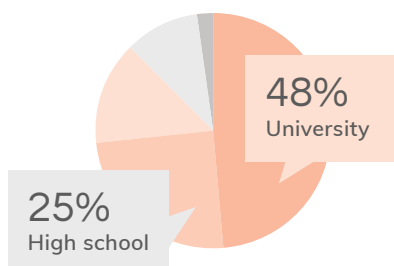
Education



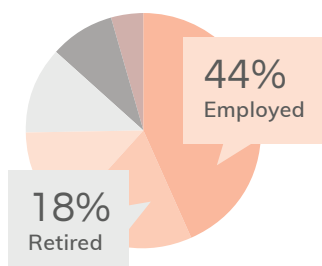
Employment Status



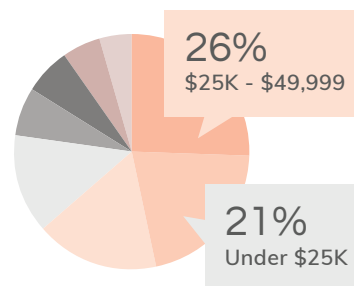
Income



- University 48.45%
- High school 24.98%
- PostGraduate 14.19%
- Vocational technical college 10.39%
- Other 2%



- Employed 43.56%
- Retired 18.38%
- Other 12.89%
- Self employed 12.09%
- Unemployed 8.89%
- Student 4.20%



- \$25K - \$49,999 25.67%
- Under \$25K 21.08%
- \$50K - \$74,999 16.88%
- \$75K - \$99,999 13.59%
- \$100K - \$124,999 6.79%
- Prefer not to say 6.49%
- \$150K or more 5.29%
- \$125K - \$149,999 4.20%

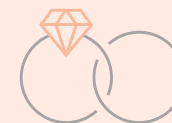
Respondent relationship statuses



Single



In a Committed Relationship



Married



Divorced



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TL, DR

It's (probably) not you, it's his finances.

No matter how smooth, charming, or elegant you think your man is, deep down, he's very insecure and worried about not being able to provide.

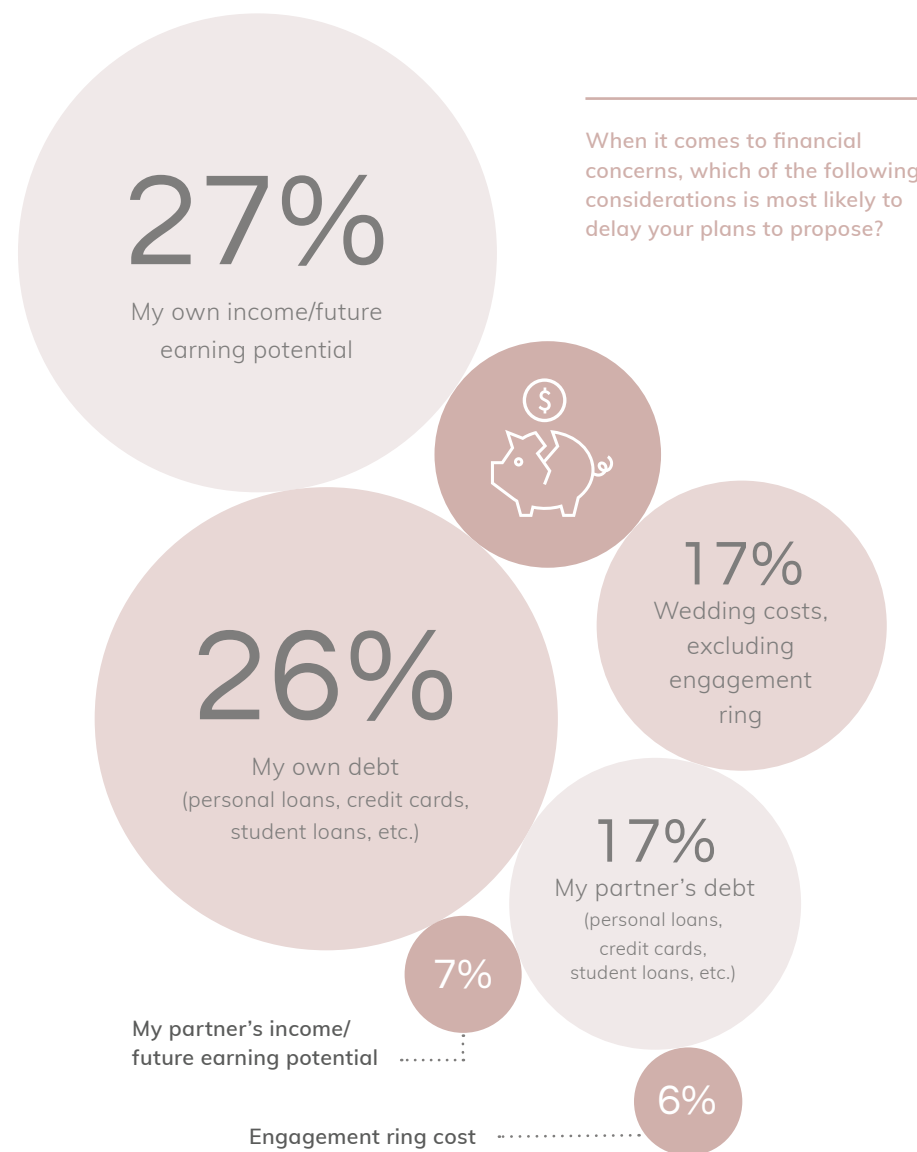
When it came to financial worries,

over 27% of men selected their income and future-earning potential

as the most likely consideration to delay proposal plans.
A close second was

their own debt (nearly 27%).

Partners were safe for the most part; men only found their partner's debt a little concerning. Financially speaking, guys put most of the pressure on themselves.



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TL, DR

The pressure is real

It may come as no surprise that guys are putting themselves under a lot of pressure and chances are, their partners aren't doing them any favors by nagging them about popping the question, getting the right ring, and having a big wedding.

But even still, the #1 reason he won't propose yet?

He's not ready to give up his freedom.

Their #2 reason?

Too much pressure from their partners.

For men in a relationship?

They don't know how they'll pay for the wedding or ring!

The ring isn't helping (and you're probably not, either).



More than 50% of men

agreed that finding the right ring was a source of pressure for them.



Over 50% of men selected price

as the most common engagement ring consideration most likely to delay engagement plans.



Nearly 40% of men

are worried that their partner expects too much when it comes to the engagement ring.



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So what's going on in his head? **A lot.**

When asked to list their top 3 most important considerations when proposing, **married men, single men, and men in a committed relationship** most commonly chose:



Length of the Relationship



Partner's Health and Lifestyle



Finances

Divorced men most commonly chose...



Quality of Sex Life



Partner's Health and Lifestyle



Finances

But don't worry, the majority of men are only planning to wait 6-12 months before popping the question.



28%
0-6 Months



42%
6-12 Months



30%
A Year or More



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A CLOSER LOOK

In the next few sections, we'll do a closer deep dive into what's really affecting men when it comes to proposing (or not proposing).

A Closer Look: Finances

The U.S. has a pretty concerning debt problem, and it looks like men are really taking that to heart. Not only are they concerned with their income potential and their own debt, they're worried about their partners' debt too (although not to the extent of their own).



23%

of percent of men agreed that their partner's income potential was a worry

35%

of men agreed that their partner's debt was a worry.



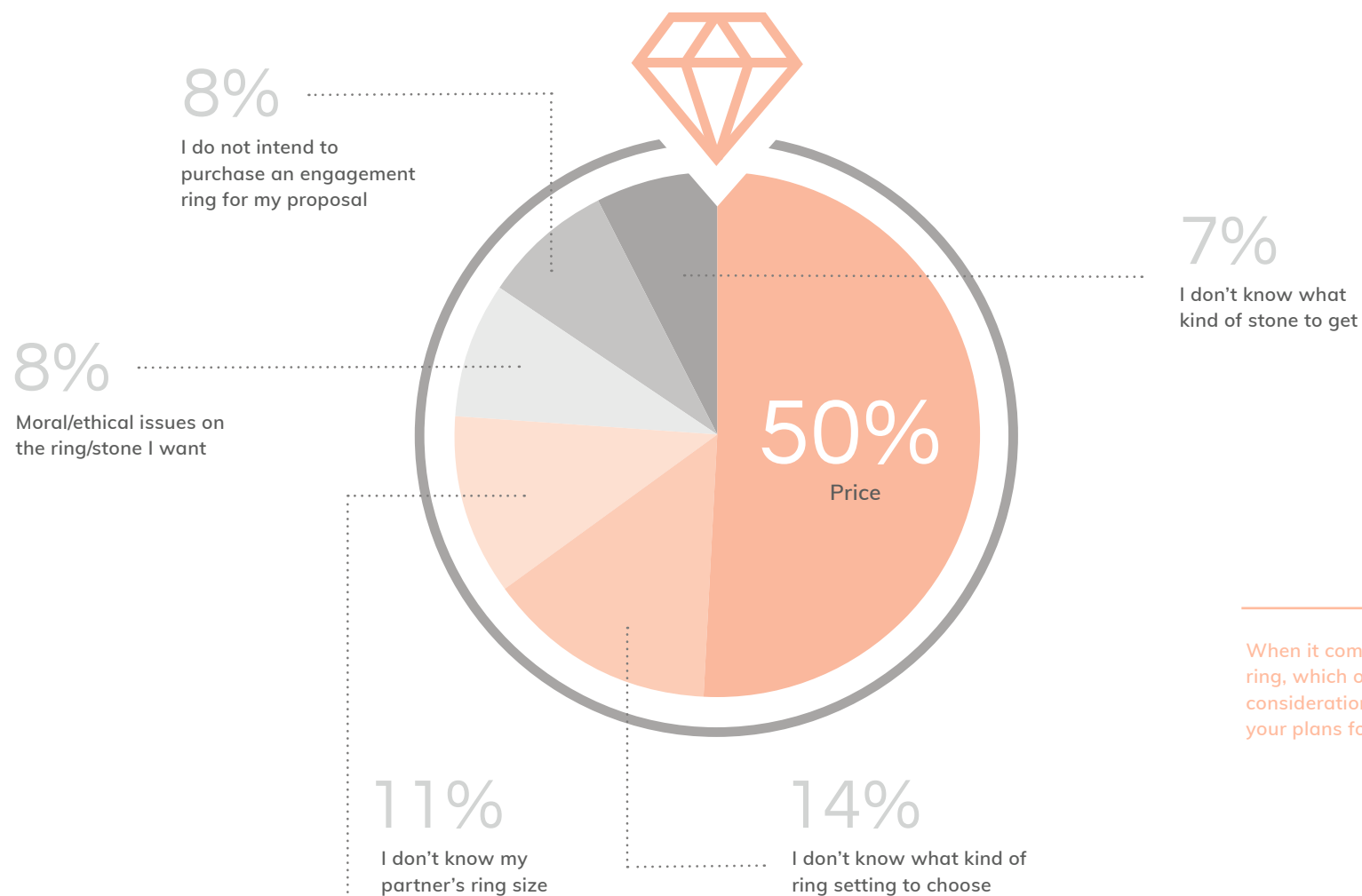
But don't go cutting up your credit cards yet. Men were pretty forgiving when it came to their partner's debt. When they were asked what kind of debt their partner would need to be in to delay a proposal,

the majority of men (nearly 60%) wouldn't think twice about it until their partner's debt reached \$20,000 or more, the highest option available.



A Closer Look: The Ring

When it came to the ring, men had one thing on their mind: price. More than 50% of respondents across nearly all age groups and personas (we'll get to the exceptions in a moment) chose price as the number one consideration when it came to buying an engagement ring.



When it comes to an engagement ring, which of the following considerations is most likely to delay your plans for an engagement?



Just under 50% of all men agreed that finding the right ring is a source of pressure and anxiety for them.

But if you ask the men in a committed relationship, that number increases past 50%.



That pressure might not just be in their heads.

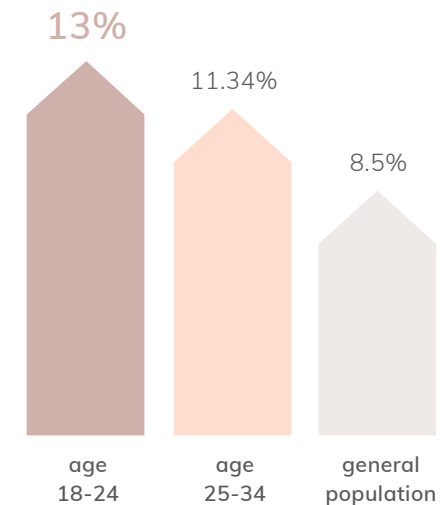
Over 35% of all our respondents said they're worried their partner expects too much when it comes to an engagement ring.

For our younger groups, we see a slight shift in priorities:



13% of the 18-24 age group considered moral/ethical issues as a reason to delay engagement plans compared to 8.5% of the general population. For the 25-34 group, 11.34% of respondents chose moral/ethical issues.

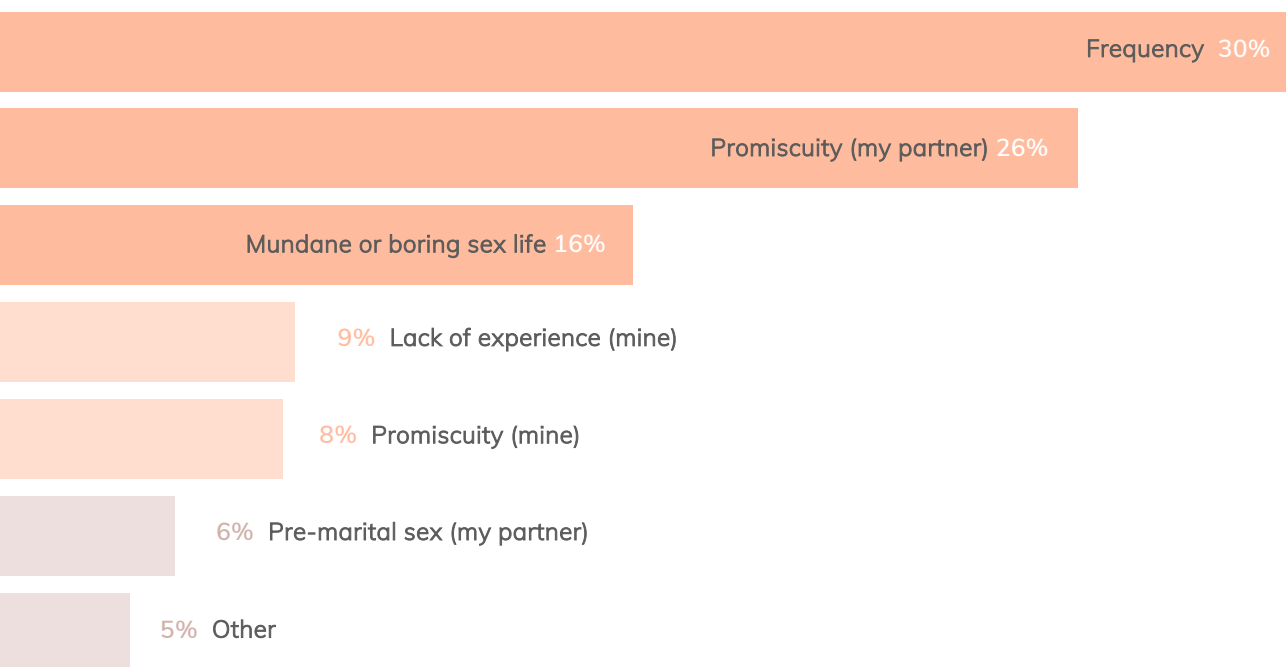
So while price is still the main factor for most men, the younger generations seem to worry more about moral/ethical issues, a trend that is likely to continue throughout future generations.



A Closer Look: Sex

Let's talk about sex baby (but not too much)

When asked about what sexual preferences or issues would delay proposal plans, the most common response was not having enough sex (no surprise there...). The second most common reason was that their partner had too many previous sexual partners. In third place, men selected a "mundane or boring sex life". The moral of the story? Try something new in the bedroom. You both might be surprised.

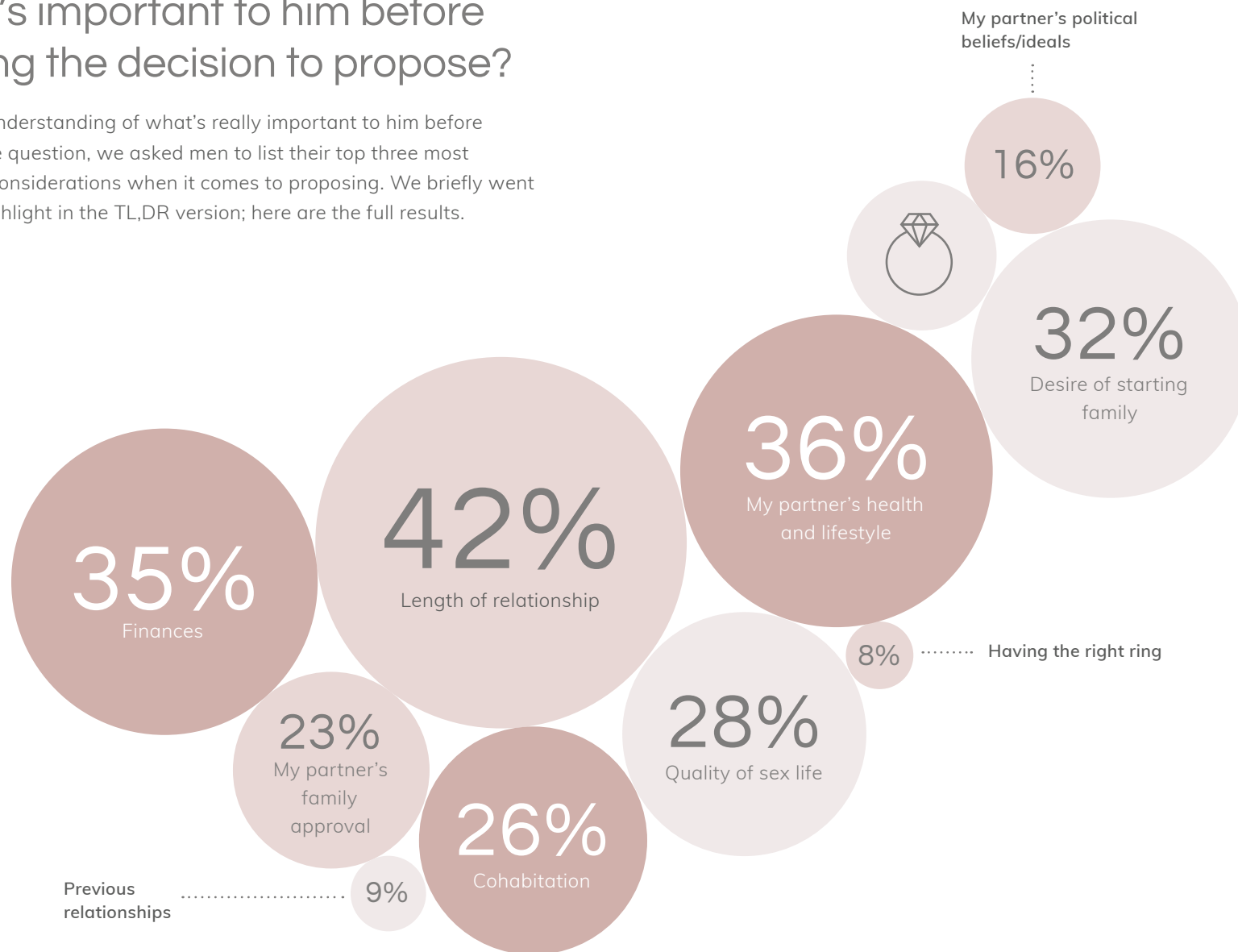


Our survey participants were clear about their biggest bedroom hangups, especially as they pertained to delaying a proposal. But remember, whether or not you care is up to you! It's a two-way street, after all.

A Closer Look: The Male Mind

What's important to him before making the decision to propose?

To get an understanding of what's really important to him before popping the question, we asked men to list their top three most important considerations when it comes to proposing. We briefly went over the highlight in the TL,DR version; here are the full results.



A Closer Look: The Male Mind

Length of relationship, finances, and partner's health and lifestyle were the three most common answers for all respondents. However, among a few personas and age groups, things shifted slightly.

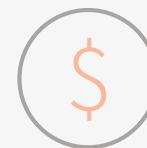
For divorced respondents, their most common considerations were:



Sex life



Partner's health
and lifestyle



Finances

Clearly they have other priorities.

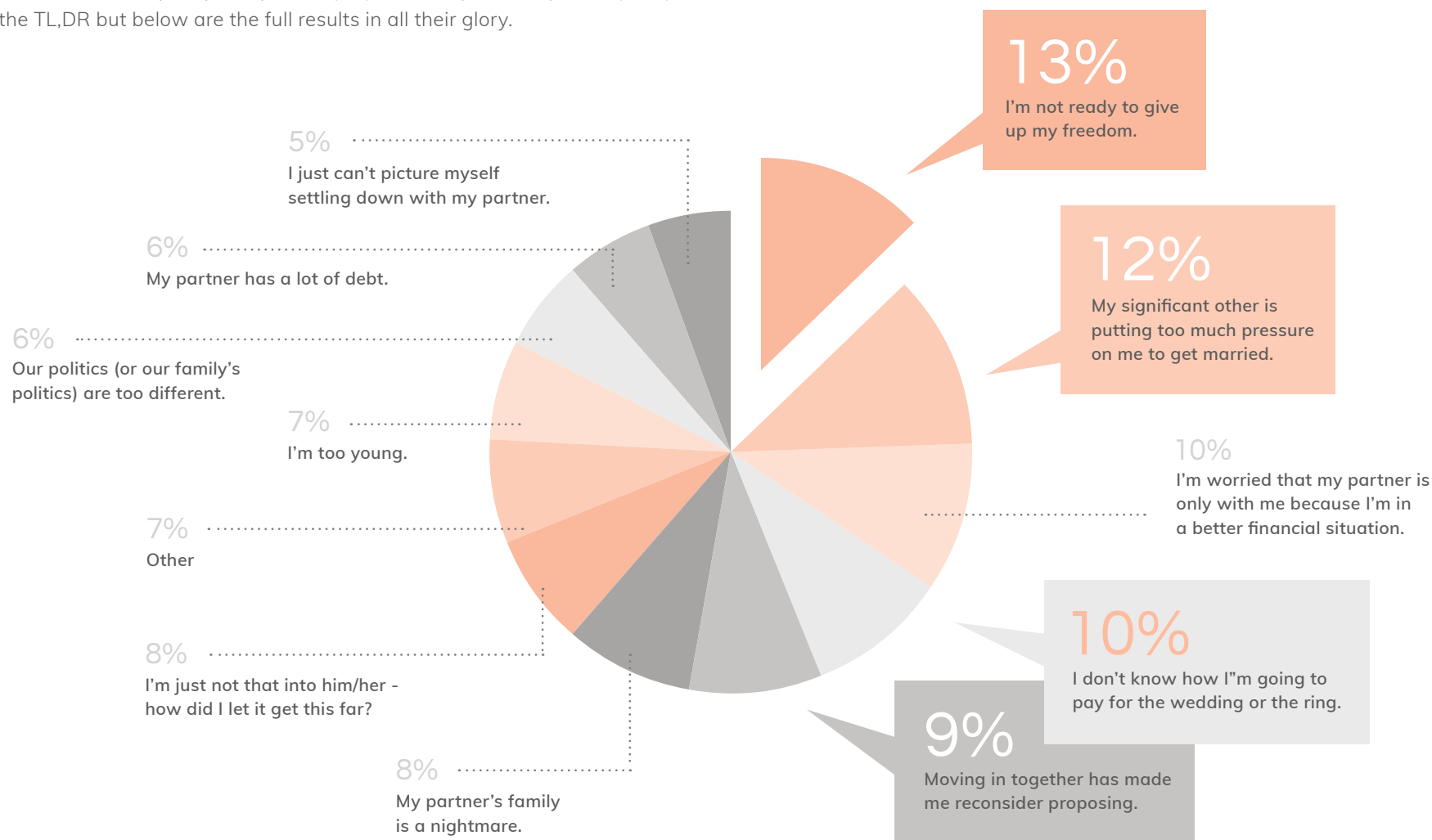
For the **25-34 age group**, desire for starting a family overtook finances (cute) and for the **35-44 age group**, there was a tie for third most common response. Cohabitation and starting a family replaced partner's health and lifestyle.

So if your man falls in the 35-44 age group, domesticity is key when it comes to getting that ring.

A Closer Look: The Male Mind

Why hasn't he proposed yet?

At the conclusion of our research, we gave men more of an open forum to tell us, once and for all, why they really won't propose. We gave away the top response in the TL,DR but below are the full results in all their glory.



A Closer Look: The Male Mind



As you can see, the most common answer was 'not wanting to to give up [their] freedom.' Not very surprising. And after weeding out the non-applicable responses, the second most-popular choice was 'too much pressure'. So if you keep asking for that ring, maybe cool it for a month or two.

When looking at the responses from the men in a committed relationship, the most common answer was not knowing how they were going to pay for the wedding or the ring. At a close second was 'too much pressure'. The third-most common response was **'moving in together has made me reconsider proposing.'**

Point is, maybe consider dialing back the pressure and letting him find his own way. Oh, and definitely move in together first... and not just for his sake. You may learn something about him (or yourself) that might change your mind about wanting that ring in the first place!





In conclusion, what can a partner do?

First, ease up on some of the pressure. If you're bringing up marriage a lot, that might spook him. Also, let him feel more at ease when it comes to money. It's not that he doesn't want to marry you, he just isn't sure how he's going to afford the wedding, the ring, and everything else.

Also, if you haven't moved in together it might be a good time for that. Either way, if you're ready, chances are he is thinking about it, too. Communicate with him and make your position clear. And remember, it's 2019! If you want to pop the question yourself, you should feel empowered to do so!

Finally, everyone deserves to be with someone who wants to be with them. If your partner is dragging his or her feet without a valid reason, that might mean it's time to move on.