

The Cost of Singledom





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In this report, we explore the financial and emotional realities of being single today — unpacking the true costs, hidden pressures and evolving attitudes shaping how singles navigate money, independence and well-being.

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Executive Summary

Single, Solvent and Surprisingly Satisfied

Being single today is often framed as a financial disadvantage — defined by higher costs, fewer safety nets and the pressure of covering life's expenses alone. While those realities exist and feel very real, Ally Bank's newest report, *The Cost of Singledom*, reveals a more nuanced picture shaped by intentionality, values and unique emotional benefits.

- **40% of single respondents say they have other priorities right now that are more important than being in a relationship**, and over half (51%) report that being single gives them the freedom to manage their money exactly as they want.
- While a significant 61% of singles cover all their expenses entirely on their own, **only one-third (33%) perceive this as a "singles tax."** This suggests that for many, solo financial responsibility is **empowering, offering greater autonomy, freedom, control and peace of mind**. Consequently, the perceived burden of a "singles tax" may often be overstated.
- **Nearly seven in 10 singles (68%) generally feel content with their single status**, despite 75% admitting to worrying about money at least several times a year.
- A considerable 70% of singles believe they are performing as well as, or better than, their peers financially.
- **Singles are more likely than their coupled counterparts to report feelings of anxiety (34% vs. 29%), overwhelm (30% vs. 26%) and worry (29% vs. 26%),** reflecting the emotional weight of managing money alone.



A more nuanced reality is emerging from these findings — one where financial responsibility and independence coexist, and where the cost of singledom is shaped just as much by values and priorities as by dollars and cents.



Singles Are Embracing Financial Independence

Many singles approach money with a greater emphasis on autonomy, flexibility and self-growth than on traditional relationship milestones.

40% of single respondents say they have other priorities right now that are more important than being in a relationship.

- Single women are more likely to share this sentiment (44%) than single men (35%).

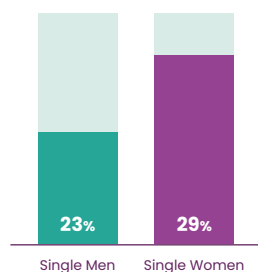
More than half (51%) of all single respondents say being single gives them the freedom to manage their money the way they want.

- 51% of single women and 52% of single men agree.

29% of single women say they feel daily financial freedom to spend their money as they choose, compared to 23% of single men.

How often do you experience the following:

I feel financial freedom daily to spend my money however I choose.



That sense of freedom is often paired with intentional spending behavior.

- 42% of singles say they spend less overall than someone in a relationship, compared to 30% of coupled respondents. Singles are more likely to say they:
 - Go out less in the evenings (56%)
 - Shop less overall (56%)
 - Manage their spending more carefully (40%)

At the same time, certain spending pressures remain harder to avoid when living independently.

- Singles are more likely to report spending pressure around:
 - Socializing and going out (44%)
 - Travel and vacations (42%)
 - Gifts for weddings and milestone events (35%)



Singles Are Embracing Financial Independence

Reflecting differences in values, compared to singles, couples are more likely to prioritize long-term, family-oriented goals, like:

- Saving for retirement (54% vs. 35%)
- Saving for children's education (26% vs. 9%)
- Increasing investments (37% vs. 28%)

On the other hand, singles are more likely to prioritize more short-term individual growth goals:

- Increasing income (39% vs. 33%)
- Saving for college or graduate programs for themselves (10% vs. 3%)

More than one-third (34%) of all single respondents say they feel confident they will be able to build long-term wealth as a single person.

What are your current financial priorities? Select all that apply

	Overall	Relationship	Single
Increase savings	58%	60%	56%
Save for retirement	46%	54%	35%
Pay off all my debt	45%	46%	43%
Earn a higher income	36%	33%	39%
Reduce spending	36%	36%	36%
Save for an emergency fund	35%	35%	35%
Increase investing	33%	37%	28%
Save for a vacation or trip	31%	35%	26%

	Overall	Relationship	Single
Buy a new car	19%	19%	19%
Save for children's education	18%	26%	9%
Buy a new home	14%	14%	15%
Start a home improvement project	13%	15%	9%
Start a new business	7%	6%	9%
Start a family	7%	6%	7%
Save for college or graduate school for myself	6%	3%	10%



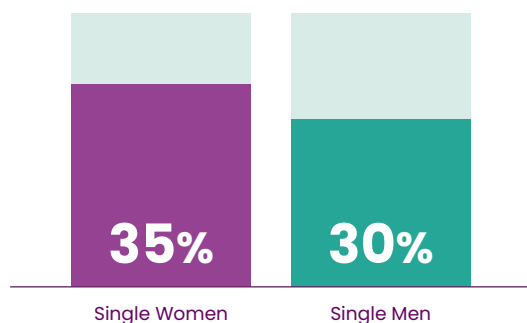
The “Single’s Tax”: A Reality Check

The idea of a “single’s tax” refers to the extra financial burden singles absorb — from covering rent, utilities and everyday costs on their own to contributing to shared life moments like weddings, engagement celebrations and milestone events — often without the cost-sharing that comes with a partner.

Relationship status alone does not appear to meaningfully drive overall financial stress — even when solo living can come with higher out-of-pocket expenses. Rather than emerging as a defining financial burden, the “single’s tax” appears to be one of many considerations within a broader climate of rising costs.

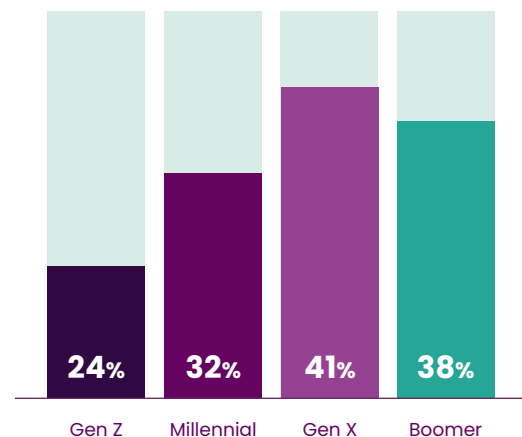
One-third (33%) of all single respondents say they’ve experienced a “single’s tax.”

- Single women report experiencing it slightly more than single men (35% vs. 30%).



Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statement:

I’ve experienced “single’s tax”, because I don’t have anyone to help share expenses.



Gen Z is the generation least likely to say they feel financially disadvantaged by being single.

24% of Gen Z report experiencing the “single’s tax,” compared to:

- 32% of millennials, 41% of Gen X, and 38% of boomers.



Financial Strain Beneath the Surface

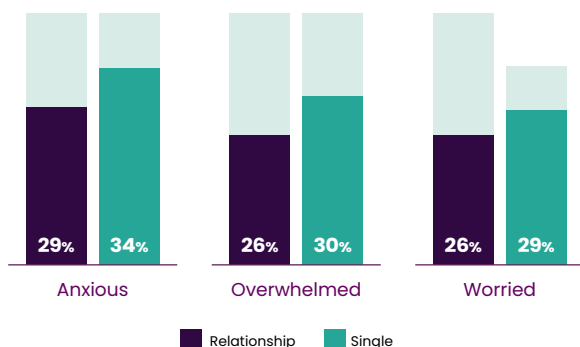
Even though most singles do not perceive these costs to be a “single’s tax,” many are still navigating financial strain.

Three-quarters (75%) of singles say they worry about money at least several times a year, compared to 69% of those in a relationship.

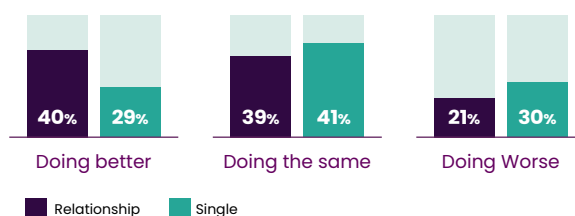
When asked about their personal finances, singles are more likely than coupled respondents to report feeling anxious (34% vs. 29%), overwhelmed (30% vs. 26%) and worried (29% vs. 26%) — reflecting the emotional weight of managing money alone.

Despite these anxieties, seven in 10 (70%) overall singles say they feel they are doing at least as well or better financially than their friends.

Feelings related to condition of personal finances (% Selected Top 5)



Comparison of financial situation with friends



Feelings about finances (% Monthly or more)





Financial Strain Beneath the Surface

Beyond day-to-day worry, singles are more likely to rely on a single income and savings pool, leaving them with fewer financial buffers:

- Those in relationships are nearly 3x as likely to have a household income of \$100K or more.
- They are also 2x as likely to have \$50K or more in household savings, giving them greater flexibility and protection when unexpected expenses arise.

Overall Gen Z and overall millennials reported the highest levels of **overwhelm** (35% Gen Z; 32% millennials) and **anxiety** (35% Gen Z; 35% millennials), whereas overall boomers are the most likely to feel **confident** (31%) and **satisfied** (30%).

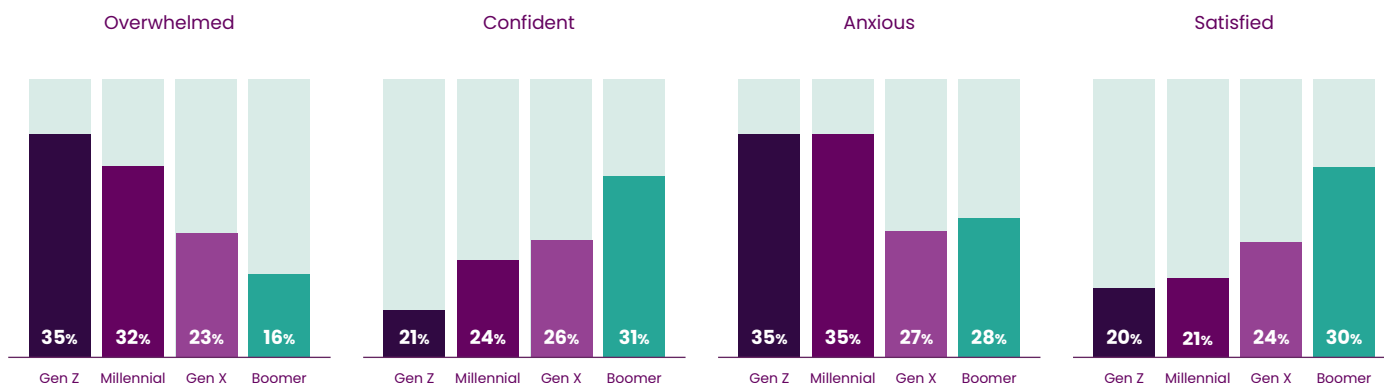
Household Savings

	Relationship	Single
Less than \$25K	32%	48%
\$25K to \$49K	8%	11%
\$50K to \$99K	13%	14%
\$100K or more	47%	27%

Household Income

	Relationship	Single
Less than \$50K	14%	42%
\$50K to \$99K	32%	38%
\$100K or more	55%	20%

Thinking about the condition of your personal finances, how does it make you feel?





Same Status, Different Stress: The Gender Gap in Financial Anxiety

Financial stress shows a clear gender divide.

Even across relationship statuses, women consistently report higher levels of financial anxiety than men — and being partnered does not significantly reduce that stress.

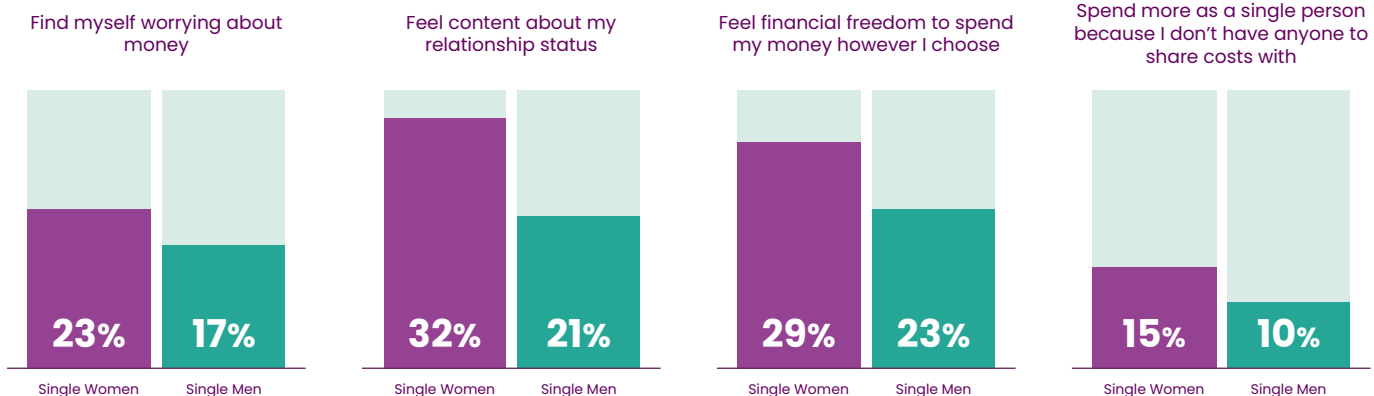
This pattern suggests not financial fragility, but a greater sense of responsibility and awareness around money.

Nearly one quarter of single women (23%) say they worry about money daily, compared to 17% of single men.

- Beyond that, 23% of single women worry daily about their long-term financial security, versus 15% of single men.



% of singles who experience the following daily:





Same Status, Different Stress: The Gender Gap in Financial Anxiety

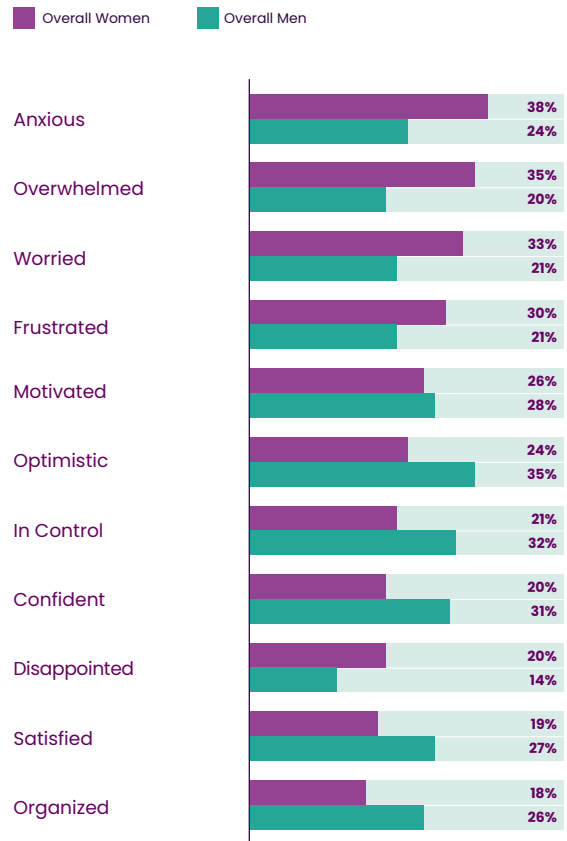
When it comes to the emotions surrounding their personal finances, overall women — single and partnered — are significantly more likely than overall men to report feeling:

- Overwhelmed (35% vs. 20%)
- Anxious (38% vs. 24%)
- Worried (33% vs. 21%)
- Frustrated (30% vs. 21%)

Conversely, overall men are more likely to report positive emotions around money, including:

- Confidence (31% vs. 20%)
- Feeling in control (32% vs. 21%)
- Optimism (35% vs. 24%)
- Satisfaction (27% vs. 19%)

Thinking about the condition of your personal finances, how does it make you feel?





Carrying the Financial Load of Everyday Expenses

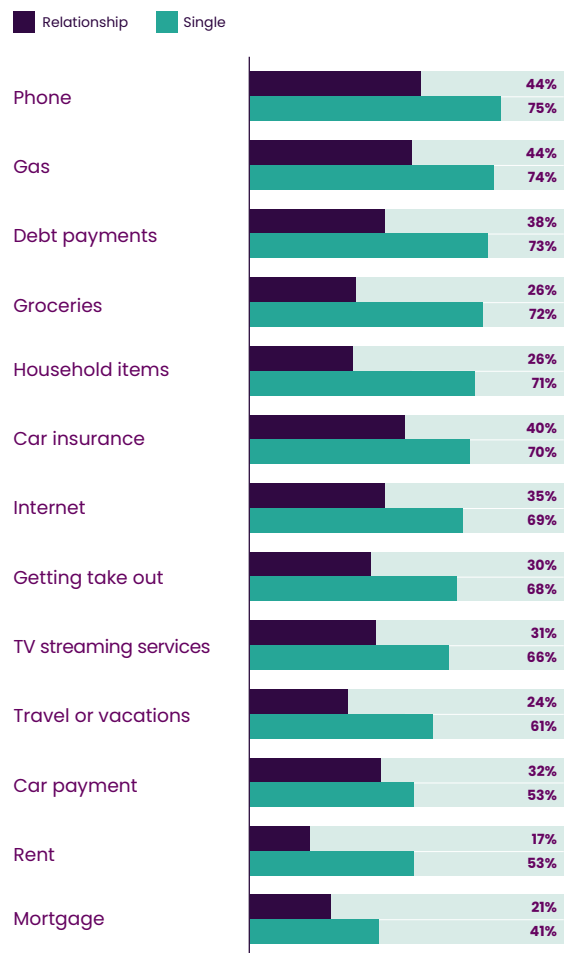
Singles are significantly more likely to manage household expenses on their own, making everyday living costs feel more pronounced — particularly for essential, fixed expenses like housing.

61% of singles say they cover their expenses entirely on their own, compared to just 25% of those in relationships.

Singles are significantly more likely to pay for essential expenses independently, including:

- Rent (52% singles vs. 17% coupled)
- Car payments (53% singles vs. 32% coupled)
- Internet (69% singles vs. 35% coupled)
- Groceries (72% singles vs. 26% coupled)
- Debt payments (73% singles vs. 38% coupled)

Expenses that are paid for on their own (% Selected pay on their own)



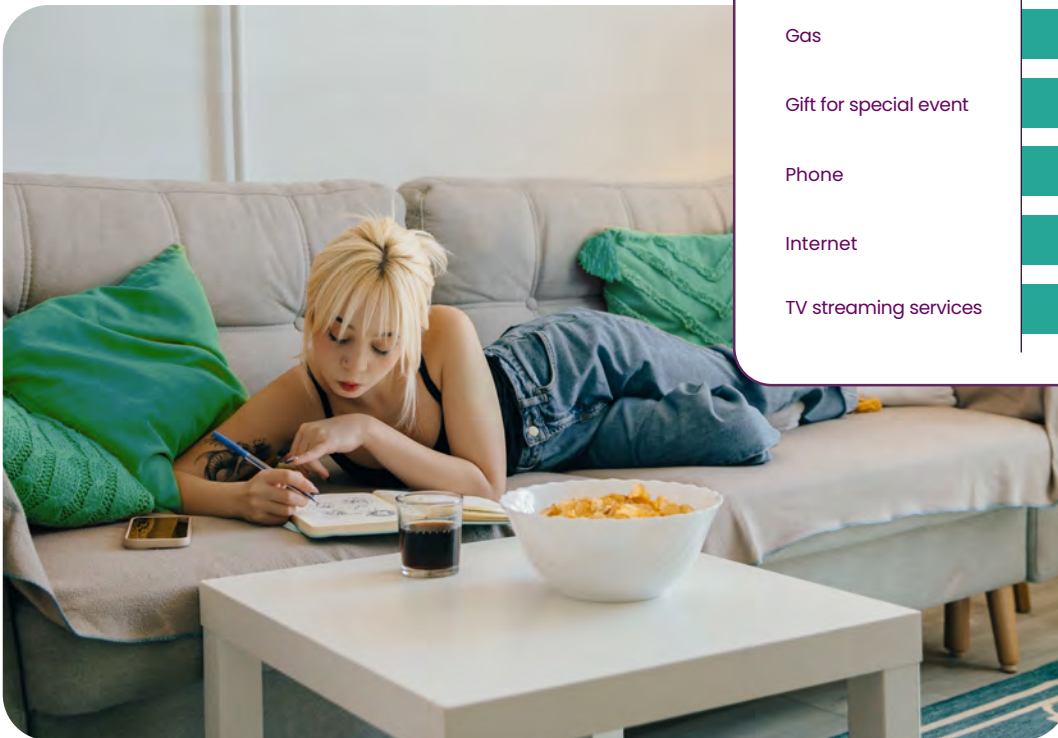
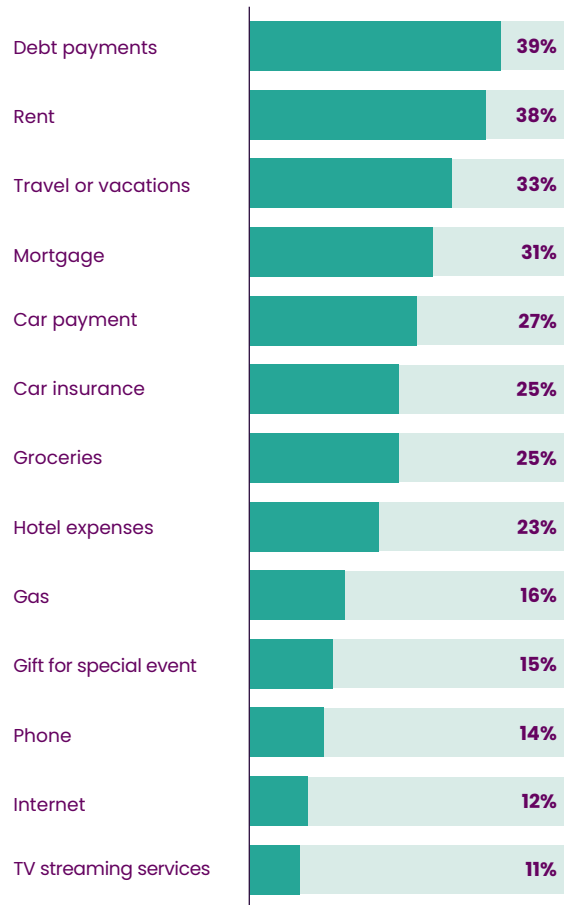


Carrying the Financial Load of Everyday Expenses

When asked about which expenses they personally find most challenging to cover on their own, singles most often cited:

- Debt payments (39%)
- Rent (38%)
- Travel or vacations (33%)
- Mortgage (31%)
- Car payment (27%)
- Car insurance (25%)
- Groceries (25%)

Expenses that are paid for on their own that are most challenging for singles





Carrying the Full Financial Load of Everyday Expenses

Housing plays a particularly outsized role in shaping the cost of living alone.

Singles are far less likely to own a home than those who are married or living together:

- 36% of singles own their home, compared to 73% of couples.
- 34% of singles rent, versus just 19% of those in relationships.

Among singles who rent or pay a mortgage, nearly half (43%) pay \$1,000 – \$1,999 per month, and nearly one in five (19%) pay \$2,000 or more.

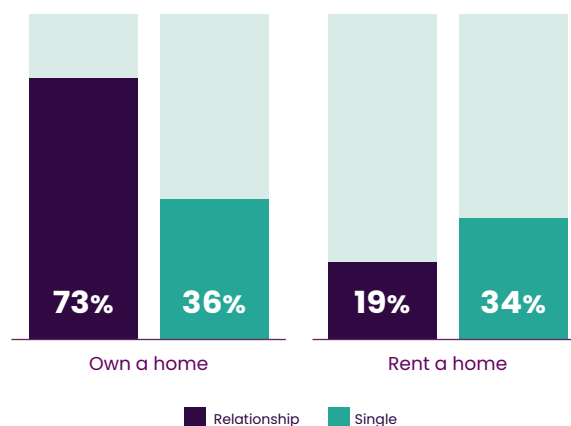
\$1,500

Is the average amount paid for housing by those married or living together.

\$1,200

is the average amount paid for housing by singles.

Home ownership
(% Own a home vs. rent)





Choosing Me: Women Are More Content Being Single Than Men

Single women and men don't just experience finances differently — they experience singledom differently.

Overall, most singles report feeling content with their relationship status, even amid financial pressure. Nearly seven in 10 (68%) say they generally feel content most of the time, and many say being single gives them the freedom to manage and spend their money as they wish — underscoring that contentment and money stress often coexist.

Against that broader backdrop, clear gender differences emerge.

- **Despite higher reported financial anxiety, single women are more likely than single men to say they feel content being single** — revealing the distinction between emotional fulfillment and financial responsibility that many women actively navigate.

About one-third (32%) of single women report feeling content about their relationship status daily, compared to just 21% of single men.

- Beyond that, 31% of single women say they enjoy being single more than being in a relationship, compared to 26% of single men.

For many women, money isn't just about covering expenses — it's about protecting autonomy, future security and the freedom to build stability on their own terms.

How often do you experience the following?

	Overall Women	Overall Men
Feel content about my relationship status	32%	21%
Feel financial freedom to spend my money however I choose	29%	23%
Find myself worrying about money	23%	17%
Spend more as a single person because I don't have anyone to share costs with	15%	10%
Feel it makes financial security harder or more difficult to achieve	13%	8%
Feel like being single impacts my financial security	11%	9%
Feel like other people worry about my financial security because I am single	9%	5%
Feel overlooked by my friends who are in relationships	8%	9%

Daily attitudes toward money and singledom, by gender



Choosing Me: Women Are More Content Being Single Than Men

Nearly seven in 10 (65%) of all single respondents say they are single and not dating.

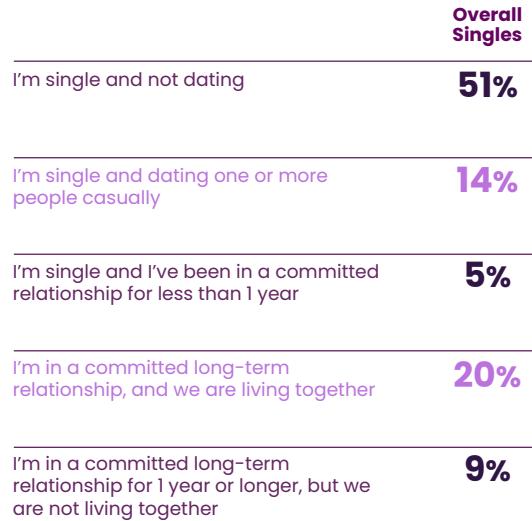
Almost four in 10 of single respondents (37%) say they've been single for 10 years or more.

- 29% have been single for one to three years, and 16% have been single for four to six years.

For how long have you been single?

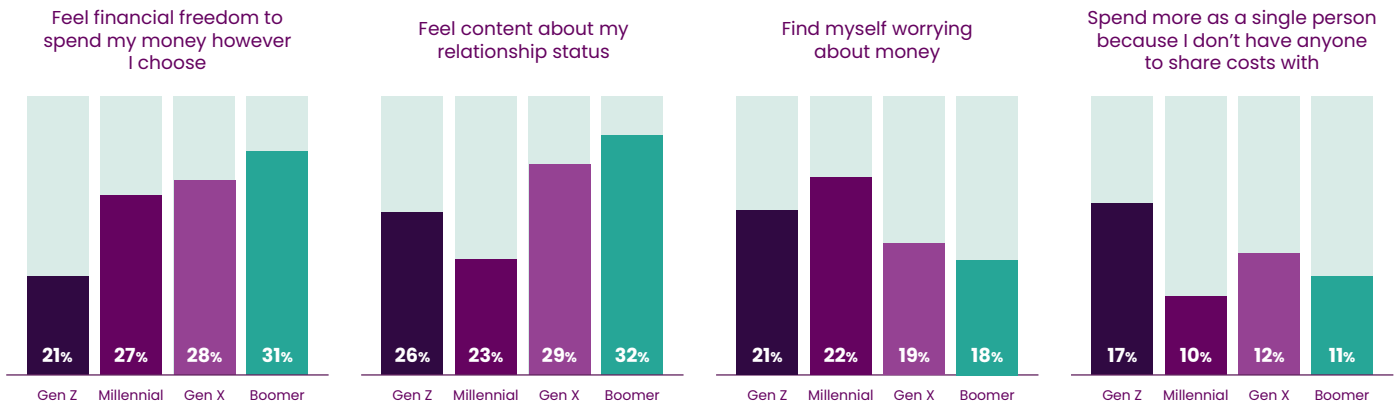


How would you describe your relationship status?



Full single sample here includes non-married, partnered respondents

How often do you experience the following? (% Daily)

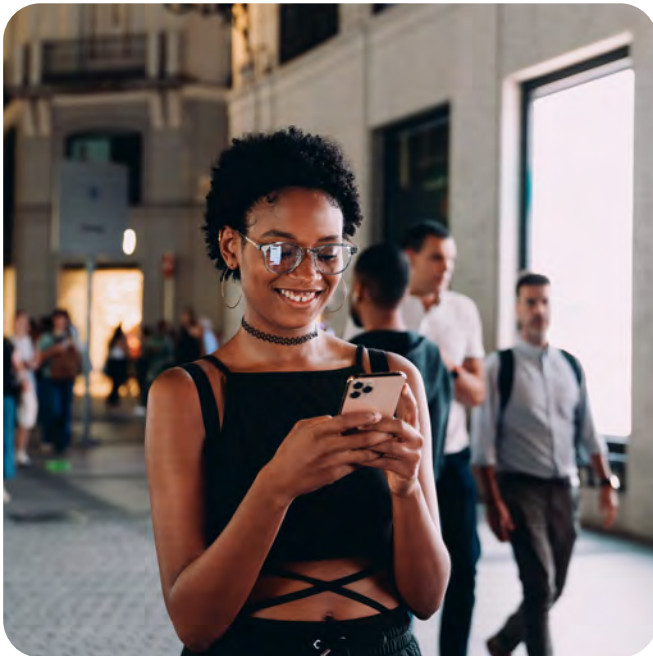




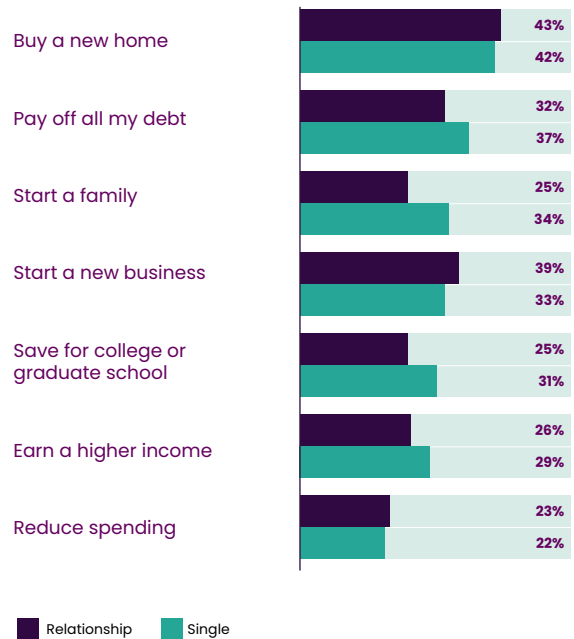
Choosing Me: Women Are More Content Being Single Than Men

At the same time, contentment does not necessarily mean financial ease.

- **Two in five singles (42%) say they feel confident about achieving their financial goals**, compared to 48% of those in relationships.
- Singles are more likely to say certain milestones — such as paying off debt or building long-term savings — feel harder to achieve without shared income or cost-sharing.



Ability to achieve financial goals (% Saying difficult)



These findings point to a clear emotional distinction: women are more likely than men to feel content being single, even as they remain attentive to their financial wellness and the realities of managing money independently.



The Myth That Romantic Partnership = Financial Safety

Romantic partnership is often associated with greater financial stability, but shared lives don't always translate to simpler finances.

Coupling can introduce cost-sharing, but it also ushers in new financial considerations — shifting where stress shows up rather than eliminating it entirely.

Across the findings, financial confidence among couples isn't dramatically higher than among singles, and in several areas, singles report comparable confidence managing day-to-day finances.

38% of coupled respondents say they're able to set aside money in savings each month, compared to 29% of singles.

Confidence around debt payment is relatively close:

- 54% of overall couples say they will be able to pay down their debt over time.
- 45% of overall singles say the same.

Beyond that, confidence paying monthly bills is significant across both groups, with 61% of couples and 51% of singles saying they pay their bills without issue every month.

Only a small share of respondents in both groups say their expenses feel "out of control," including 9% of those in relationships and 12% of singles.

Thinking about your personal finances, please rate your agreement with the statements below (% Agree)

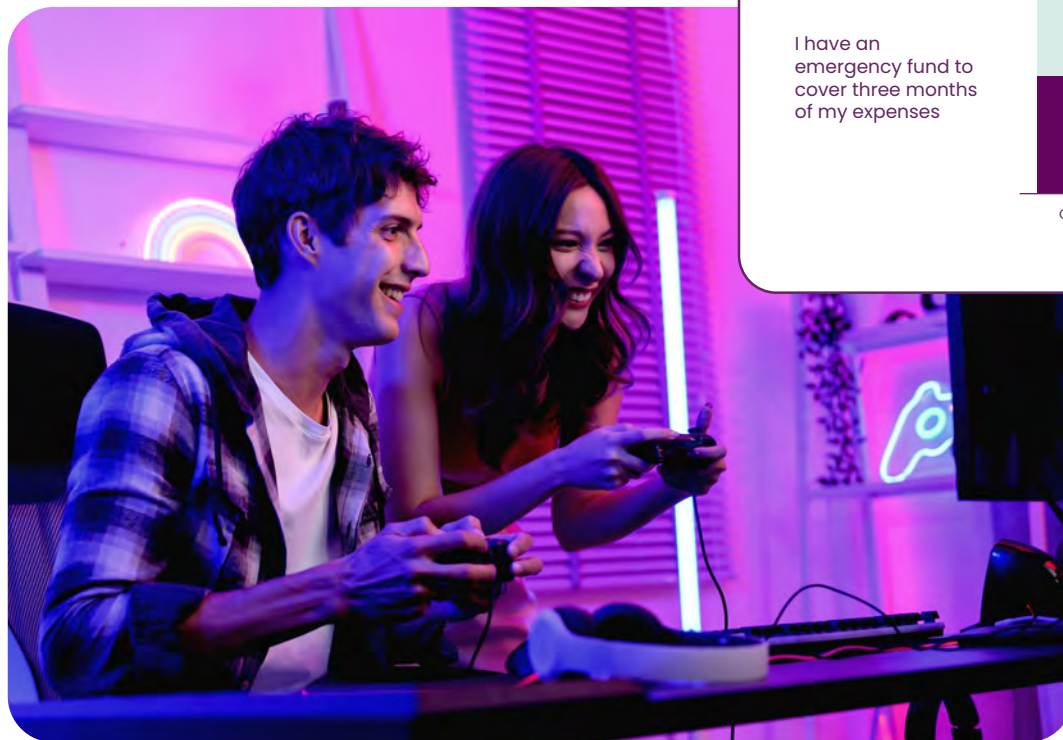
	Overall	Relationship	Single
I pay bills on time each month without any issues	57%	61%	51%
I will be able to pay off or pay down my debt over time	50%	54%	45%
I am able to set aside money in savings each month	34%	38%	29%
My expenses are out of control	11%	9%	12%



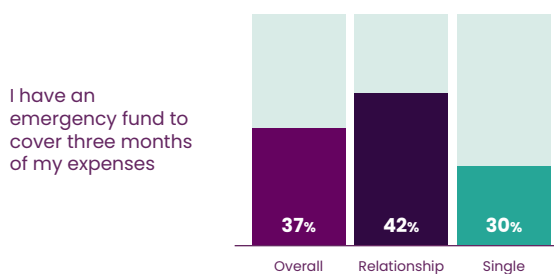
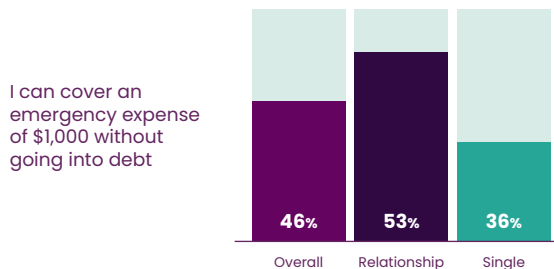
The Myth That Romantic Partnership = Financial Safety

Emergency preparedness shows a wider gap — illustrating how differences in income and savings can affect how easily unplanned costs are managed:

- 53% of couples can cover a \$1,000 emergency without debt, compared to 36% of singles.
- 42% of couples have an emergency fund covering three months of expenses, while almost a third (30%) of singles do.



Thinking about your personal finances, please rate your agreement with the statements below (% Agree)





The Myth That Romantic Partnership = Financial Safety

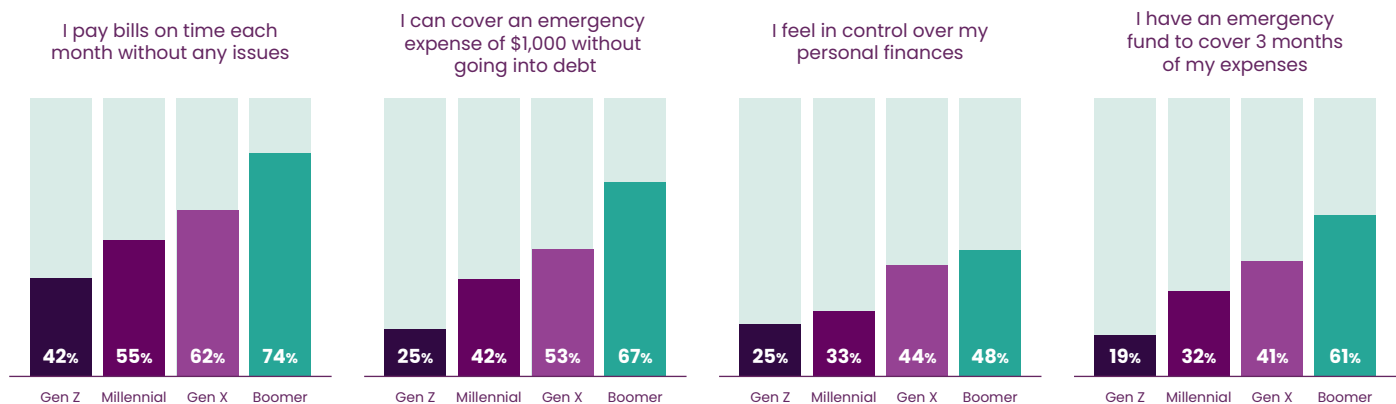
Regardless of relationship status, Gen Z is the generation least likely to be prepared for an emergency expense — reflecting broader challenges in building financial safety nets early in adulthood:

- About one-fifth of Gen Z (19%) has a three-month emergency fund, compared to 32% of millennials, 41% of Gen X and 61% of boomers.
- Similarly, 25% of Gen Z can cover a \$1,000 emergency expense, compared to 42% of millennials, 53% of Gen X and 67% of boomers.

Romantic partnership can offer certain financial buffers, but it doesn't guarantee ease.

Money stress often persists — simply taking different forms — underscoring that long-term financial confidence is shaped less by relationship status and more by money mindfulness, day-to-day habits and values-aligned decisions.

Thinking about your personal finances, please rate your agreement with the statements below (% Agree)



Ally supports people where money intersects with life — helping them build confident, values-based money wellness habits, with or without a plus-one.

Survey Methodology: To understand how financial attitudes and pressures vary by relationship status, we surveyed nearly 2,000 consumers from a census-balanced general population sample. Consumers were categorized as single if they were not married or living with a partner, and as in a relationship if they were married or living with a partner.