

## My Family History with Money

The Gottmans' research on a sample of 4,574 couples indicated that of all the issues married couples fight about, financial arguments were the single best predictor of divorce. For most couples, the arguments around money tend to fall into three distinct categories: different perceptions of financial inequality, different perceptions of what it means to have financial well-being, and different perceptions about the nature of how they argue about money. Of all three, the nature of the arguments was the best predictor of whether a couple would break up. This means that conflicts over finances don't need to be a "make or break" issue. What matters most is how a couple talks about their financial disagreements. This exercise is meant to be paired with Gottman Date 4. Complete the questionnaire below, separately, and before your date. Then discuss your responses with your partner. Read each question and answer it honestly.

- What did your maternal and paternal grandparents do for a living?
- How well off were your grandparents?
- What did your parents do for a living?
- How well off were your parents?
- What were your parents' attitudes about money? How did you view these parental ideas as a child?
- Did your parents feel comfortable spending money? How did you view these attitudes about money as a child?
- Did your parents save money or invest? How did you view these attitudes about money as a child?
- Did your family take family vacations or travel together when you were growing up? How did you view these vacations as a child? Was money discussed?
- Did your family entertain? How did you view this as a child?
- Did your family engage in philanthropy or charitable activities?
- As a child, did you have an allowance? How did you view this as a child?
- What is your own work history?
- What does money mean to you personally and why?
- Did your parents celebrate your birthdays? Did you feel special?
- Did you have a birthday cake? Did that fact matter to you as a child?
- How did your parents show you that they were proud of you? Or didn't they?
- Did you get presents during the holidays? Did that fact matter to you as a child?
- What did your parents teach you about money? How do you feel about those teachings now?
- What did your family's history teach you about money? What's your attitude now?

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- What were your family's values about money? What did you agree with and what did you disagree with?
  - What is your most painful memory of money? Tell the story of that memory to your partner.
  - What is your happiest or best memory of money? Tell the story of that memory to your partner.

Adapted from: *Eight Dates: Essential Conversations for a Lifetime of Love*. By: John Gottman, Julie Schwartz Gottman, Doug Abrams, and Rachel Carlton Abrams