

Do the Two of You Have the Same Moral Compass?

by Susan Vogt, MA, CFLE

Couples don't have to always agree on what color to paint the kitchen but disagreeing on when to have a baby or whether both spouses should work outside the home are decisions of values and conscience. If it's a matter of morality, the rule of thumb is to not violate the stricter partner's conscience.

Circle the number that best reflects how much you care about the following moral issues:

	Don't care 1	2	Somewhat 3	4	Very Important 5
1. Attending religious services religiously, i.e. weekly.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Raising our children in a religious faith.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Have our children attend religious schools even if it's a financial hardship.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Having our children attend a religious education program if they don't go to a religious school.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Donating a portion of our income (ideally a tithe of 10%) to charity.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Planning our family in accordance with church teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Having one parent at home while the children are young.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Paying our legitimate taxes even if others do not.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Caring for the environment by doing things like recycling, avoiding excessive packaging, minimizing car use, composting...	1	2	3	4	5
10. Taking good care of my physical health through eating nutritious foods, exercising, not smoking, and avoiding excessive alcohol or drugs.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Living simply, avoiding undo consumption and a luxurious lifestyle.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Live within our means. If our means are great, then our moral responsibility is to use our excess to help others.	1	2	3	4	5

13. Being responsive to my spouse's requests for sexual intimacy.

1

2

3

4

5

14. Being an active citizen, voting, working for political issues or candidates, doing volunteer community work, etc.

1

2

3

4

5

Bonus questions for discussion:

What social and religious causes are you most passionate about?

Politics is grounded in many moral assumptions. What political candidate did you support in the last election? Does your spouse share your politics?

SCORING:

Add up all your points. If your totals vary by:

Less than 15 points: Your moral compasses are very compatible. You may not always be right, but at least you share similar values. Consider if there are any moral issues that call you to become more generous or life-giving.

16 - 49 points: Time to discuss the issues you differ on by more than one number. Try to balance rationalizing away differences with being overly scrupulous.

Over 50 points: You're living on different planets. Talk with a priest or pastoral counselor soon.