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In Advance of Highest Divorce Rate Month, Brigham Young University Study Shows Thinking About Divorce is Common, Not Cause for Alarm

SALT LAKE CITY, Dec. 16, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- In advance of the New Year and a month notorious for the highest percentage of people thinking about and initiating divorce, a new nationwide survey has found that Americans are thinking about divorce often, with a quarter of those surveyed having thought about it at least a few times in the last six months. Researchers argue that thinking about divorce is not only common, but can actually promote positive change in a relationship.

"Thoughts about divorce can be a healthy wake-up call to work on a marriage," said Dr. Alan Hawkins, professor of Family Life at Brigham Young University. "According to our research, most people's thoughts about divorce are more 'soft' than 'serious,' and can help spur needed actions."

The main points of the study include:

- More than half of married individuals say they have had thoughts about divorce, recently or in the past.
- Most of those seriously considering divorce want to stay together and work things out.
- Only one percent of people who have recently thought about divorce were not happy to still be together.
- Almost all those who stuck together in spite of thoughts of divorce were happy.
- Most of those who stayed together were not just survivors, but thrivers.

The study surveyed 3,000 individuals, representing married people ages 25-50 in the United States, and was funded by BYU. Faculty from five other universities also participated: University of North Texas, University of Minnesota, University of Missouri, Montana State University and University of Alberta.

Many worry about their marriage, especially considering that an estimated half of all marriages in America end in divorce. The study's findings show that even if one considers divorce, their marriage isn't over; only five percent of those considering it say they are done with their marriage. Most want to work to improve it.

"While we know a lot about what predicts divorce and the effects of divorce, we haven't studied how people start thinking about it," said Hawkins. "This data will help us help those who are struggling in their marriages."

For more information and the full study, visit: <https://familystudiescenter.byu.edu/Pages/Home.aspx>

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