



Couples & Money

by Cynthia Fick

He's a spender; she's a saver. She's a risk taker; he's a security seeker. They're married. And the most complicated relationship they have to deal with isn't even the one between them. It's the one they each have with **money**.

Over half of all couples don't make day-to-day money decisions together. So there's often a dearth of communication on top of existing differences in attitudes about money. Then factor in the stressors from today's *Economic Perfect Storm* — job loss, stock market drop, and real estate downturns — and you've got the makings of a relationship tsunami.

Make it a point to understand your spouse's money beliefs and attitudes. If you haven't already, take a money attitude questionnaire. An online search on "money attitude questionnaire" yields several options. Answer separately, then go over your responses together, focusing on compassionate inquiry as you discuss the results. Worrying about the future, college for your

children, or whether you will be able to retire is only made worse if you feel like you're in it alone. Don't take your differences personally. Stay open to compromise as well as new ideas.

How do you compromise effectively? Compromises should cover the needs and some of the wants for both partners. Think of yourselves as a team. Find common ground. Revisit your financial goals to keep up with changing priorities. If you need financial planning assistance or money management counseling, seek the advice of a professional who can listen to *both* of your concerns.

My most important advice? Have the conversation.

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