

Top 43 reasons why men remain single—according to Reddit

August 8 2018



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In the past, forced or arranged marriages meant that socially inept,

unattractive men did not have to acquire social skills in order to find a long-term love interest. Today, men must be able to turn on the charm if they want to find a partner. Those men who have difficulty flirting, or are unable to impress the opposite sex may remain single because their social skills have not evolved to meet today's societal demands. So says Menelaos Apostolou of the University of Nicosia in Cyprus in a study in Springer's journal *Evolutionary Psychological Science*. Apostolou analyzed more than 6,700 comments left by men on the popular social news and media aggregation internet site Reddit.

Up to 35 per cent of people in North American and European societies are single or live on their own. To understand why singlehood is so widespread in these Western societies, Apostolou analysed 6,794 of the 13,429 comments that were received following an anonymous post on Reddit in 2017 that asked: "Guys, why are you single?"

His findings indicate that most of the men commenting on the thread were not willingly single but wanted to be in a [relationship](#). Apostolou established at least 43 reasons why these men thought they were single. Having poor looks and being short or bald were the most frequent reasons they put forward, followed by lack of confidence. Not making the effort and simply not being interested in long-term relationships were also high on the list, along with a lack of flirting skills and being too shy. Some said that they had been so badly burnt in previous relationships that they did not dare to get into another. Others felt that they were too picky, did not have the opportunity to meet available women or had different priorities. Some of the men had experienced [mental health issues](#), sexual problems, or struggled with illness, disability or addiction.

Apostolou says there are evolutionary reasons why some modern men are unable to successfully approach women. According to the so-called mismatch argument, their [social skills](#) do not align with the qualities needed today to make a good impression. He explains that in a pre-

industrial context, marriages were arranged, male-male competition was strong, and wives were sometimes obtained by force. While in one respect this left men with little choice about who would be their wives, it also meant that their looks were irrelevant, and they did not need to know how to attract the opposite sex. Socially inept and unattractive men may not have been single because their relationships were regulated by their parents.

"Single modern men often lack flirting skills because in an ancestral pre-industrial context, the selection pressures on mechanisms which regulated mating effort and choosiness were weak," Apostolou explains. "Such skills are needed today, because in post-industrial societies mate choice is not regulated or forced, but people have to instead find mates on their own."

More information: Menelaos Apostolou, Why Men Stay Single? Evidence from Reddit, *Evolutionary Psychological Science* (2018). [DOI: 10.1007/s40806-018-0163-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40806-018-0163-7)

Provided by Springer

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