

Would Americans Rather Be Younger, Thinner, Richer or Smarter?

New York, N.Y. – August 26, 2010 – If you could be granted one wish to change something about yourself, what would you choose? When American adults were asked if they would most want to be richer, thinner, smarter, or younger, a large plurality (43%) professed that they would want to be richer.

These are some of the findings of a new **Adweek Media/Harris Poll**, survey of 2,163 U.S. adults surveyed online between July 27 and 29, 2010 by **Harris Interactive**.

One in five (21%) Americans said they would like to be thinner, 14% said smarter and 12% said younger. One in ten (9%) said they would not want to choose any of the given options. While all of the options are generally considered positive changes that one could make, different groups of Americans say they would choose different traits.

Differences by Gender

It appears men and women view these traits slightly differently. Although just 14% of both men and women say they would choose to be smarter, that's the only characteristic they agree on. More men say that they would choose to be richer (46%, compared to 41% of women), while 29% of women say that they would most want to be thinner, compared to just 14% of men who say the same. And while women may have the stereotype of lying about their age, 16% of men say they would most want to be younger, compared to just 8% of women who say the same.

Differences by Age

Not surprisingly, American adults' desires change, depending on their age and circumstances. Predictably, older Americans are more likely to want to be younger—19% of those aged 55 and older say this, compared to 14% of those aged 45-54, 12% of those 35-44, and just 4% of those who are 18-34 years old. It is also not surprising that young adults who may be early in their careers or starting families, are more focused on their finances than are adults in later life-stages. Half of Americans aged 18-34 (50%) and 35-44 (53%) say they would most want to be richer, compared to 41% of those aged 45-54, and just one-third (34%) of adults aged 55 and older, who say the same. Similarly, adults with children in the household also think of their purse-strings, as almost half (48%) of adults with children in the home say they would want to be richer, compared to two in five (41%) adults who do not have children at home.

So What?

It's always entertaining to fantasize about what you would want if you could change something about yourself. However, for Americans who say they most want to be richer (43%) or thinner (21%), the good news is that they don't need to rely on a fairy godmother. It's interesting to note that the largest percentages of Americans' desires represent changes that are more or less achievable, through smart choices, hard work and dedication. On the other hand, the Americans who want to be younger should just keep dreaming.

**TABLE 1
DESIRABLE ATTRIBUTES**

“Given a choice of the following, which one would you most want to be?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	Total	Gender		Age				Children in HH	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Has Children in HH	No Children in HH
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Richer	43	46	41	50	53	41	34	48	41
Thinner	21	14	29	23	15	24	22	20	22
Smarter	14	14	14	16	12	14	13	14	14
Younger	12	16	8	4	12	14	19	10	13
None of these	9	9	9	6	8	8	12	8	9

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Methodology

This **Adweek Media/Harris Poll** was conducted online within the United States between July 27 and 29, 2010 among 2,163 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Where appropriate, this data were also weighted to reflect the composition of the adult online population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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The Harris Poll® #101, August 26, 2010

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