



THOUGHT STARTER

Optimism Reigns in 2018, But Will it Continue in 2019?

*Be at war with your vices,
at peace with your neighbors,
and let every new year find
you a better man (person).*

— BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

As Americans get ready for the new year, it is time to reflect on 2018. Did the year unfold as they anticipated? Ipsos recently surveyed Americans to get their take on the past year and uncover what they are looking for in 2019.

Cheers to 2018

2018 was a positive year for most Americans. 75% say it was a *good* year for them, with 25% stating it was a *very good* year for them. Only 6% of Americans told us 2018 was a *very bad* year, on a personal level.

This good cheer seems to extend to holiday spending for the festive season. 59% plan to spend a similar amount to that of 2017. Only 27% say they will spend less and 14% anticipate spending more this holiday season.

While most Americans are pleased with how 2018 has gone on a personal level, that positive sentiment does not translate to how they feel about the country. This is a divisive topic. 52% feel 2018 was a good year for our country, while 48% say it was a bad year.

2018 vs 2017

How do American's feelings about 2018 compare to their feelings about 2017? We compared their answers from our Ipsos eNation data we collected last year. It is worth noting that the number of Americans who reported 2018 as a good year for them, both personally and for the U.S., has increased.

American sentiment	2018 %	2017 %
Personal level		
Good year	75	68
Bad year	25	32
Country as a whole		
Good year	52	39
Bad year	48	61



2018 Trends

2018, like most years, had its share of highs and lows impacting American society. The positives can be seen in the rise of #MeToo and the *Year of the Women* movements. These efforts have brought about a cultural, political and societal shift as women’s voices and power are being heard and seen, like never before. As a result, in the 2018 Midterm elections a record number of women were elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Other notable events from 2018 include a record number of registered voters in the midterm elections, a 50-year low in the unemployment rate and the legalization of marijuana in many states.

There are some familiar lows in 2018 to consider. Gun control is still a hotly debated topic in America with the country experiencing many mass shootings. For the first time after a tragic mass shooting, we saw a different response. Students from Parkland, Florida became actively involved in pushing for gun control, after 17 people were killed at their high school in February.

Looking Ahead to 2019

Americans seem to be optimistic about 2019. 73% are encouraged about what the new year will bring, while 31% feel *very optimistic*. Only 6% report feeling *very concerned* about the upcoming year.

Feelings about 2019:	%
Optimistic-net	73
Very optimistic	31
Somewhat optimistic	42
Concerned-net	27
Somewhat concerned	21
Very concerned	6

Most Americans are planning to make positive changes in their life in 2019. With a new report finding only one in four get the recommend amount of daily exercise, it is not surprising that exercise is a top priority for change. 57% of Americans plan to exercise more in the new year. Interestingly, women are most likely to say they plan to make changes for 2019.

Plan to Change in 2019:	%
Exercise more	57
Lose weight	50
Eat cleaner/healthier	50
More positive attitude	42
More patient/kind	36
More respectful of others	22
Volunteer more	21
Vote	20
More accepting/inclusive	18
Quit/reduce looking at news	12
Quit smoking	9
Quit/cut down alcohol	8
Other	4
None of above	12

As for 2019’s housing market, 16% of Americans indicate they plan or expect to buy a home in the new year. Not surprisingly, millennials lead the charge. At 28%, they are the group most likely to purchase a home next year, compared to other demographics.

Ipsos U.S. eNation

Let’s hope these feelings of optimism are more than mere sentiment, and our country experiences a great 2019. With the use of Ipsos U.S. eNation, we will continue to track what Americans think and feel about their lives in 2019. We look forward to bringing you these updates throughout the year. Ipsos eNation will be sharing more opinions from the U.S. this February 2019.

Ipsos U.S. eNation omnibus completes five national surveys, weekly. Ipsos Omnibus offers a variety of services, including overnight and custom studies. Data for this study was generated by an Ipsos eNation online omnibus study of 1,005 American adults 18 and older conducted November 8–9, 2018. If you would like complimentary access to the **2018 Year in Review** study, or to learn more about eNation omnibus, please contact:

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