



Fetzer Institute

Survey of Love and Forgiveness in American Society



prepared for the Fetzer Institute by StrategyOne
October 2010





Methodology

Who

n=1,000 US Adults age 18+ (Margin of Error: 3.1% in 95 out of 100 cases)

n=200 Oversample of influencers* (Margin of Error: 6.9% in 95 out of 100 cases)

n=300 Oversample in six geographic markets (Margin of Error: 5.7% in 95 out of 100 cases)

Dallas; Detroit; New York City; San Francisco; Seattle; Washington, D.C.

How

Online Data Collection

When

August 4–15, 2010

•Influencers are defined as follows:

-Business Influencer: currently holds a professional title of director or above

-Community Influencer: has participated in at least three community activities like volunteering or charities or nonprofit organizations, attending public meetings, contacting politicians, or others in the past 12 months



Key Findings

A Growing Desire for Love and Forgiveness

American adults recognize a need for more meaningful love and forgiveness. Sixty-eight percent of Americans agree (strongly or somewhat) that they need more meaningful love in their personal lives, and this number increases to 89% in their communities, 94% in America, and 95% in the world. Sixty-two percent of Americans agree (strongly or somewhat) that they need more forgiveness in their personal lives, and this number increases to 83% in their communities, 90% in America, and 90% in the world.



Key Findings

Americans Seek Greater Connection Globally

Americans express a universal desire for a more loving and unified world. For example, most (61%) claim that if they better understood the values of people in other countries, there would be less conflict in the world, which indicates a need in our country for better understanding of foreign cultures and values and how those values align with our own. Additionally, 9 in 10 Americans agree that the world is too divided and apart, and 95% agree that we need more meaningful love in the world.



Key Findings

An Increasingly Fearful and Violent World

The belief is prevalent in the United States that the world is increasingly becoming more fearful and violent. Ninety-one percent of Americans feel this way, and the majority of Americans also believe that both the United States and the world today are too divided and apart (87% and 90% respectively).



Key Findings

The Complexity of Forgiveness in America

Sixty-seven percent of Americans agree that the US population is composed of generally forgiving people, but 58% also agree that there are instances where people should never be forgiven. The unforgiveable instances are murder (41%), abuse or sexual crimes (26%), or any intentionally committed crime (22%), suggesting that most Americans focus on crimes against an individual as being unforgiveable. Additionally, 60% of Americans believe that forgiving someone would first depend on the offender apologizing and making changes.



Key Findings

Americans Live with Distrust and Long to Belong

While most Americans describe their personal communities as friendly, peaceful, respectful, and compassionate, 74% agree that most people would take advantage of others if they had the chance. In addition, 40% of Americans describe their communities as divided; 31% claim their communities are intolerant; and 27% state their communities are untrusting. The data also points to a clear majority who long to belong. 82% of Americans agree that it's personally important to feel part of a community, and 58% say that they want to be a part of something bigger than themselves but don't know how to begin.



Key Findings

Americans Are Becoming More Spiritual

The United States is becoming an increasingly spiritual country. Seventy-six percent of American adults consider themselves to be spiritual, and 60% of American adults say they are becoming more spiritual as compared to five years ago. Furthermore, nearly three-quarters of American adults believe spirituality can help solve misunderstandings between cultures. Still, there is a segment of the population that doesn't know where to turn to address their spiritual needs. Around one-third of American adults spend a lot of time grappling with spirituality, and more than one-in four have spiritual needs and don't know where to turn for help.



Meaningful Love



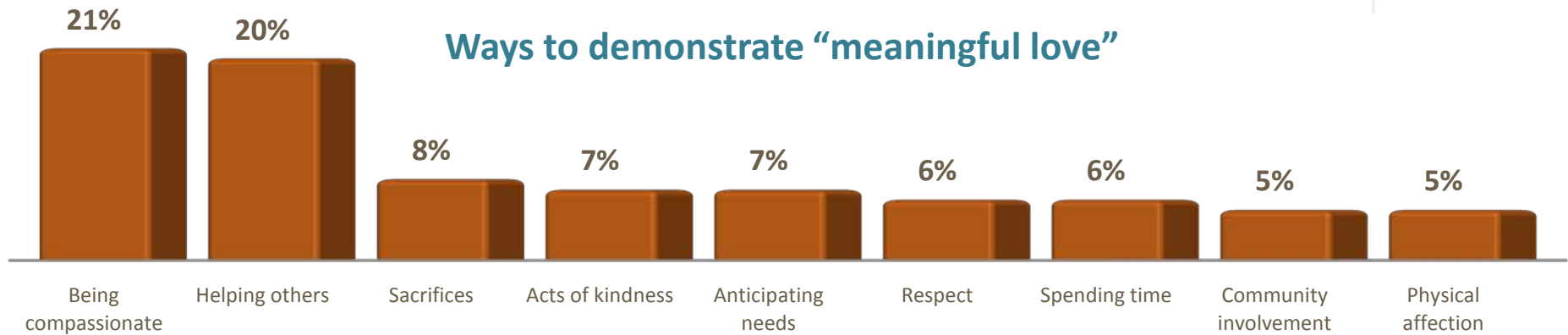
Meaningful love in Americans' personal lives is primarily about compassion and supporting others.

Defining "meaningful love"

US Population



Ways to demonstrate "meaningful love"



Asked among US Population

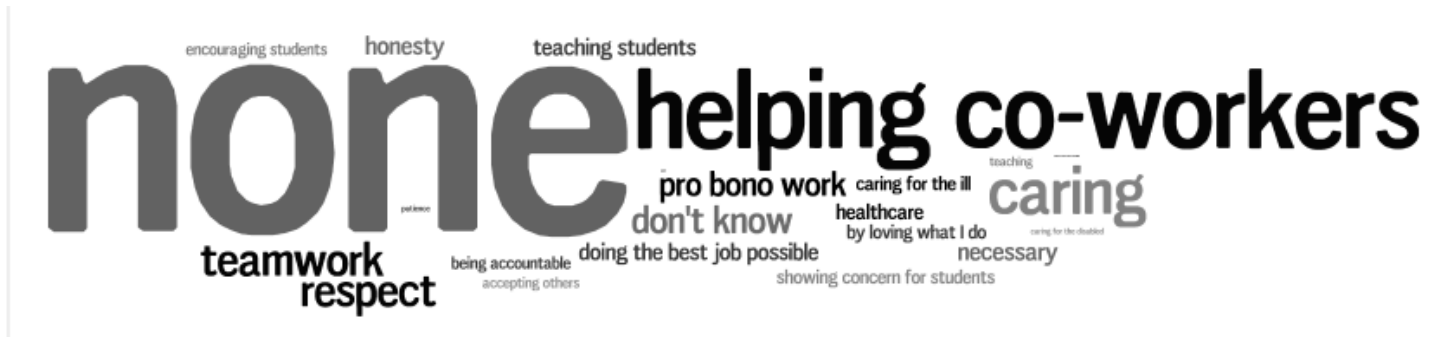
- Thinking about the term "meaningful love," how would you define this in the context of your personal life?
- What are some ways you demonstrate "meaningful love" in your personal life?



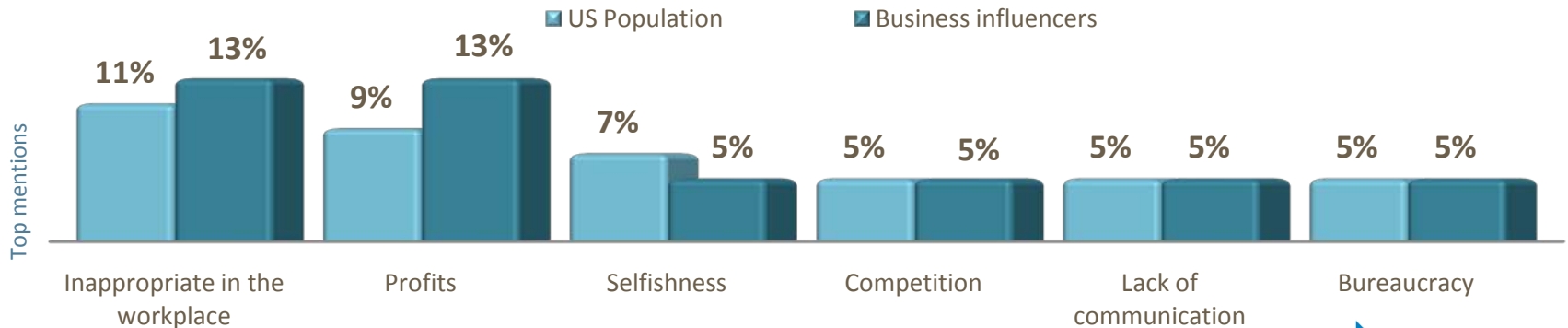
Americans believe that meaningful love is not part of the workplace.

Ways “meaningful love” is part of industry/field

US Population



Main obstacle to “meaningful love” in the workplace



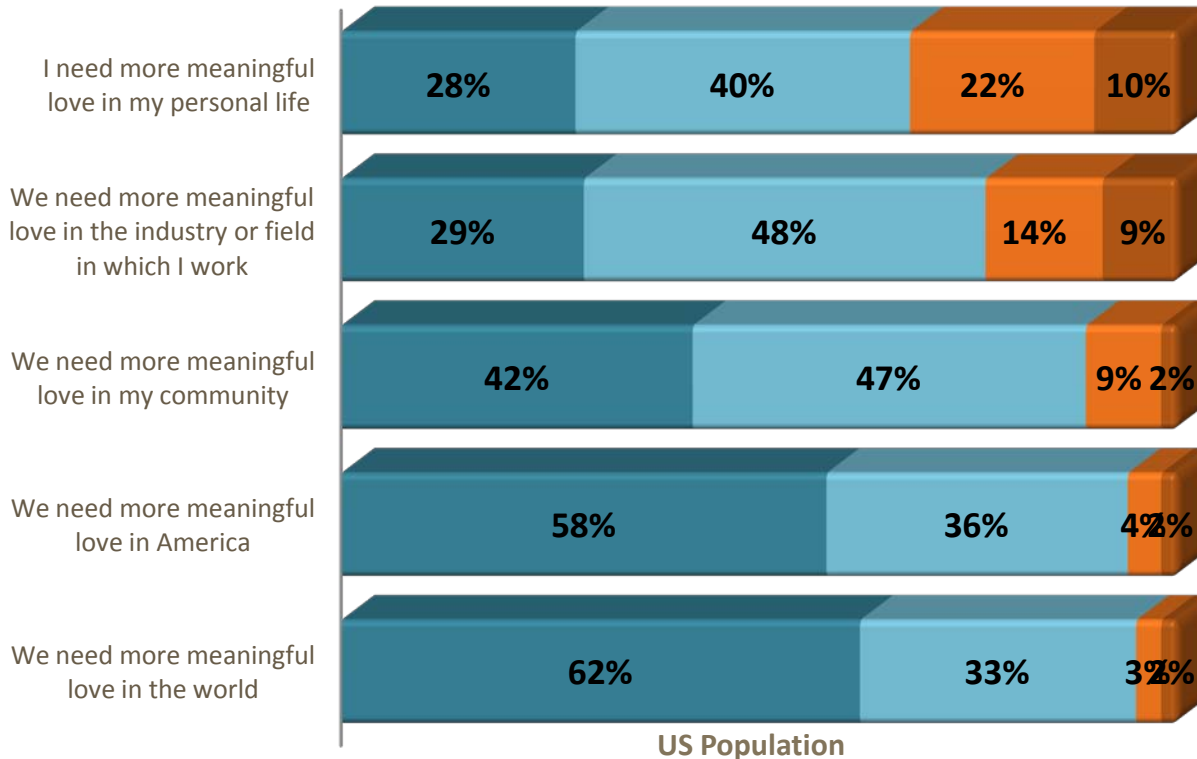
- In what ways do you think “meaningful love” is part of the industry or field in which you currently work?
- What do you think is the main obstacle to having more “meaningful love” in the industry or field in which you currently work?



Americans indicate a strong desire for more meaningful love in their lives, particularly at the community and societal levels.

Perceived Need for Meaningful Love

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree



% AGREE, Key Groups		
US Population	Community Influencers	Business Influencers
68%	67%	66%
77%	77%	75%
89%	87%	85%
94%	94%	92%
95%	95%	92%

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



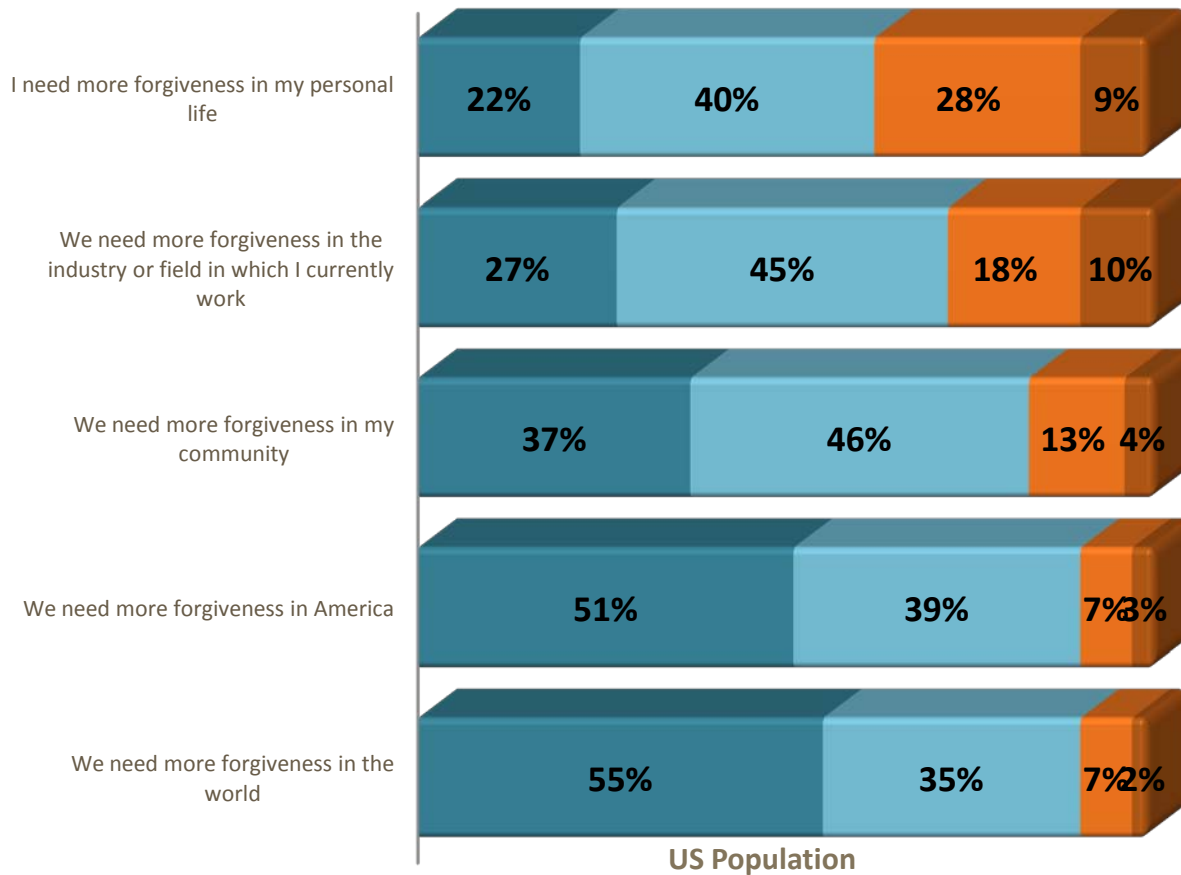
Forgiveness



Americans see an increasing need for forgiveness, particularly at the community and societal levels.

Perceived Need for Forgiveness

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree



% AGREE, Key Groups		
US Population	Community Influencers	Business Influencers
62%	63%	61%
72%	73%	72%
83%	83%	84%
90%	91%	89%
90%	93%	89%

•How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

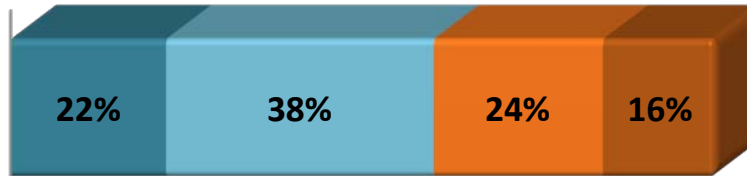


Attitudes about forgiveness are mixed, and more than half of Americans agree there are instances that do not warrant forgiveness.

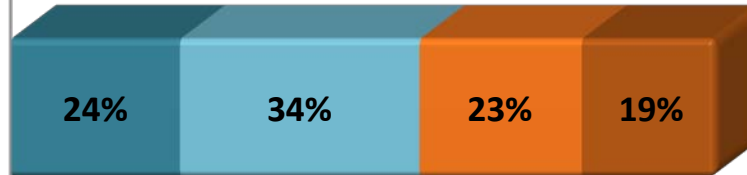
Situations of Forgiveness

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

In general, my forgiving someone should depend upon the offender first apologizing and making changes



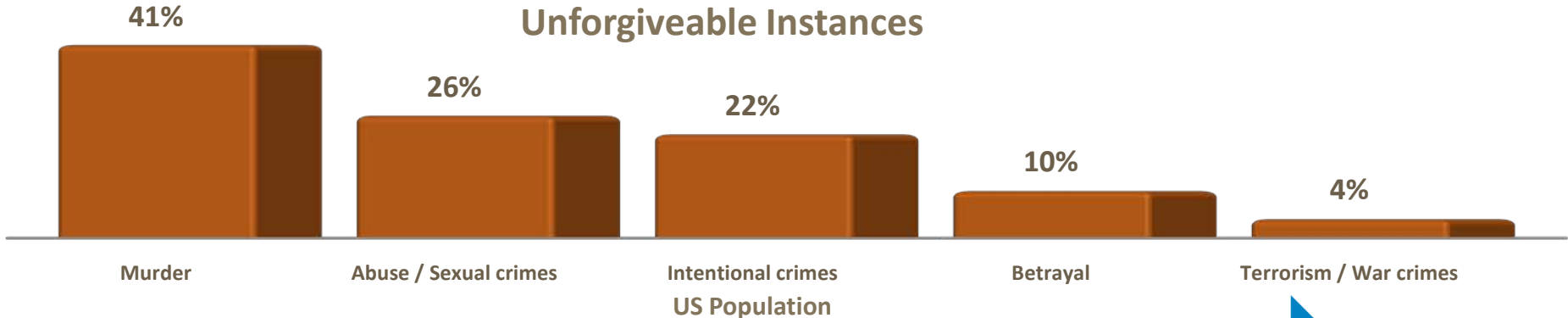
There are instances where people should never be forgiven



US Population

% AGREE, Key Groups		
US Population	Community Influencers	Business Influencers
60%	49%	58%
58%	50%	60%

Unforgivable Instances



- How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
- What are these instances where people should never be forgiven?

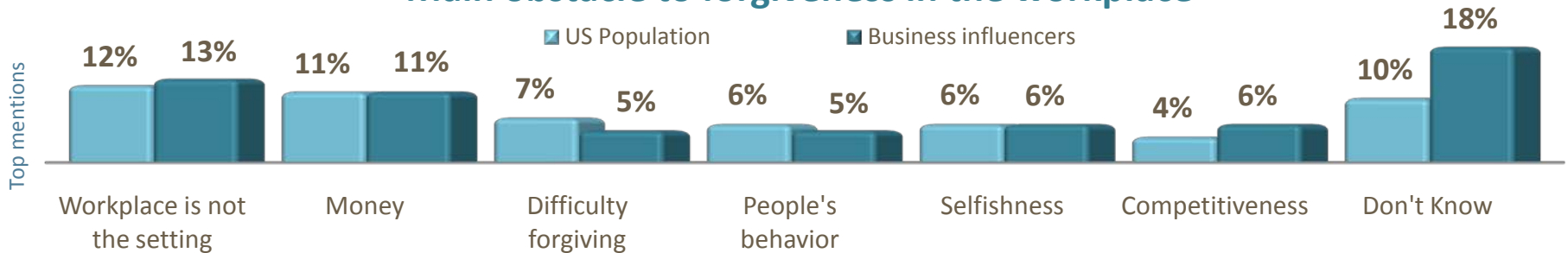


Americans believe that forgiveness is not part of the workplace.

Ways forgiveness is part of industry/field



Main obstacle to forgiveness in the workplace



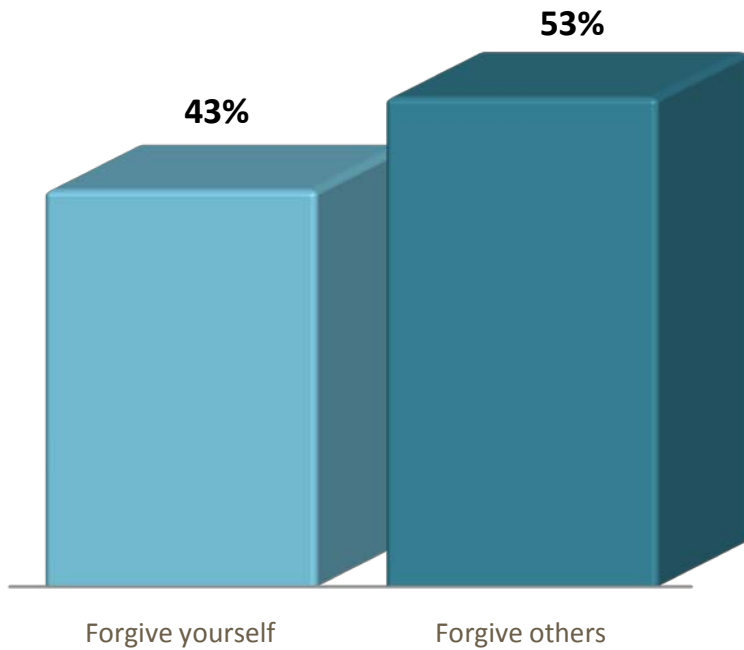
- In what ways do you think forgiveness is part of the industry or field in which you currently work?
- What do you think is the main obstacle to having more forgiveness in the industry or field in which you currently work?



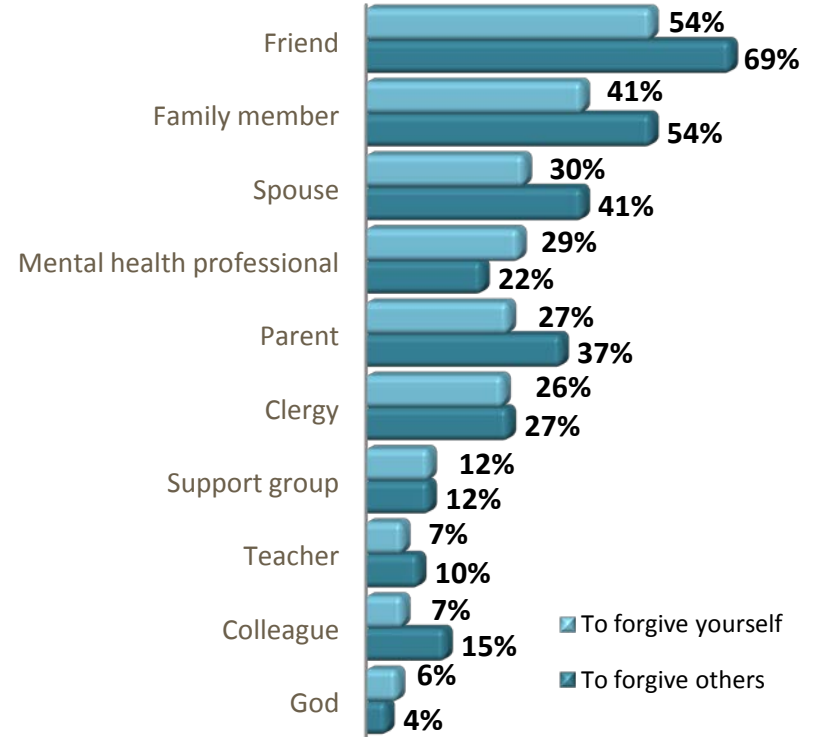
Americans are more comfortable seeking help to forgive others than in seeking help to forgive themselves.

US Population

Turn to others for help to...



Turn to:



■ To forgive yourself
■ To forgive others

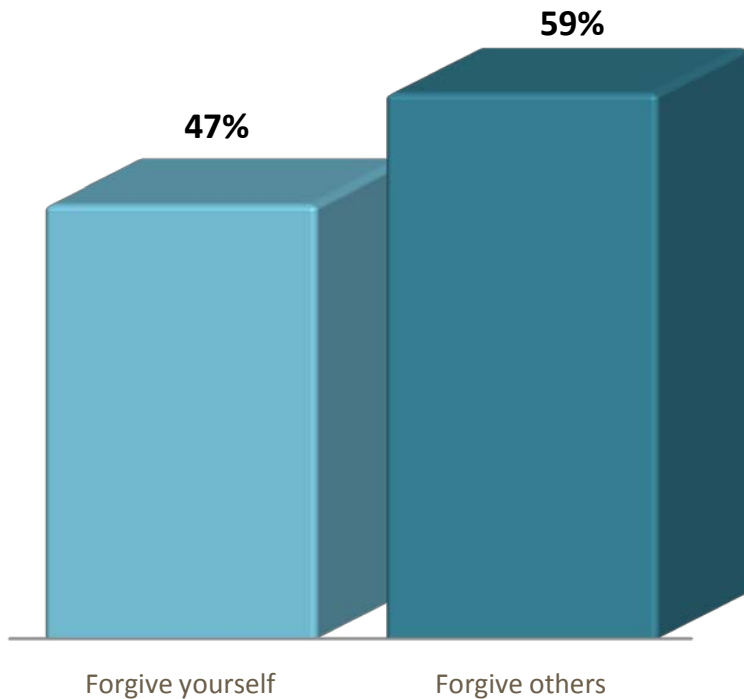
- Have you ever turned to anyone for help or guidance in trying to forgive others?
- Have you ever turned to anyone for help or guidance in trying to forgive yourself?
- Which of the following have you turned to?



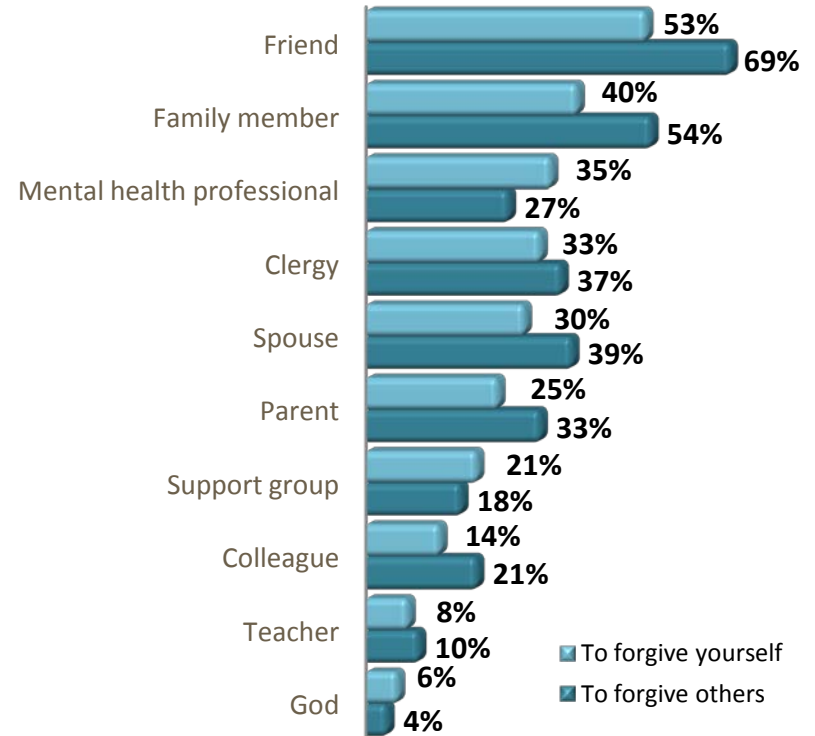
Influencers demonstrate similar attitudes to the general public, but they are more comfortable turning to a variety of support sources.

Community and Business Influencers

Turn to others for help to...



Turn to:



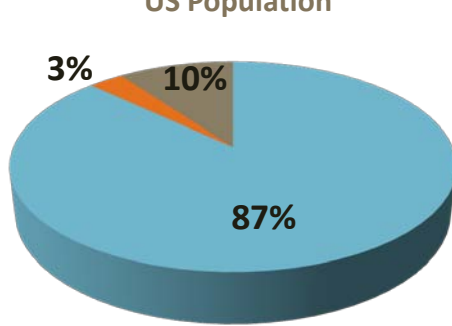
- Have you ever turned to anyone for help or guidance in trying to forgive others?
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- Which of the following have you turned to?



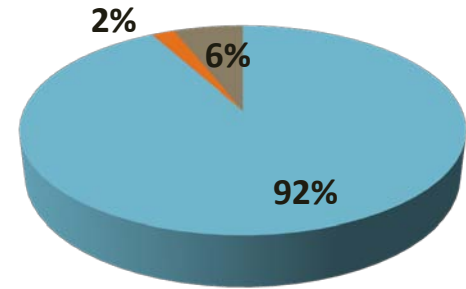
Most Americans seek help from friends and family when grappling with a personal problem.

Where You Turn for Personal Guidance

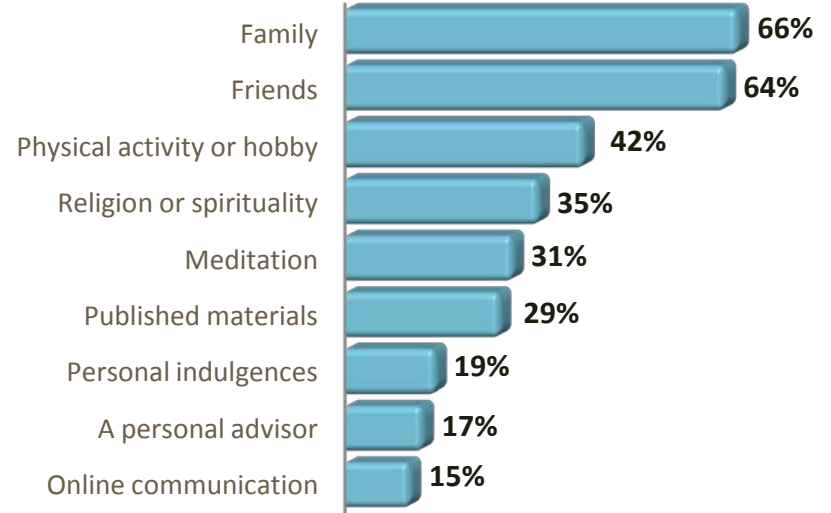
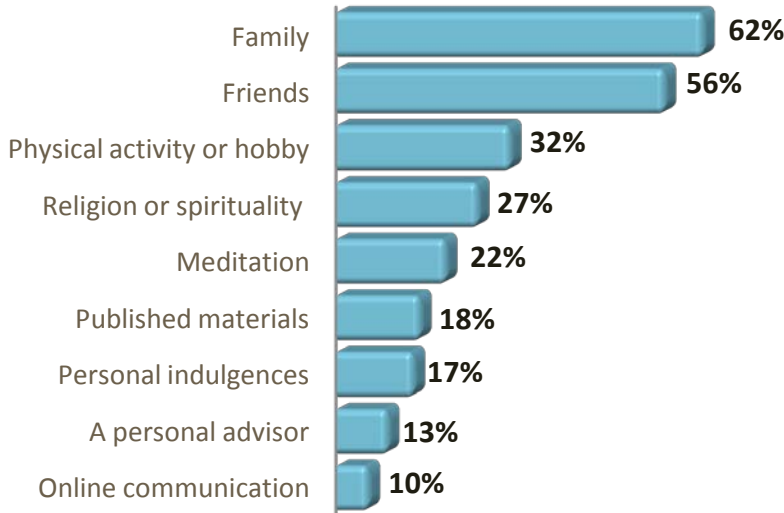
US Population



Community and Business Influencers



- I have resources
- I don't know where to turn
- I don't look for help



•To which of the following do you turn for support when you are struggling with a personal problem?



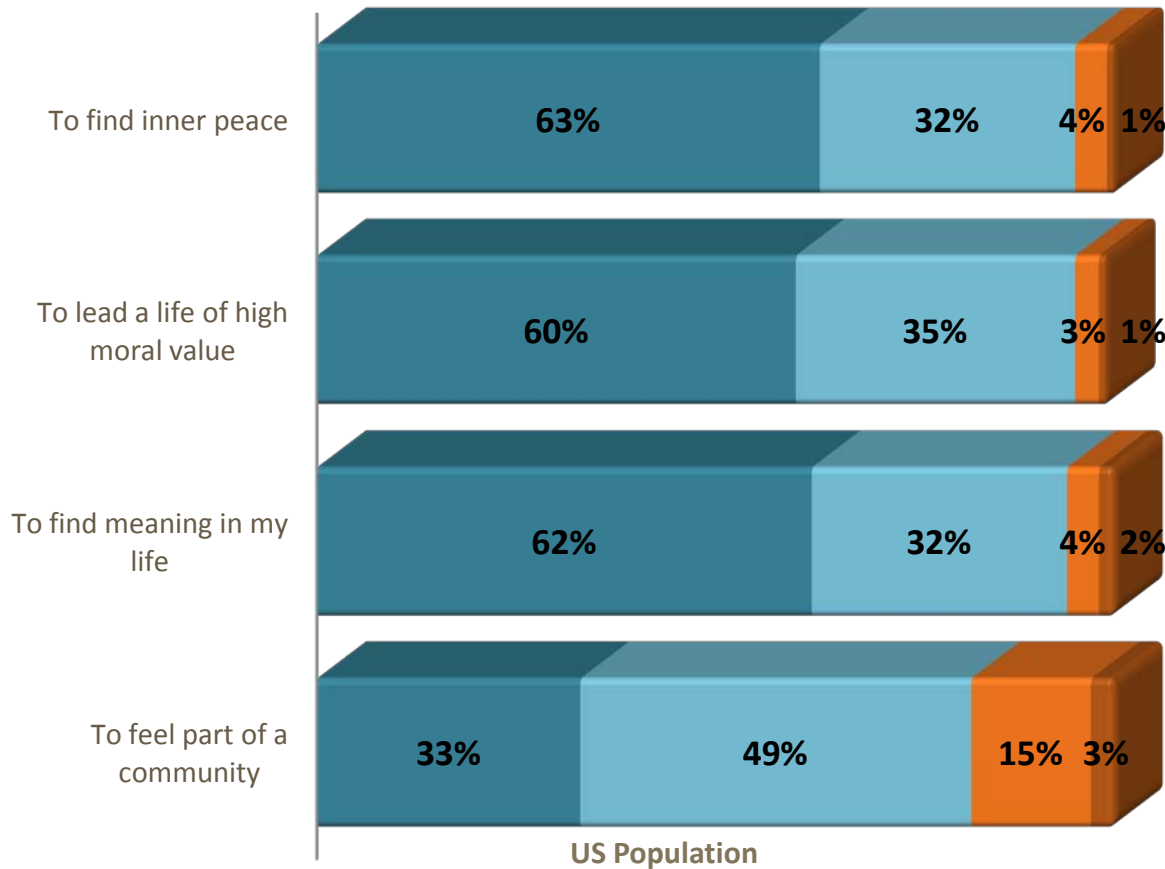
Religion & Spirituality



Americans are uniformly committed to leading spiritual, connected lives.

Importance of Values

Very important Somewhat important Not very important Not at all important

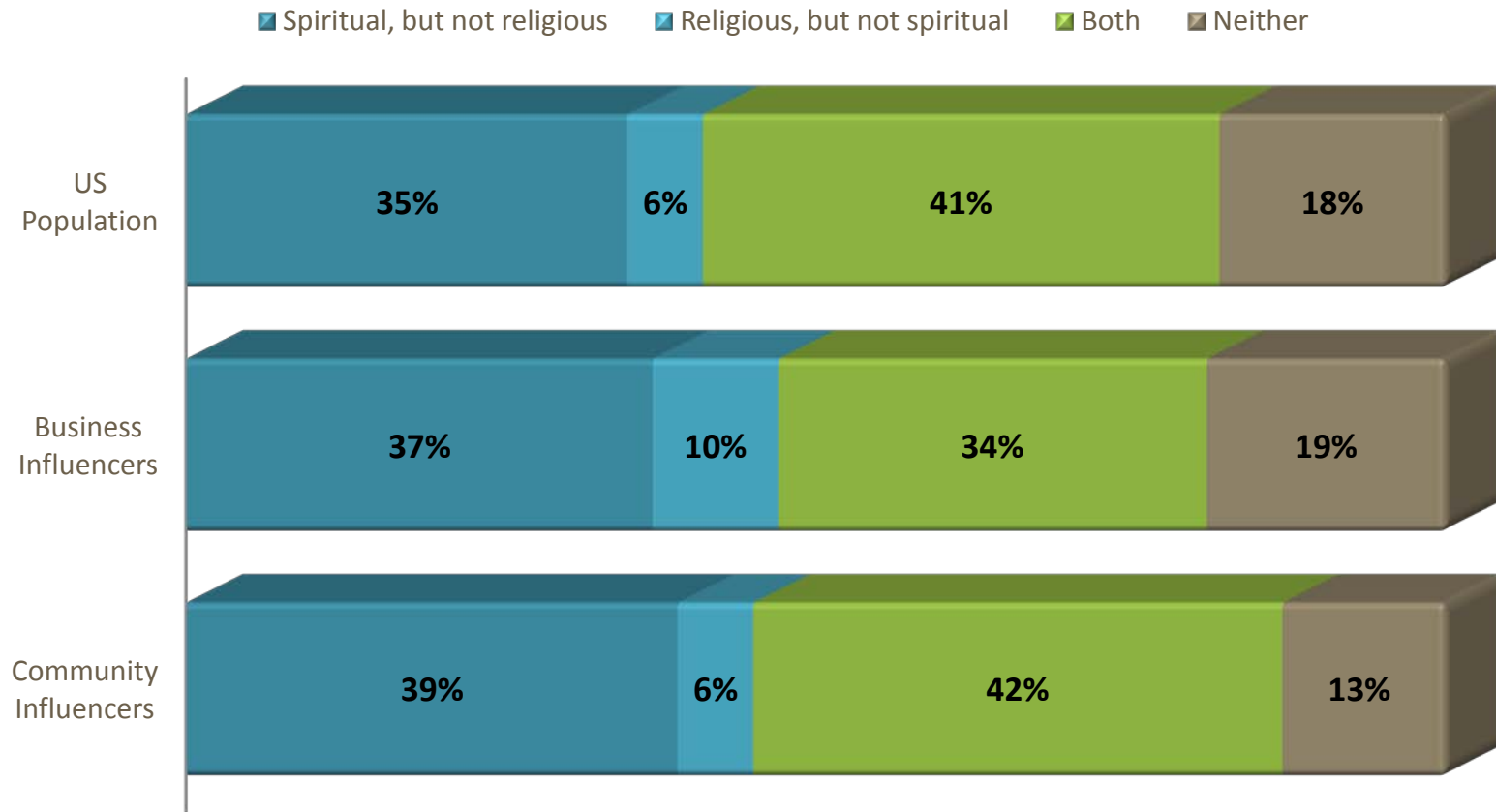


% IMPORTANT, Key Groups		
US Population	Community Influencers	Business Influencers
95%	96%	95%
95%	95%	95%
94%	95%	93%
82%	90%	87%

•How important would you say each of the following is in your personal life?

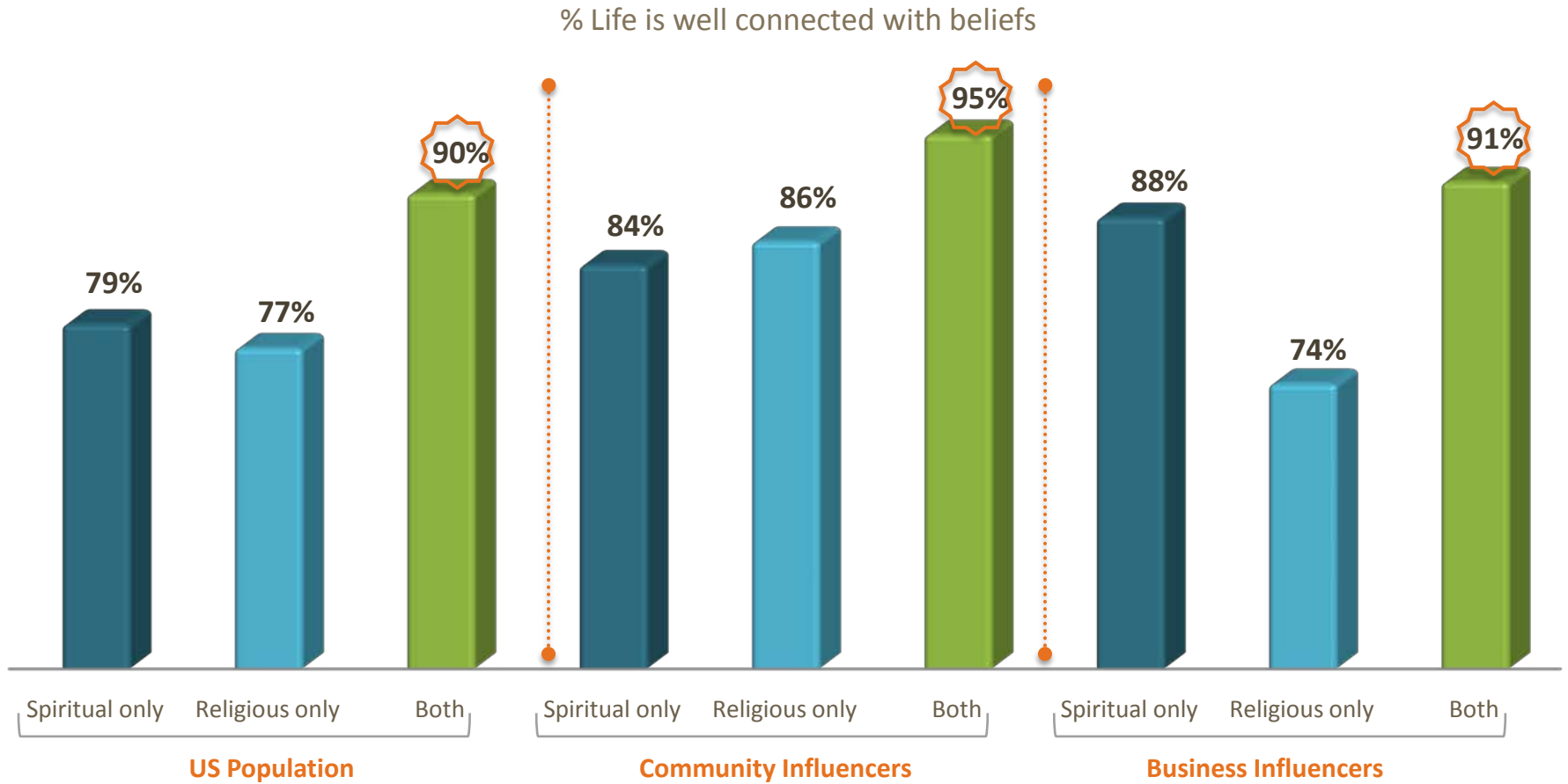


Most Americans consider themselves “spiritual.”





Americans who are both religious and spiritual lead lives more aligned with their beliefs.



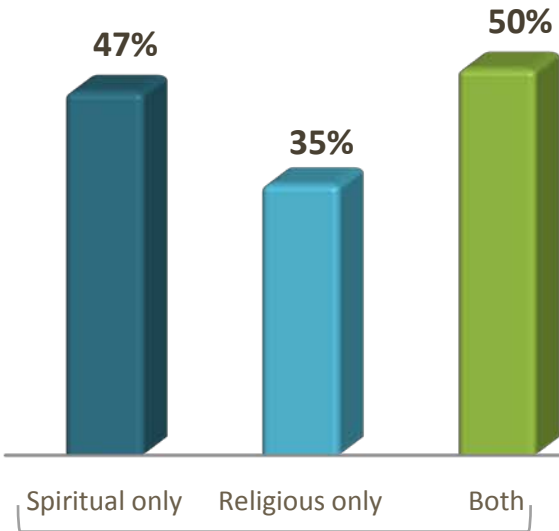
- How well connected is your life with your spiritual beliefs? (Asked among spiritual only.)
- How well connected is your life with your religious beliefs? (Asked among religious only.)
- How well connected is your life with your spiritual/religious beliefs? (Asked among both spiritual and religious.)



Spirituality is a common factor in Americans having more trust and openness to others.

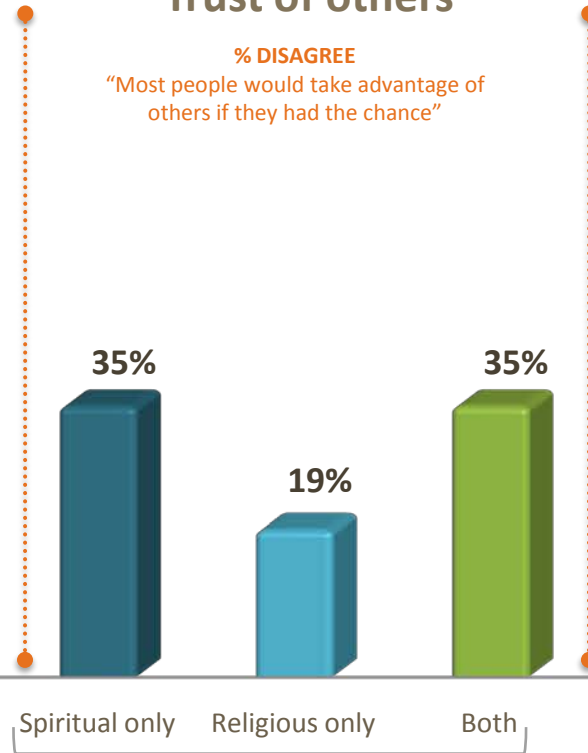
Forgiveness not conditional

% DISAGREE
“In general, my forgiving someone should depend upon the offender first apologizing and making changes in their behavior”



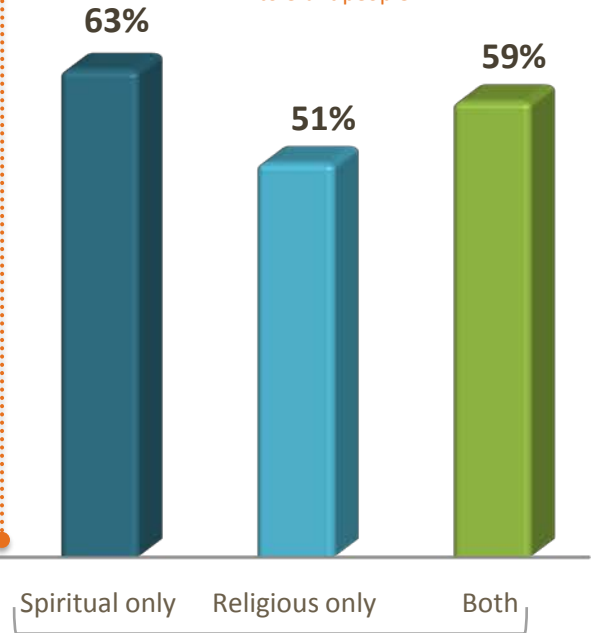
Trust of others

% DISAGREE
“Most people would take advantage of others if they had the chance”



Positive global views

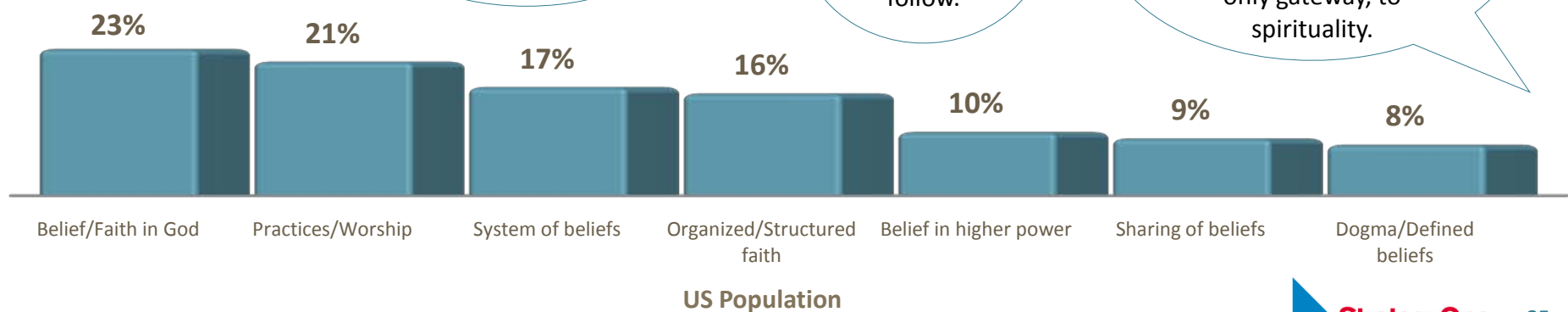
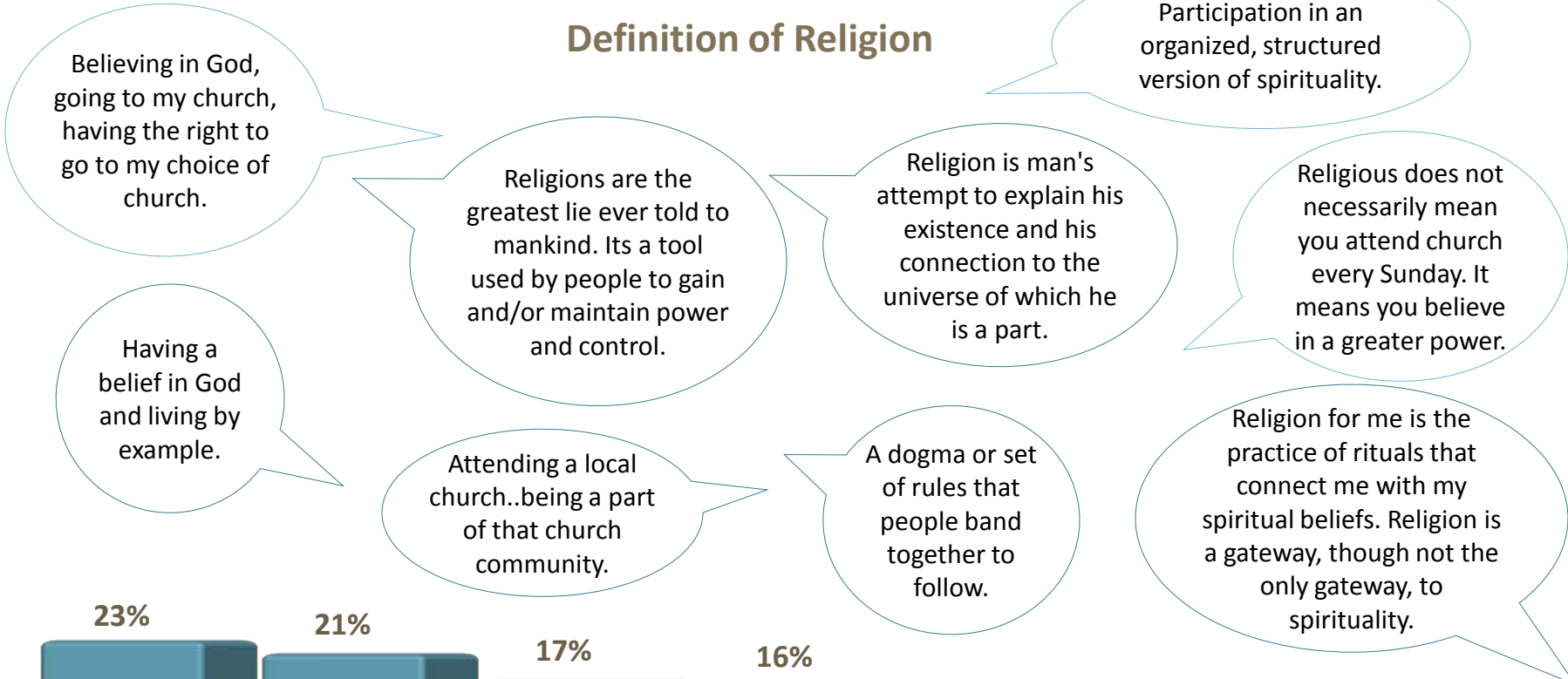
% DISAGREE
“People in other countries are generally intolerant people”





Americans understand religion as a set of beliefs and practices of faith.

Definition of Religion



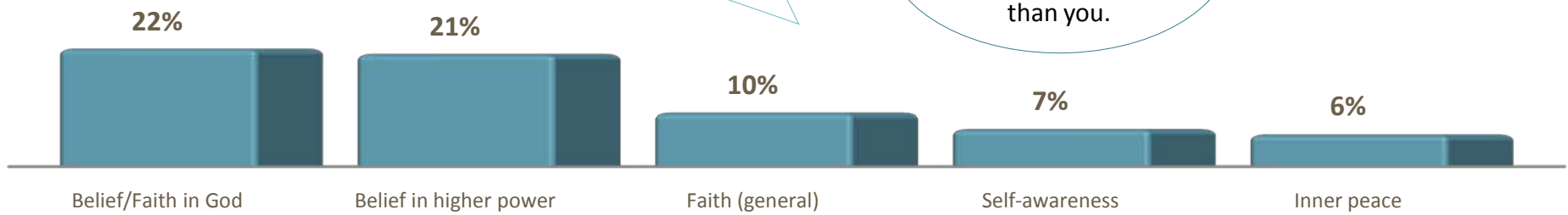
•What does the term "religion" mean to you? (Mentions less than 10% omitted from table.)



Americans understand spirituality to be more personal than religion.

Definition of Spirituality

- Spirituality means the love and worship of GOD.
- Having a personal relationship with God.
- That you are kind, and compassionate, and you think about broader things than yourself, like making the world a better place, and having a moral code that you live by, and being good to others.
- Spirituality is the feeling of peace and serenity you get knowing there is a power greater than yourself who knows what is best for you.
- You live your life in the 'spirit' of Christ.
- Religion is for people who are afraid of going to hell, Spirituality is for the people who have already lived through it.
- To me, it means having faith in a higher power or in something greater than you.



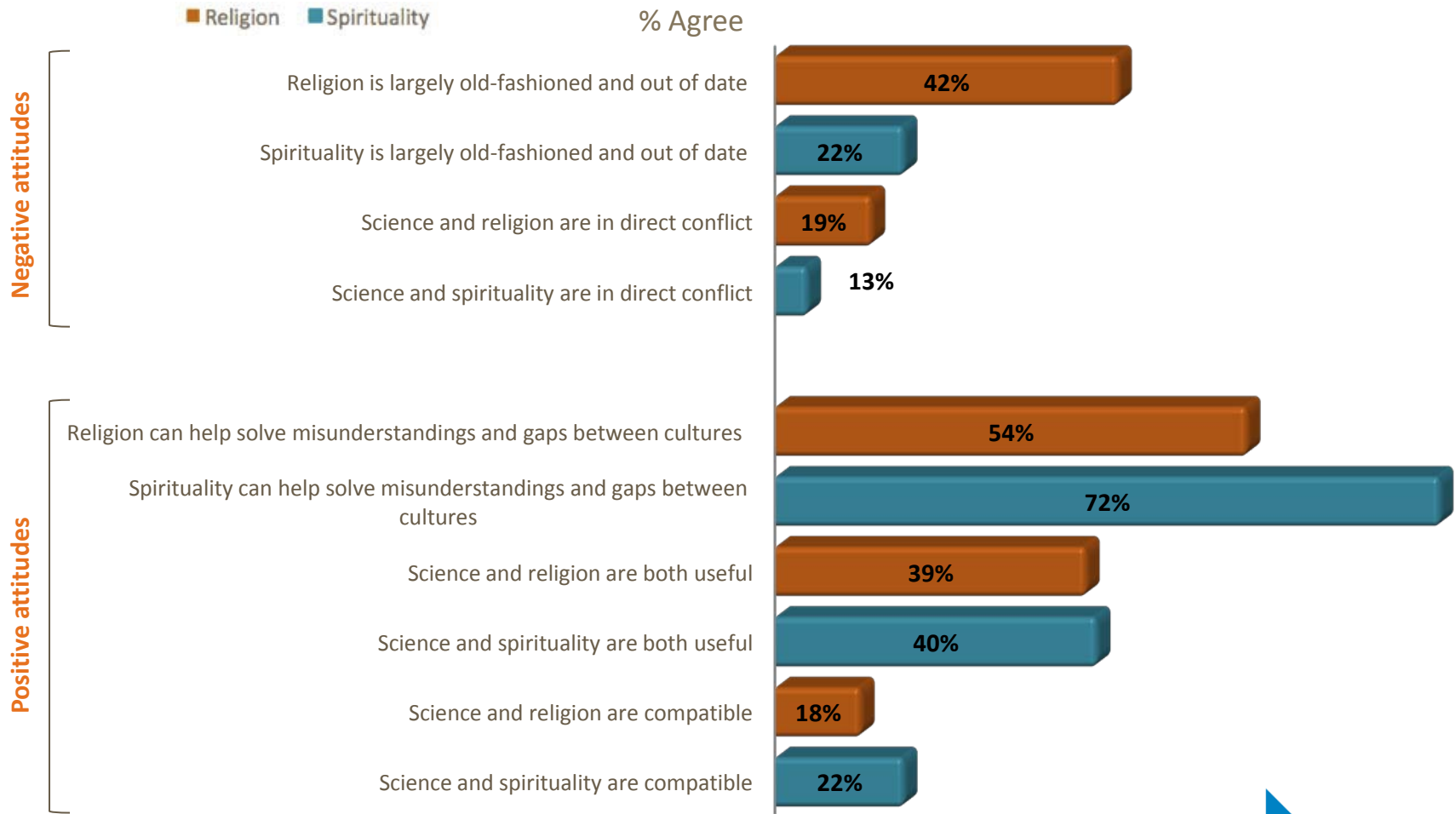
US Population

•What does the term "spirituality" mean to you? (Mentions less than 5% omitted from table.)



Attitudes about religion and spirituality differ. Americans are more likely to see spirituality as relevant and useful.

Perceived Relevance of Religion and Spirituality



US Population

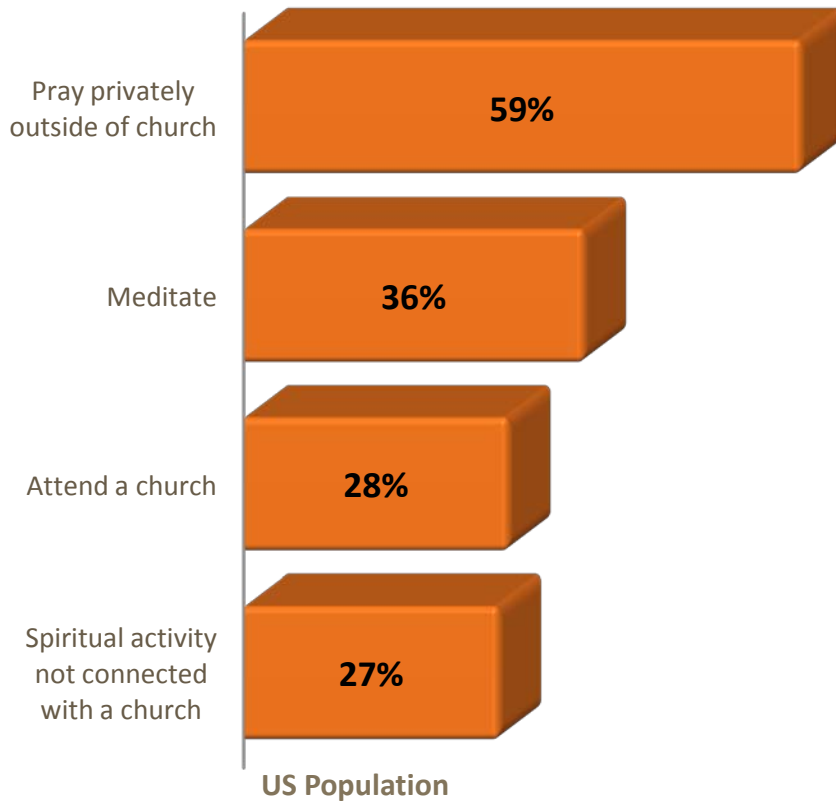
•How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Those who are both religious and spiritual are most likely to participate in religious/spiritual practice.

Religious/Spiritual Practice

% Once per week or more



% FREQUENTLY, Key Groups					
US Population	Community Influencers	Business Influencers	Spiritual only	Religious only	Both
59%	62%	61%	50%	62%	87%
36%	46%	52%	41%	35%	49%
28%	37%	38%	12%	46%	54%
27%	36%	41%	29%	29%	38%

•How often do you do each of the following activities?



Americans have a growing interest in spirituality and are searching for guidance.

Connection to Spirituality

% Agree



US Population

% AGREE, Key Groups					
US Population	Community Influencers	Business Influencers	Spiritual only	Religious only	Both
69%	67%	69%	63%	71%	89%
60%	63%	67%	66%	42%	77%
58%	52%	56%	56%	58%	57%
48%	52%	56%	70%	45%	39%
41%	41%	44%	22%	55%	67%
31%	30%	39%	30%	45%	31%
27%	22%	32%	27%	43%	24%

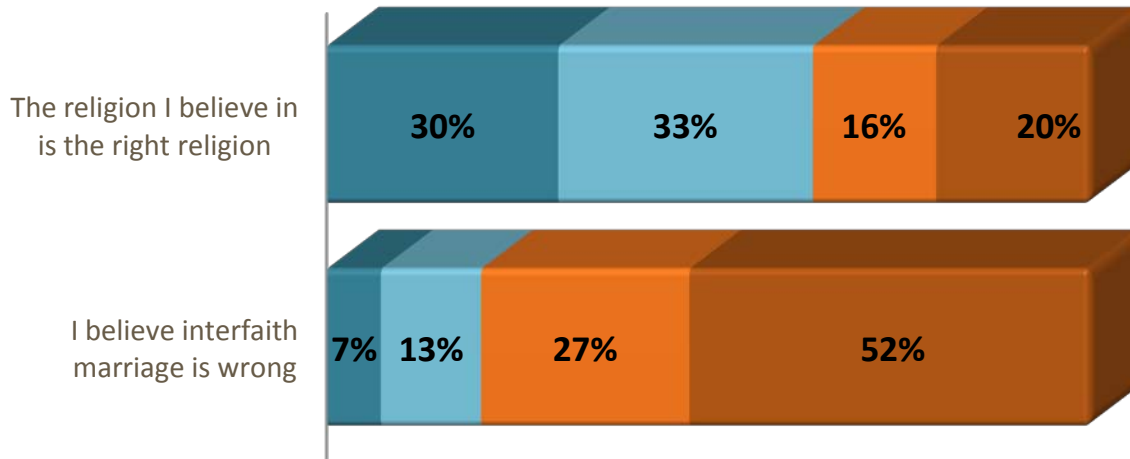
•How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Many Americans believe their religion is the right one.

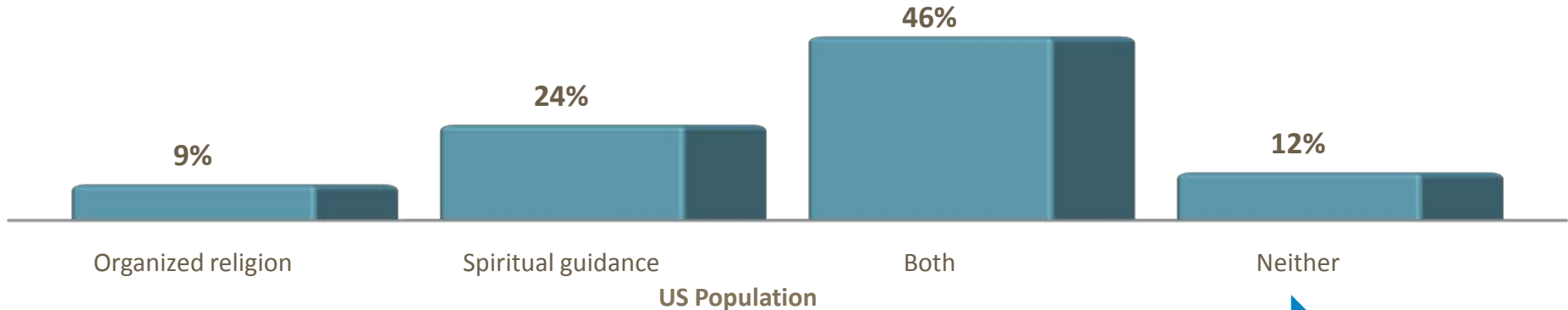
How Religious Preference Affects Lifestyle

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree



% AGREE, Key Groups		
US Population	Community Influencers	Business Influencers
63%	57%	60%
21%	16%	25%

Children should be raised with...



- How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
- Do you believe that your children should be raised with... (Asked of respondents with children.)

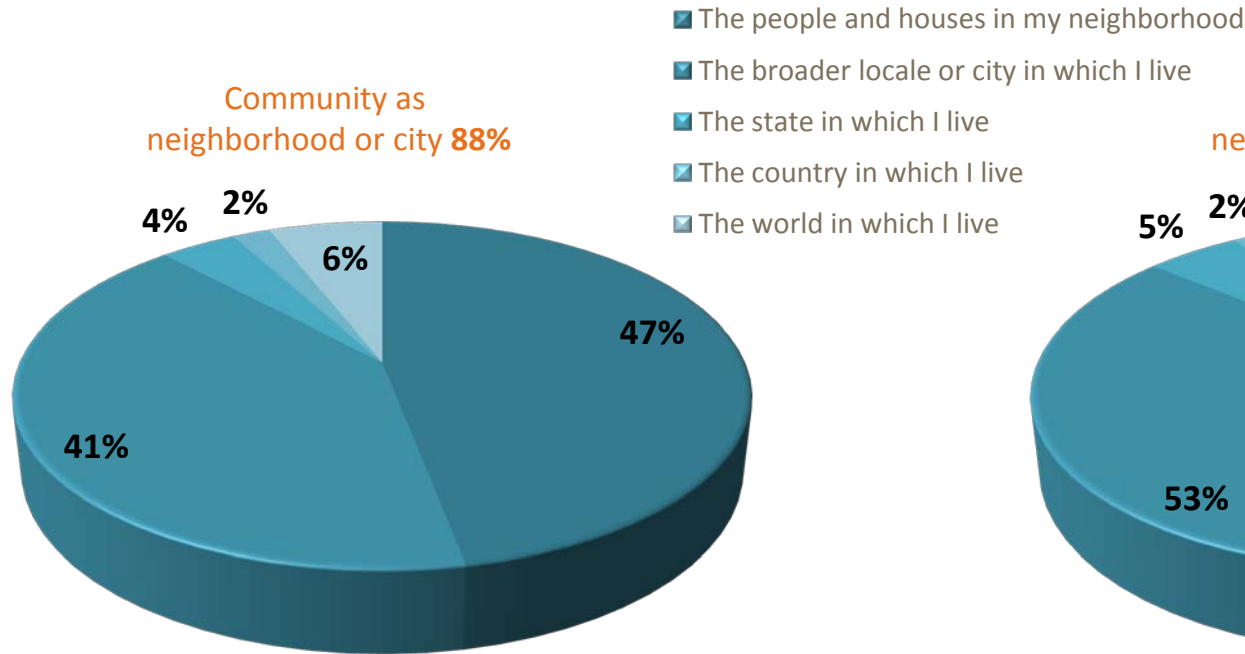


Community & Self

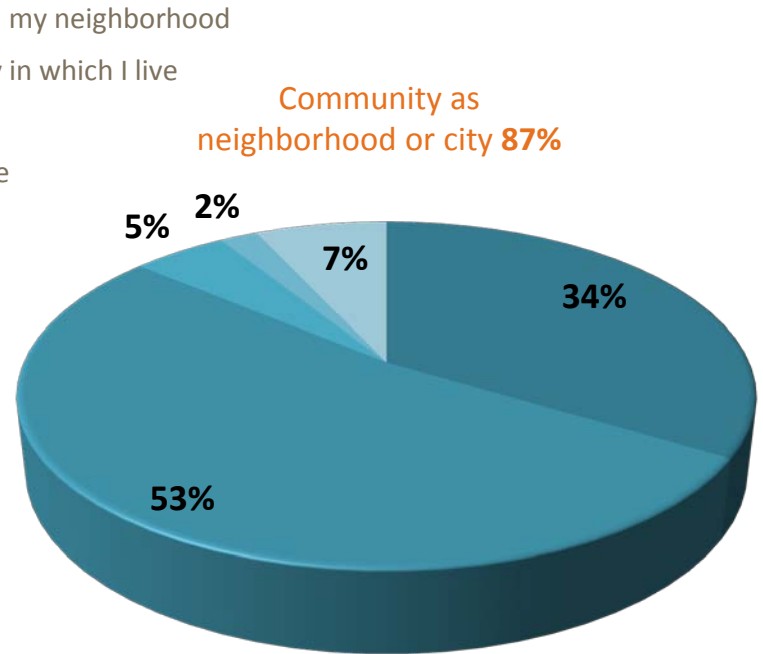


For many, “community” is defined by close geographic proximity.

US Population



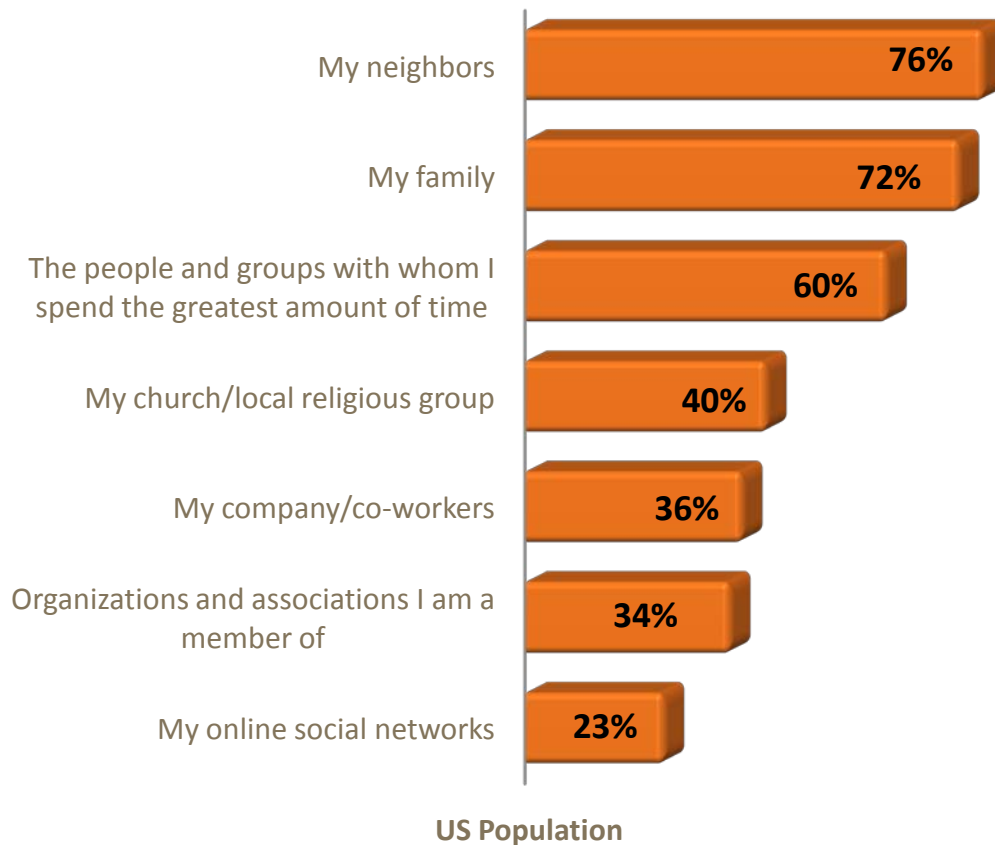
Community and Business Influencers





Influencers have a wider definition of their personal community than other Americans.

Definition of Personal Community



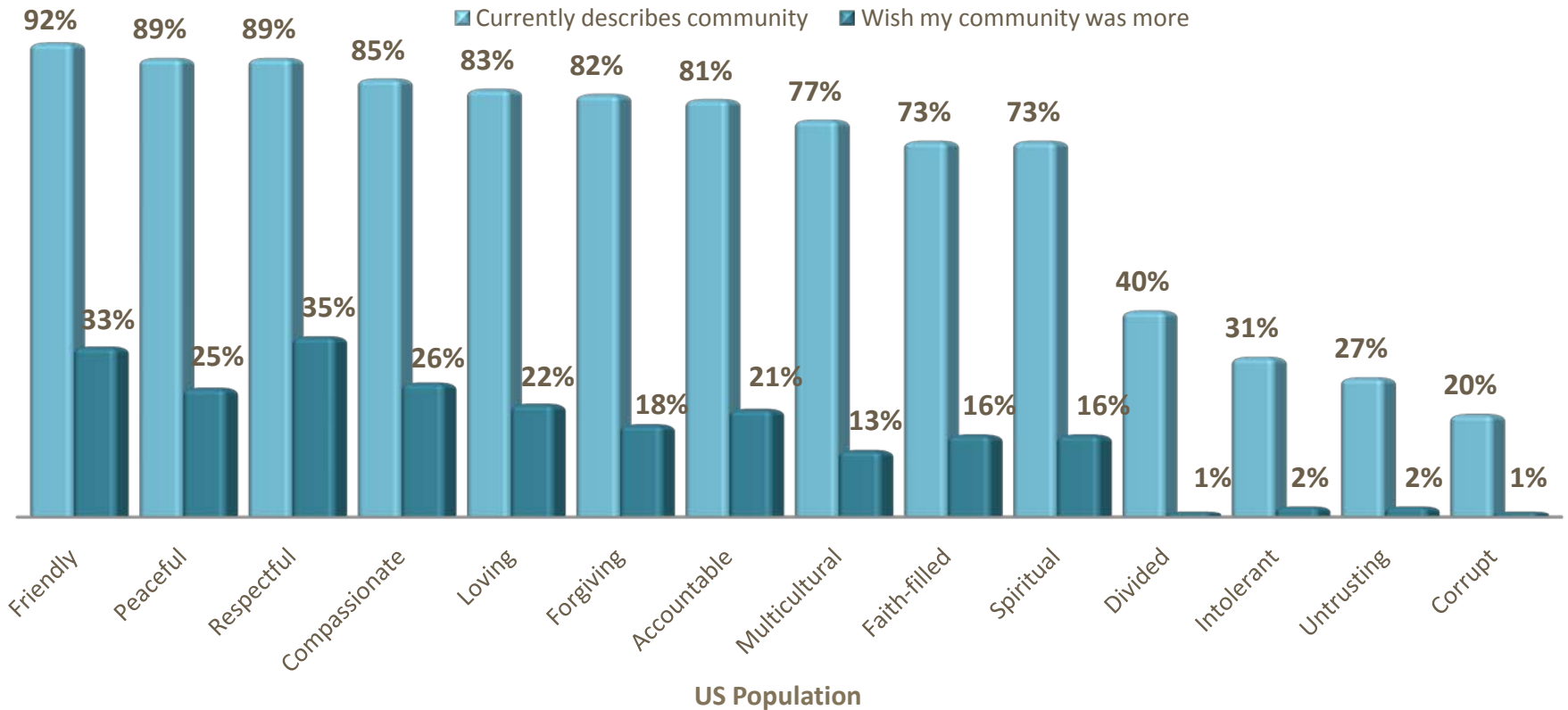
Key Groups		
US Population	Community Influencers	Business Influencers
76%	82%	75%
72%	80%	78%
60%	75%	69%
40%	53%	49%
36%	46%	56%
34%	56%	52%
23%	32%	34%

•Thinking about your personal community, whom do you include...



Americans recognize the positive qualities of their communities, but also identify room for improvement.

Preference for Personal Community



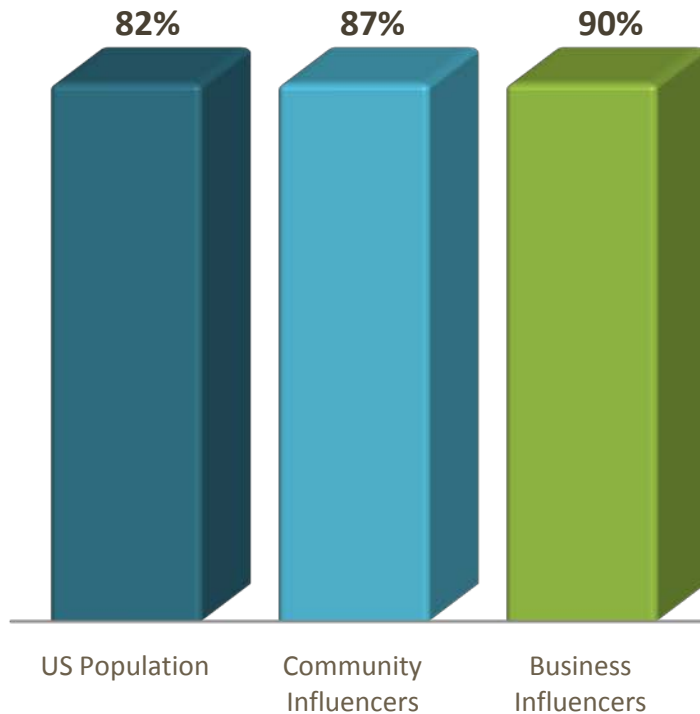
•Thinking about this personal community, how well do you agree that each of these terms describes your community now?
•Which of the following do you wish your personal community was more of?



Americans want to be a part of a community and are looking to belong to something bigger than themselves.

Importance of Community

% IMPORTANT
"To feel part of a community"



Joining Something Bigger

% AGREE
"I want to join something bigger than myself, but I don't know how to begin."



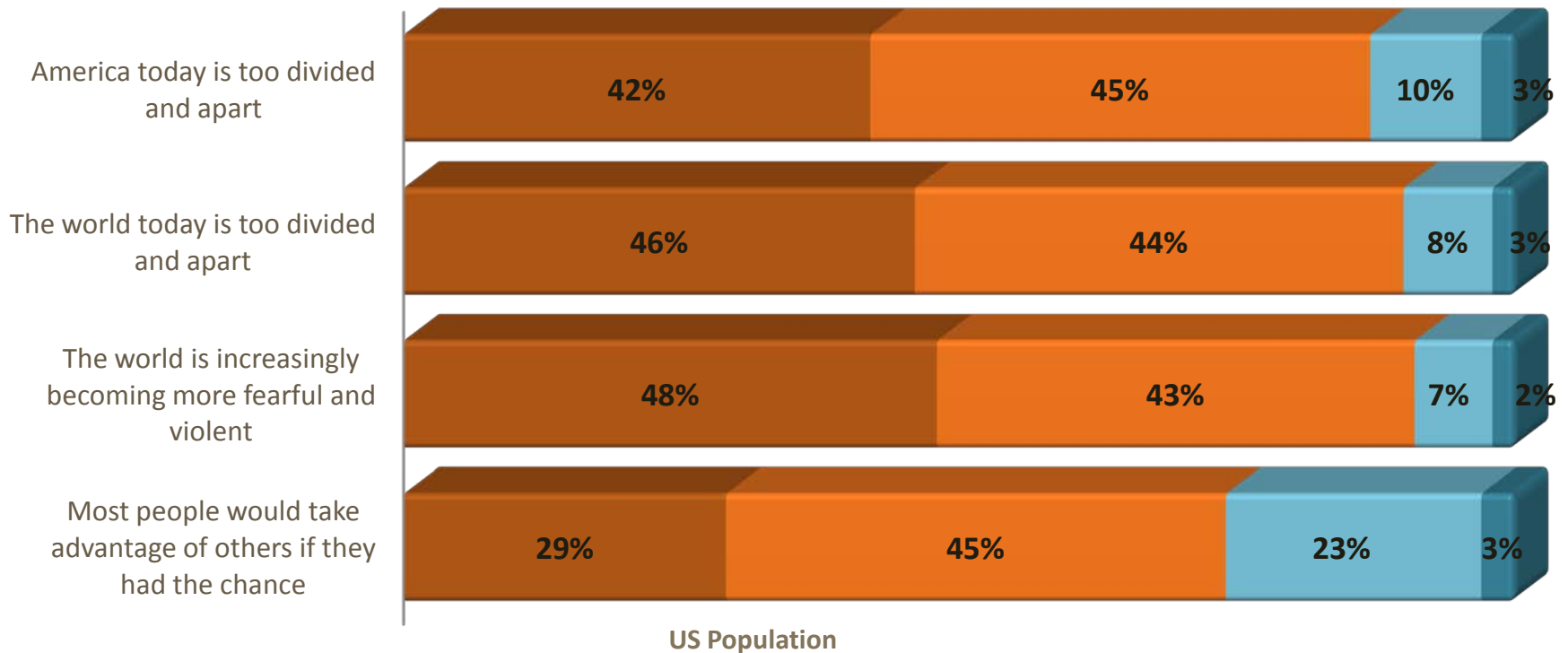
- How important would you say each of the following is in your personal life?
- For each of the following statements, please indicate how much you agree or disagree.



Americans believe that both the United States and the world are too divided and apart.

Perception of Social Health

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

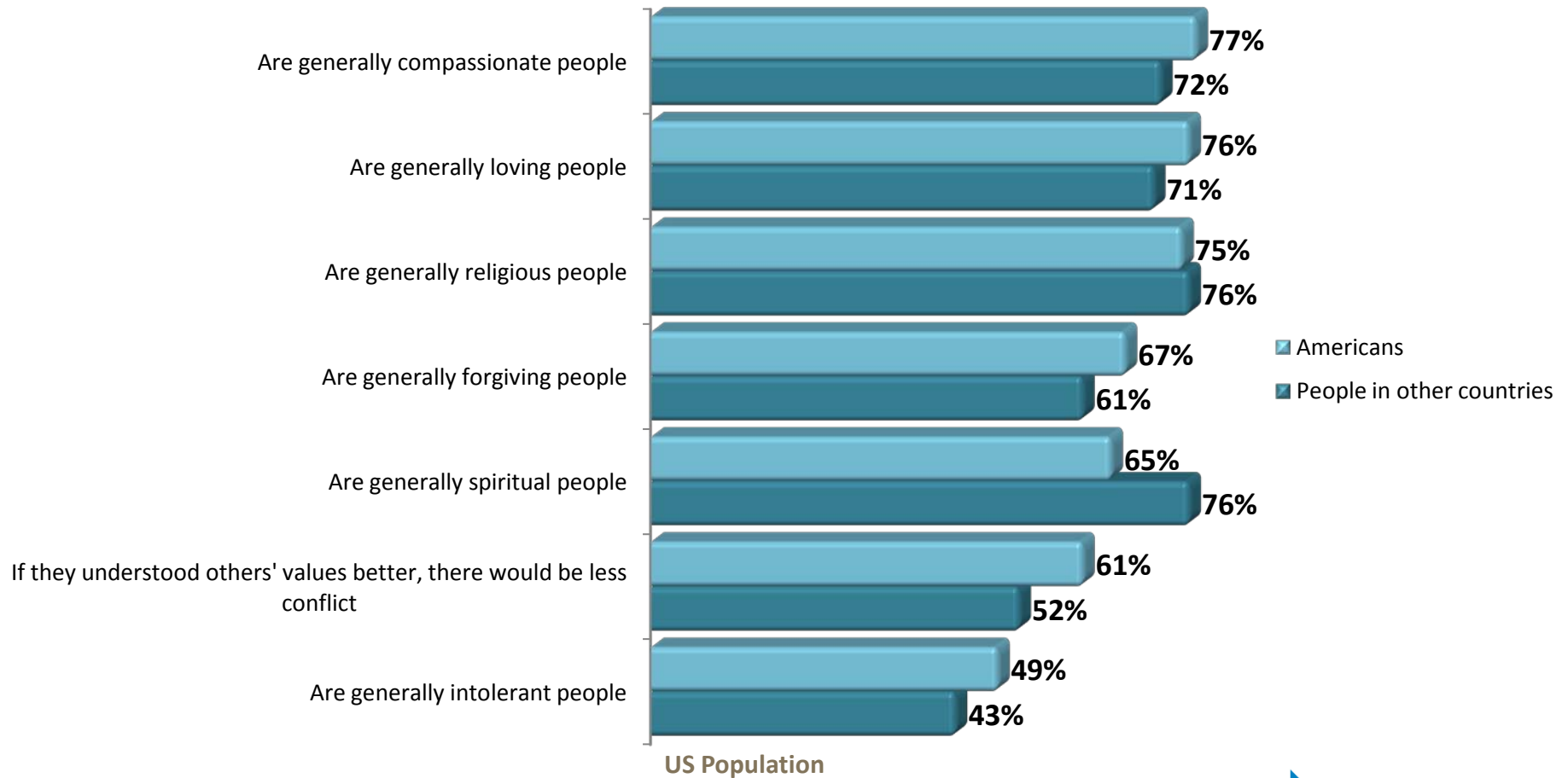


•For each of the following statements, please indicate how much you agree or disagree.



The majority of Americans have similar perceptions of themselves as they do of people around the world.

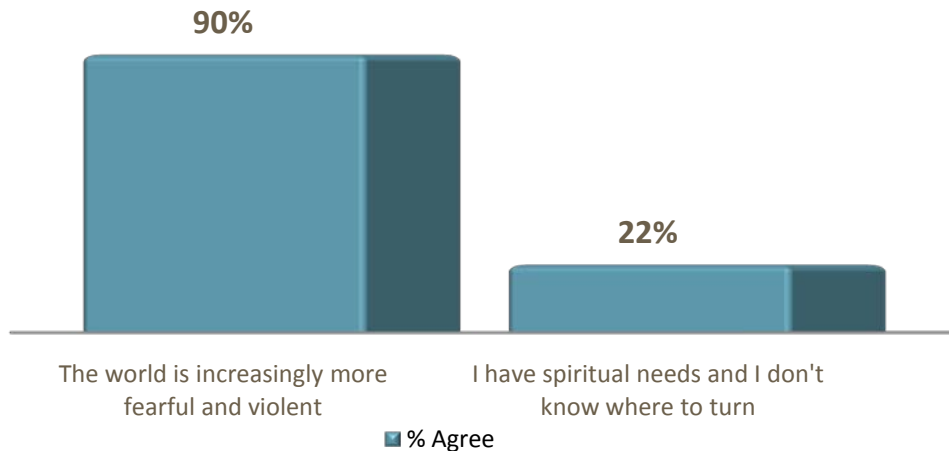
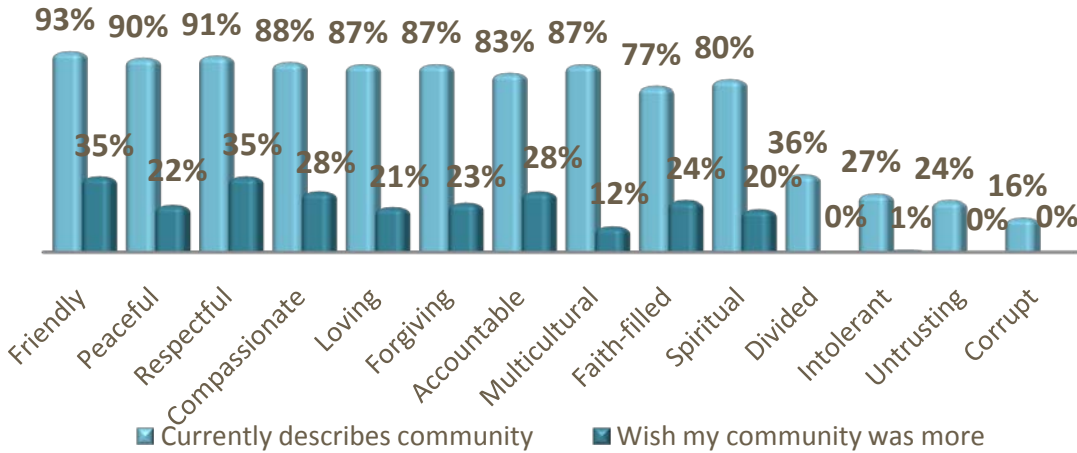
Perceptions of Foreign Cultures



•How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Total % Agree shown)
Question split sampled [Americans] [People in other countries]



Detailed Findings by City

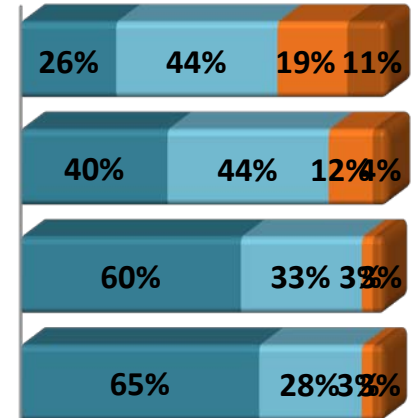


I need more meaningful love in my personal life

We need more meaningful love in my community

We need more meaningful love in America

We need more meaningful love in the world

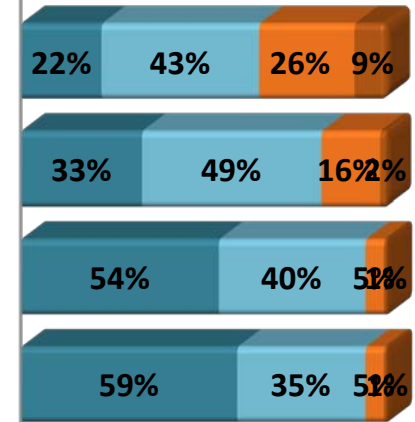


I need more forgiveness in my personal life

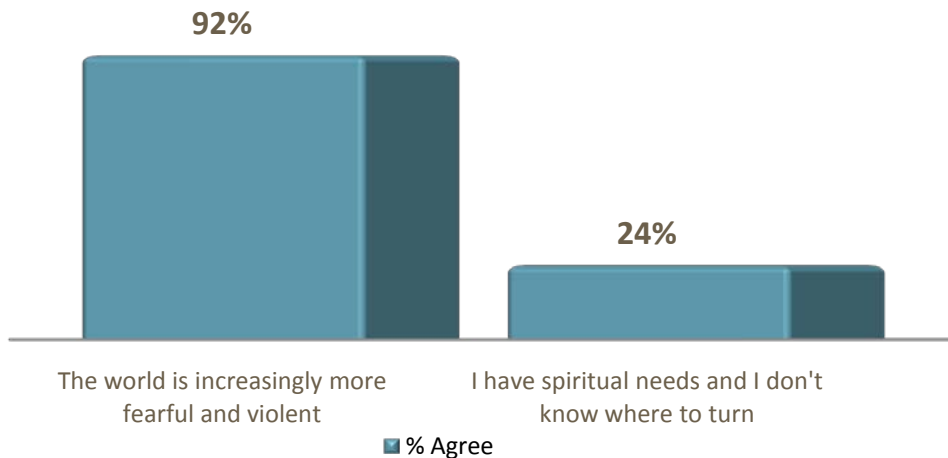
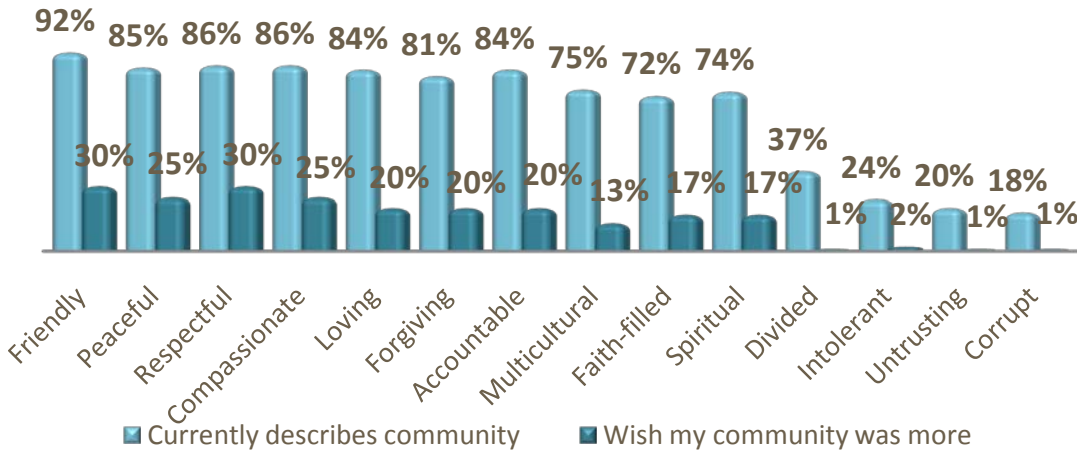
We need more forgiveness in my community

We need more forgiveness in America

We need more forgiveness in the world



Strongly agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

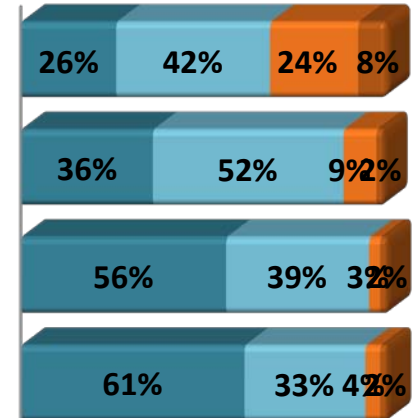


I need more meaningful love in my personal life

We need more meaningful love in my community

We need more meaningful love in America

We need more meaningful love in the world

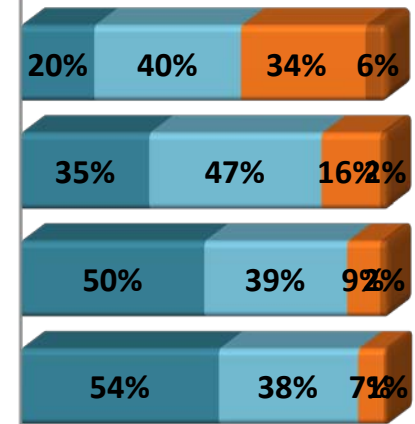


I need more forgiveness in my personal life

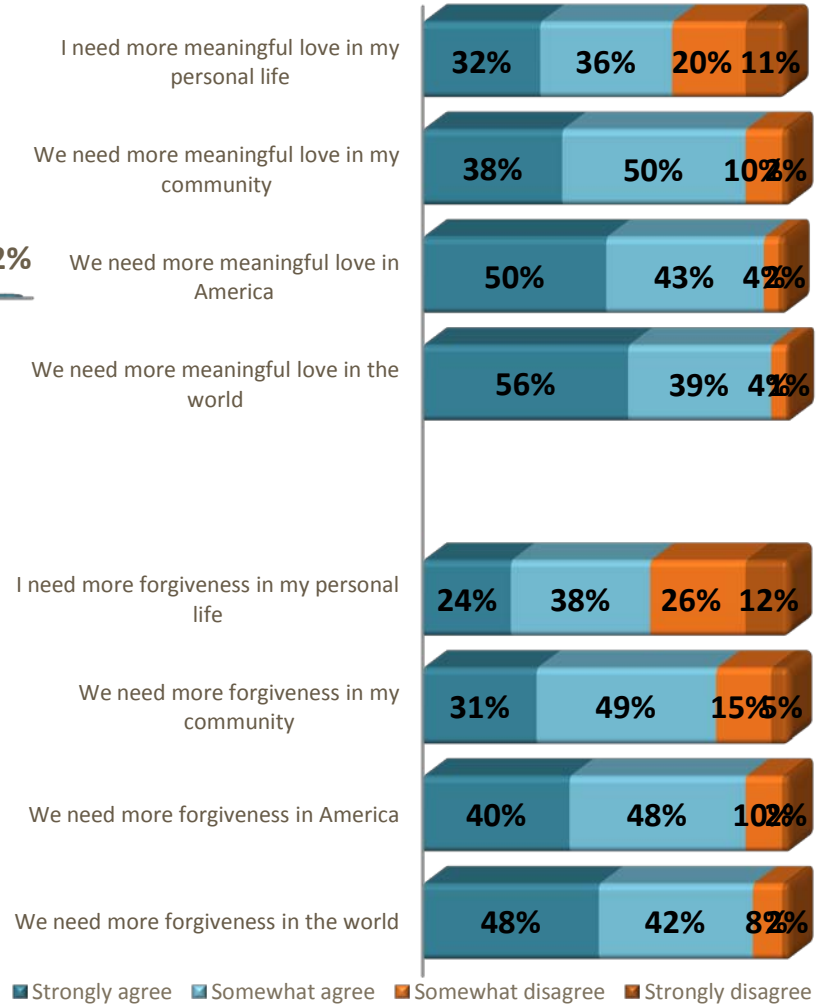
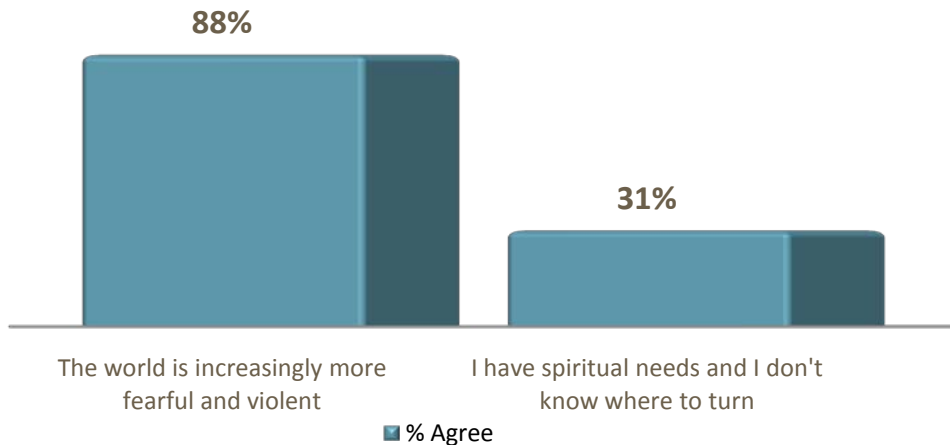
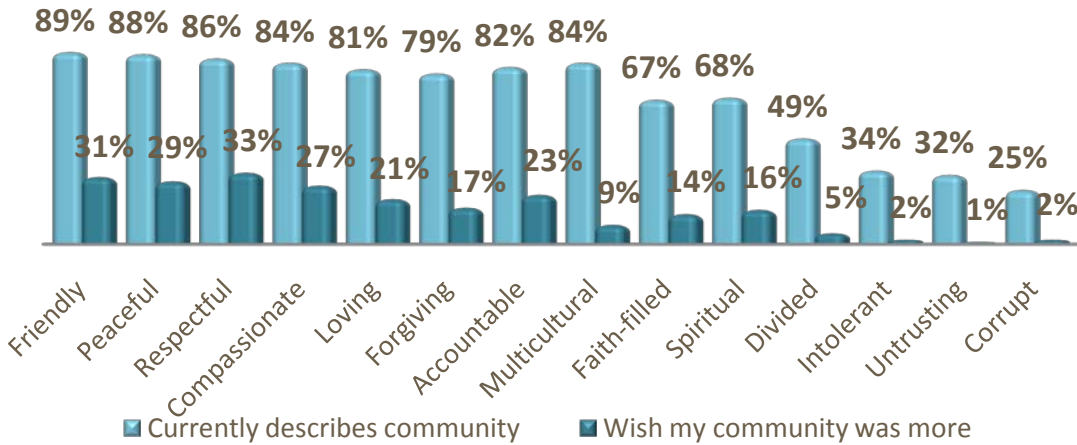
We need more forgiveness in my community

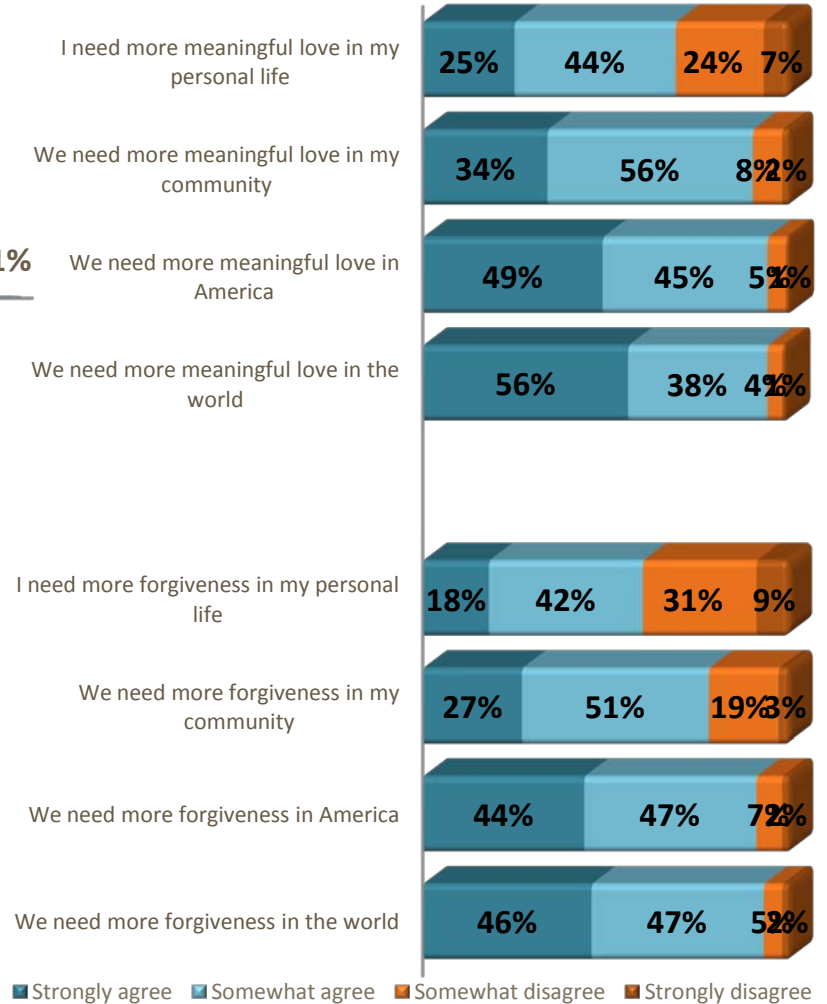
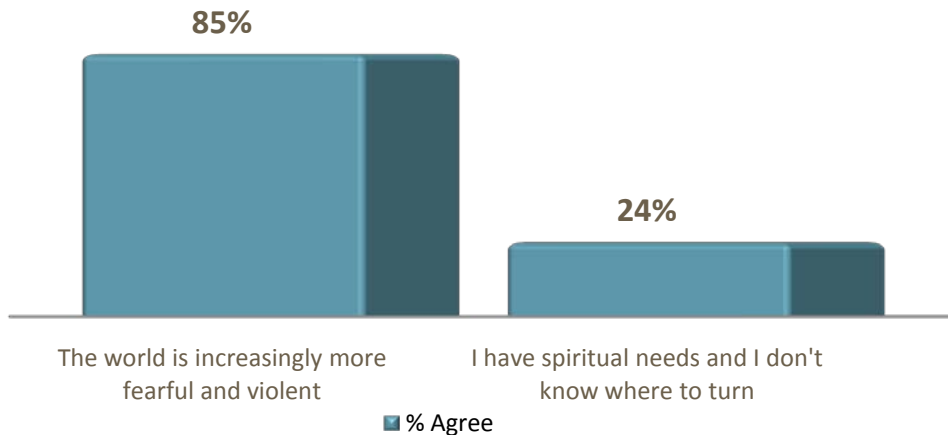
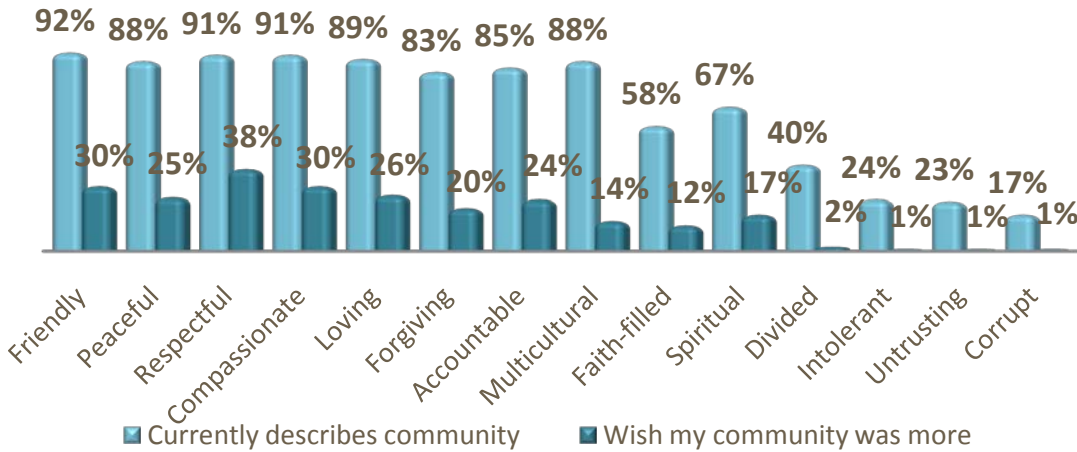
We need more forgiveness in America

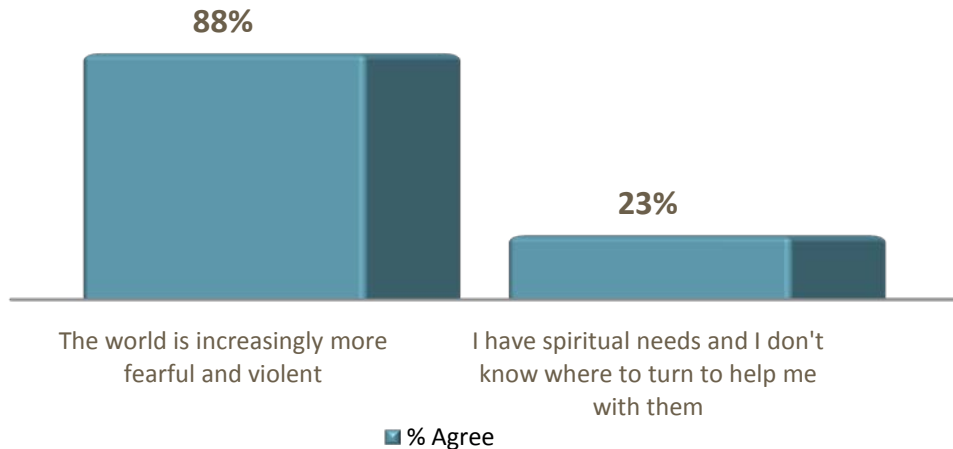
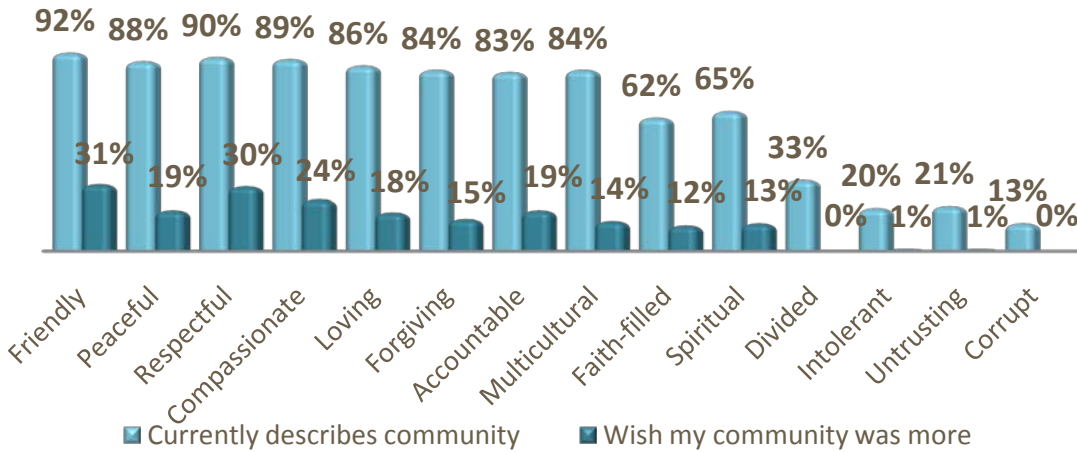
We need more forgiveness in the world



■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree





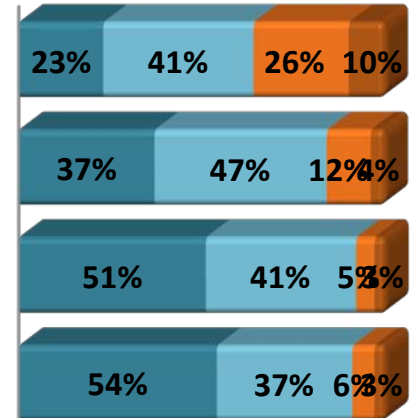


I need more meaningful love in my personal life

We need more meaningful love in my community

We need more meaningful love in America

We need more meaningful love in the world

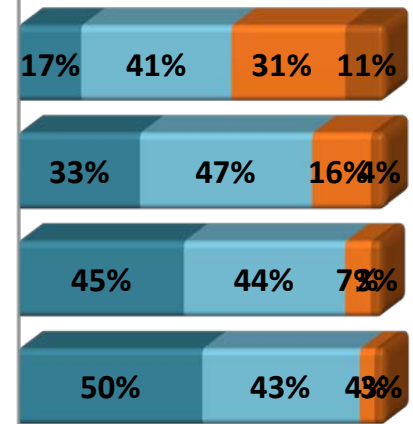


I need more forgiveness in my personal life

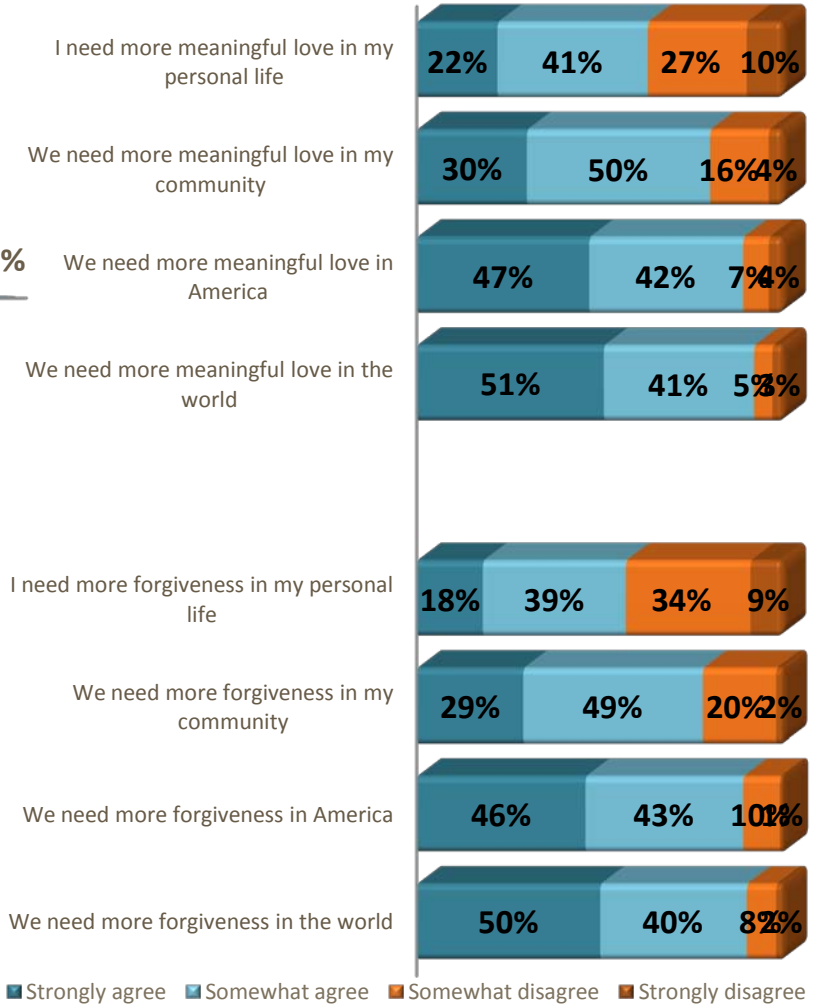
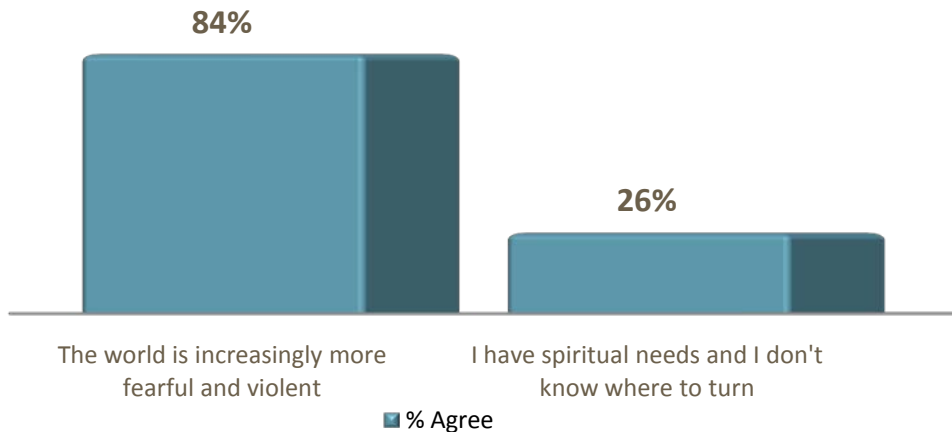
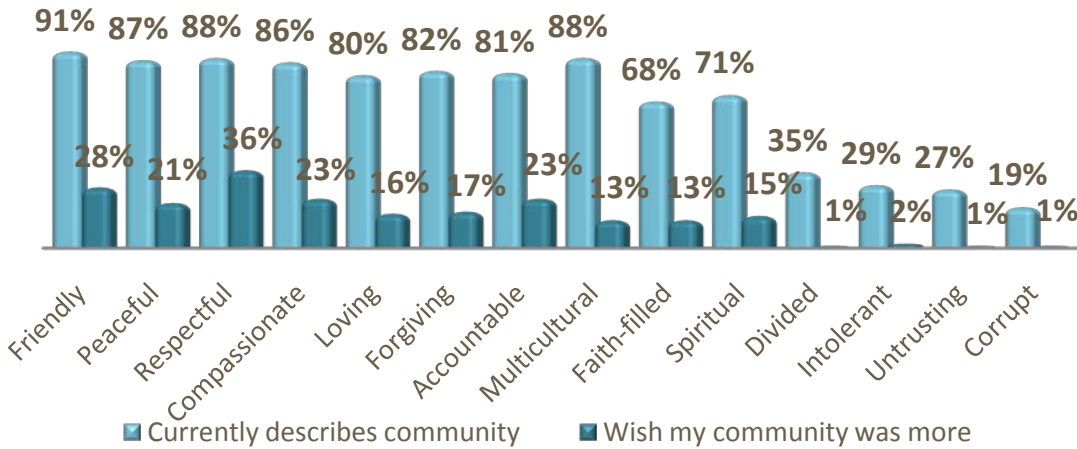
We need more forgiveness in my community

We need more forgiveness in America

We need more forgiveness in the world



■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree





Demographics



Demographics

		Gen Pop	Business Influencers	Community Influencers
Age	18-24	14%	4%	10%
	25-29	10%	9%	7%
	30-34	10%	13%	8%
	35-44	22%	22%	18%
	45-54	22%	24%	21%
	55-64	16%	19%	27%
	65+	6%	8%	11%
Gender	Male	45%	59%	41%
	Female	55%	41%	59%
Region	Northeast	24%	31%	26%
	South	29%	24%	25%
	Midwest	23%	17%	20%
	West	23%	29%	30%
Metropolitan Areas	Dallas	4%	11%	10%
	Detroit	3%	9%	11%
	NYC	16%	23%	18%
	San Francisco	5%	15%	16%
	Seattle	2%	10%	12%
	DC	4%	12%	13%
	None of these cities	65%	20%	20%

		Gen Pop	Business Influencers	Community Influencers
Education	High School or less	21%	9%	8%
	Some College	35%	22%	31%
	College graduate	29%	38%	35%
	Professional/Graduate School	14%	31%	26%
Type of School	Public School	82%	76%	77%
	Parochial/Religious School	10%	12%	14%
	Private School	5%	9%	6%
Employment Status	Employed Full-Time	40%	75%	46%
	Employed Part-Time	14%	14%	14%
	Part-Time Student	1%	0%	<1%
	Full-Time Student	7%	3%	7%
	Retired/Semi-Retired	10%	4%	15%
	Unemployed, looking for work	13%	2%	9%
	Unemployed, not looking for work	2%	1%	<1%
	Homemaker/Unpaid caregiver	8%	0%	5%
	Disabled	5%	1%	3%



Demographics

		Gen Pop	Business Influencers	Community Influencers
Ethnicity	Caucasian	76%	78%	79%
	African-American	8%	6%	8%
	Asian	5%	8%	6%
	Hispanic	9%	5%	5%
	American Indian	<1%	1%	1%
	Middle-Eastern	<1%	<1%	<1%
	Other	2%	1%	2%
Income Level	>\$20,000	15%	5%	8%
	\$20,000-\$34,999	19%	8%	12%
	\$35,000-\$49,999	17%	11%	15%
	\$50,000-\$74,999	21%	20%	22%
	\$75,000-\$99,999	14%	18%	18%
	\$100,000-\$149,999	8%	19%	15%
	\$150,000+	4%	17%	10%
Voting Preference	McCain	29%	29%	34%
	Obama	43%	56%	53%
	Other	4%	6%	5%
	Did not vote	23%	9%	8%

		Gen Pop	Business Influencers	Community Influencers
Occupation	Business	9%	27%	12%
	Education	8%	10%	12%
	Health	4%	7%	7%
	Government	5%	6%	6%
	Engineering	3%	6%	4%
	Labor	3%	2%	3%
	NGO/Non-profit	2%	5%	4%
	Communications	2%	5%	2%
	Law	1%	2%	2%
	Arts	1%	3%	1%
	Design	1%	3%	2%
	Sports	1%	2%	1%
	Natural Sciences	<1%	1%	1%
	Religion	1%	1%	1%
	Social Sciences	<1%	1%	1%
	Humanities	<1%	1%	1%
	None of these	28%	28%	19%
	Not currently professionally employed	34%	0%	28%



Demographics

		Gen Pop	Business Influencers	Community Influencers
Professional Titles	C-Suite	5%	31%	6%
	President	3%	20%	5%
	Executive Vice President	1%	7%	2%
	Senior Vice President	1%	4%	1%
	Vice President	1%	7%	2%
	Director	4%	31%	8%
	Manager	16%	0%	20%
	Other Professional Staff Member	32%	0%	37%
	Not currently professionally employed	13%	0%	5%
	None	23%	0%	14%
Marital Status	Married	47%	56%	52%
	In a relationship, but not married	13%	8%	10%
	Single	25%	22%	21%
	Widowed	3%	3%	4%
	Divorced	11%	9%	11%
	Prefer not to answer	<1%	1%	<1%

		Gen Pop	Business Influencers	Community Influencers
Children in HH	Yes	34%	39%	31%
	No	66%	61%	69%
Religion	Protestant / Christian	36%	26%	34%
	Catholic	22%	26%	24%
	Born-again	11%	8%	12%
	Jewish	4%	9%	7%
	Evangelical	2%	5%	4%
	Buddhist	1%	2%	2%
	Believe in God, but not organized religion	1%	4%	2%
	Hindu	1%	3%	1%
	Muslim	1%	2%	1%
	None/Atheist/Agnostic	9%	9%	10%
	Other	20%	20%	21%
	Don't Know/Refused	7%	6%	5%