



Couple's Financial Compatibility Survey

from *The 21st Century Student's Guide to Financial Literacy - Getting Personal*

When you marry, your financial future is all in with that other person. For the most part, their after-marriage debts are your debts. Your financial success is their financial success. It's the ultimate share. Blinded by love, most couples head down the aisle having had zero discussion about how they'll handle money. That's pretty crazy considering that, according to experts, the third most common reason for divorce in the U.S. is money issues. Moreover, it's usually not a lack of money, it's a lack of financial compatibility. Partners find they have completely different financial goals, spending and saving habits, and investment risk tolerance.

Your job: Pick a classmate to be your faux fiancé. Complete the Couple's Financial Compatibility Survey and compare scores. Select the three questions in which you had the largest score differentials. Discuss your differences. Can you come up with a plan to resolve them and live happily ever after, or are your differences deal breakers?



On a scale of 1–10 (10 = "Totally agree!" 1 = "No way, not at all.")

1. I am committed to building wealth and financial stability, including making financial sacrifices and working hard for many years.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

2. I will be totally honest with my fiancé about my pre-marriage financial condition including credit card debt, student loans, and my credit score.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

3. Managing household finances is a joint responsibility with joint decision making powers.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

4. I will obtain a college degree.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

5. I have an intense work ethic.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

6. My investment risk tolerance is (*circle one: very high high moderate low no risk!*) and it is important to me that my spouse has the same level of risk tolerance.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



7. I want ____ children. It is important that my spouse and I agree on the number of children we will have.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

8. Saving for retirement is a high priority financial goal for me.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

9. I never buy on impulse.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

10. The most money I would spend without consulting my spouse is \$_____. It is important to me that my spouse has the same spending limit.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

11. Owning my own home is a high priority financial goal for me.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

12. If I rent a home to save money I will follow a disciplined strategy to invest the amount I save by renting.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

13. I will use credit cards sparingly *and* pay off the balance every month.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

14. An excellent credit score is a high priority financial goal for me.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

15. I will have an emergency savings fund of 3–6 months of living expenses.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

16. It's important to me that my spouse makes as much or more money than I do.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

17. Some student loan debt is ok, but It's important to me that my spouse-to-be does not have pre-marriage credit card debt.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

18. It's important to me that my bills are paid on time.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



19. I have a personal budget that I stick to, even if it means giving up something want.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

20. Throughout my income earning years, I will work to increase my job security and earnings potential by learning new skills and improving old ones.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

My score: _____

160-200. You have your financial coupledness priorities straight. You approach wealth-building with the candor and discipline it deserves. If your fiancé/fiancée has the same values, you could be a dynamic wealth-building duo with a high probability of a stable and successful financial future. If their score is substantially lower than yours, you may experience financial friction in your marriage. Before you say “I do,” have an open and honest discussion with your future spouse to make sure you see eye-to-eye about the financial matters you believe are most important to your shared future.

100-159. Your commitment to coupledness financial success may need a bit of bucking up. A spouse with financial discipline and clear financial goals may be just the ticket to inspire you to greatness! Work with your future spouse to identify the specific short term and long term financial goals of your coupledness. Make a mutual commitment to building the savings habit and work together to create a household budget that furthers those goals. Discuss risk tolerance and investment goals. If one spouse-to-be’s risk tolerance is substantially lower or higher than the other’s, this could be a wake up call! Identify your weaknesses and work together to tackle them.

60-99. Financial success and stability isn’t something that “just happens.” You have to work at it. In fact, building wealth is like a second job. It appears you may not have the desire, effort level, or discipline needed to successfully manage your personal finances and build wealth. How will this impact your financial coupledness? Has a lack of financial goals impacted your motivation to plan and save? Do you lack the discipline you need to save money or pay your bills on time? You’d better rethink your approach to money management. Low credit scores, financial stress, and living pay check-to-pay check are romantic buzz-kills. Be honest with your future spouse about your money management challenges before you walk down the aisle.

20-59. OK, hit the financial future reset button. Start with incorporating one or two personal money management skills or strategies each month. Begin with creating a budget. Open a savings account. Take on a second job if you are not earning enough money. Take a class that will build your human capital value. Examine your spending habits for waste. Start aggressively paying down your credit card debt. Until you get your financial act together, you will not be a valuable member of a wealth-building team. Your future spouse should be wary of marrying you. If you both have low scores, make a point to learn money management skills together. Set short and long term financial goals and begin building wealth together.

