



I Have a (New American) Dream

87% of U.S Adults no Longer Consider Owning a Home to be the Most Essential Part of their American Dream

Santa Monica, Calif., August 11, 2011 – If your American Dream doesn't elicit thoughts of single family homes with white picket fences and 2.5 kids, you're not alone. While home ownership was once the definitive sign of success in the United States, a recent Rent.com survey found that 87% of U.S. adults no longer consider owning a home to be the most essential part of their American Dream.

To Each His Own Dream

To learn more about what *does* inspire and fill the dreams of Americans today, Rent.com invited people to open up in the *New American Dream Contest*. Hundreds of individuals shared videos and essays describing their life's ambitions. What Rent.com discovered is that the American dream is changing and with it the measure of our success. After struggling to keep up with the Joneses for too long, Americans are finally beginning to cast of the singular notion that home ownership and the accumulation of wealth are at the core of the American dream. Instead, Americans are taking back the dream and redefining their lives in ways that are more personally meaningful. Some are going back to basics, longing for the simplicity of family life while others are going around the world in search of their dreams. Happiness, as it turns out, comes in many forms and achievement is being redefined by the individual; to each his own dream.

Throughout the stories submitted for the contest, several common themes emerged showcasing not only the variety but also the simplicity of what Americans are dreaming about today. From these themes we developed the Top 7 New American Dreams:

1. **Freedom from Debt:** Whether it's school loans or a mortgage, Americans are tired of being saddled with debt. SweetNesey writes, "For too many years many Americans acted as if it was perfectly normal to run up debt. I want to be an awesome and faithful saver and a role model for my son." Ranah describes her student loan debt as "a ball and chain around my neck, preventing me from providing for my retirement or a future home for myself." *Independence and self-reliance remain essential American values.*
2. **Travel:** Across the country, numerous Americans told Rent.com that they wanted to travel the world. Whether embarking on a cross-country road trip or travel internationally, wanderlust abounds. Some wanted to just change things up and see something new while others sought to gain a better understanding of other people and cultures. *The desire to see the world and understand its people defines the longings of modern wanderers.*
3. **To Change the World:** A significant number of Americans told Rent.com that their New American Dream was to have a positive impact on society, whether locally, nationally or globally. From starting charities to providing professional services to under-served communities, *Americans want to give back graciously of what is theirs.*

4. **Financial Stability:** Americans are working harder to survive in the midst of a volatile economy. In the wake of an economic recession, many Americans simply desire relief from the stress of making ends meet. Yvonne writes, "I am a single mother of a two-year-old. A few months ago I lost my job, and as of yet have not found a new one. My new American dream is to keep my one bedroom apartment." *No matter what, Americans fight to survive.*
5. **Doing What You Love:** The idea that you should do what you love and love what you do has become a catalyst for many Americans who seek more personally fulfilling career paths. Starting a business, working for a cause, or earning a living through pursuing writing, music and art are just some of the *passions to which Americans want to devote their lives.*
6. **The Simple Life:** In a fast-paced and complex society, many people just want to slow down and take a moment to enjoy the simple things in life. Arizkid sums it nicely by saying, "The American Dream is to enjoy life to the fullest. Family and friends are the greatest gift ever. Money can buy the essentials but it can't buy happiness." *Cherishing freedom and happiness will always be at the heart of the American dream.*
7. **For the Kids:** Not surprisingly, many parents want to create a better life for their children. Some common themes were providing a good education, moving to a better neighborhood, or affording them life-enriching experiences. As NikiVee puts it, "It is my hope not to give my child the world, but rather, to show her the world. If I do that, maybe she will have the desire and opportunity to change it." *The future of America is our children, and our dreams reflect that.*

While our dreams are changing in response to a more complex world what is clear is that certain qualities that characterize Americans have not changed. Independence, survival, and a longing to build a better life for ourselves and future generations are woven into the fabric of our lives. As our founding fathers knew well, it's our ability to adapt and redefine our lives to achieve happiness and success that makes us truly American. If owning a home is not right for you then take back the dream and make it your own.

For more information on the New American Dream, please visit [Take Back the Dream](#).

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In addition to providing renters free access to detailed property listings and robust search tools, Rent.com rewards renters with a \$100 prepaid Visa® debit card if they: (1) find their property using the Rent.com website, (2) tell the property owner or manager they found their rental home using

Rent.com, and (3) report to Rent.com signing a lease with a property that participates in the \$100 Reward Program. Rent.com is dedicated to giving renters a convenient way to find the perfect place to live.

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