

# Pre-Wedding Finance Talk



Your romantic courtship should also be a financial courtship. After all, you'll be merging resources and making financial decisions together. You need to know what you're getting into. Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself and your future mate to making your marriage health and happy.

- Begin discussing your finances as soon as you think you might be in a serious relationship.
- In the beginning of the relationship start asking questions casually, then later, move in with more serious start forward questions.
  - Did he/she had a summer job in high school?
  - Did he/she work to put him/herself through college?
  - Does he/she have student loans? These questions will give you clues about their financial history.
  - What was his/her life like growing up? Gently probe how the family treated money.
  - Does he/she own this condo and/or home, etc?
- Observe your future mate's behavior with money. Does he/she charge everything or save to pay with cash? Live beyond his/her means? Or is he/she too stingy? Is he/she generous and considerate about your feelings about money?
- Once you've moved past the dating stage and the marriage word is dropped ,it's time to get serious. Pull out all the bank statements, checkbooks and credit reports. Get the tax returns and make sure they're being filed on a regular basis.
- During this stage ask your partner some of these more probing questions.
  - What are his/her current and future financial commitments?
  - Is there alimony? Child support?
  - Has he/she ever filed for bankruptcy? Ever defaulted on a loan?
  - Does he/she want to buy a home soon? How soon?
  - Is he/she investing into a 401k? What are his/her investments?
  - How much credit card debt does he/she have?
  - Does he/she want a prenup? These are best to decide on at least a year before the wedding.
- Another suggestion would be to meet with a financial planner to help take the pressure off you doing the questioning.

*Information courtesy of the Rockford Register Star, 2005.*



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