



money date #4

Rethinking the future

AS THE SAYING GOES, LIFE IS AN ADVENTURE, NOT A PACKAGE TOUR Things don't always go as planned. And right now, for many people, we've taken an unexpected financial detour into uncertainty and anxiety. But that doesn't mean we can't plan ahead. By taking the steps you've already taken – to figure out where your assets are, examine your spending and begin to create an emergency fund – you've already set yourself on a very positive path to financial empowerment.

But, remember money discussions (or arguments!) are not “just” about money. Power, equality, values and dreams are all wrapped up in those dollars and cents. When you and your partner got together, financial circumstances may have been different. Now, it's time to come together and reassess.

Here are a series of questions for you to think and write about. At the end, come together to exchange thoughts and discuss.

Do each section separately and so you can think and write your own answers.

STEP 1:

Discuss personal goals

- What are your personal goals for the next year, and next five years?
- What has changed in terms of what you think is possible in the short term?
- What steps can you take to achieve your longer-term goals?
- When it comes to things like a car, house etc., what are your goals?
- Do you want to have children?
- How will we work to achieve these goals given our current circumstances?
- If our goals are different, how will we work together to achieve our separate goals?

STEP 2:

Discuss career goals

- What is your current work?
- What do you hope to be doing in 5, 10, and 15 years from now?
- Are you happy with your paid work?
- Are you happy with your unpaid, volunteer, and caregiving work?
- Is your job secure?
- If you change careers, what kind of effects would this have on the happiness, salary, and lifestyle within your relationship?
- How will you make decisions about life-changing career opportunities?
- How will you support your partner's career? How would you like your partner to support your career?
- If you have children, who will be the “lead parent”?

STEP 3:

Discuss finances

- How does the household financial system work now? Who is responsible for what?
- Are there changes that need to be made as circumstances change?
- How will you keep each other updated as to your separate and joint financial status as resources and responsibilities change?
- If one of us has a financial problem, should we try to fix it on our own first, or bring it to the other one immediately to solve jointly?
- What are the important financial milestones you had planned? Are those still reasonable?
- Is it necessary to reassess previous decisions about pooling income or keeping income separate?

STEP 4:

Discuss lifestyle, health, & wellness

- Do we need to rethink where we are living? Do we need to reconsider our decisions to own or rent?
- In our current circumstances, how can we better divide up responsibility in the house? How could this change over time? How would we communicate effectively to make sure to share labor fairly?
- What kinds of things do we hope to own that would make our lives easier but may not be completely necessary (i.e. technology, car, etc)
- How do we plan to continue to keep our relationship fun and romantic, even on a more limited budget?
- Is your job secure?
- Do we have any current health issues? If so, how will we work together to support each others' physical and emotional needs?
- If a health issue comes up unexpectedly, how do we plan to support each other?
- What are our responsibilities to others in terms of health and wellness (parents, children, etc.)?
- What commitments are we making to maintain physical health?
- How will we incorporate nutrition and exercise into our routine?
- What do we believe spiritually? How will we maintain this even in challenging times?
- How can we be open and honest with one another about any issues we are dealing with regarding physical intimacy?