

ARE YOU DYING TO GET MARRIED... OR IN ZERO RUSH?

There's a new bridal divide: Women who want a rock so badly that their ring finger's twitching, and others extending singledom as long as possible. Tick off our checklist to see where you stand on the issue (you might surprise yourself).

By Julia Gaynor

are 21 and 22," says Risa Provencio, a wedding consultant at Romanza Events in San Clemente, California. "They all want to be Jessica Simpson and live the *Newlyweds* life. They want big princess weddings, and they want to start their family young, like Kate Hudson did."

Nationwide, more bridal consultants are taking notice. "A few years ago, the norm was to have your career first and your family later," says Siobhan Flaherty, of Flaherty Miller Events in NYC. "There seems to be a backlash against waiting to marry, or at least a switch. It's suddenly trendy to have babies young, and that means getting married young."

You might be *sure* you know where you stand on this issue—marry now or delay it. But still, powerful forces bombard you every day. "Outside forces, like family pressures and being besieged by wedding fever, can make it hard to flesh out your feelings," says psychologist Dale V. Atkins, PhD, coauthor of *Wedding Sanity Savers* and advice columnist for Weddingchannel.com.

Plus, it's easy to look at women who are in a different place in their life than you are and feel there's something wrong with you. Perhaps all your friends are getting hitched, and you're the *only* one not going bridal, or you may genuinely crave couplehood but are surrounded by giddy bachelorette friends.

To suss out which commitment camp you *really* fall into, read our two checklists on the following pages—and be honest with your answers. Then learn how to be happy where you are...and know you're there for the right reasons.

Hubbies in Hiding

Only 22 percent of the men surveyed say they don't think they're the marrying kind, according to a survey by the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University.

■ When to marry is a huge decision in most women's lives, and these days, many sexy single *Cosmo* chicks are putting off getting hitched until their mid to late 20s and even 30s. Not only has the median age of first-time marriages for women risen over the past three decades from age 21 to 25, but the percentage of unmarried women ages 20 to 24 jumped from 36 percent to 75 percent. Additionally, the percentage of unmarried 30- to 34-year-olds spiked from 6 percent to 23 percent, according to the most recent census figures.

But despite all the women out there who are prolonging singlehood and loving it, there are also a bunch of young women who are ready to walk down the aisle practically as soon as they hit their 20s. "I've seen a big wave of brides coming through lately who