

Smile for the camera - it might help you stay happily married

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The bigger your grin in your high-school yearbook photo, the more likely you are to have a successful marriage, according to a new study.

Scientists at [DePauw University](#) in [Indiana](#) have "found a link between weak smiles and divorce," according to [Matt Hertenstein](#), associate professor of psychology, who led the team of researchers.

During one test, researchers rated the smile intensity in a collection of yearbook photos from one to ten and discovered that none of the highest 10 percent of smilers had divorced, while almost one in four of the bottom 10 percent had experienced a broken marriage.

A second test requiring people over 65 to produce photos from their childhood concluded that just 11 percent of those with the biggest smiles in their photos had been divorced, while 31 percent of those who kept a straight-face in their photos had experienced a failed marriage.

The researchers have concluded that people who frown in childhood photos are five times more likely to get a divorce than those who smile for the camera.

"It feeds into this idea that what's occurring earlier in our lives in terms of our present situation and our mental state can predict things that occur decades later," Hertenstein told [LiveScience](#). "Maybe smiling people attract other happier people, and the combination may lead to a greater likelihood of a long-lasting marriage. We don't really know for sure what's causing it."

Hertenstein has also considered the possibilities that smiling for the camera may indicate a more obedient personality or that those with a happy disposition may develop a bigger support network of friends and in turn find it easier to maintain a long-term relationship.

"I think [our results] go along with a lot of the literature that's been coming out over the last five to 10 years, which shows that positive emotionality is incredibly important in our lives," Hertenstein added. "There are many, many beneficial outcomes to a positive disposition."