



HIS & HER financial styles

Bill and Pam Farrel

Ministry is not a money-making career; so with all the trouble in the economy at the present time, ministry couples might discover new tensions in their relationships. Most people think if you just have more money, you'll have less disagreement over money, but that is not necessarily true. Deep-seated differences arise because couples spend money according to their individual personalities.

A husband thinks a new truck is a must-have, and a wife thinks paying off school loans is important. You may agree on the importance of funding your dream. If you have enough money, both of you will be happy. If, however, your budget is limited so that you have to choose between the truck or paying off the school loan, or putting off funding your dream, you will experience conflict.

Take a date night this week and talk over what financial style you each have, and brainstorm ways to meet both needs within the family budget. Consider these four money motivational styles:

Inner Drive #1: AUTHORITY

For spouses who are motivated by having authority, money is power. Money represents options and opportunity. As a result, these spouses are very active with their money because they spend money on whatever goals they consider worthwhile. They invent a plan and take calculated risks to see that plan become a reality.

These types of spouses are exciting to be around because they are highly productive, visionaries, focused, and fearless. They are hard-working, hard-driving people who have the capacity to handle large budgets and large challenges. With spiritual depth and maturity, they can accomplish much for a family, a marriage, a community, or a church. However, it's difficult for them to let financial opportunities slip by, so a spouse motivated by "authority" either has a lot of money or is completely broke!

The danger here is the temptation to become power hungry workaholics where people become low priorities. They tell people that all their hard work is for them, but relationships can remain elusive because the pursuit of power and wealth are like an aphrodisiac to their souls.

One compromise might be to save a certain amount of money each month toward their long-term goals, while a stable amount is used for family needs. In this way, the visionary makes headway on his dream, but the family's bread and butter is not at risk.

Inner Drive #2: ATTENTION

This spouse spends money to make memories. The heartfelt question that gets asked over and over again is, "How will my spouse, friends, child, etc., feel when I give money or spend money on them?"

A shortcoming here is these spouses like to *appear* as if they have a lot of money—whether they do or not! They love to pick up the tab, throw the lavish party, dress in the latest fashion, or drive the newest car. They love to spring for fun, trips, shopping, or a day of recreation. As a result, they are very generous. Family finances work out easier if these spouses are given freedom to set aside discretionary funds to do with whatever they see fit to enhance relationships. If their ability to "bless" people is taken away, they can become hard to live with.

The solution to the ever-pressing need to spend money to gain fun or friendship is to picture your most important relationships at the point of every purchase. When you are ready to make a financial decision ask, "Will this please my spouse?" For the spouse married to the generous heart, create a discretionary amount line item he or she can spend without consulting you.

Inner Drive #3: ACCEPTANCE

These spouses purchase peace. The goal is to create as simple a process toward money as possible. When the money is there, they are very cooperative. If finances are tight, however, they get stubborn because they feel like a crisis is being created that will disrupt the peace in their lives. At this point, they will either work harder, argue, or dig their heels in to find a path out of the crisis.

If the family is spending less than they are making, this spouse relaxes. If, however, more is being spent than they earn, this spouse will grow to resent the spending habits of the family as he or she begins to feel defined as a paycheck rather than a person.

These spouses have a remarkable ability to simplify things when it comes to money. They remind us that life is not all about money. They are peacemakers and natural mediators so they are good at problem-solving financial issues when they are causing harm in relationships and families.

Your marriage will be better when you commit to a savings account because it helps this motivational style relax. As long as there is money in the bank to cover contingencies and a way to stay ahead, your spouse can have peace and remain cooperative.

Inner Drive #4: ACCURACY

These spouses are all about a system, which they are emotionally attached to. When a budget is set, they take the budget *literally*. So if the budget says \$50 for groceries per week, they mean \$50—not \$55 and not \$60. The budget is a mandate to live by. However, because they love managing money and resources, they often have money and resources to manage! They are savers, planners, and investors (as long as the investment is prudent and safe). They spend money according to a cautious, practical, and wise long-range plan. This is the spouse that says "I love you" with snow tires because you need them and tires will keep you safe.

Because these spouses are so rigid and inflexible, they can often miss great financial opportunities. They will make sure you are never without funding for your life, but cooperating with the budgeting plan might be a challenge for your own personality. The key to working things out is to discuss any changes or adaptations that might need to occur ahead of time. Accuracy-motivated people are precise, but they are generally reasonable, so if you give good reasons, you will get cooperation. These spouses also need consistent encouragement, so daily expressions of appreciation go a long way in keeping the cooperation level high in your marriage—and helping them stay positive and open to financial ideas you might express. Say "thank you" often and that will help. This should be easy to do if you remember that because your mate is motivated this way, it is highly unlikely you will ever be in a financial bind because he or she takes pride in being financially savvy.

By budgeting in a way that includes your motivation, there will be fewer arguments. For example, Pam is a number two. Making memories with family and friends is what makes life worth living and why she works so hard. So we have a line item in our budget to give her freedom to do so. Bill is a number three, so Pam has agreed to money management methods that make Bill's life easier for monthly bill paying. No money motivational style is right or wrong as long as you keep in mind biblical mandates of respect, honor, love, and a desire to create a spirit of unity by valuing the way God wired your mate. ☞

Bill and Pam Farrel are the authors of over 25 books including the bestseller Men are Like Waffles, Women are Like Spaghetti. Additionally, they are co-directors of Masterful Living. For more information on money and marriage go to www.farrelcommunications.com.