

Anxiously Engaged

Supplemental Lesson

Becoming One Through Shared Financial Stewardship

Lesson 2: Understanding our Financial Backgrounds

Introduction

All of us bring attitudes and expectations about money and finances to our relationships – even if we are unaware of these expectations. Our financial attitudes and expectations are often influenced by how our family of origin handled (or didn't handle) money as well as our past financial experiences. As a couple, it is important for you to identify and verbalize your financial beliefs and expectations. Appreciating your own financial background and beliefs and then working to understand your partner's financial background and beliefs is a great foundation for a healthy ongoing conversation about financial matters in your marriage.

Activity #1: Financial Personality Quiz

Identifying your own financial personality is a good first step in recognizing your attitudes about money. We would like each of you to take a short quiz to find out your financial personality so that you can then talk to your partner about what personality each of you is bringing to the relationship. This quiz does not indicate a “permanent” personality but is helpful in discovering different perceptions about financial matters.

This link will take you to an outside source by Dr. Olivia Mellan:

<https://www.moneyharmony.com/moneyharmony-quiz>



Once you have completed the financial personality quiz, you can read about your specific personality. You can also follow a link to brief paragraphs about each of the other personalities. Now, in the spirit of understanding and accepting each other, turn to your partner and take turns explaining to each other the advantages and disadvantages you see within your own financial personality. Listen especially to the positive aspects that each personality possesses. This activity will help you begin to understand each other's financial beliefs.

Family of origin impact

So many of our money habits and perspectives come from our family of origin. For example, your parents' income level or the amount of financial stress your parents faced probably had a big impact on the way you were raised and view money. It's important to realize that the experiences you and your partner have had with money from your respective families of origin will continue to influence the way each of you think about money.



Understanding where your partner's general money habits are coming from can help as you begin to collaborate about money in your marriage. As you talk about the following questions together as a couple, don't worry about resolving differences right now. Focus on understanding your partner's perspective.

Activity #2:

Discuss the following questions together to understand the impact of each of your families of origin:

1. What was your family's overall attitude about money?
2. How were you taught about money?
3. What was your parents' income level?
4. Did your family use a budget?
5. What was your family's attitude about debt?
6. How important was saving in your family?
7. What were your family's spending priorities?
8. When you were growing up, how were financial decisions made in your home?
9. Which parent handled the day-to-day money matters (paying bills, etc.)?
10. Which parent handled long-term financial planning (saving, investing, etc.)?



Intentionally creating your own financial values as a couple



Marriage merges two financial perspectives. This merging can be a source of immense unity or it can be a source of division, bondage and frustration. Trying to understand your future spouse's financial values and behavior is the first step toward creating financial unity. Make an effort to see the noble value of their behaviors (i.e., their financial priorities) rather than judging them on the superficiality of their use of funds. Recognizing each other's family of origin patterns and financial perspectives can then help you intentionally decide what new financial values and behaviors you want to create in your marriage.

Activity #3:

Discuss the following questions about creating your own financial values:

1. Which of your family's financial habits, priorities and values would like to keep?
2. Which would you like to discard?

THE BOTTOM LINE

Our attitudes about money are significantly influenced by our family of origin. Recognizing your own money beliefs and working to understand your partner's money beliefs is an essential first step to creating a strong pattern for future financial communication.