

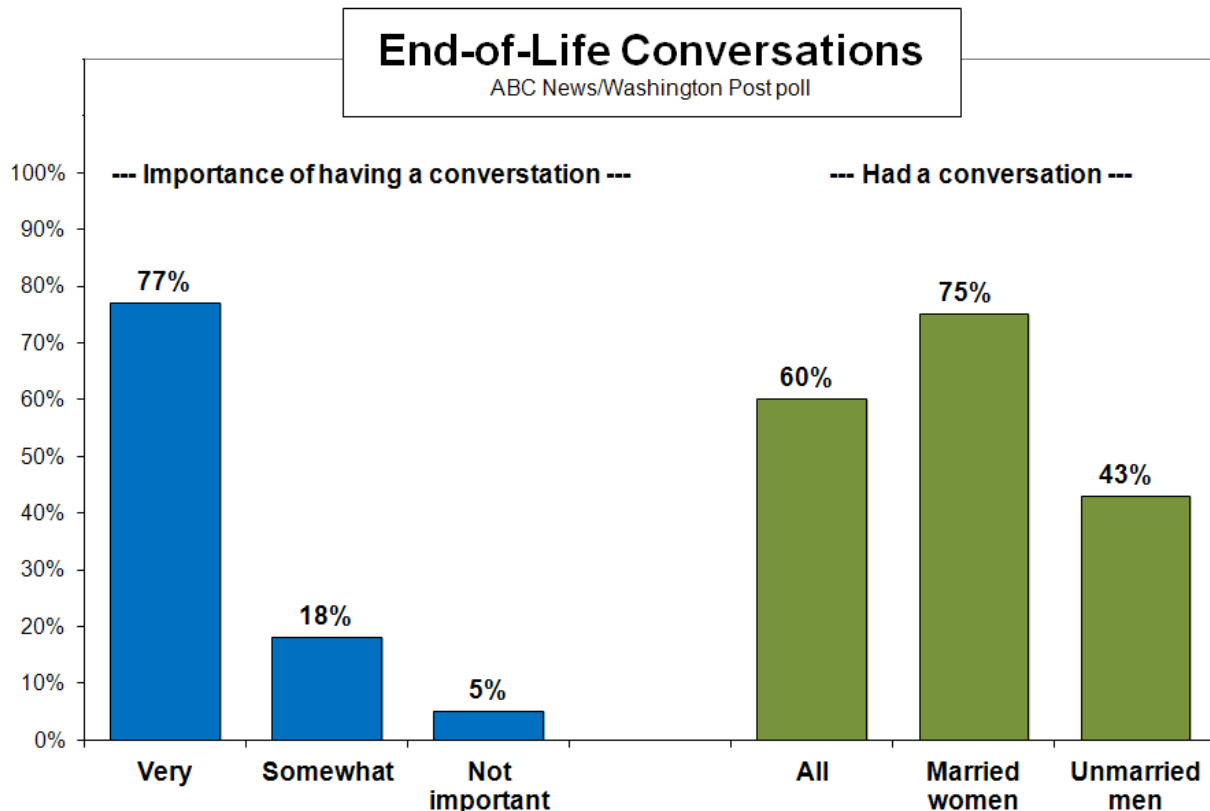
## **Married Women Lead the Way In End-of-Life Discussions**

It may not be easy to talk about, but nearly all Americans say it's important to have a conversation with loved ones about end-of-life issues – and most have done so, albeit with substantial differences depending on age, sex and marital status.

At the high end of the spectrum, 75 percent of married women have had a serious conversation with a spouse, parent, child or other loved one about their wishes for their care at the end of their life. At the low end, just 43 percent of unmarried men have done so.

Overall, 95 percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll think it's important to have this discussion, including 77 percent who say it's "very" important. And among those who see it as important, 84 percent say it should happen years in advance, rather than days, weeks or months.

For those who haven't had the discussion, a simple reason stands out: Many say it's simply because they don't feel it's the right time. That fits with the finding that young adults, in particular, are unlikely to have had end-of-life conversations with loved ones.



This survey, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), explores the subject as part of ABC's coverage of "The Conversation Project," an effort to encourage Americans to discuss their end-of-life preferences with loved ones.

Despite the sensitive nature of the subject, only 7 percent of those who haven't had such a conversation say it's because they're uncomfortable talking about it. A similarly small number, 9 percent, say it's because they don't feel they have someone to discuss it with. That compares with four in 10 who say it's not the right time. (About as many give a range of other answers.)

Seeing it as a critical issue is one factor: Among those who think it's very important, seven in 10 have had the conversation. That plummets to 26 percent of those who say it's only somewhat important or less so.

**GROUPS** – Women are 11 percentage points more likely than men to think discussing end-of-life issues is very important (the only meaningful difference among groups on this question) – and they're 17 percentage points more apt to have done so.

Marital status, as noted, is a factor as well. So is age: Among adults younger than age 30, just 37 percent have had an end-of-life conversation with a loved one. That jumps to 66 percent of adults age 30 and up.

	Have had a conversation on end-of-life issues
All	60%
Men	51
Women	68
Unmarried men	43
Married men	58
Unmarried women	61
Married women	75
18-29	37
30+	66
High school or less	52
Some college+	66
50K	55
50-100K	63
100K+	70
White	63
Nonwhite	51

Having had such a conversation also is related to education, income and race. It's 14 points more likely among Americans who've attended college vs. those who haven't gone beyond high

school; 15 points more prevalent in \$100,000-plus households than among people with annual incomes less than \$50,000; and 12 points more common among whites than nonwhites.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone July 5-8, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,003 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 4 points. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by Abt-SRBI of New York, N.Y.

Analysis by Gregory Holyk.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

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Full results follow.

\*= less than 0.5 percent

1-28 previously released.

29. On another subject, have you ever had a serious conversation with a spouse, parent, child or any other loved one about your wishes for your care at the end of your life, or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
7/8/12	60	39	1

30. (IF NOT HAD A CONVERSATION) Why is that - is it mainly because (you don't feel it's the right time), (you're not comfortable with the subject), (you don't feel you have someone to discuss it with), or some other reason?

	Not right time	Not comfortable	No one to discuss	Other	No opinion
7/8/12	39	7	9	44	1

31. Do you think that having a conversation with loved ones about end-of-life issues at some point is very important, somewhat important, not so important or not important at all?

	NET	Important	NET	Not important	No opinion		
		Very	Somewhat	Not so	Not at all		
7/8/12	95	77	18	5	1	3	*

32. (IF CONVERSATION IS IMPORTANT) Do you think it's best to do that days in advance, weeks in advance, months in advance, or years in advance?

	Days	Weeks	Months	Years	No opinion
7/8/12	2	3	8	84	3

\*\*\* END \*\*\*