

# Till death do us part? The risk of first and second marriage dissolution

by Warren Clark and Susan Crompton

Marriage has been on just about everyone's mind for the last few years. While the discussion was sparked by the debate over same-sex marriage, many thoughtful Canadians were led to consider just what marriage means in today's society.

Marriage as we have understood it over the last 50 or 60 years seems to be losing its appeal. Marriage is being "de-institutionalized", in the words of American social researcher Andrew Cherlin, as old social norms crumble and couples must negotiate new, mutually acceptable standards of behaviour.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly, there is now less marriage, partly because young adults are delaying marriage and partly because common-law union is increasingly replacing marriage among Canadians of all ages.<sup>2</sup> Also, there is more divorce; well over one-third of Canadian marriages will end in divorce before the couple celebrates their 30th anniversary.<sup>3</sup> Finally, marriage is no longer a prerequisite to childbearing, as more and more children are being born to single mothers or unmarried couples.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, the great majority of people do marry. This article uses the General Social Survey on family history to briefly examine the basic

characteristics of Canadians who have legally married once, twice or more than twice. It then uses a proportional hazard model to identify some of the factors that are associated with ending a first and a second marriage by divorce or separation.

## The first marriage

According to the 2001 General Social Survey (GSS), just slightly more than 16.6 million Canadian adults — 80% of the population aged 25 and over — have married at least once.

On average, Canadian adults entered their first marriage when they were about 25 years old (for 89%, their first marriage is their current marriage). The grooms had been about two and a half years older than the brides, at 26.2 and 23.6 years old, respectively. (See Appendix Table 1.)

Most people married another single person, but a few of them (6%) exchanged their first matrimonial vows with someone who had been married before. And although living common-law was not widely acceptable before 1980 (when most of them were courting), about 15% had lived with their spouse before the wedding.

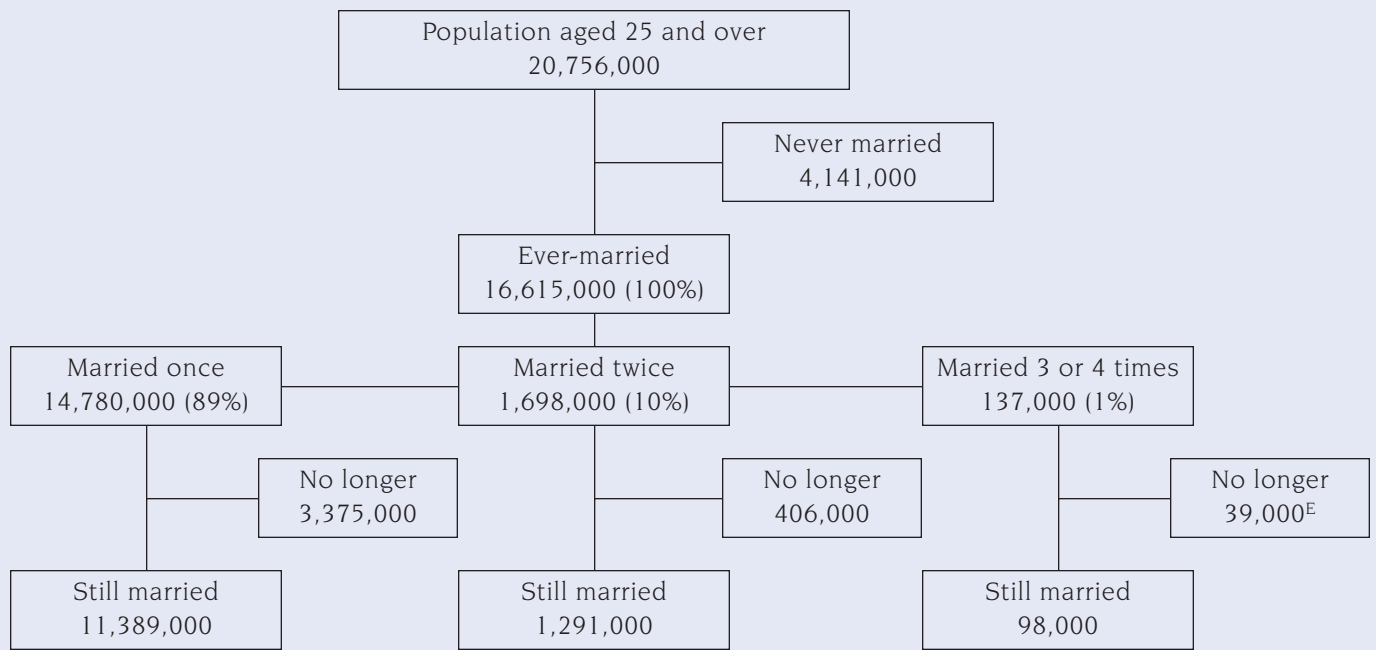
About 9 in 10 ever-married Canadians (88%) have raised at least one

child and at the time of the survey, 60% of them still had children living at home. Having children tends to bring people back into the places of worship they may have neglected in their youth,<sup>5</sup> and indeed the majority (86%) of ever-marrieds reported that they belonged to a religious faith. Of these, 42% had attended religious services at least once a month in the year preceding the survey. (The corresponding rates for adults who have never married are 77% and 22%, respectively.)

At the time of the GSS, over two-thirds of ever-married people (69%) were still with their first spouse and they had been married for an average of 23.5 years. But for 23%, their first marriage had ended in dissolution following about 11 years of matrimony. (For the remaining 9%, their first marriage had ended in their spouse's death after 34 years together.)

## Age at marriage and living common-law are key factors in first marriage failure

The success or failure of a marriage is ultimately decided by the deeply personal dynamics of the couple and their unique situation. However, a hazard model can be used to calculate the relative likelihood



E High sampling variability: use with caution.  
 Note: "No longer" includes those separated from their current spouse, divorced and widowed.  
 Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001. Unpublished data.

that a person's marriage will end in separation or divorce, given that the individual has certain socio-demographic characteristics. (See "What you should know about this study.")

One of the key factors associated with a first marriage breaking down is a newlywed's age. Someone marrying in their teens faces a risk of marriage dissolution almost two times higher than a person who marries between the ages of 25 and 29. In contrast, people who wait until their mid-30s or later to marry run a risk 43% lower. (The hazard ratio – or risk – is estimated for each variable when all other factors in the model are controlled for. See "What you should know about this study" for the list of variables included.) Age difference between spouses is not a significant risk factor if the husband is more than 5 years older than his wife, but it is 29% higher if he is more than 5 years younger.

People with less than high school education at the time of their first marriage face a 38% greater risk of marital dissolution than those with secondary completion; those with a university degree are at 16% less risk, when all other factors in the model are controlled for. This finding may seem contradictory – presumably people with lower socioeconomic status are least able to afford to leave their marriage – but it supports evidence which suggests that people with higher social status (especially women) are happier and less likely to divorce.<sup>6</sup>

Living common-law is also strongly associated with a first marital breakdown. In fact, the risk is 50% higher among people who lived with their partner before the wedding than among those who did not. This finding is supported by recent Canadian research which clearly shows that marriages preceded by a common-law union are distinctly less

stable than those that began at the altar,<sup>7</sup> possibly because the tradition of marriage is less important to people who have participated in non-traditional conjugal relationships.<sup>8</sup>

The longer a couple has been married, the greater their chances of staying together. For example, someone who married in the 1960s is at 13% lower predicted risk of first marriage dissolution than someone married in the 1970s; however, the risk is a notable 67% higher for someone married in the 1990s, even when all other factors are accounted for. This difference across the decades probably reflects people's changing expectations of marriage, particularly the shift in emphasis from family-oriented child-rearing to individually-based personal fulfillment.

Having children significantly reduces the predicted risk of first marriage failure: it is 73% lower than that for married partners without children, after controlling for all other

variables in the model. This finding bolsters the fact that, although children can put a strain on the adult relationship, marriage dissolution is actually less likely to occur among couples with than without children, an observation which is true across most societies and cultures.<sup>9</sup>

### **Religion and mother tongue are linked with staying married**

Religious belief can also have a protective effect on first marriage. Although religious affiliation does not seem significant, religious observance is associated with marital durability. People who attend religious services during the year, even if only several times, have between a 10% and 31% lower predicted risk of marital dissolution than those who do not attend at all. (This excludes attending services on special occasions like weddings, christenings and funerals.)

The GSS does not provide information about respondents' cultural heritage. Nevertheless, given that language is a key transmitter of values and norms within a social group, mother tongue can be used as an indirect indicator of the attitudes to which a person was exposed while growing up.

People living outside Quebec, and whose mother tongue is neither English nor French, have a significantly lower risk of first marriage dissolution than the reference group (Anglophones outside Quebec), at almost 26% lower. The large majority of these allophones report that at least one of their parents was born in Asia or Europe, cultures which tend to have traditions that place strong emphasis on the importance of marriage and family.

On the other hand, Francophones in Quebec have even less risk of first marital failure, at 29% lower than Anglophones outside the province. This result is quite puzzling since Quebec posts a divorce rate higher than elsewhere,<sup>10</sup> common-law unions are much more acceptable, and Quebec generally has a more

socially liberal attitude than the rest of the country.<sup>11</sup> In fact, being a francophone Quebecer is no longer a significant factor in lowering the risk of first marital dissolution if the attitudinal variables are removed from the hazard model (that is, importance of being in a couple, being married, and having children. Results of model not shown.)

### **The second marriage**

The great 18<sup>th</sup> century English lexicographer Dr. Samuel Johnson famously remarked that remarrying was "the triumph of hope over experience."<sup>12</sup> But about 43% of Canadian adults whose first marriage had ended in divorce had married again by the time of the GSS,<sup>13</sup> as had about 16% of those whose first spouse had died.

Canadians who married a second time averaged about 39 years old at the time of the wedding. Over half (55%) exchanged vows with someone who had also been married before, and more than one-third (37%) had already lived common-law with their new spouse.

At the time of the GSS, about 1.3 million of them (71%) were still married to their second spouse of almost 13 years. There are good reasons for believing that these marriages will continue to be successful. American research suggests that remarriages made after age 40 are more stable than first marriages.<sup>14</sup> And the hazard model predicts that, all other factors being controlled for, Canadians who were in their 40s when they remarried face only half as great a risk of marital dissolution as those who were under 30. Even those who remarried in their 30s have a 27% lower risk of breaking up.

The reason dissolution risk falls as age at remarriage rises may be partly due to the partners' increased maturity. An American study reported that the quality of the relationship between the couple is better when both spouses are remarried; they scored higher on measures of intimacy-based reasons for marriage

than other types of couples and lower on external reasons.<sup>15</sup> As for the "psychological baggage" they may bring to their new marriage, evidence suggests that the effect of divorce on general happiness, depression and general health is significant but weak, once the effects of demographic variables are removed.<sup>16</sup>

### **The first failure may help to set the stage for the next one**

However, over one in five of Canadians who remarried had left their second spouse within an average of 7.6 years. Why someone's subsequent marriage should end in dissolution is perhaps more puzzling than why their first one did.

Some of the theories social research has presented to explain remarriage failure include: a personal psychology that makes someone more likely to end relationships; learned behaviour, that is, they solved the previous marital problem with divorce; lack of social support for remarriages; and a smaller pool of suitable candidates available for remarriage, which reduces the likelihood of finding a compatible partner.<sup>17</sup>

The first two hypotheses suggest that previous conjugal history may help to explain why the subsequent marriage failed. As shown earlier, both first and subsequent marriages contracted at a young age are less likely to succeed, probably because failure tends to repeat itself if a person has not corrected their "marital style". Adults who are twice-divorced were 3 years younger than their still-married counterparts, both the first time they tied the knot (22 versus 25) and the second (about 36 versus almost 40).

Interestingly, though, living common-law – which is much more common among twice- than once-married people and is strongly associated with a first marital breakdown – is not a significant factor in the dissolution of a subsequent marriage, once all other variables are controlled for.

	Risk ratio of marital dissolution			Risk ratio of marital dissolution	
	First marriage	Subsequent marriage		First marriage	Subsequent marriage
<b>Gender</b>					
<i>Men</i>	1.00	1.00			
Woman	0.83*	0.91			
<b>Age at start of marriage</b>					
Less than 20	1.98*	--			
20 to 24	1.34*	--			
25 to 29	1.00	--			
30 to 34	0.67*	--			
35 and over	0.57*	--			
<b>Age at start of marriage</b>					
<i>Less than 30</i>	--	1.00			
30 to 39	--	0.73*			
40 to 49	--	0.50*			
50 and over	--	0.39*			
<b>Age difference between spouses</b>					
Husband 6 or more years older	1.09	0.87			
<i>Less than 5 years between spouses</i>	1.00	1.00			
Husband 6 or more years younger	1.29*	0.90			
<b>Lived common-law with spouse before marriage</b>					
<i>No</i>	1.00	1.00			
Yes	1.50*	1.05			
<b>Decade when marriage started</b>					
Before 1960	0.29*	0.19*			
1960s	0.87*	1.03			
1970s	1.00	1.00			
1980s	1.41*	1.43*			
1990s or later	1.67*	2.50*			
<b>Educational level at start of marriage</b>					
Less than high school graduation	1.38*	1.34			
<i>High school graduation</i>	1.00	1.00			
Some postsecondary	1.03	1.28			
Trade or vocational diploma	0.33*	0.90			
College certificate or diploma	0.89*	1.34*			
University degree or certificate	0.84*	1.18			
<b>Presence of children in the marriage</b>					
<i>No</i>	1.00	1.00			
Yes	0.27*	0.79			
<b>Religious affiliation</b>					
<i>No religion</i>	1.00	1.00			
Catholic	1.00	1.22			
Protestant	1.13*	1.22			
Others	1.07	2.35*			
<b>Religious attendance</b>					
<i>Not at all</i>	1.00	1.00			
Infrequently	0.90*	0.67*			
At least once a month	0.69*	1.04			
<b>Mother tongue and region of current residence</b>					
Francophones in Quebec	0.71*	1.04			
Anglophones in Quebec	1.05	0.87			
Allophones in Quebec	1.25	0.66			
Francophones in rest of Canada	1.00	1.83*			
<i>Anglophones in rest of Canada</i>	1.00	1.00			
Allophones in rest of Canada	0.74*	0.79			
<b>Population of community where respondent lived in 2001</b>					
<i>One million or over</i>	1.00	1.00			
250,000-999,999	1.11*	1.19			
10,000-249,999	1.05	1.15			
Rural And Small Town Canada	0.87*	0.82			
<b>Importance of being married to respondent's happiness</b>					
<i>Very important to my happiness</i>	1.00	1.00			
Important	1.38*	1.28			
Not very important	3.08*	2.70*			
Not at all important	3.96*	4.30*			
<b>Importance of relationship as a couple to respondent's happiness</b>					
<i>Very Important to my happiness</i>	1.00	1.00			
Important	1.20*	1.41*			
Not very important	1.60*	1.54*			
Not at all important	1.61*	1.15			
<b>Importance of having children to respondent's happiness</b>					
<i>Very important to my happiness</i>	1.00	1.00			
Important	0.86*	0.87			
Not very important	0.77*	0.86			
Not at all important	0.47*	0.79			
<b>Would you stay in a bad marriage for the sake of your children?</b>					
<i>Yes</i>	1.00	1.00			
No	2.16*	1.69*			

Note: Most subsequent marriages are second marriages.

\* Significant statistical difference from reference group shown in italics ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.

The importance of social support to the success of remarriage has been acknowledged by a number of researchers. The support received from family and friends plays a significant role in the quality of the marital relationship, especially in couples where both partners are remarried.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, low levels of social support contribute to the psychological distress reported by people who have divorced, especially those who have left a marriage more than once.<sup>19</sup>

### **Being a member of a minority population is associated with subsequent marriage failure**

The choice of a second marriage partner has interested sociologists long enough for them to produce two competing theories. The "learning hypothesis" proposes that a person looks for someone similar to themselves after the failure of a marriage to someone dissimilar; in contrast, the "marriage market hypothesis" argues that people end up with a dissimilar partner because of the limited number of candidates available for remarriage.<sup>20</sup> Neither hypothesis has trumped the other, and the results of the GSS hazard model are equally inconclusive.

Although higher education is a prime protective factor against first marriage dissolution, it is much less important to subsequent marriage dissolution. This seems to suggest that there may be more educational similarity between partners in second marriages. This interpretation is supported by a Dutch study of recently remarried adults that shows both sexes tend to choose a second partner who is better educated than their first; men especially are more likely to remarry a woman whose education more closely matches their own.<sup>21</sup>

On the other hand, the model's results also seem to speak to the difficulty of finding a compatible partner the second time around if a person belongs to a small population group. Two variables that played no

role in first marriage dissolution are significantly associated with the breakdown of subsequent marriages. First, the risk for a francophone living outside Quebec is 83% higher than that for an Anglophone, when all other factors in the model are controlled for. Second, being a member of a religious faith other than the predominant Catholic or Protestant churches increases the risk by 135%, compared with someone who has no religious affiliation at all.

It has become a truism that stepchildren are a prime contributor to the collapse of second marriages. The appeal of this idea is obvious, and teenagers especially can put any marital bond to the test, but studies are inconclusive: some find that they are a prime factor in remarriage failure<sup>22</sup> yet others determine that they contribute to the marital satisfaction of the adults.<sup>23</sup> The GSS model predicts that, when all other variables are controlled for, the presence of children in the household at the time of a subsequent marriage is not associated with marital dissolution.

The hazard model also shows that some factors associated with marital success or failure are simply not within a person's power to control. For example, women have the same risk of subsequent marriage dissolution as men, which is somewhat surprising because they had a significantly lower risk for a first marriage break-up. The answer may lie in women's attitudes to marriage, since a new story appears when attitudinal variables are removed from the model. If the predicted risk is calculated using only socio-demographic variables, women and men in a first marriage have an equal risk of dissolution; but in a subsequent marriage, women face a 30% higher risk than men. (Results of model not shown)

### **The third marriage**

In 2001, according to the GSS, almost 137,500 Canadian adults had been legally married more than twice. They

represented less than 1% of the ever-married population aged 25 and over. Virtually all of them had tied the knot three times.

Apart from their marriage habit, nothing much sets these serially-married Canadians apart, socio-demographically, from other married Canadians. They had entered their third marriage at an average age of almost 46, generally to someone who had also been married before. Over one-third (38%<sup>F</sup>) had lived with their third spouse before the ceremony.

And although 71% had recently celebrated their 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary with their most recent partner, almost one-quarter (23%<sup>F</sup>) had left their marriage after less than 4 years of matrimony.

Some researchers believe there is credible evidence that "...multiple marriers are different in personality and behavior (sic) from those who remarry only once."<sup>24</sup> A 1990 U.S. study specifically of serial marriers agreed that both men and women married multiple times have higher levels of anxiety than those married only once or twice; multiply-married women also reported more psychological distress than other married women, even after controlling for their divorce history.<sup>25</sup>

### **Believing in Marriage produces a stronger marriage**

This psychological profile – however brief – may help to shed some light on a rather counterintuitive finding from the GSS. One would expect that people who marry multiple times are keen believers in the value of marriage and family, but the data tell a different story.

Serial marriers are significantly less likely to claim that being married is important or very important to their happiness, at 69% versus 82% of people who married only once (including those divorced or widowed as well as those still married). Of course, deeply held beliefs can be altered by a person's experience, especially a severely negative experience such as the failure of their

This study is based on the General Social Survey (Cycle 15) on family history, conducted by Statistics Canada during 2001. Almost 25,000 Canadians aged 15 and over living in private households in the 10 provinces were asked to provide information about all their marital and common-law unions, on separation, divorce and death of their partners, as well as a wide array of background characteristics.

This article focuses on adults aged 25 and over who have been legally married a minimum of one time, and the likelihood that their marriage will end in divorce or separation. The analysis is based on about 14,550 respondents who have married only once, 1,750 who married twice and 140 who married more than twice. These respondents represent almost 14.8 million, 1.7 million and 137,000 Canadians aged 25 and over respectively.

**Ever-married:** Adults aged 25 and over who have been legally married at least once, regardless of their marital status (still married, divorced, widowed) at the time of the survey.

**Once-, twice- and serially-married:** Persons who, as of the time they were surveyed, had legally married once, twice or more than twice, respectively.

**Dissolution:** The end of marriage due to separation, divorce or annulment. (Widowhood is excluded.) Because this study examines the breakdown of the relationship rather than its legal termination, dissolution is defined to occur at the time of final separation from the spouse; in the small

number of cases where marriage ended with an immediate divorce without a period of legal separation, it is the time at divorce. This category therefore includes respondents who were separated but whose divorce was not yet final; these individuals account for about 30% of all persons in this category.

**Risk ratio:** The predicted likelihood that an individual's marriage will end in separation or divorce, compared with a reference individual. The ratios were calculated using a proportional hazard model, a statistical technique that estimates the likelihood that an individual will experience an event (in this case, marital dissolution), given a certain set of explanatory variables.

In this study, the explanatory variables are: sex; age at start of marriage; age difference between spouses; whether the couple had lived together before marriage; the decade in which the marriage started; educational level at the time of marriage; whether there were children in the household during the marriage; religious affiliation; religious attendance; mother tongue and region of residence. The model also included variables that measured the respondent's attitudes to marriage, being part of a couple and having children, as well as whether they would stay in an irreparable marriage for the sake of the children (if their children were less than 15 years old).

marriage. But this lack of commitment to the idea of marriage may become a self-fulfilling prophecy, since it is a key factor associated with marital collapse. People who do not believe that marriage is important for them to be happy have a predicted risk of both first and subsequent marriage failure 170% to 330% higher than people who feel it is very important, when all other variables are controlled for.

Similarly, serial marriers are almost twice as likely to say they would not stay in a bad marriage even for the sake of their children (50% compared with 28% of once-marrieds). Of course, this is probably

a very hypothetical question for most once-marrieds, who may overstate their case, while serial marriers might have a more realistic idea of how much they are prepared to tolerate. Nevertheless, compared with those who believe they would stay in an irreparable marriage for the sake of their kids, the predicted risk of a first or second marriage dissolution is 69% to 116% higher for people who are prepared to leave.

## Summary

Current events may suggest that the estate of marriage is in disarray. Some people would argue that society's

acceptance of the individual's demand for personal fulfillment has freed irresponsible and hedonistic people to flit from one spouse to another.

However, marriage still seems to possess an aura that elevates it above a simple living arrangement. Most Canadians marry once and only once; less than one percent walk down the aisle more than twice. Married couples generally have "greater commitment and higher relationship quality" than partners in common-law unions,<sup>26</sup> which suggests something about the transcendent nature of the marriage bond itself.



The factors associated with the break-up of a first marriage tend to be different than those that are significant risk factors for the dissolution of a subsequent marriage. In general, however, the predicted likelihood that their marriage will succeed is higher for people who marry in their 30s, did not live common-law before the wedding, have children, attend religious services, are university educated, and believe that marriage is important if they are to be happy.



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Current marital status (2001)	Ever-married: At least once			
	Total	Married	Divorced	Widowed
<b>Both sexes (000s)</b>	16,701	12,778	2,416	1,405
Men	7,810	6,466	1,043	300
Women	8,788	6,312	1,372	1,104
<b>Average age at first marriage</b>				
Both sexes	24.8	25.1	24.0	23.8
Men	26.2	26.3	25.5	26.0
Women	23.6	23.8	22.8	23.2
<b>Average age difference between respondent and first spouse</b>				
Both sexes	3.5	3.4	3.8	4.8
Men	3.3	3.2	3.8	3.5
Women	3.7	3.5	3.8	5.2
<b>Average duration of first marriage (years)</b>				
Total	21.7	22.2	12.2	33.9
Still married	23.5	23.5	..	..
To divorce or separation	11.1	8.9	12.1	13.4
To death of spouse	34.2	23.0	16.7	35.7
<b>First spouse's marital status before the marriage (%)</b>				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Widowed	0.6	0.5	F	1.6 <sup>E*</sup>
Divorced	5.5	5.3	7.6*	3.9
Single	93.9*	94.2	92.0*	94.5*
<b>Respondent lived common-law with first spouse before marrying</b>				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	14.9	14.8	22.4*	2.7*
No	83.3*	85.2	77.6*	97.3*
Have never lived common-law	76.8*	80.9	47.7*	89.3*
<b>Reason for end of first marriage</b>				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Still married	68.7*	89.1	..	..
Divorced or separated	22.7*	9.7	99.2*	9.5
Death of spouse	8.6*	1.2	F	90.5*

\* Statistically significant difference from reference group (currently married) marked in italic ( $p < 0.05$ ).

<sup>E</sup> High sampling variability; use with caution.

F Sample size too small to produce reliable estimate.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.



Current marital status (2001)	Ever-married: At least twice			
	Total	Married	Divorced	Widowed
<b>Both sexes (000s)</b>	1,834	1,389	299	146
Men	865	722	115	28 <sup>E</sup>
Women	970	667	184	119
<b>Age of respondent at start of second marriage</b>				
Both sexes	38.7	39.1	35.6	41.3
Men	40.6	40.7	38.6	45.2
Women	37.1	37.4	33.7	40.5
<b>Average age difference between respondent and second spouse</b>				
Both sexes	5.9	5.9	5.7	6.0
Men	6.5	5.6	6.5	5.7
Women	5.3	5.2	5.2	6.1
<b>Average duration of second marriage (years)</b>				
Total	12.2	12.5	7.7	18.7
Still married	12.7	12.7	..	..
To divorce or separation	7.6	6.7	7.7	F
To death of spouse	19.3	F	F	20.0
<b>Marital status of second spouse before entering into second marriage (%)</b>				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Widowed	7.9	7.1	F	22.6 <sup>E*</sup>
Divorced	46.6	48.3	45.6	32.7 <sup>E*</sup>
Single	45.5	44.6	50.0	44.7
<b>Respondent lived common-law with second spouse before marrying</b>				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	36.8	38.9	36.1	18.6 <sup>E*</sup>
No	8.1 <sup>*</sup>	5.6	20.6 <sup>*</sup>	F
Have never lived common-law	55.1	55.5	43.3	75.1 <sup>*</sup>
<b>Reason for end of second marriage</b>				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Still married	70.6 <sup>*</sup>	93.0	0.0	0.0
Divorced or separated	21.7 <sup>*</sup>	6.1	98.5 <sup>*</sup>	15.0 <sup>E*</sup>
Death of spouse	7.7	F	F	85.0

\* Statistically significant difference from reference group (currently married) marked in italic ( $p < 0.05$ ).

<sup>E</sup> High sampling variability; use with caution.

F Sample size too small to produce reliable estimate.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.

Current marital status (2001)	Ever-married: At least 3 times	
	Total	Married
<b>Both sexes (000s)</b>	137	98
Men	67	56
Women	70	41 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Age of respondent at start of third marriage</b>		
Both sexes	45.6	46.2
Men	47.5	48.5
Women	43.9	43.2 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Age difference between respondent and third spouse</b>		
Both sexes	7.2	7.4
Men	7.8	8.0
Women	6.5	6.6 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Average duration of third marriage (years)</b>		
Total	7.1	8.1
Still married	8.3	8.3
To divorce or separation	3.7 <sup>E</sup>	..
To death of spouse	F	..
<b>Marital status of third spouse before entering into third marriage (%)</b>		
Total	100.0	100.0
Widowed	F	F
Divorced	54.4	57.8
Single	F	F
<b>Respondent lived common-law with third spouse before marrying</b>		
Total	100.0	100.0
Yes	37.8 <sup>E</sup>	39.5 <sup>E</sup>
No	23.4 <sup>E</sup>	F
Have never lived common-law	38.9 <sup>E</sup>	40.3 <sup>E</sup>
<b>Reason for end of third marriage</b>		
Total	100.0	100.0
Still married	71.1*	100.0
Divorced or separated	22.9 <sup>E</sup>	..
Death of spouse	F	..

Note: Divorced and widowed persons are not included due to very small sample size.

\* Statistically significant difference from reference group (currently married) marked in italic ( $p < 0.05$ ).

<sup>E</sup> High sampling variability; use with caution.

F Sample size too small to produce reliable estimate.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.

	Ever-married		
	Once	Twice	Three or four times
(percent distribution downwards)			
<b>For me to be happy, it is ... to have a lasting relationship as a couple</b>			
Very important	72.0	69.1*	57.8*
Important	23.0	22.1	30.6
Not very important	3.5	6.0*	F
Not at all important	1.5	2.8 <sup>E*</sup>	F
<b>For me to be happy, it is ... to be married</b>			
Very important	55.6	50.5*	42.2*
Important	26.0	25.7	26.8 <sup>F</sup>
Not very important	12.7	16.3*	22.1 <sup>E*</sup>
Not at all important	5.6	7.5*	F
<b>For me to be happy, it is ... to have at least one child</b>			
Very important	60.8	59.4	46.2*
Important	28.2	29.6	33.4
Not very important	7.1	11.0*	F
Not at all important	4.0	6.1*	F
<b>If I had young children under 15 and my marriage was in trouble and the differences with my spouse could not be resolved, I would still stay in the marriage for the sake of the children<sup>1</sup></b>			
Yes	46.7	30.7*	25.7 <sup>E*</sup>
No	34.7	57.9*	67.1*
Do not know	18.6	11.4*	F
<b>Religious affiliation</b>			
No religion	13.9	16.5*	23.6 <sup>E*</sup>
Catholic	43.6	31.7*	17.2 <sup>E*</sup>
Protestant	25.8	36.5*	34.2
Orthodox	1.5	1.3 <sup>F</sup>	F
Jewish	1.0	F	F
Other Eastern religions	4.3	2.0 <sup>E*</sup>	F
Other, Do not know	9.8	10.8	22.6 <sup>E*</sup>
<b>Religious attendance<sup>2</sup></b>			
Weekly	29.5	19.3*	29.8 <sup>F</sup>
Monthly	13.5	11.5	F
Occasionally	22.3	23.2	F
Yearly	8.0	10.0	F
Not at all	26.7	36.0*	39.3*

1. Asked only of respondents who were still married at the time of the survey.

2. Asked only of those who reported having a religious affiliation.

\* Statistically significant difference from reference category (ever-married once) marked in italic ( $p < 0.05$ ).

<sup>E</sup> High sampling variability; use with caution.

<sup>F</sup> Sample size too small to produce reliable estimate.

Note: Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.