

THE FINANCE FIGHT

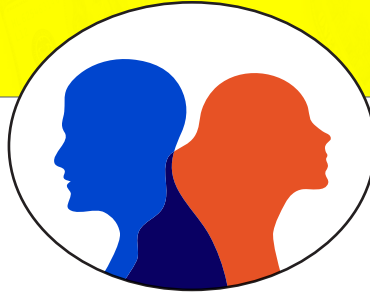
Some say it isn't polite to discuss money, yet it's one of the most friction-inducing topics among couples. From differing attitudes, spending habits, and saving styles, to mismatched priorities and financial infidelity, **money is one subject where you can't afford to agree to disagree.** Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is here to help you have an open, honest conversation about finances before it costs you your relationship.

24 HOURS A DAY

(800) 222-0364 TTY: (888) 262-7848 FOH4YOU.COM



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It's not about the money

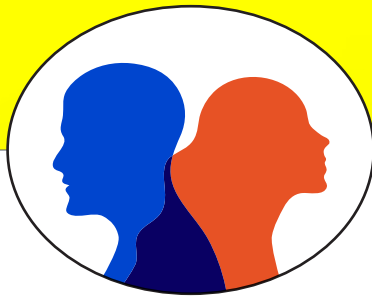
Money is the number one issue that couples argue about, and it's often the reason cited for divorce. What is it about money and relationships that leads to so much conflict?

The answer is less about the money itself—how much you have, where you spend it, or who makes what—and more about a lack of communication. In fact, many of the most common issues that plague relationships can be traced back to poor communication. Regularly talking about money not only helps to ensure that you and your partner are working toward the same goals, it also establishes a healthy routine of maintaining open dialogue. Over time, this principle naturally extends to other areas of your relationship leading to a stronger union and fewer disagreements.

Talk now, or pay later

Talking about money is tough. It's extremely personal, so the initial discussion can be uncomfortable, stressful, or possibly embarrassing. Even if you are great with money and have a near-spotless history, preparing for what your partner may reveal can be unnerving, and hearing about your partner's history might change the course of your relationship. Whether you're dating or engaged, or even already married, withholding information about money management from your loved one could cost you both a whole lot more down the line. As vulnerable as it may make you feel, talking about finances with someone you love and plan to share your life with is one of the most valuable ways to foster true intimacy.

**THE ANSWER IS
LESS ABOUT THE
MONEY ITSELF—
HOW MUCH YOU
HAVE, WHERE
YOU SPEND IT,
OR WHO MAKES
WHAT—AND MORE
ABOUT A LACK OF
COMMUNICATION.**



CONVERSATIONS EVERY COUPLE NEEDS TO HAVE

FIRST, THE FIGURES

REVEAL SALARIES AND
OTHER INCOME.

Include commission percentages
and bonus amounts if applicable.

TALLY UP THE MONEY
YOU CURRENTLY HAVE.

Calculate separate totals for
checking, savings, investment,
and stock accounts.

DISCLOSE ALL DEBT.

Discuss how soon you want to pay
off debt and how you plan to go
about it.

REVIEW YOUR CREDIT
SCORES AND RATINGS.

Having this information is critical to
setting realistic financial goals and
helps you determine where your
financial priorities and possibilities lie.

Dig a little deeper

Compare individual philosophies.
Walk each other through how
money was handled in your family
growing up, then, talk about how
that shaped your current attitude
toward money and your spending/
saving style.

Open up about your financial
history. If you've ever racked
up any amount of debt, made a
bad investment, or even filed for
bankruptcy, be frank about how
it happened.

Evaluate long-term goals. For
example, talk about whether
you'd like to buy a home someday
and when you hope to retire.

Explore lifestyle objectives. Do
you place more value on having
things versus experiences? How
often do you want to travel? Are
kids in the cards? Will you both
work, or will you have a one-
income household?

Discuss how to pay expenses.
Determine where money will be
deposited and how much, as
well as how bills will be paid and
by whom. Decide whether you
will combine incomes and pay
for everything out of one joint
account, split bills based on
income ratio, or keep everything
separate and go 50/50? No one
approach is right or wrong as long
as it works for the two of you.

GROW YOUR FINANCES ALONG WITH YOUR RELATIONSHIP

CHECK IN REGULARLY.

Schedule recurring money
meetings to go over bills,
recent charges, and
upcoming expenses.

BUDGET AS A TEAM.

Work together to build weekly,
monthly, and yearly budgets.
You may even want to create
additional budgets for special
events, college savings,
and vacations.

REASSESS GOALS.

Change is inevitable, so be sure
to periodically reevaluate previous
goals and adjust as needed.

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is here to help you navigate the delicate subject of money with your significant other. Our financial experts are also available to provide confidential advice about your specific needs and goals. The EAP is a voluntary and confidential employee benefit available to federal employees at no cost.