The United States divorce rate was 31% in 2002.

Melissa Raley

Only thirty-one percent? The most striking aspect of this statistic is the fact that it is much lower than one usually hears. The so called “most-widely known statistic” is apparently not so widely known, since most people think the divorce rate is fifty percent. The fact that the actual divorce rate is much lower than the majority of the population realizes shows that the fate of marriage and the family in the United States is not so grim as we first expected. It makes the goal of saving those institutions a little less arduous.

The pollster Lewis Harris stated, “The idea that half of American marriages are doomed is one of the most specious pieces of statistical nonsense ever perpetuated in modern times.” Not only is this statement true because it inflates the divorce rate, but it is also true because the rate of divorce does not mean that any given marriage has a certain chance of ending in divorce. In fact, nothing about marriage and divorce is about chance. Spouses who “make it” do so through years of hard work and dedication – to both their significant other and to the covenant of marriage itself.

Although lower than most realize, this number is important to the social structure because widespread divorce is detrimental to families as well as macrosociety. It lowers the standard of living, especially for divorced mothers and their children. It has adverse health affects that stem from the fact that two people who take care of each other (in sickness and in health) will be healthier than singles who are more likely to take risks and not watch out for themselves as much. On the microsocial level, divorce has particularly injurious psychological affects on the children of that dissolved union, often making them discern between two competing moral systems at a very young age. Therefore, we need to continue our efforts in lowering the rate of divorce. No number is too low.

Source: