

# How to Talk About Money with Your Partner

Money is always a sore issue with couples. This is probably because our treatment of money is deeply psychological. Our values, emotions, and goals all tie into our spending and saving habits (or our lack of either). It is very hard to see eye-to-eye on all these issues. However, you and your partner can follow three steps that will help you resolve your financial issues.

## Step 1: Communicate

The first step may seem obvious, but it is also the hardest. It will be difficult to talk about money issues with your partner. Be prepared for disagreements. They will be inevitable.

It may help to do a little self-examination beforehand. What are your own money hang-ups? What does money mean to you? What motivates your saving or spending habits? Do you overspend because shopping makes you feel happy? Do you throw your every nickel into your savings account because it gives you a sense of safety? MSN Money columnist MP Dunleavy states that our parents' money habits usually strongly influence our own views on money. Think of how you were taught to view money when you were growing up.

As you discuss money with your partner, be patient and humble. Remember that you want to work together to come up with a mutually beneficial arrangement. On that note, be open to compromise. Even though money is an extremely important and stressful issue, it is still just one issue that you must overcome like any other. Do not expect to get your way completely. Compromise will be necessary. It won't be easy, but it is important that you and your partner come to agreement.

## Step 2: Assess Your Financial Goals Together

Come up with some big-picture goals with your partner. What do you and your partner want in life? Would you both like to save for a retirement? Do you both want children? Are there vacations you would like to plan together? All of these goals require careful consideration. Having mutual goals will motivate both of you to work together on saving for what you both want.

### **Step 3: Come Up With a System**

Once you and your partner have agreed on your financial goals, figure out a way you will save for them. Come up with a budget based on your goals and your combined incomes. Agree that neither of you will make impulse buys over a set amount before discussing it first. Finally, decide on a banking arrangement that works for both of you. You may want to set up a joint savings account that you use to pay bills and hold your main savings. You could also open up separate savings accounts for personal use.

### **Conclusion**

It is unlikely that these three steps will work completely the first time around. You and your partner will most likely have to keep working on fine-tuning your system. Try to come up with proactive solutions rather than point fingers. Remember that like any argument, you must work together to find resolutions.