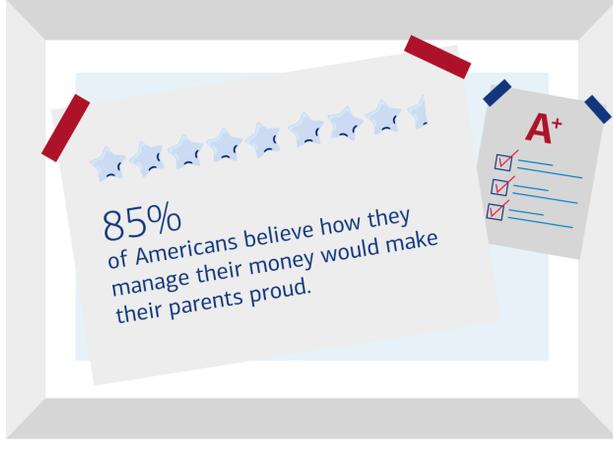


# Merrill Edge<sup>®</sup> Report

Spring 2019

## Make me proud

Americans are adopting savvier spending and savings habits as they prioritize their financial goals and take steps toward improving their futures.



## Financial feats

In the past year, 85% of Americans took steps to improve their financial lives, including:



45%

Raising their credit score



43%

Paying off some or all their credit card debt



35%

Saving enough to live on for three months without an income



29%

Investing some of their savings in the market

## Treat yourself

Perhaps these financial feats are influencing their “treat yourself” mentality.



56% are rewarding themselves for meeting a financial goal, with top rewards including:



48%

Purchasing something like clothes, shoes or jewelry



48%

Taking a vacation or trip



40%

Eating out at an expensive restaurant



24%

Indulging in beauty services

## Impact spending: put your money where your mouth is

A growing number of Americans are aligning their spending with their personal values.



When choosing between two retailers selling an identical product, 42% of Americans would choose the retailer selling it at a higher price knowing the company's core values align with their own.

Two in five

Americans would stop buying products from companies whose values fundamentally conflict with their own.

## Mind, body and toll

Managing money is taking a toll on Americans' mental and physical health.

The majority say managing their finances impacts their:



59%



56%

Women are more likely than men to feel the impact of their finances on their:



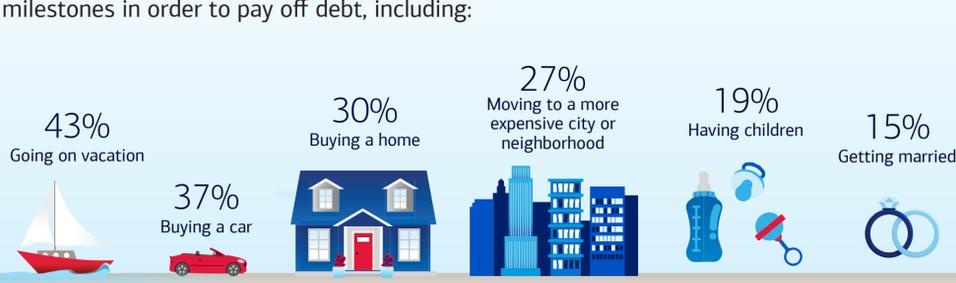
Mental health  
64% vs 52%  
Women Men



Physical health  
60% vs 51%  
Women Men

## Debtor nation

68% of Americans have purposefully delayed or abstained from certain activities or life milestones in order to pay off debt, including:



## Would you rather?

Managing money is a taxing reality for Americans, so if given the choice to never have to manage their personal finances again, they would rather:



41%

Give up all social media platforms forever



37%

Cut carbs, sugar and/or alcohol



35%

Lose access to their smartphone for one month



25%

Move back in with their parents



25%

Run into their ex every time they're out with their current partner

## Help wanted

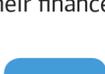
New tech might be the answer for Americans looking to adopt better spending and savings habits.

Many say the following apps are effective tools and methods to help them save money and manage their finances:



71%

Consumer banking



65%

Money transfer



63%

Personal finance



57%

Automated investment

## You can't take it with you — they hope

81% of current or future parents say it is important to leave an inheritance to their children.

And 38% are making sacrifices to their lifestyle now so they can leave behind a more substantial estate. Sacrifices include:



31% Limiting spending on luxuries like eating out and entertainment



26% Skipping out on travel and vacations



18% Delaying retirement



15% Taking on a second job or working overtime

92% of all respondents want to leave money and other assets behind, but 64% do not have a formal estate plan in place, including almost half of seniors (46%) and over half baby boomers (59%).

Source: Merrill Edge Report Spring 2019

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