

Conversations About Money: Understanding It, Identifying It, and Asking for It

During the presentation, we will talk in small groups about our personal relationships with money. These discussions may bring up childhood memories and tender emotions. This will be a safe space for all experiences and viewpoints.

To prepare everyone for open honest conversations, I am sharing some information we will cover in the presentation including George Kinder's 7 stages of money maturity, money personalities outlined by Olivia Mellon, and key questions asked during the small group discussions (see below).

Kinder's Stages of Money Maturity

1. Innocence

The childhood state we are born in, devoid of any concept of money

2. Pain

The discovery that we have more money than some and less than others and that work is necessary to make a living

3. Knowledge

The intellectual task of learning financial techniques such as saving, budgeting, and investing

4. Understanding

The emotional work done in coming to terms with feelings around money, such as greed, envy, and resentment (which are rooted in Pain)

5. Vigor

The energy (physical, emotional, and spiritual) that must be expended to reach financial goals

6. Vision

The direction of Vigor outward toward the health and welfare of communities, with or without profit motive

7. Aloha

Compassionate goodwill allows one to use the money to perform acts of kindness without expecting anything in return.

Some questions for you to think about for the small group discussions:

1. What are your earliest memories of money? What feelings are attached to these memories?



2. When and how did money first enter your relationship with your mother? Your father? Your primary caregiver?
3. What are your family stories about money?
4. What experience with money has brought you the most joy? The most pain?
5. How did you feel about your social economic status growing up?

Money Harmony: Resolving Money Conflicts in Your Life & Relationships – Olivia Mellan

Most of Olivia Mellan's work revolves around couples and how each person's unique "money personalities" affect their relationship. Opposite styles often lead to friction, which is why money is consistently one of the top causes of marital conflict, Mellan suggests that partners need to learn to empathize with each other by walking in the other person's shoes. How do you feel and act with money? What role does money play in your life? Do you align with any of these "money personalities" Mellan has identified?

Spender: enjoy spending on immediate goods/services, difficult to put aside enough money for future-oriented purchases/long-term goals

Hoarder: like to save money, prioritize goals, and have a hard time spending money on luxury items or even practical gifts.

Avoider: Hard time balancing checkbooks, doing taxes, paying bills; feel incompetent/overwhelmed with money tasks

Amasser: happiest when having large amounts of money to spend, save, and invest; equate money with self-worth

Money Monk: money is dirty/bad; too much will corrupt you; avoid investing for fear it grows

More questions to think about for the small group discussions:

Thinking more about walking in another's shoes, how would you answer the following questions:

1. Are you a spender or a saver?
2. Do you avoid thinking about or constantly worry about money?
3. Do you like to take risks or avoid risks with your money?



4. What do you think about couples who merge their money (who want to combine all their finances)? And those that keep finances separate?
5. Are you a planner (who digs into the nitty-gritty details) or a dreamer (who has a grand vision but no idea how to get there)?
6. Do you think money is corrupting?
7. Do you believe that having money shows you are a better person than someone who is poor?

How does your personal relationship with money affect how you feel when you talk about money with your donors?

