

DIVORCE DOESN'T MEAN HAPPINESS

Reuters

CHICAGO - Unhappily married couples often get lots of advice and a report released on Thursday offered some more: don't divorce, stick it out.

Researchers from the University of Chicago and other schools concluded that about the same proportion of couples who avoided divorcing despite an unhappy marriage ended up just as happy five years later as those who had split up.

Interviews with a subset of the 5,232 married adults surveyed in the 1980s and again five years later found those who found happiness discovered the sources of conflict such as money, depression, and even infidelity eased with time.

Others reported they got better at getting along, sometimes enlisting help from relatives or counselors -- or by threatening divorce. Others found ways to be happier individually in spite of their mediocre marriages.

But divorce sets in motion events over which an individual has little control, such as the reactions of spouses and children, as well as the uncertainty of new relationships.

"Staying married is not just for the childrens' sake. Some divorce is necessary, but results like these suggest the benefits of divorce have been oversold," said University of Chicago sociologist Linda Waite, lead author of the report presented at a conference in Washington, D.C.

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