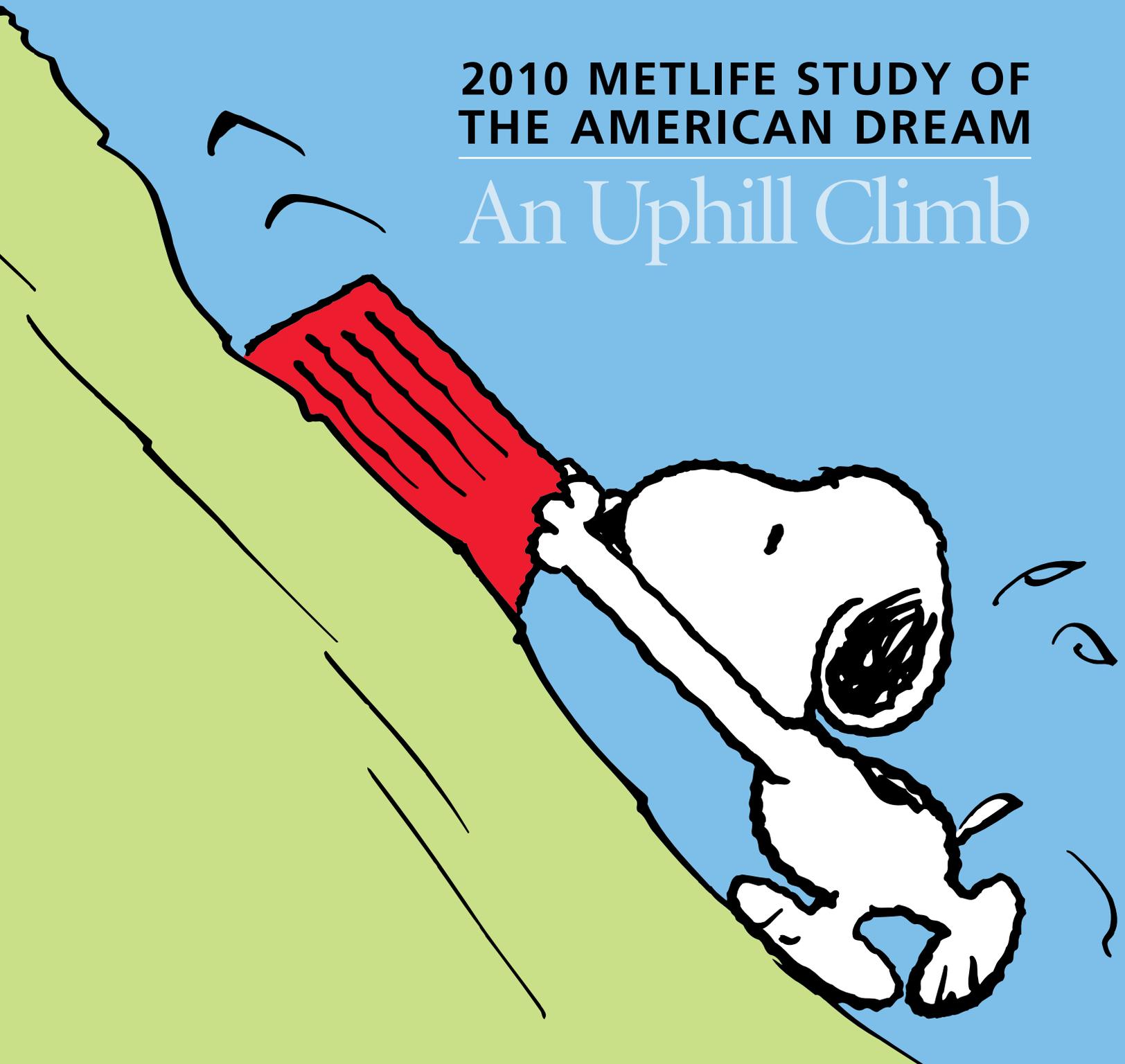


**MetLife**

**2010 METLIFE STUDY OF  
THE AMERICAN DREAM**

*An Uphill Climb*



## INTRODUCTION

Nearly two years after the start of the financial crisis, the *2010 MetLife Study of the American Dream* delves deep into the numerous factors working for and against most Americans as they push for a recovery that, for many, seems years away. One-third of Americans believe that the U.S. economy will be better in 2010 and 41% say that it will be the same as it was in 2009, suggesting that they believe the economy has bottomed out. The same could be said for Americans' personal financial situation, with the highest percentage of people (41%) saying it will stay the same in 2010.

While the economy may no longer be getting worse, increased pressures at work, concerns over job loss and the lack of a financial safety net have combined to make Americans pessimistic about when they will enjoy a personal recovery: two-thirds believe that a full recovery of the U.S. economy is still three or more years away.

This is not for lack of effort. Americans are doing all that they can to improve their household's financial situation. They are working harder than ever, with 56% taking on more responsibility at work. At the same time, nearly three in four are spending less. Surprisingly, a significant number of Americans are helping those who may not be able to help themselves – even though they may also be teetering on the financial brink. In fact, 64% of Americans have given or received help from family members.

**55% could not take care of expenses for more than two months.**

Despite these sacrifices and concrete steps to improve their personal financial situations, many Americans still find themselves perilously close to financial ruin should they lose their job: 55% could not take care of expenses for more than two months.

With many Americans stretched and stressed, one might expect individuals to recalibrate their expectations and redefine success in less material terms. However, while behaviors have changed out of necessity (i.e., saving more and spending less), for the most part expectations still run high.

Take, for example, that 58% of Americans still believe that the bar is constantly rising in terms of the basic necessities in life. Or that one in three feel pressure to buy more and better possessions. And the American dream, that concept of aspiration and success, seems to get further away for many. In fact, since the first *Study of the American Dream* in 2006, Americans' personal expectations of the dream have increased. Most Americans are putting a greater emphasis on marriage, family and children, but expectations have also increased for financial security and a comfortable

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retirement. Even more surprising is that expectations were not scaled back for any of the seven most important components of the dream, including home ownership and a successful career. Given this, it's no surprise that close to three-quarters of Americans are pessimistic about achieving the dream because of obstacles they face.

With most Americans raising their expectations, working harder, changing their habits and still not seeing an immediate recovery, it's understandable that Americans are feeling stressed. Forty-five percent of Americans say that concerns about how they are going to "make ends meet" are keeping them up at night.

**Only 34% of Americans feel like they have an adequate personal safety net, but 77% say they are taking action to build one.**

Given this stress to make ends meet, combined with the worry of job loss and the deeper impact to many Americans' financial situation, it's clear that a strong safety net is more important than ever. At this point in time, only 34% of Americans feel like they have an adequate personal safety net, but 77% say they are taking action to build one. Of course, having a safety net is a practical benefit, defined by Americans as a cash cushion, strong retirement savings and protection products like health, auto and life insurance. But, it's also linked to the American dream. In fact, those who consider themselves to have a safety net are twice as likely to feel like they've achieved the dream as those who do not (57% vs. 24%). With these results in mind, it seems that building a financial safety net for our families is an important prerequisite for Americans to be firmly on the road to recovery.

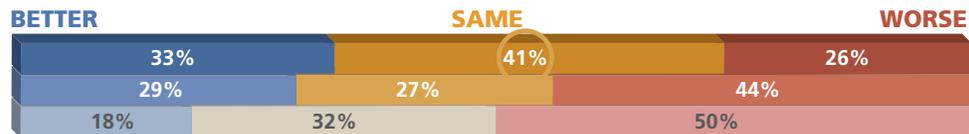
**THE U.S. ECONOMY HAS BOTTOMED OUT, RECOVERY THREE YEARS OR MORE AWAY**

Results from the 2010 MetLife Study of the American Dream suggest that Americans believe the U.S. economy and their personal financial situations may have bottomed out. One-third (33%) of Americans believe that the U.S. economy will be better in 2010 than it was in 2009, with 41% feeling that the economy will be the same and only 26% believing it will be worse in 2010 versus 2009. That is a significant change from last year's response where most people (44%) believed the economy would be worse. On a personal level that feeling is about the same, but with results showing a flip-flop has occurred from last year to now. Instead of 41% feeling their personal financial situation will improve and 33% saying it will stay the same in 2009, now 35% of Americans are saying their situation will improve with the highest percentage of people (41%) saying it will stay the same in 2010. As for a recovery, two-thirds of Americans believe it is still three or more years away.

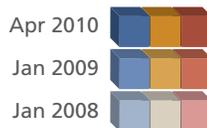
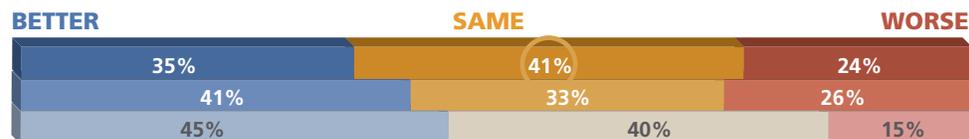
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41% feeling that the economy and their personal financial situation will be the same this year

Do you expect the U.S. economy to be better, worse or about the same in 2010 than it was in 2009?



Do you expect your personal situation to be better, worse or about the same in 2010 than it was in 2009?



**AMERICANS ARE TREATING THEIR FINANCIAL PROBLEMS**

Having spent much of the last two years managing their lives around the recession's impact by doing many of the things that they are "supposed" to be doing – spending less, saving more and working harder – some Americans are finding their personal situations are still not improving. Expected tangible results remain elusive due to the depth of the hole many Americans found themselves in when the recession hit – and still find themselves in today.

### WORKING DIFFERENTLY...AND HARDER

At work, Americans are continuing to see the impact of the economic downturn as they cope with the residual effects of layoffs over the past two years. Those who are employed are doing what they can, and would be willing to do more. Fifty-six percent have taken on more responsibility at work due to cutbacks in staffing. Over four in ten (42%) believe they are working as hard as or harder than their parents did. And, 68% said they would be willing to take a 10% pay cut if it meant there would not be layoffs at their company.

68

68% said they would be willing to take a 10% pay cut if it meant there would not be layoffs at their company

### WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO?

To achieve or sustain the American dream for you and your family, which of the following would you be willing to do? Please select all that apply.

	% All Respondents
Take a job for which I'm overqualified	47
Take a pay cut	24
Relocate	31
Change industries	36
Start my own business	32
Go back to school	36
Get additional job training	45
Others	1
None of the above	17

### CHANGING THEIR HABITS

Americans are making significant behavioral changes to fix their personal balance sheets. Nearly three in four are spending less than last year. Nine in ten (93%) have, or plan to, save more and spend less. Fifty-six percent have or plan to pay more attention to their employers' benefits offerings and 40% have become more focused on establishing a financial plan as a result of the current economic situation. Many are even making better decisions regarding their health as a result of the economic downturn – 44% report eating better and 42% say they are exercising more.

**FINANCIAL BEHAVIORAL CHANGES AND FUTURE STEPS**

What steps have you or will you take towards securing your financial future as a result of the current economic situation in this country?

40

40% have become more focused on establishing a financial plan as a result of the current economic situation

	% All Respondents	
	% Taken Step	% Plan to Take Step
Saving more and spending less	64	29
Rethinking my priorities in life	61	24
Becoming more focused on making a financial plan	40	41
Becoming more educated on financial topics	37	39
Taking on difficult adult concerns sooner than prior generations have had to	37	30
Reconnecting with old friends	33	31
Reviewing my retirement savings plan	31	37
Paying more attention to my employers' benefits offerings (or benefits at the workplace)	27	29
Delaying major life events such as buying a home, getting married and/or having children	26	17
Re-evaluating my life insurance needs	21	34
Rebalancing my investment portfolio	21	29
Turning to my parents or relatives for financial help	18	9
Meeting with my financial advisor	17	22

## AMERICANS STRETCHED TO MAKE ENDS MEET

In the past two years have you had to take on more responsibility at work due to cutbacks in staffing?

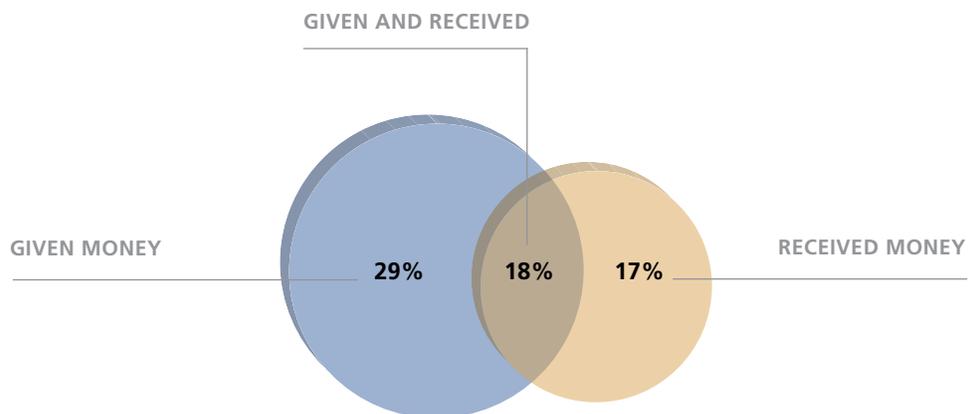


How has your household spending changed in the last year?



## “FAMILY NET”: A BLESSING AND A BURDEN

A person-to-person financial system is emerging between family members turning to each other for financial support, which can be a silver lining and a financial burden at the same time. Nearly half of Americans (47%) say they have given money to a family member in the past year so they can pay their bills, and more than one-third (35%) have had a family member give them money in the past year. Interestingly, this cycle of giving and receiving seems to be boosting the dream – according to the study, those who gave money to others were 23% more likely to feel that they have achieved the dream (38% vs. 31%).



Most of those who have received money from a family member are in dire financial straits. Six in ten (61%) of those who have received money are unlikely to be able to afford their financial obligations for more than a month, compared to 36% of those who have not received money. Over half (54%) of those who have received financial assistance from their families have credit card debt, and 63% are concerned about making ends meet (versus 36% who have not received money).

Surprisingly, many of those who have given money to a family member are struggling financially themselves. “Family givers” are more likely to have credit card debt and be concerned by it than are non-givers. Additionally, nearly half (48%) of family givers are concerned about making ends meet, and 47% could only meet their financial obligations for one month if they were to lose their job. Reflective of Americans’ desire to place greater importance on their personal relationships, many are risking their own long-term financial security and stretching themselves even further in order to help one another get by.

**THE BANDAGES HAVEN’T STOPPED THE BLEEDING**

Despite their efforts – working harder, spending less, leveraging the “family net” – Americans are still at a financial stalemate due to their lack of an “income cushion.” While their new “frugality” has helped a little bit, most are living precariously close to financial ruin. Nearly six in ten (59%) are living paycheck to paycheck, and almost half (47%) have credit card debt they don’t pay off in full each month. Of those, 19% expect they will always have some credit card debt.

For how long could you afford to be out of work and still meet your financial obligations?

59

Nearly six in ten are living paycheck to paycheck

	% All Respondents
<b>A month or less</b>	<b>45</b>
Less than 2 weeks	19
2 weeks to a month	26
2 to 3 months	20
<b>Less than 3 months</b>	<b>65</b>
4–6 months	15
7 months to a year	8
More than a year	12

At the workplace, unfortunately, their efforts have not translated into a sense of job security: more than half (55%) of Americans are still concerned about job loss. Their concerns are real, considering that 65% say that if they were to lose their job, they could only meet their financial obligations for less than three months. Almost two in ten (19%) could only meet them for two weeks or less. Consistent with the *2009 Study of the American Dream*, most (61%) are also concerned about losing their home in the event of a job loss, and 56% are concerned about going into bankruptcy in the event of a job loss.

**A SELF-PRESCRIBED TREADMILL: AMERICANS FEEL LIKE THE BAR IS RISING**

Given the fact that Americans are feeling stretched financially and emotionally, it would seem logical to assume that Americans may be taking a “step back” and

recalibrating their expectations to adapt to current realities. Yet, expectations remain high. According to the Study more than half (58%) of Americans continue to raise the bar when it comes to the basic necessities in life, and three in ten (29%) report that the pressure they feel to buy more and better material possessions is now greater than before.

#### What does the “American dream” mean to you today? Showing top 3 choices.

	% All Respondents			
	Apr 10	Jan 09	Jan 08	Nov 06
Financial security	65	66	62	59
Family/children	58	56	47	42
Free from want, my basic needs are met	43	45	42	43
Comfortable retirement	36	38	35	31
Home ownership	35	35	35	35
Successful career	31	29	27	28
Marriage	29	27	17	21
Others	03	03	05	04

65

While still defined as financial security, and by increasing numbers of people (65% in 2010 versus 59% in 2006), the American dream is becoming even more challenging

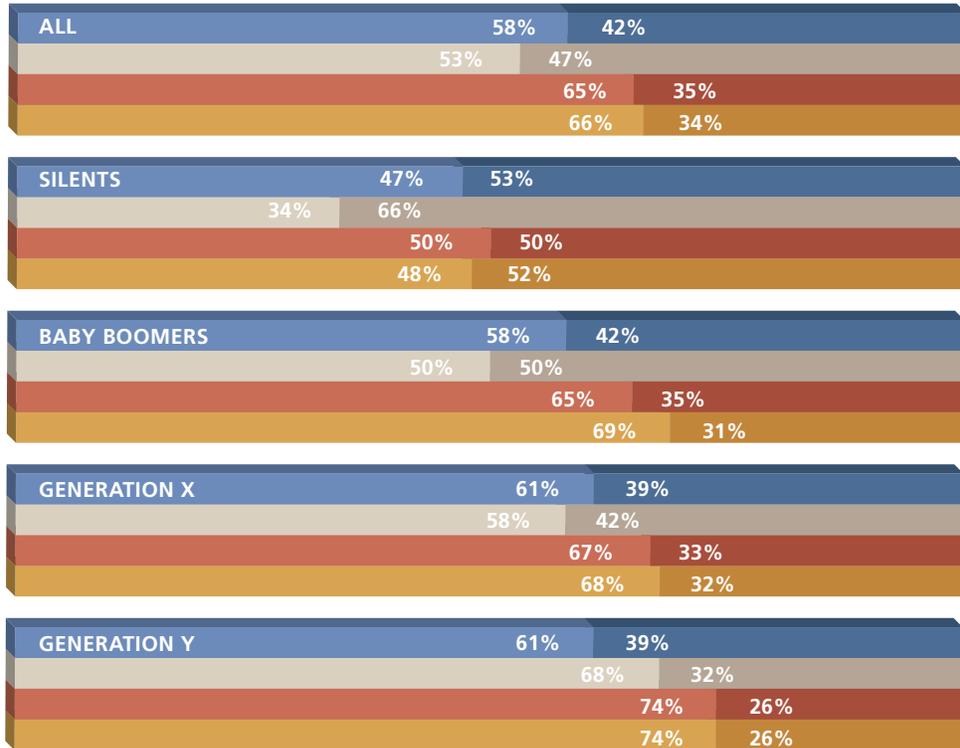
While still defined primarily as financial security, and by increasing numbers of people (65% in 2010 versus 59% in 2006), the American dream is becoming even more challenging to achieve as their expectations for what they can and should secure to achieve it remain in line with realities of the past, prior to the recession, when people always expected the next year to be better. In fact, not one component of the dream went down since MetLife began the Study in 2006, and four went up including family/children (by the highest percentage), financial security, marriage and a comfortable retirement. The significant effort that Americans are putting into fixing their personal financial situation combined with rising expectations may be causing a significant amount of angst for many Americans – and some may be approaching burnout as a result.

**Expectations of the dream are on the rise: not one component of the dream went down since 2006, and four went up.**

This “treadmill” effect leads those who believe they have not yet achieved the dream to feel “behind” or “off track” – while those who feel they have achieved the dream are desperately trying to stay on and avoid falling behind. Consistent with the 2009 study, one-third (34%) of Americans feel they have achieved the American dream, and 70% believe it’s possible for them to achieve the American dream in their lifetime. Of those who believe they have achieved it, 43% are concerned about losing it.

**BAR RISING – BY GENERATION**

Which of the following is closer to your view?



“I feel like the bar is constantly rising in terms of the basic necessities of life”  
 Apr 2010  
 Jan 2009  
 Jan 2008  
 Nov 2006

“I already have what I need; the necessities in my life will always remain constant”  
 Apr 2010  
 Jan 2009  
 Jan 2008  
 Nov 2006

**BOOMERS, SILENTS MOST SUSCEPTIBLE TO BEING “LEFT BEHIND”**

Older, and wealthier, Americans – who also happen to feel they are the closest to achieving the American dream – are having a difficult time coming to grips with the reality of their current situation. They are not recalibrating their expectations, and demonstrate significant concern over backsliding. Sixty-seven percent of Boomers still believe that the American dream equates to financial security, an increase from 60% in 2006, and 69% of Silents agree. Nearly six in ten (58%) Boomers, and 47% of Silents, continue to believe that the bar is constantly rising in terms of the basic necessities in life, up from 50% and 34%, respectively, in 2009.

Furthermore, fewer Boomers say they’ve achieved the dream this year than in years past – 34% vs. 40% in both 2009 and 2008 – and optimism that they will achieve the dream in their lifetime is down 6% from 2009. This, combined with the stress they feel over the continued need to “keep up with the Joneses,” is leading older Americans to believe there is more risk to their family’s future than in the past.

## A DIFFERENT DREAM FOR SOME

Either frustrated by the seemingly never-ending pursuit of more and better material possessions, or out of financial necessity, some are recalibrating what it means to achieve the American dream. According to the Study, nearly nine in ten (87%) Americans say the current economic environment has caused them to reevaluate their priorities and place more emphasis on personal relationships, and 77% say that for them, achieving the American dream is about improving the quality of their lives by strengthening personal relationships. Fifty-eight percent of Americans say they define the dream as family and children, up from 42% in 2006, and two thirds have, or plan to, reconnect with old friends.

## DREAM ELASTICITY

“Dream elasticity” – i.e., the desire/ability of Americans to redefine the dream in new, personal and more achievable terms – is related to the age of the person and his/her income. The groups least likely to say they have achieved the American dream – Generation Y (26%) and those with lower incomes (25%) – are leading this change. Once known as a coddled generation whose every move was influenced and monitored by “helicopter parents,” coming of age during periods of crisis has had a significant influence on the expectations that Generation Y has for themselves and their families. They seem to understand how fleeting wealth can be, with the past 10 years of their lives bookended by recessions. And they appear eager to make their mark in the world, despite the fact that many remain unemployed. Therefore it’s not surprising that while just 26% of Generation Y says they have achieved the dream, 95% believe it’s possible to achieve the dream in their lifetime, and this cohort alone feels like the bar has stopped rising.

According to the *2010 MetLife Study of the American Dream*, two thirds of Generation Y – more than any other cohort – say they define the American dream as family and children. They’re also less materialistic, with 39% saying they already have what they need, and the necessities in life will remain constant – up from 32% in 2009 and 26% in 2008. Most significantly, among Generation Y the number who feel growing pressure to buy more and better material possessions has dropped almost 20 percentage points since 2006 (from 66% to 47%).

## THE BUILD UP OF STRESS

With the significant stress of trying to resuscitate their personal balance sheet, coupled with most people raising their expectations, it’s not surprising that 45% of Americans say that concerns about how they are going to “make ends meet” is keeping them up at night. On top of these stresses, only 34% of Americans consider themselves to have an adequate safety net. Of those who do not have a safety net, 95% are very or somewhat concerned about this. While they don’t have a safety net, they do have credit card debt, and one-quarter (26%) say that credit card debt concerns are keeping them up at night. And while steady work and a paycheck that goes with it helps combat those financial stresses, it is also causing anxiety for most Americans. Compared with two years ago, 52% report being more stressed about performing all the tasks their job requires.



**77%** say that for them, achieving the American dream is about improving the quality of their lives

**MOVING FORWARD, ADDING SAFETY**

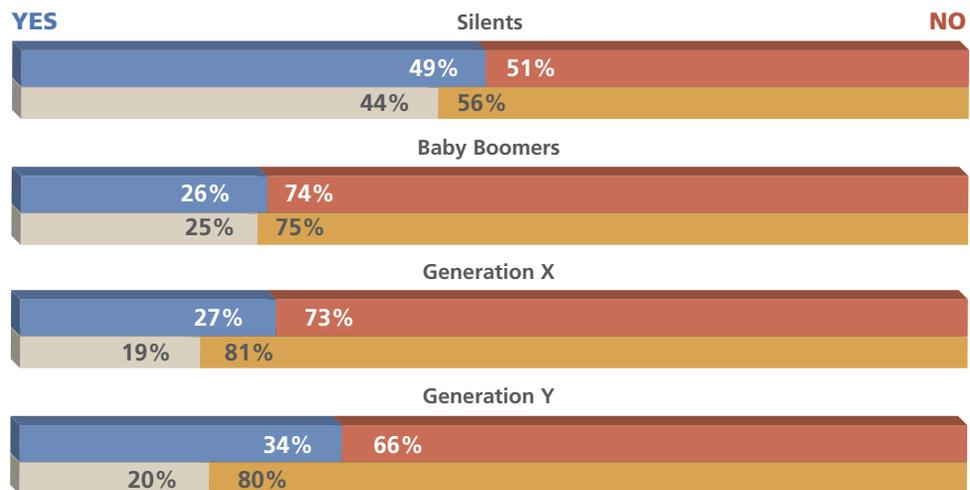
The American dream of the past – one focused on financial outcomes – may be unsustainable moving forward. With no quick fix in sight to end the stresses at work and home, high levels of debt and fears of foreclosure and bankruptcy, a recalibration of expectations around what it means to achieve the dream may result in a stronger, happier population. And, if Americans adjust their views of reality, a new normal may emerge rather than just behavioral changes out of necessity that could easily revert back to old behaviors.

**People who reported having a safety net are twice as likely to feel they've achieved the American dream.**

Until then, this painful sense of weariness and fatigue may continue because the story Americans are telling themselves hasn't changed to reflect current realities. Without shifting their values, many Americans may be putting themselves at the mercy of the economy and other external forces – with uncertain consequences.

**FEW HAVE SAFETY NET**

Do you feel that you have an adequate safety net?



Apr 2010  
Jan 2009

In light of the deterioration of traditional safety nets (and only 34% feeling that they've built their own safety net), building a personal safety net could also relieve some of the stress. A safety net, according to those polled in the past, would include automobile insurance, health insurance, life insurance, homeowners insurance, retirement savings and a cash cushion. Americans who have an adequate personal safety net are twice as likely to feel that they have achieved the dream as those who

do not (57% vs. 24%), demonstrating that a safety net is just as much emotional as practical. With six in ten Americans feeling pressure to provide financial security for themselves and their families, it's encouraging that three in four (77%) of Americans say they are taking action to create their own personal safety net.

**Americans think that ending wars overseas and increased consumer spending will jump-start the economy.**

### WHAT GOVERNMENT CAN DO FOR AMERICANS

Americans are no longer expecting to rely on the government for financial security. In fact, many Americans (45%) think that the recently-passed healthcare reform will actually make it harder for them to achieve, or sustain, the American dream. Popular changes Americans believe the government could make to help them achieve the American dream are tax reform, deficit reduction and regulatory reform. And to jump-start the economy, Americans favor the ending of wars overseas and increased consumer spending over government-sponsored options like an economic stimulus package.

### JUMP-STARTING THE ECONOMY

Aside from job creation, which of the following do you think would help jump-start the economy the most?

	% All Respondents
Ending wars overseas	27
Increased consumer spending	24
Economic stimulus package	16
Growth in the stock market	9
Healthcare reform	6
Increased home prices	4
Others	8
None of the above	6

### DEMOGRAPHIC SEGMENTS

#### Middle Class in Fast Pursuit of the Dream

The middle class, defined as those aged 25-44 with a household income of \$35,000 to \$100,000, is in fast pursuit of the American dream. And while they are more materialistic than other groups – 41% of the middle class say that they think the pressure is greater than ever to buy more and better material possessions, versus 29% of Americans overall – they are willing to work hard to get what they want. The middle class is more disposed than other Americans to try new strategies to achieve the American dream, including a willingness to relocate (43% vs. 31% overall), get additional job training (58% vs. 45% overall), and go back to school (47% vs. 36%

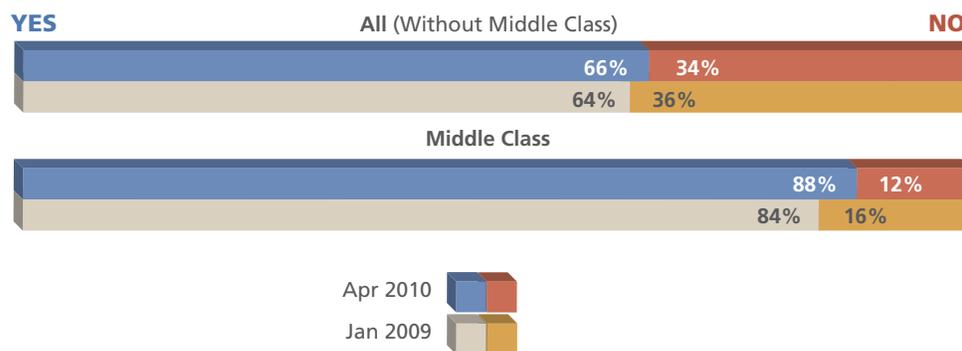
41

41% of middle class say the pressure to buy material possessions is greater than ever

overall). In addition, 80% said the current economic situation in this country has caused them to reevaluate their priorities in life and place greater importance on their relationships rather than material possessions.

**DREAM OPTIMISM: MIDDLE CLASS VS. GENERAL POPULATION**

**IF HAVEN'T ACHIEVED:** Do you think it is possible for you to achieve the "American dream" in your lifetime?



This willingness may be due to their optimism about achieving the dream; 88% of the middle class say that they think it's possible to achieve the American dream in their lifetime, versus 70% of all Americans. And only 7% of the middle class says that they don't think they will ever achieve an adequate personal safety net, significantly lower than the 21% of Americans overall who say the same. So while the middle class may be farther away than other Americans from achieving the dream, they are committed to putting in the time and effort to get there.

**WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO? MIDDLE CLASS VS. GENERAL POPULATION**

To achieve or sustain the American dream for you and your family, which of the following would you be willing to do? Please select all that apply.

	% All Respondents	% Middle Class
Take a job for which I'm overqualified	47	54
Take a pay cut	24	27
Relocate	31	43
Change industries	36	46
Start my own business	32	42
Go back to school	36	47
Get additional job training	45	58
Others	1	?
None of the above	17	6

**FINDINGS BY GENERATION**

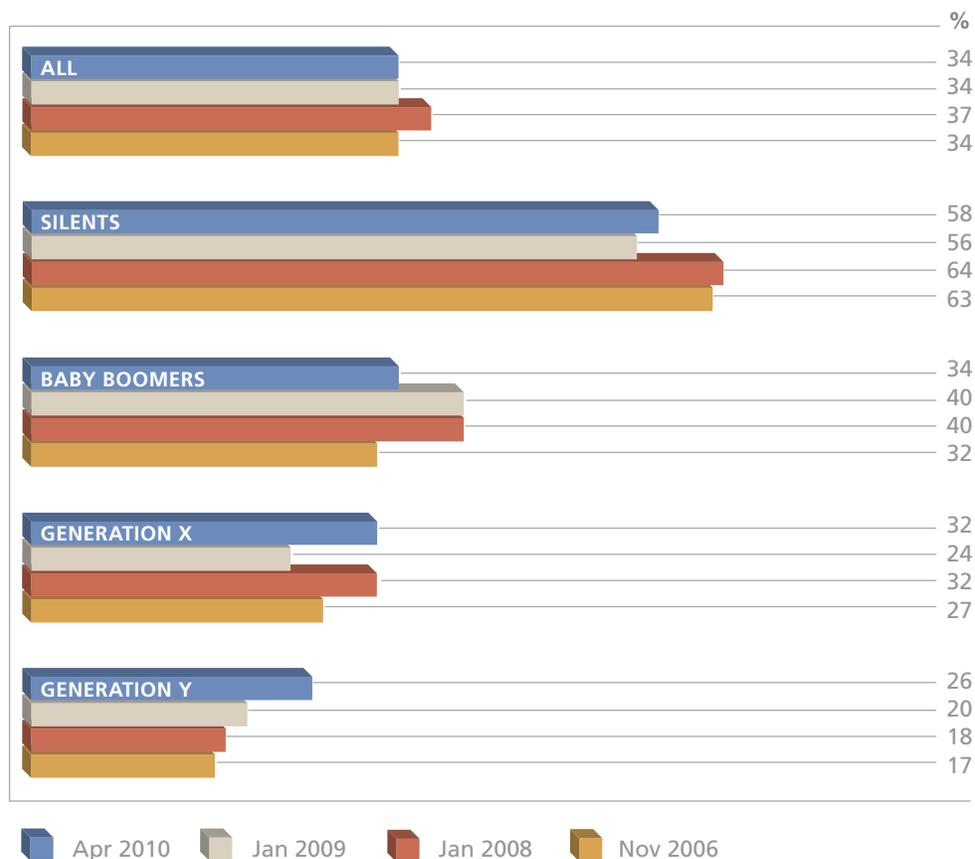
**Silents Return to Work for Stimulation...And Often Necessity**

Among all Americans, the Silent generation is the most likely to say that they have achieved the dream (58% vs. 34% overall). Financial security and a comfortable retirement are keys to the dream for Silents. Interestingly, while 38% of the Silent generation has left the workforce voluntarily but has since returned to work, they are equally as likely to say their reason for returning is for happiness and stimulation as inadequate savings. Four in ten (43%) of Silents say they returned to work, or are seeking to return to work, because their savings were not adequate to live on, 29% say it's because additional, unexpected expenses occurred, and 41% of Silents are returning to work because they were not happy/stimulated in retirement.

However, economic concerns weigh heavily on Silents, just like they do on all other generations. Two in ten (21%) are concerned about making ends meet, and more than half (51%) don't have an adequate personal safety net. Of those, 35% don't believe they will ever achieve a personal safety net. Silents say that living paycheck to paycheck (49%), paying off mortgage (41%) and having credit card debt (38%), are the top three things standing in the way of their achieving a personal safety net.

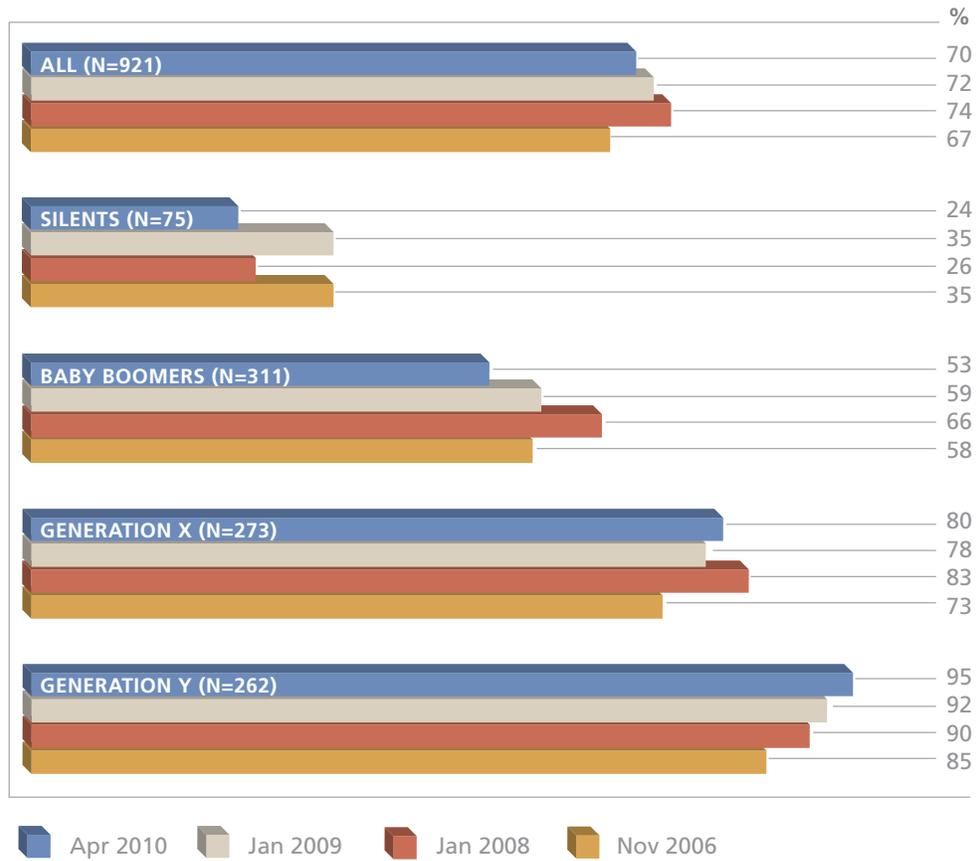
**DREAM ACHIEVEMENT BY GENERATION**

Do you think you have achieved the American dream? % say Yes



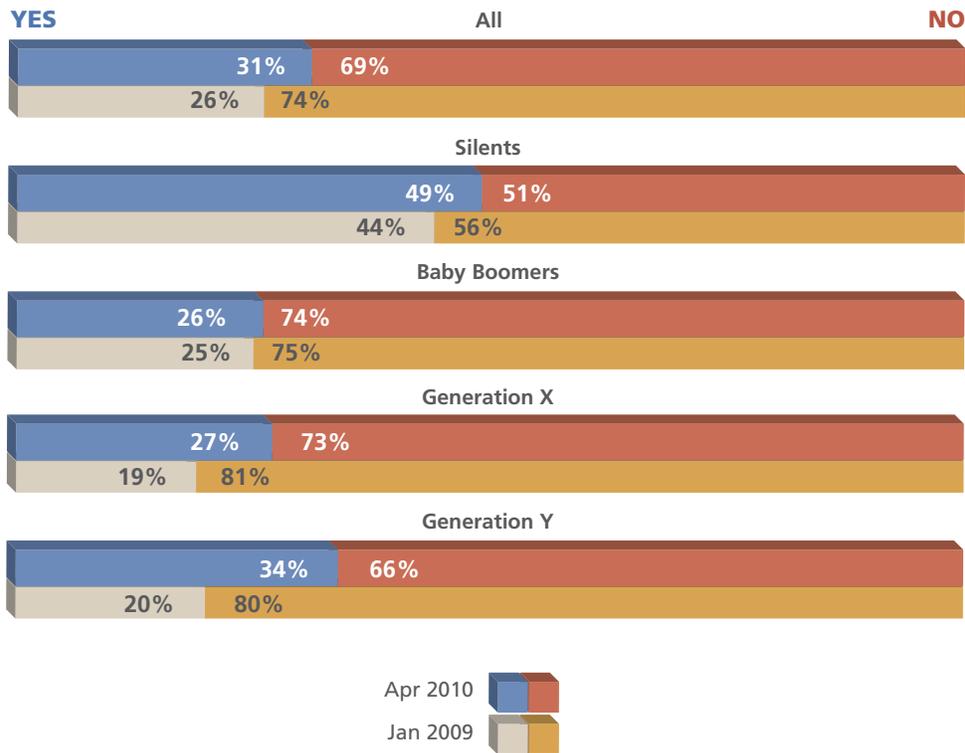
**DREAM OPTIMISM BY GENERATION**

IF HAVEN'T ACHIEVED: Do you think it is possible for you to achieve the "American dream" in your lifetime? % say Yes



### SAFETY NET ACHIEVEMENT BY GENERATION

Do you feel that you currently have an adequate safety net?



### RETURNING TO WORK TO STAY AFLOAT (SILENTS)

IF VOLUNTARILY LEFT WORK, BUT RETURNED: Why did you decide to or are you seeking to return to work? Please select all that apply.

	% All N=463	% Silent N=67*
My savings were not enough to live on	46	43
Additional, unexpected expenses occurred	30	29
I need to help my children financially	23	8
I was not happy/stimulated in retirement	21	41
I needed access to employee benefits, such as health insurance	21	5
I needed to support my parents financially	10	1
Other	19	20

40

40% of Silents say they need to work since their savings are not enough

\* Denotes findings are directional due to small sample size.

**DEFINITION OF THE DREAM BY GENERATION**

What does the “American dream” mean to you today? Showing top 3 choices.

	% Silent	% Boomer	% Gen X	% Gen Y
	Apr 10 Jan 09 Jan 08 Nov 06			
Financial security	69 64 60 55	67 67 64 60	69 68 64 64	56 61 55 54
Family/children	51 50 54 35	54 53 37 41	57 62 54 43	66 59 48 51
Free from want, my basic needs are met	50 53 50 38	46 51 47 47	41 40 38 43	40 35 31 38
Comfortable retirement	59 62 49 55	46 45 45 34	28 29 27 24	19 21 18 13
Home ownership	32 26 33 28	33 35 34 38	38 38 37 38	34 39 37 34
Successful career	14 15 7 10	17 21 22 23	39 32 25 28	51 50 55 52
Marriage	25 26 17 22	31 23 15 17	24 27 18 22	31 32 19 26
Others	00 03 02 05	04 05 06 04	03 04 04 03	03 02 05 03

17

17% report being out of work and looking for employment

**Boomers on the Brink**

The recession has hit Boomers hard: nearly three-quarters (74%) do not feel they have an adequate personal safety net, and nearly all (97%) are somewhat or very concerned by this. Job loss, in particular, seems to have plagued Boomers, as 17% report being out of work and looking for employment. They also seem to have lost the optimism and idealism that have been their generation’s hallmarks: only 53% believe they will be able to achieve the American dream in their lifetime, and one-third (35%) don’t think they’ll ever be able to achieve an adequate personal safety net. And, an overwhelming majority of Boomers believe that there is more risk to their family’s financial future than in the past (80% vs. 70% overall). Yet despite this, Boomers continue to be generous, as half (49%) have given money to a family member in the past year so they can pay their bills.

Boomers are far behind the Silent generation in pursuit of the dream – whereas 58% of Silents say they have achieved the dream, just 34% of Boomers say the same. And while 46% of Boomers describe the American dream as a comfortable retirement, it looks like that is in jeopardy. Nearly three in 10 (29%) say they have either returned to work, or are looking to return to work, with over half (56%) citing that their savings were not enough to live on as the reason for their return. For a generation that seemingly were the ones to redefine retirement, there is now a question of when or even if they will retire.

### Generation X Steps Up

Generation X sets itself apart in two ways. First, GenXers are emerging as the “consumer” generation of today. Second, they are resilient and relatively optimistic. While pressure to buy material possessions remains relatively consistent for most generations, 34% of Generation X agree that the pressure they feel to buy more and better material possessions is greater than before, up from 29% in 2009. And, 61% of Generation Xers report feeling like the bar is constantly rising in terms of the basic necessities in life, an increase from 58% in 2009.

Despite this, Generation X is the only generation to be as optimistic about their personal financial situation this year as they were last year – 46% expect it to get better, vs. 35% overall. And almost on par with Boomers, 32% of GenXers say they’ve achieved the dream, up from 24% in 2009. Furthermore, 80% of GenXers believe it’s possible for them to achieve the dream, compared to 70% overall and just 53% of Boomers. Generation X, with a significant amount of time left in the workforce to both continue to spend and build their safety net, remains resilient and optimistic about their future.

### Generation Y Comes of Age

Coming of age and entering the workforce during one of the worst job markets in history has not dimmed the spirit of Generation Y, and they’re positioned to benefit from this optimism. Nearly all (95%) of Generation Y believe it’s possible for them to achieve the American dream in their lifetime, and more than half (51%) believe their work ethic will help them achieve it. More than any other generation, 66% of GenYers define the American dream as family/children first, ahead of financial security.

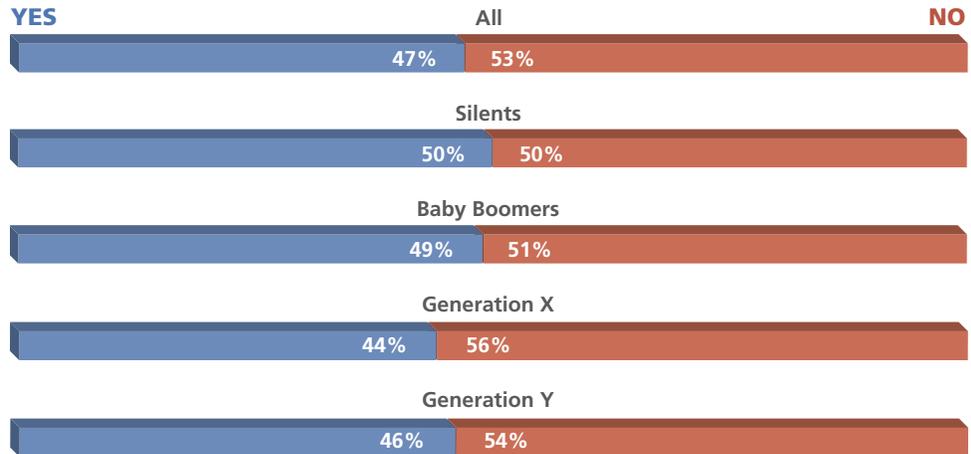
Generation Y is the only group that doesn’t feel that the bar is rising in terms of the basic necessities of life, which helps explain their optimism. And while 50% of Generation Y has been given money by a family member to help pay their bills, a surprisingly high 46% have also given money. Generation Y, long pegged as a coddled generation, appears to be coming of age.

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**61% of Generation Xers report feeling like the bar is constantly rising in terms of the basic necessities in life**

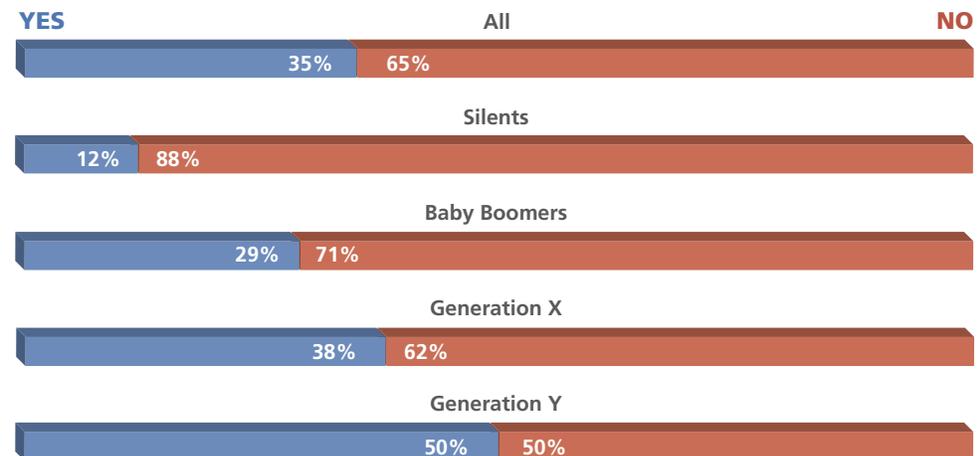
**GIVING TO FAMILY/BY GENERATION**

Have you given money to a family member in the past year so they can pay their bills?



**HAVE RECEIVED \$ FROM FAMILY/BY GENERATION**

Has a family member given you money in the past year to help you pay your bills?



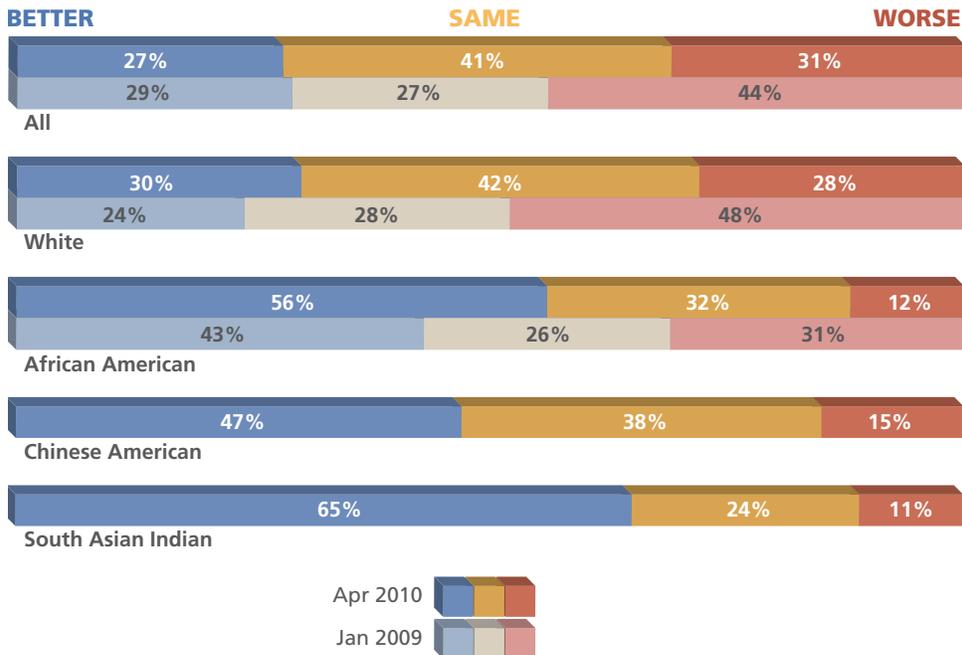
### Ethnic Groups

Though African Americans and Asian Americans are less likely than Caucasians to say that they've achieved the American dream, they're significantly more optimistic about their own personal financial recovery, economic recovery overall and ability to achieve the American dream. And while financial security dominates as the definition of the dream among all groups, Asian Americans are more likely to rank successful career higher than African Americans, who generally rank family/children higher.

Fifty-five percent of African Americans and 47% of Asian Americans expect their personal financial situation to be better in 2010 than it was in 2009, compared to 35% of the total population. Similarly, 56% of African Americans and 54% of Asian Americans, versus 33% of the total population, believe the U.S. economy will be better in 2010 than it was in 2009. Again, these ethnic groups are another example of a demographic that appears to be farther away than other Americans from believing they have achieved the dream, but it showcases their resiliency through their optimism about achieving the dream.

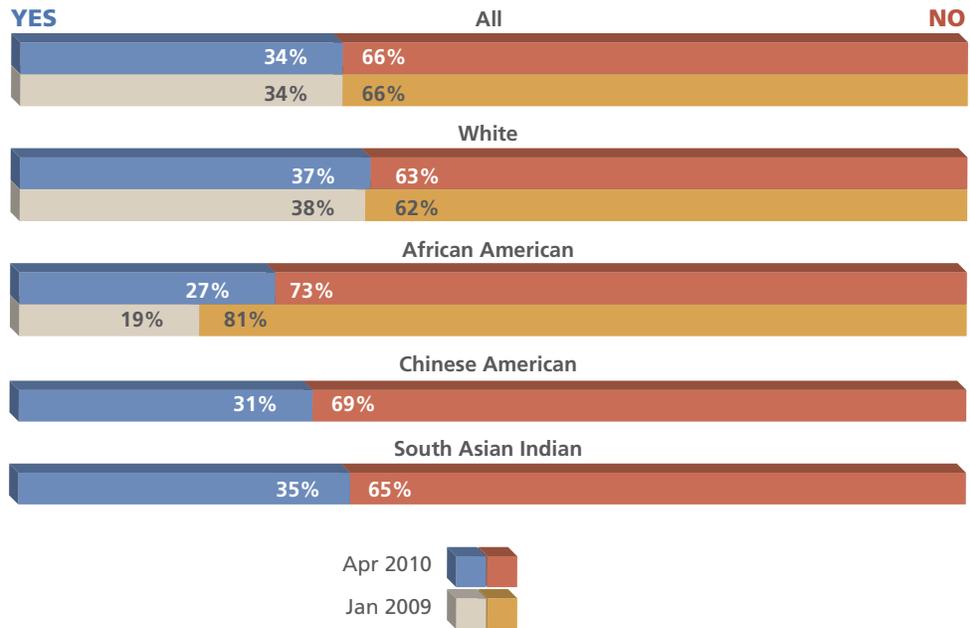
### ECONOMIC OUTLOOK BY ETHNICITY

Do you expect the U.S. economy to be better, worse or about the same in 2010 than it was in 2009?



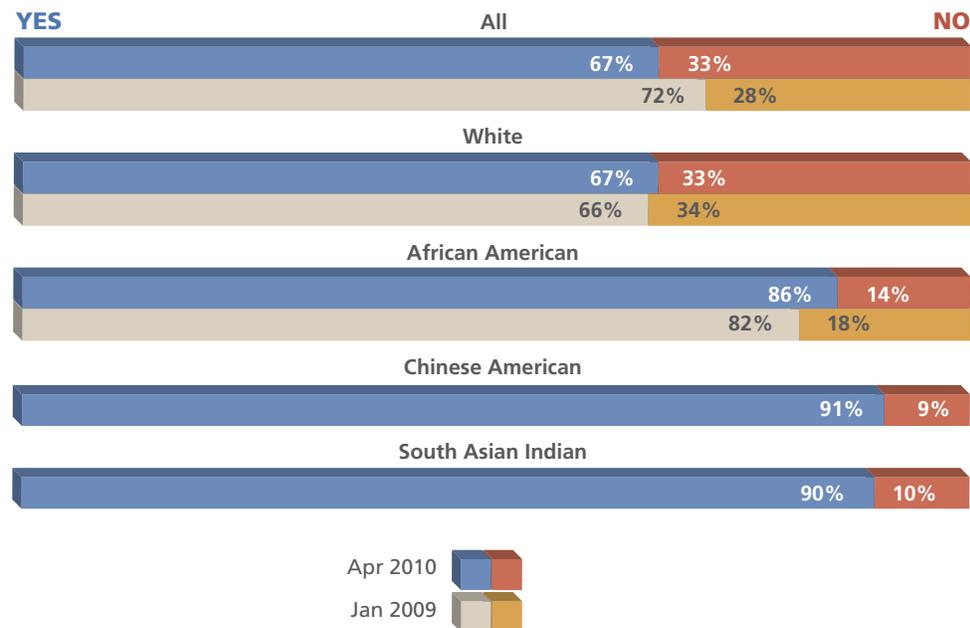
**DREAM ACHIEVEMENT BY ETHNICITY**

Do you think you have achieved the “American dream”?



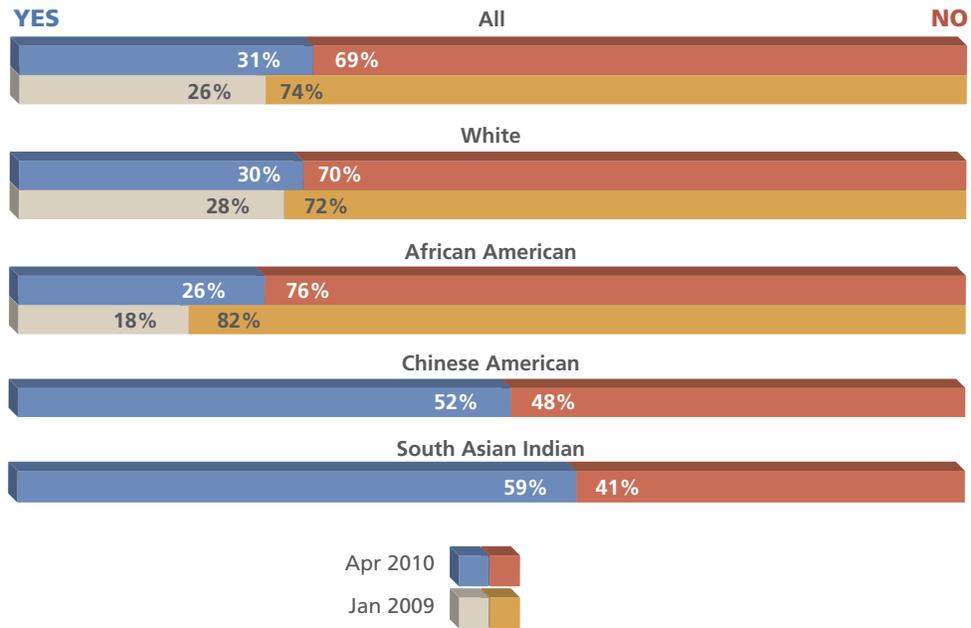
**DREAM OPTIMISM BY ETHNICITY**

IF HAVEN'T ACHIEVED: Do you think it is possible for you to achieve the “American dream” in your lifetime?



**SAFETY NET BY ETHNICITY**

Do you feel that you currently have an adequate safety net?



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**CONCLUSION**

MetLife's *2010 MetLife Study of the American Dream* finds that Americans are facing tremendous challenges. Their efforts over the past two-and-a-half years to cut spending and bring down debt, coupled with the stresses of pushing themselves hard at work and the worry of further job loss, has obviously been painful for many. Despite their best intentions and tremendous effort, Americans continue to believe there is more risk to their family's financial future than in the past.

At the same time, the bar continues to rise, leading for many to a catch-22 situation of soaring expectations and decreasing material wealth. However, most Americans are realizing the importance of a financial safety net and are taking action to build one to protect their family from financial ruin. A safety net, by their definition, would have the practical benefits of a cash cushion, retirement savings and protection products such as health, auto and life insurance. But, since those who have a safety net are twice as likely to feel like they've achieved the dream, they would also have the benefit of feeling that the American dream is alive and within their reach.

## METHODOLOGY

From April 14–21, 2010 Strategy First Partners in conjunction with Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates conducted 2,243 online surveys in the United States among the general population as part of the *2010 MetLife Study of the American Dream*. The following groups were surveyed:

	N-Size	Margin of Error %
U.S. General Population	1,402	+/- 2.52
Silent Generation Born between 1933 and 1945	178	+/- 7.31
Baby Boomers Born between 1946 and 1964	472	+/- 4.46
Generation X Born between 1965 and 1977	400	+/- 4.85
Generation Y Born between 1978 and 1994	353	+/- 5.17
African Americans	400	+/- 4.85
Chinese Americans	199	+/- 6.91
South Asian Indians	178	+/- 7.31
Middle Market Age 25–44, Household Income of \$35,000–\$100,000	665	+/- 3.74

Variable And Long-Term Care Products Are: • Not A Deposit Or Other Obligation  
Of Bank • Not FDIC-Insured • Not Insured By Any Federal Government Agency

Only Variable Annuity Products: • Not Guaranteed By Any Bank Or Credit Union  
• May Go Down In Value

Only Long-Term Care Products: • Not Issued, Guaranteed Or Underwritten  
By Bank Or FDIC • Not A Condition To The Provision Or Term Of Any Banking Service Or Activity  
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1006-2017

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