

# Is Your Marriage Financially Sound? Or Are You Headed For Relationship Bankruptcy?

By Susan Vogt, MA, CFLE

	Tightwad	Frugal	Neutral	Generous	Spendthrift
<b>1. Rate yourself according to your natural inclination to spend money:</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Rate your spouse (boy/girlfriend, fiancé/fiancée):</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2. Rate your ability to put money into savings:</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Rate your spouse's ability:</b>	1	2	3	4	5

### 3. Circle the phrase that best describes your shopping style:

- A. Utilitarian (I go, I buy, I'm out.)
- B. Laissez-faire (When I see something I like, I buy it. I don't plan for it, I just follow my whim.)
- C. Bargain Hunter (I check the ads. When something's on sale, I snatch it, stock up.)
- D. Therapy (When I'm in a blue mood, buying something helps me feel better.)
- E. Recreation (I like to window-shop. I can spend hours shopping alone or with friends.)

*Star the phrase that you think best describes your spouse.*

### 4. Agree/Disagree?

Separately mark if you Agree (A) or Disagree (D) with each of the following statements.

- A. It's important to be frugal and thrifty with our money regardless of how much we make.
- B. I think that we should have a new car at least every five years.
- C. I'd rather put money into a house than take a vacation or other recreation.
- D. I prefer to handle paying the bills.
- E. It's best to maintain separate checking or savings accounts.
- F. It's OK to keep some "treat" money that my spouse doesn't know about. (to treat myself or buy a surprise for my spouse)
- G. I think it is O.K. to maintain a balance due on a credit card.
- H. I think that we should pay cash for all purchases except a house or a car.
- I. I think that a portion of every pay check should be saved.
- J. If money is tight, I would only buy insurance that is legally required, i.e. car & mortgage insurance.
- K. I think it is O.K. to gamble, so long as I don't use the grocery money.
- L. I think it is O.K. to ask our parents for financial assistance.
- M. I think it's important to have one parent at home when our children are young.

N. I think that we should make regular gifts to charity.

O. I think it is O.K. to fudge on our tax return; everybody does it.

*Compare answers with your spouse. Was your assessment of each other in questions 1, 2, and 3 accurate? Discuss the items you disagreed on in question 4.*

---

It's not necessary to have the same spending habits, but it is important to know where you differ (especially if either of you are 1's or 5's on the continuum) since that is likely an area of tension between you. Sometimes differences are healthy since one spouse's desire to save might "save" the marriage from financial recklessness. But it doesn't mean there won't be arguments about it.

---

## **SCORING:**

### **Questions 1 and 2:**

\_\_\_ total of your own ratings for Questions 1 and 2 (out of a possible 10 points)

\_\_\_ total of your spouse's ratings for Questions 1 and 2 (out of a possible 10 points)

If your totals are separated by:

- 3 or fewer points, you are very financially compatible, but check to see if your similarities are at the extremes since being too much alike can cause problems. Two tightwads may need to loosen up and spend some money having fun together. Two spendthrifts may need to cut up their credit cards or work with a financial counselor to develop a realistic budget.
  - 4 - 6 points, you're on the same wavelength and hopefully balance each other out.
  - 7 - 8 points, better see a financial or marriage counselor before you end up in bankruptcy or divorce court.
- 

### **Question 3:**

Discuss

---

### **Question 4 (Agree/Disagree):**

\_\_\_ total statements for which you gave the same answer. (except D)

If you agree with each other on:

10-15 statements, you have open communication about financial matters and similar financial values.

5-9 statements, you urgently need to discuss the items you have different opinions about.

1-4 statements, a consultation with a credit or marriage counselor is long overdue. Make an appointment today. Consult a credit counseling website such as [www.nfcc.org](http://www.nfcc.org). for more information.