

## CANADIANS ON 'LIVING FREE'

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If Canadians Had No Bills To Pay For One Year, Majorities  
Would "Spend More Time With Family" (83%), "Wipe Financial  
Slate Clean" (79%), Or "Travel" (77%)*



**Public Release Date: October 20, 2004 at 11:45 a.m. (EDT)**

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## CANADIANS ON 'LIVING FREE'

*Just 33% Of Canadians Think "Nothing" Is Free In Life  
If Canadians Had No Bills To Pay For One Year, Majorities Would  
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Clean" (79%), Or "Travel" (77%)*

Toronto, ON - A new Ipsos-Reid/Air Miles survey reveals that when asked what is free in life, only one-third (33%) of Canadians say, unprompted, "nothing". In fact most Canadians offer a variety of thoughts when asked this question, with many pointing to things like "the air we breathe" (18%) and "love/friendship" (13%) as things that are free in life (all other responses were mentioned by fewer than 10% of respondents and can be found on the pages that follow).

And if Canadians had "no bills to pay for one year" strong majorities of them would undertake life changes such as "spend more time with family and friends (83%), "wipe the financial slate clean and pay off debt" (79%), "travel" (77%), "live the same life but step it up a notch" (73%), or "renovate your house or purchase a new home or cottage" (59%). While in comparison, only minorities of Canadians would "study or go back to school" (38%), "buy a new car" (36%), "become your own boss by investing in or starting a new business" (32%), or "walk into your boss's office and quit" (14%). Another three in ten (28%) Canadians say they would "not change a single thing."

When asked what 'free' means to them, half of Canadians (52%) mention, unaided, "getting something without paying or working for it" - small portions of Canadians mention things such as "no money problems/having enough money" (7%), "be able to do anything you want/anything within the law" (6%), "no obligations/no strings attached" (4%), "healthy/no health problems" (4%), and "no difficulties/problems" (4%). All other responses can be found on the pages that follow.



Asked which of five statements best defines the term 'Live Free', more than half of Canadians (55%) would define it as "having peace of mind or no worries", while others would define the term as "having time to do what you want" (15%), "having enough money to do what you want" (11%), "having everything you want in life" (11%), or "having no obligations" (5%).

When Canadians are asked to choose from a list the one thing they most dream of doing sometime in their lifetime: Four in ten (42%) choose "spending more time with family", 16% choose "building your own home or cottage", and 12% choose "living in another country" (all other responses were mentioned by fewer than 10% of respondents and can be found on the pages that follow).

And which of a list of five reasons best describes why they've been unable to pursue this dream? One-third (34%) of Canadians say a "lack of time", while a similar proportion (29%) point to "bills and expenses." Fewer mention "family responsibilities" (15%), "career demands and ambitions" (12%), and "fear of change or failure" (3%).

*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/AIR MILES(tm) Reward Program poll conducted from October 1<sup>st</sup> to October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2004. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1001 adult Canadians were interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 2001 Census data.*



## *What Do Canadians Think Is Free In Life?*

During the survey Canadians were asked an open-ended question as to “what is free in life?”

In response to this question:

- One-third of Canadians (33%) state, unaided, that “nothing” is free in life.
- 18% say “the air we breathe”;
- 13% say “love/friendship”;
- 8% say “nature/our environment”;
- 6% say “happiness/smiles”;
- 5% say “freedom of choice”;
- 4% say “be able to do anything you want/anytime within the law”;
- 3% say “thought”;
- 2% say “freedom of speech”;
- 2% say “health”;
- 2% say “family”;
- 2% say “life”; and
- 1% say “advice”.

Of remaining Canadians, 13% state some “other” thing as being free in life, and 5% “don’t know” what is free in life.



- No demographic trends are apparent with respect to this question.

### ***And, If Canadians Had No Bills To Pay For One Year...***

During the survey, Canadians were read a series of possible lifestyle changes and were asked whether or not they would make these changes in their life if they “had no bills to pay for one year”.

When these lifestyle changes are ranked by the highest percentage of Canadians who say “yes” they would make this change:

1. **“Spend more time with family and friends”** ranks first, with 83% of Canadians saying “yes” they would do this and 16% saying “no” they would not do this. The remaining 1% of Canadians “don’t know” whether they would do this or not if they had no bills to pay for a year.
  - Residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (94%) are the most likely of all Canadians to say they would “spend more time with family and friends”, followed by residents of Alberta (87%), British Columbia (86%), Ontario (82%), Atlantic Canada (80%), and Quebec (79%).
  - Those aged 18-54 are significantly more likely than those aged 55 and over to say they would “spend more time with family and friends” (86% vs. 77%).
  - Canadians living in urban regions are significantly more likely than those living in rural regions to say they would “spend more time with family and friends” (84% vs. 77%).
2. **“Wipe the financial slate clean and pay off debt”** ranks second, with 79% of Canadians saying “yes” they would do this and 19% saying “no” they would not do



this. The remaining 1% of Canadians “don’t know” whether or not they would do this if they had no bills to pay for a year.

- Residents of Quebec are significantly less likely than all other Canadians to say they would “wipe the financial slate clean and pay off debt” (65% vs. 91% in Atlantic Canada, 87% in British Columbia, 85% in Alberta, 83% in Saskatchewan/Manitoba, and 82% in Ontario).
  - Those aged 18-54 are significantly more likely than those aged 55 and over to say they would “wipe the financial slate clean and pay off debt” (85% vs. 67%).
  - Women are more likely than men to say they would “wipe the financial slate clean and pay off debt” (82% vs. 76%).
3. “Travel” ranks third, with 77% of Canadians saying “yes” they would do this and 22% saying “no” they would not do this. The remaining 1% of Canadians say they “don’t know” whether they would travel if they had no bills to pay for one year.
- Residents of Ontario (81%) are the most likely to say they would “travel” if they had no bills to pay for one year, followed closely by residents of British Columbia (80%), Atlantic Canada (78%), Alberta (76%), and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (71%) and Quebec (71%).
  - Those aged 18-34 are significantly more likely than those aged 35 and over to say they that they would “travel” if they had no bills to pay for one year (87% vs. 74%).
  - Canadians living in urban regions are significantly more likely than those living in rural regions to say they would “travel” (79% vs. 71%).



- Those with an annual household income of \$60,000 or more are more likely than those with an annual household income of less than \$60,000 to say they would “travel” (82% vs. 74%).
4. **“Live the same life but step it up a notch”** ranks fourth, with 73% of Canadians saying “yes” they would do this if they had no bills to pay for one year and 26% saying “no” they would not do this. The remaining 2% of Canadians “don’t know” if they would do this if they had no bills to pay for one year.
- Residents of Quebec (90%) are by far the most likely Canadians to say they would “live the same life but step it up a notch” if they had no bills to pay for one year, followed by residents of Ontario (71%), Atlantic Canada (68%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (65%), and British Columbia (61%) and Alberta (61%).
  - Women are more likely than men to say they would “live the same life but step it up a notch” if they had no bills to pay for one year (76% vs. 70%).
5. **“Renovate your house or purchase a new home or cottage”** ranks fifth, with 59% of Canadians saying “yes” they would do this if they had no bills to pay for one year and 40% saying “no” they would not do this.
- Residents of Atlantic Canada (70%) are the most likely of all Canadians to say they would renovate their house or purchase a new home or cottage”, followed by residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (66%), Ontario (60%), Alberta (57%), and Quebec (56%) and British Columbia (56%).
  - Canadians age 18-54 are significantly more likely than those age 55 and over to say they would renovate their house or purchase a new home or cottage (65% vs. 48%).



- Women are more likely than men to say they would renovate their house or purchase a new home or cottage (64% vs. 55%).
- Canadians living in rural regions are significantly more likely than those living in urban regions to say they would renovate their house or purchase a new home or cottage (66% vs. 58%).
- 6. **“Study or go back to school”** ranks sixth, with 38% of Canadians saying “yes” they would do this if they had no bills to pay for one year and 60% saying “no” they would not do this. The remaining 1% of Canadians “don’t know” whether they would do this or not.
- Residents of British Columbia (42%) and Alberta (42%) are the most likely of all Canadians to say they would “study or go back to school” if they had no bills to pay for one year, followed by residents of Ontario (40%), Quebec (37%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (33%), and Atlantic Canada (30%).
- Canadians age 18-34 are significantly more likely than those aged 35 and over to say they would “study or go back to school” if they had no bills to pay for one year (54% vs. 31%).
- 7. **“Buy a new car”** ranks seventh, with 36% of Canadians saying “yes” they would do this if they had no bills to pay for one year and 63% saying “no” they would not do this.
- Residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (43%) are the most likely of all Canadians to say they would do this, followed by residents of Atlantic Canada (38%) and Ontario (38%), British Columbia (37%), Alberta (34%), and Quebec (32%).





- Those age 18-34 are significantly more likely than those age 35 and over to say they would “buy a new car” if they had no bills to pay for one year (41% vs. 33%).
8. **“Become your own boss by investing in or starting a new business”** ranks eighth, with 32% of Canadians saying “yes” they would do this and 66% saying “no” they would not do this. The remaining 1% of Canadians “don’t know” whether they would do this or not.
- Residents of British Columbia (36%) are the most likely of Canadians to say they would do this, followed closely by residents of Alberta (35%), Ontario (34%), Quebec (29%), and Atlantic Canada (28%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (28%).
  - As age rises among Canadians, the percentage who say “yes” they would become their own boss “by investing in or starting a new business” diminishes (41% among 18-34 year olds, 34% among 35-54 year olds, and 21% among those age 55 and over).
  - Those with an annual household income of less than \$30,000 are more likely than those with an annual household income of \$30,000 or more to say they would become their own boss “by investing in or starting a new business” (38% vs. 31%).
9. **“Not change a single thing”** ranks ninth, with 28% of Canadians saying “yes” they would do this and 71% saying “no” they would not do this. The remaining 1% of Canadians “don’t know” whether they would do this or not.
- Residents of Quebec (34%) are the most likely to say they would “not change a single thing”, followed by residents of Atlantic Canada (30%), Ontario (27%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (26%), British Columbia (24%) and Alberta (22%).
  - Those age 55 and over are significantly more likely than those age 18-54 to say they would “not change a single thing” (25% vs. 36%).



10. **“Walk into your boss’s office and quit”** ranks last, with only 14% of Canadians saying “yes” they would do this and 83% saying “no” they would not do this. The remaining 2% of Canadians “don’t know” whether they would do this or not.

- Residents of Ontario (16%) are the most likely of all Canadians to say they would do this, followed closely by residents of Alberta (14%) and Quebec (14%), British Columbia (13%), Atlantic Canada (11%), and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (9%).

### ***What Does ‘Free’ Mean To Canadians?***

When asked an open-ended question “what does free mean to you?” half of Canadians (52%) mention, unaided, “getting something without paying or working for it”.

And among remaining Canadians:

- 7% mention “no money problems/having enough money”;
- 6% mention “be able to do anything you want/anything within the law”;
- 4% mention “no obligations/no strings attached”;
- 4% mention “healthy/no health problems”;
- 4% mention “no difficulties/problems”;
- 3% mention “a state of mind/feeling”;
- 3% mention “freedom of choice”;
- 3% mention “freedom of speech”;
- 1% mention “no restrictions/limits”; and
- 1% mention “spirituality”.



Meanwhile, 14% of Canadians mention some “other” definition when asked “what does free mean to you”, while 6% mention “nothing is free” and 4% say they “don’t know”.

- No demographic trends are apparent with respect to this question.

### ***How Would Canadians Describe The Term ‘Live Free’?***

When asked to choose from a list of five statements the one that best defines the term ‘Live Free’, by far the largest portion of Canadians (55%) choose “having peace of mind or no worries”. Smaller portions of Canadians choose other statements such as “having time to do what you want” (15%), “having enough money to do what you want” (11%), “having everything you want in life” (11%), and “having no obligations” (5%).

Of the remaining 3% of Canadians, 2% choose “none of the above” and 1% “don’t know” which one best describes this term.

- Younger adult Canadians age 18-34 are significantly more likely than those aged 35 and over to say “having time to do what you want” (21% vs. 13%).

### ***And From A List Of Nine Things, Which One Do Canadians Most Dream Of Doing Sometime In Their Lifetime?***

When Canadians are asked to choose from a list of nine things the one thing they most dream of doing sometime in their lifetime:

- 42% choose “spending more time with family”;
- 16% choose “building your own home or cottage”;
- 12% choose “living in another country”;
- 7% choose “becoming your own boss”;
- 6% choose “learning a new language”;



- 5% choose “learning to play a musical instrument”;
- 3% choose “planning a family reunion”;
- 2% choose “owning a sports car”; and
- 2% choose “running a marathon”.

Meanwhile, 4% of Canadians do not choose any of these things, and 1% “don’t know” which thing they most dream of doing sometime in their lifetime.

- There are no demographic trends apparent with respect to this question.

### ***So, What’s Holding Them Back?***

When asked to choose from a list of five reasons the one that best describes why they’ve been unable to pursue this dream, the largest portion of Canadians (34%) point to a “lack of time”, while 29% point to “bills and expenses”, 15% point to “family responsibilities”, 12% point to “career demands and ambitions”, 3% point to fear of change or failure”, and 4% point to “some other reason”.

Of remaining Canadians, 3% say that “nothing is stopping me” from pursuing this dream, and 1% “don’t know” what is stopping them.

- No demographic trends are apparent with respect to this question.

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