

# What is shaping culture: The single life

 By [Brett Rogers](#)

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As we become more self-determining, more identity-driven and less inclined to contact with other people we have started focusing more on ourselves and our own desires, rejecting the norms of the past and choosing The Single Life. It's not just us ordinary humans either, with celebrities like Emma Watson who coined the term "Self-Partnered"



Photo by [Suhyeon Choi](#) on [Unsplash](#).

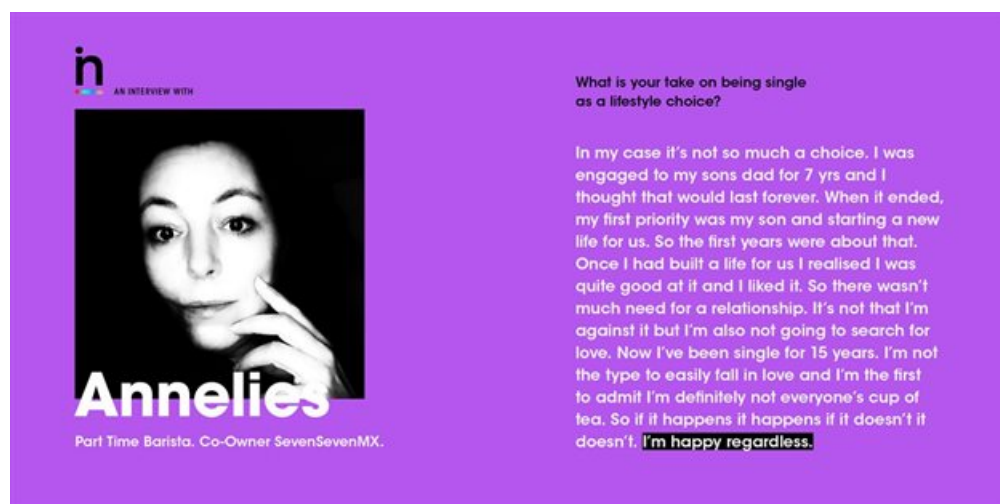
Do you take you to be your lawfully wedded ... you? Linda Doktor did. She's our introduction to The Single Life, a woman who married herself on a beach and in the process made visible something that many among us have become: dedicated and committed to ourselves.

"...how we are showing up for ourselves is how the world is going to reflect back at us, including our friendships, our environment and our relationships. I really wanted to enter into a conscious relationship with myself and I wanted to really tap into the unconditional love of honouring myself because quite often we get caught up in treating others nice but how are we actually treating ourselves?"

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So, what we understood from Linda is this is not so much about committing to being single so much as committing to looking after yourself, in order to be the best you that you can be. Committing to caring for your mental and physical health, for what you want to do, for how you want to live your life, and by doing so creating the strongest best version of yourself that you can be. If you do find a romantic partner, they will find in you a person powerful in their own skin, hopefully resulting in a much healthier relationship than if they hadn't first cared for themselves.

Not everyone does this intentionally, having found themselves single for some time they've adapted to a new way of thinking which gives them a sense of independence that they didn't know they had.

A purple rectangular graphic featuring a black and white portrait of a woman, Annelies, on the left. She is resting her chin on her hand. To the right of the portrait, there is white text. At the top left of the graphic is a small 'h' logo with the text 'AN INTERVIEW WITH' below it. The main text on the right asks a question and provides a response. At the bottom left, the name 'Annelies' is written in large white letters, followed by her job title in smaller white text.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH

What is your take on being single as a lifestyle choice?

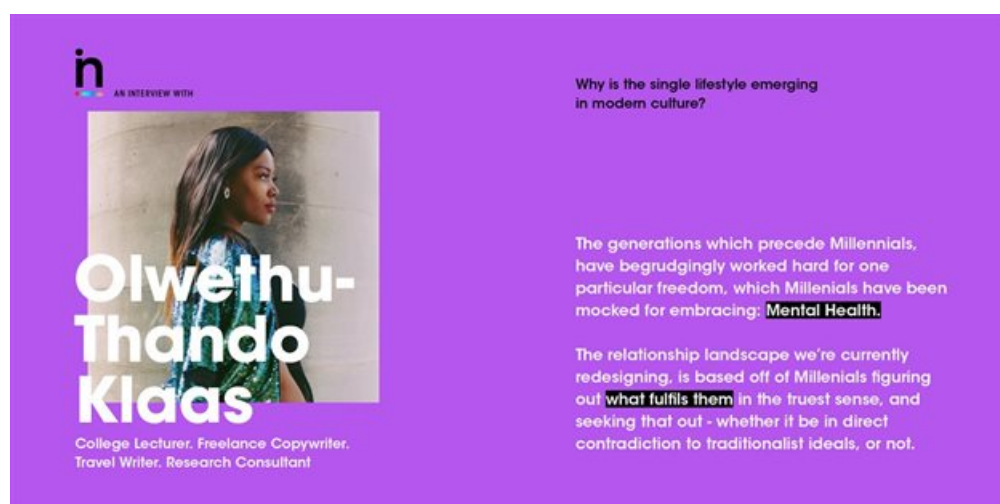
In my case it's not so much a choice. I was engaged to my sons dad for 7 yrs and I thought that would last forever. When it ended, my first priority was my son and starting a new life for us. So the first years were about that. Once I had built a life for us I realised I was quite good at it and I liked it. So there wasn't much need for a relationship. It's not that I'm against it but I'm also not going to search for love. Now I've been single for 15 years. I'm not the type to easily fall in love and I'm the first to admit I'm definitely not everyone's cup of tea. So if it happens it happens if it doesn't it doesn't. **I'm happy regardless.**

**Annelies**  
Part Time Barista. Co-Owner SevenSevenMX.

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The Single Life, despite all the dating apps and the amorous suitors sliding into your dm's, is something that is becoming more and more attractive to some people. We are taught from a young age that, in order to have a healthy relationship, we'll need to adapt to our partner, to make concessions, to compromise. And, while this is true, we cannot ignore the fact that we are stand-alone people who have wants and needs that are uniquely our own.

Mental health is a major problem in modern life and many are finding ways to address their mental health in more conscious ways. One of those ways is to release oneself from the societal pressures that say that you have to either be in a relationship or chasing one.

A purple rectangular graphic featuring a photograph of a woman, Olwethu-Thando Klaas, on the left. She is wearing a patterned top and looking to the side. To the right of the photo, there is white text. At the top left of the graphic is a small 'h' logo with the text 'AN INTERVIEW WITH' below it. The main text on the right asks a question and provides a response. At the bottom left, the name 'Olwethu-Thando Klaas' is written in large white letters, followed by her job titles in smaller white text.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH

Why is the single lifestyle emerging in modern culture?

The generations which precede Millennials, have begrudgingly worked hard for one particular freedom, which Millenials have been mocked for embracing: **Mental Health.**

The relationship landscape we're currently redesigning, is based off of Millenials figuring out what fulfils them in the truest sense, and seeking that out - whether it be in direct contradiction to traditionalist ideals, or not.

**Olwethu-Thando Klaas**  
College Lecturer. Freelance Copywriter. Travel Writer. Research Consultant

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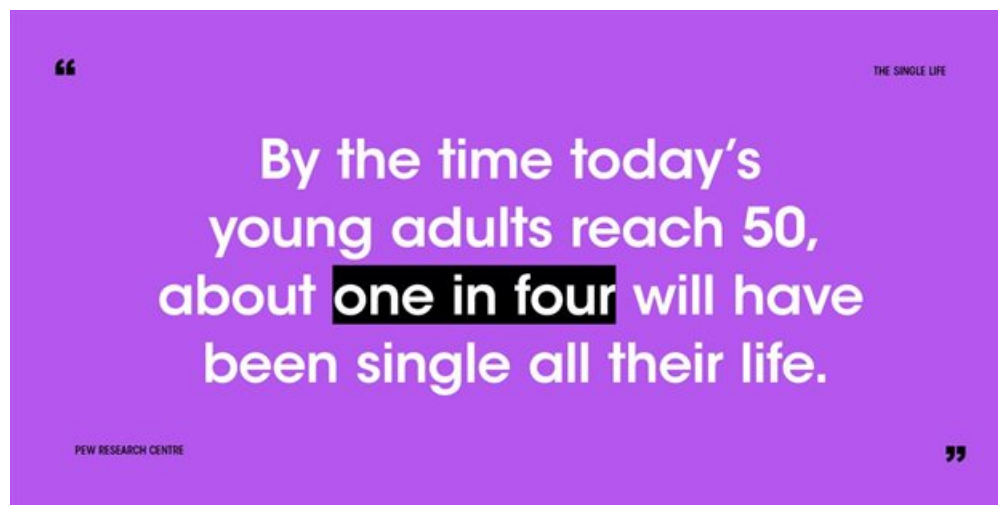
People like Olwethu have a growing awareness which many generations before simply didn't have, or didn't have the luxury to have. Historically, gender roles dictated a certain level of need to be in a relationship (especially women as they were prevented from earning a decent salary and becoming independent). This norm has changed, meaning that women neither need to, nor have to be in a relationship in order to have an enjoyable life. Equally, with men, the norm that without a

partner they were somehow less 'of a man' no longer exists, freeing all genders from that societal pressures, somewhat.

Author, academic and activist Dr Bella DePaulo made a serious statement regarding how those who are single are treated. Her assertion is that single people are being consciously and unconsciously discriminated against. The term she coined in relation to this discrimination is 'singlism', which she compares to racism and sexism.

Some singlism actions include those single people get used to and don't seem to notice much – friends in relationships no longer invite singles along to events, or colleagues expecting more of you at work because you are not in a relationship. But DePaula also highlighted a few very real problems that single people have. For instance, the 'single supplement' when travelling or effectively paying more per person for rent.

There are more than 1000 laws in the USA that benefit and protect people who are legally married. Sometimes that involves financial protection offering opportunities to people who are married but not to those who aren't. Moreover, single people are a massive part of the population and, generally speaking, are ignored as a growing culture.



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## ABOUT BRETT ROGERS

Brett Rogers, culture lead at Cape Town advertising agency HaveYouHeard and content curator for In\_, a channel of content, which showcases cultural forces that are changing the world. It aims to inform, inspire and entertain the viewer and does so with multimedia posts, including podcasts, videos, google trends, mini Q+A's and more. In\_ talks to those interested in in-depth cultural exploration and those curious about the world we live in.

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