



## FAMILIES SHOULD EXPLORE THEIR DIFFERENCES IN FINANCIAL CHOICES

BY ROBIN HENAGER

Do you find it difficult to talk with family members about finances? For some, it is part of the normal flow of conversation since finances are involved in most life choices. For others, the subject is tough and sometimes contentious. This can cause challenges when making long-term planning decisions.

For example, buying a house, investing for retirement, and even buying a new car work best when the purchase is planned and one can save toward the goal. Success is more likely when family members work together toward that goal. Even for short-term planning, we have been strongly reminded about the need for an emergency fund given the past months of the pandemic. Saving for an emergency fund as a family can be a good first start in discussing finances. Set an example for children, work together with a spouse or partner, or convince a sibling that saving is a good idea. It does mean forgoing current expenses. This can be hard because, quite honestly, spending money is fun for most of us. For others, saving is easy because it provides a sense of security.

Understanding your individual perspective on money can be a very important step in learning how to communicate about money with others. I found a money quiz for parents online and a lot of partner quizzes for couples to understand how each sees the money issue differently. Simply search for something like “finances children quiz” or “finances partner quiz” to see the many options.

I have seen the benefits of working through these with a partner, both in my classes and in my own family. I took my daughter and future son-in-law through a process using cards to identify their money attitudes and habits called Money Habitudes. It was fun, interesting, and eye-opening for them. As they discovered, one is a saver and one is a giver. Understanding this about each other has helped them as they begin their life together. They now plan ahead and, in addition to their regular saving for emergencies and large purchases, they save money in a specific account to plan for gift expenses (birthdays and other holidays) and charitable giving. In other words, they built their budget around the understanding of their money attitudes. If you are interested, information about Money Habitudes can be found online at <https://www.moneyhabitudes.com/>.

Conflict over money is often mentioned as the biggest point of contention for most marriages. It does not have to be that way, especially when you understand

each other’s perspective. Children often manage their money better in adulthood when their parents have discussed money with them and taught them good principles of money management.

So many decisions families make involve finances. One example is the question of whether to dine out or spend food money only at the grocery store. Choices of cars, housing, or schools touch on finance, too. Children, once in high school, will decide whether to go to college or work when they graduate.

This subject simply involves so many parts of our lives that I cannot stress the importance of understanding as much as you can about money and how you view it.



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