

The Power of the Success Sequence for Young Adults

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Some of the Most Important Issues Confronting America



The American Dream

The best predictor of economic mobility for poor children
at the state level?



Mass Incarceration

The best predictor of incarceration for young men?



Child Poverty

The best predictor of child poverty at the state level?

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a grey t-shirt and a blue denim apron, stands in the doorway of a shop. She has her arms crossed and is smiling warmly at the camera. The shop interior is visible behind her, featuring shelves with various bottles and products. The lighting is warm and inviting, with a soft glow from the shop's interior lights. The background outside the shop shows trees and a street scene.

Happiness

The best predictor of happiness for adults?

Not Race

Not Public Spending

Not Even Education

It is Marriage &
Family

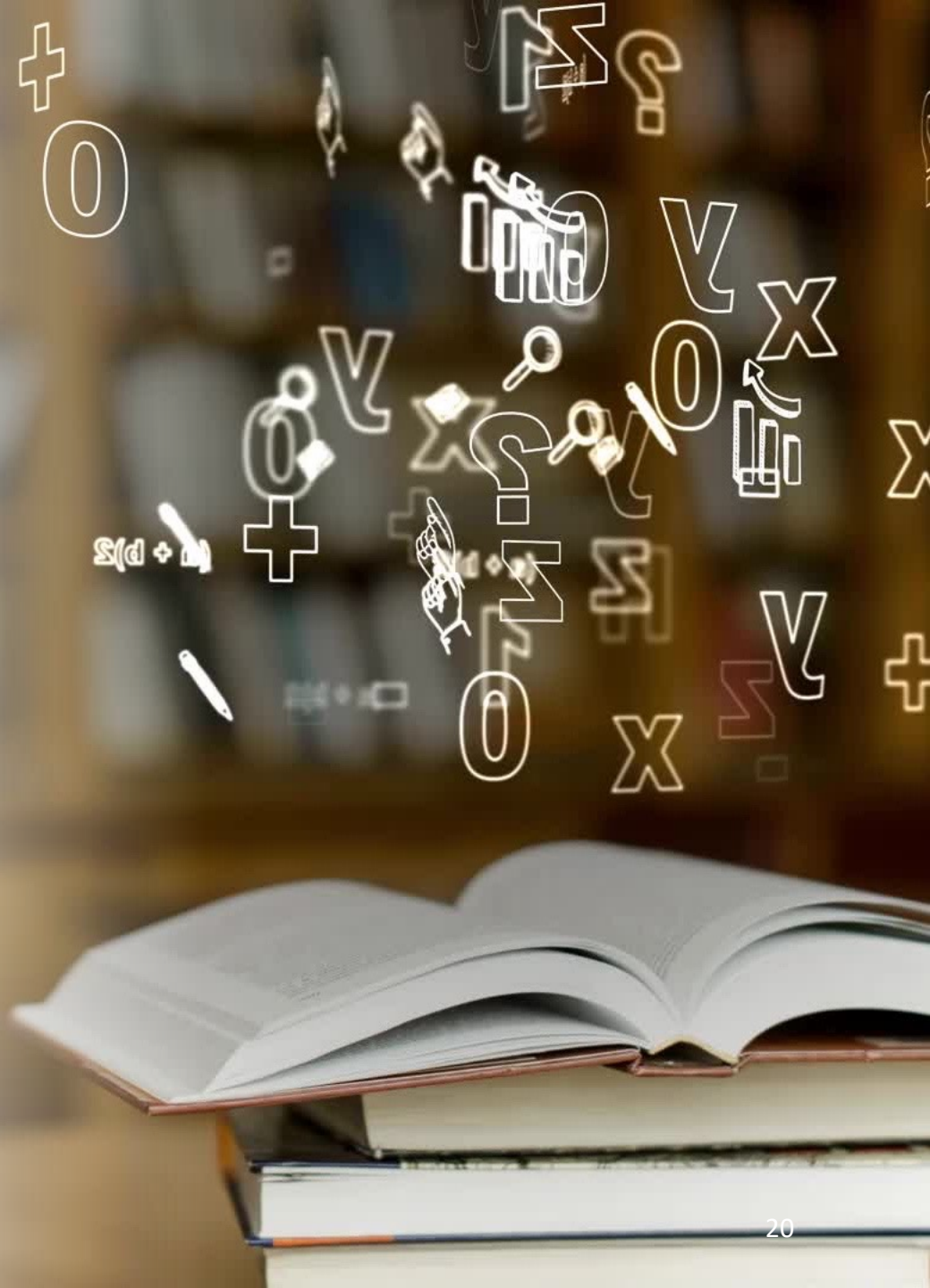
HARVARD

When it comes to **economic mobility**, “the **strongest and most robust predictor** is the fraction of children with **single parents.**”

~ Raj Chetty, Harvard



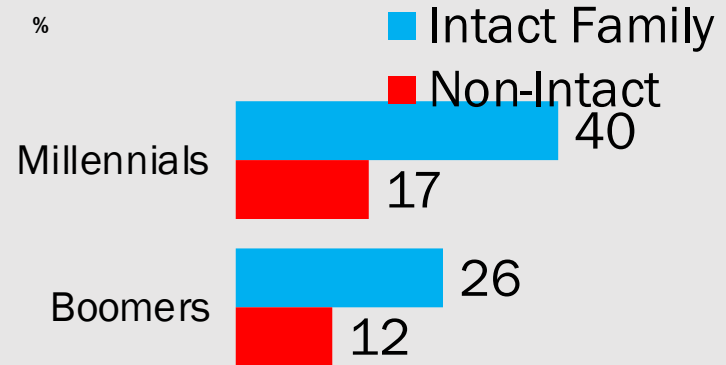
When it Comes
to Happiness,
What Beats
Education,
Work &
Money?



Family Matters More than Ever for Education



College graduation



Notes: Millennials refer to those born in 1980 to 1984. Boomers refer to those born in 1957 to 1963.

Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997(NLSY97) and 1979(NLSY79)



Our Culture Has a Family Problem

Cultural Elites Aren't Telling the Truth re: Marriage & Family

When it comes to family culture...
Elites don't talk their walk



A photograph of a city skyline at sunset, with palm trees in the foreground. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and pink. The city buildings are silhouetted against the bright sky. The palm trees are in the foreground, some in silhouette and some catching the light. The word "California" is written in white, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

California

Discounting Marriage as a Public Ethic

Embracing it as a Private Ethic

Educated Californians are more likely to endorse family diversity

% agree

Family diversity should be celebrated



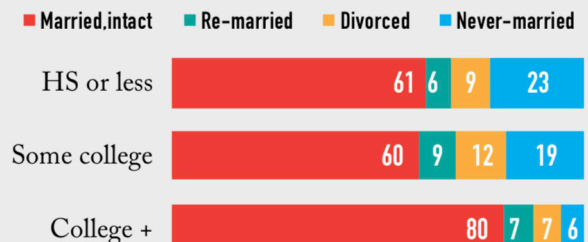
Educated Californians are more likely to embrace "marriage before baby" personally

% agree

Very important for me, personally, to be married before having children



Marital status of parents by education



Discounting Marriage in Major Culture-Shaping Institutions

- Schools & Universities
- Mainstream Media
- Pop Culture



Consequential Because Culture Helps Explain America's Family Divide

Too many young adults do not know that marriage is so important to them, their kids & communities.

Because elites aren't telling them the facts of life nor helping them acquire virtues needed for marriage.

What's Needed To Renew American Family Culture

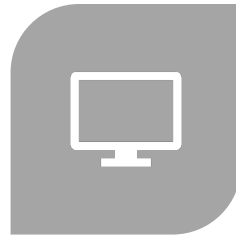
- Educate regarding marriage and family life in America
- Equip to embrace the values and virtues that sustain strong and stable families



Institute for Family Studies Using New Ways to Tell the Truth About Family



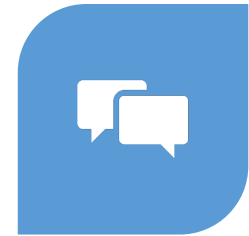
ORIGINAL
RESEARCH



PSAS/MEDIA

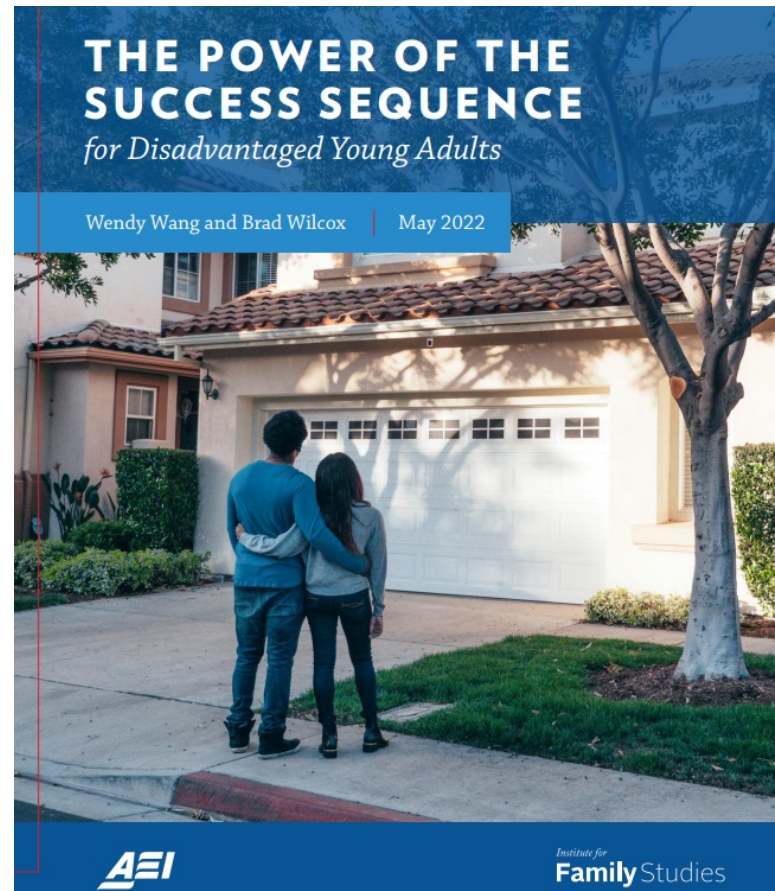
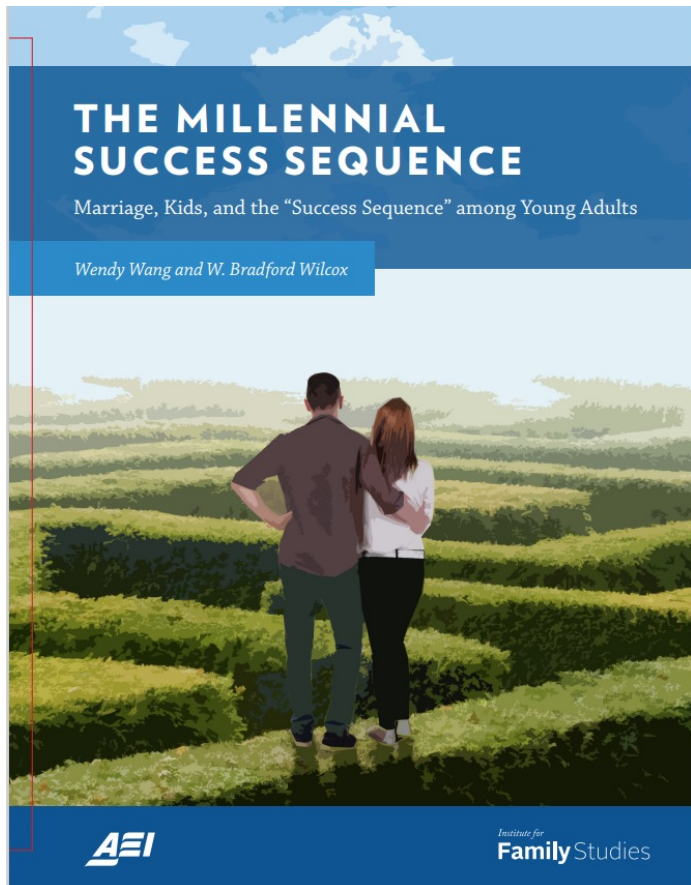


SCHOOL
CURRICULA



SOCIAL MEDIA

Original Research



The “success sequence” marked by 3 steps

01

Getting at least a HS degree by mid-20s

02

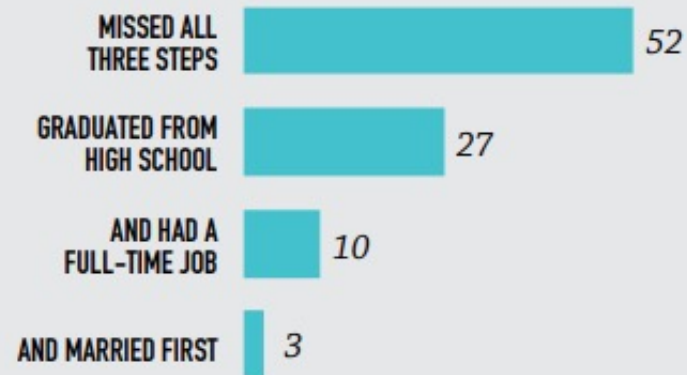
Working full-time in 20s

03

Marrying before having children

97% of adults who followed the success sequence are not poor

% of adults ages 32-38 in poverty after completing each step

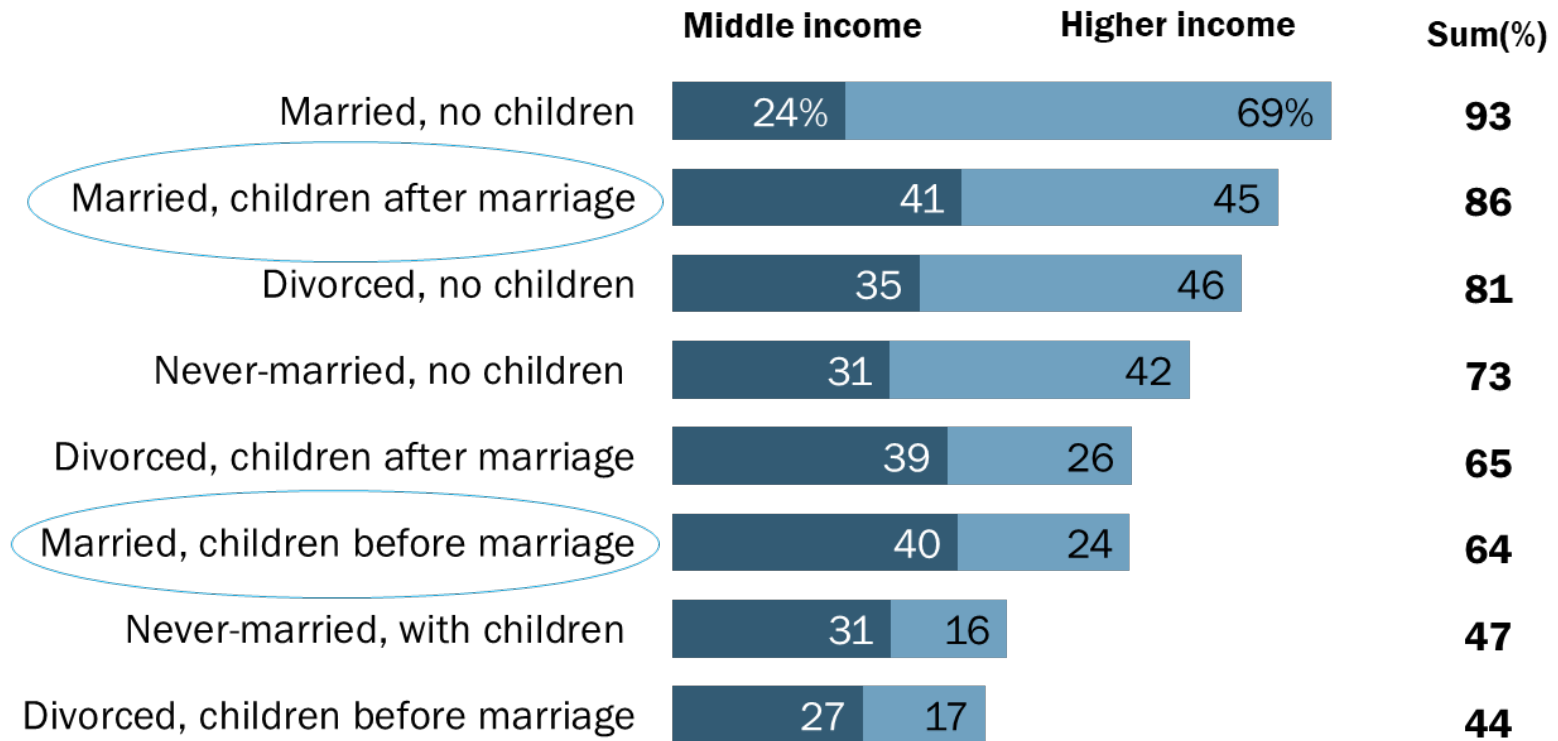


Notes: Based on adults surveyed in 2017-2018. Education and employed measured in 2010 when the cohort was in their mid 20s.

Source: IFS analysis of National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 cohort (NLSY97).

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Millennials' Family Status and Their Income



Note: Based on adults ages 28-34 and surveyed in 2013-2014.
 Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97)

Skeptics

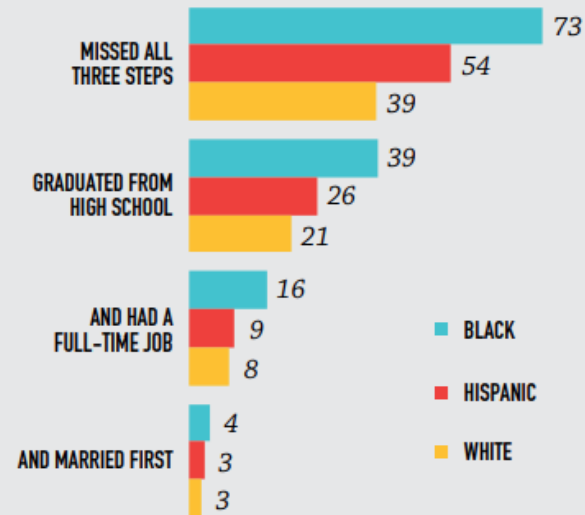
- Does the Success Sequence apply to:
 - Black and Hispanic Young Adults?
 - Young Adults from Lower-Income Homes?
 - “The bottom line is that even when black Americans do follow all three norms, their economic prospects are worse than whites.” ~ Richard Reeves et al. 2015



Race/ Ethnicity

More than 95% of black and Hispanic adults who followed the success sequence are not poor

% of adults ages 32-38 in poverty after completing each step



Notes: Based on adults surveyed in 2017-2018. Education and employed measured in 2010 when the cohort was in their mid 20s.

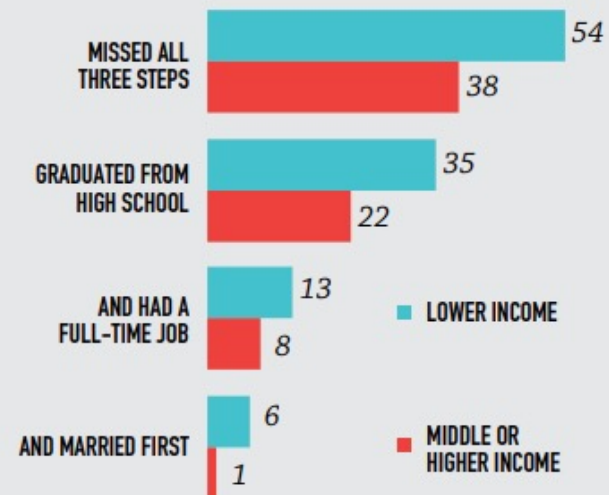
Source: IFS analysis of National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 cohort (NLSY97).

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Income

94% of young adults from lower-income families who followed the success sequence are not poor

% of adults ages 32-38 in poverty after completing each step



Notes: Based on adults surveyed in 2017-2018. Education and employed measured in 2010 when the cohort was in their mid 20s.

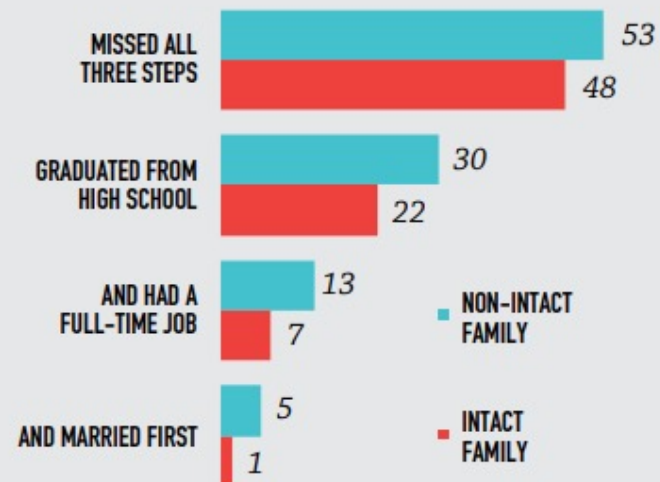
Source: IFS analysis of National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 cohort (NLSY97).

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Family structure

95% of young adults from non-intact families who followed the success sequence are not poor

% of adults ages 32-38 in poverty after completing each step



Notes: Based on adults surveyed in 2017-2018. Education and employed measured in 2010 when the cohort was in their mid 20s.

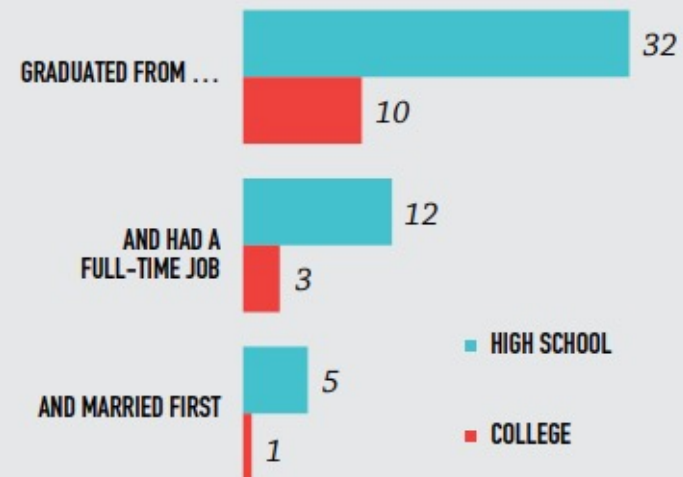
Source: IFS analysis of National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 cohort (NLSY97).

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College is
NOT a
necessity
for success

The poverty gap between college and high school graduates is small among those who followed the success sequence

% of adults ages 32-38 in poverty after completing each step



Notes: Based on adults surveyed in 2017-2018. Education and employed measured in 2010 when the cohort was in their mid 20s.

Source: IFS analysis of National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 cohort (NLSY97).

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**Odds ratio of being in middle/higher income or poverty
(Marriage & Parenthood sequence model)**

% based on adults ages 32 to 38 in 2017-18

	Middle/Higher Income		Poverty	
	Odds ratio	s.e.	Odds ratio	s.e.
MARRIAGE & PARENTHOOD SEQUENCE (<i>vs. Baby first</i>)				
Marrying first	2.29***	0.10	0.35***	0.14
Unmarried, childless	0.57***	0.11	0.83	0.15
WORKING FULL TIME	2.22***	0.08	0.28***	0.12
COLLEGE+	2.53***	0.12	0.33***	0.22
RACE/ETHNICITY (<i>vs. white</i>)				
Black	0.53***	0.11	1.85***	0.14
Hispanic	0.98	0.12	1.04	0.17
Asian	1.58	0.36	1.13	0.49
Other	1.27	0.25	1.04	0.34
WOMEN (<i>vs. men</i>)	0.79**	0.08	1.27*	0.11
ABOVE MEDIAN AFQT SCORE	2.11***	0.09	0.42***	0.13
GROWING UP IN LOWER INCOME FAMILIES	0.69***	0.09	1.73***	0.12
GROWING UP IN NON-INTACT FAMILIES	0.77**	0.09	1.06	0.12
N	3817		3808	

Notes: *** p<0.001 **p<0.01 *p<0.05. Whites, blacks and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Asians include Pacific islanders. Education and employment was measured in 2010, when the youngest adults in the cohort reached 25.

Source: IFS analysis of National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97).

**Odds ratio of being in middle/higher income or poverty
(Success Sequence model)**

% based on adults ages 32 to 38 in 2017-18

	Middle/Higher Income		Poverty	
	Odds ratio	s.e.	Odds ratio	s.e.
SUCCESS SEQUENCE (<i>vs. completed all three steps</i>)				
Missing all three	0.16***	0.20	10.69***	0.23
Missing 1-2	0.37***	0.10	3.40***	0.17
On track	0.28***	0.15	1.20	0.31
COLLEGE+	2.86***	0.12	0.28***	0.22
RACE/ETHNICITY (<i>vs. white</i>)				
Black	0.49***	0.11	2.07***	0.13
Hispanic	0.93	0.12	1.11	0.17
Asian	1.13	0.34	1.53	0.48
Other	1.05	0.25	1.29	0.33
WOMEN (<i>vs. men</i>)	0.83*	0.08	1.33**	0.11
ABOVE MEDIAN AFQT SCORE	2.02***	0.09	0.43***	0.13
GROWING UP IN LOWER INCOME FAMILIES	0.71***	0.09	1.70***	0.12
GROWING UP IN NON-INTACT FAMILIES	0.76***	0.08	1.08*	0.12
N	3817		3808	

Notes:*** p<0.001 **p<0.01 *p<0.05. Whites, blacks and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Asians include Pacific islanders. Education was measured in 2010, when the youngest adults in the cohort reached 25.

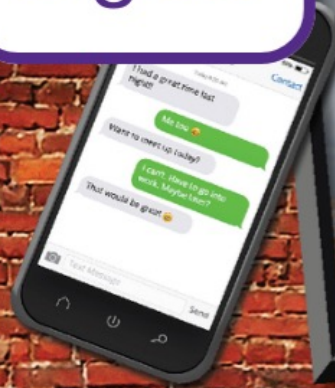
Source: IFS analysis of National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97).

Realizing the Dream



- Following the Success Sequence is associated with a dramatic increase in the odds that black and Hispanic young adults, as well as young adults from low-income families, are financially flourishing in their 30s.
 - 94%+ avoid poverty in their mid-30s
 - 80%+ reach the middle class or higher in their mid-30s
- If young adults can overcome barriers to education, work, and marriage, the American Dream can be theirs.

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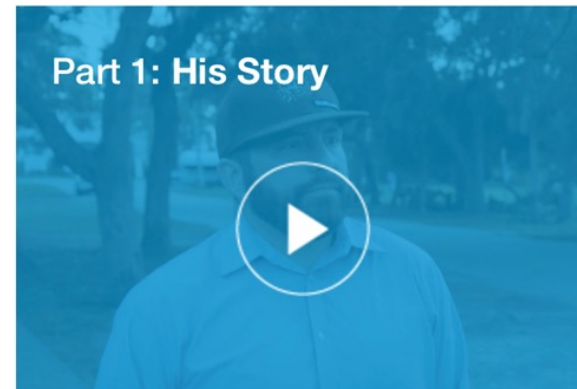


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www.success-sequence.org



Video Case Studies:
“Straight Talk About the Success Sequence”





New Offerings from California & NYC



Bridge the Family Divide

- Ideas and initiatives like this can help bridge the marriage and family divide facing America's young adults.

