TRUE NORTH MONEY · FREE FAMILY TOOLS

Money Talks for Couples

12 conversation prompts to help Canadian couples talk about money — without it becoming a fight.

How to use this guide

Pick a Saturday morning, a Sunday afternoon, or any quiet two-hour window where you're not exhausted and the kids (if any) are occupied. Make coffee. Sit somewhere that isn't your usual fight spot.

Work through one or two prompts at a time. Don't try all 12 in one sitting — you'll burn out. The first 4 are the foundation. The middle 4 are the practical operating rules. The last 4 are about your shared future.

> **GROUND RULES:** *(1) No criticism of past spending. (2) No 'I told you so.' (3) When one of you is talking, the other only asks clarifying questions — no rebuttals. (4) Either of you can call a 10-minute break at any time, no questions asked. (5) End with one agreed-upon decision, even if it's small.*

© True North Money. Print and use freely. Not for resale.

Part 1: The foundation (prompts 1-4)

Knowing where you each came from money-wise. Most money conflict is actually about these unspoken stories.

1. Your earliest money memory

> *"What's the first memory you have of money? What was it about? How did it make you feel?"*

WHY THIS MATTERS: How we grow up around money shapes how we behave with it for the rest of our lives. Knowing each other's earliest memory unlocks 60% of what each of you assumes about money.

2. Your parents' financial style

> *"Were your parents savers, spenders, fighters about money, silent about money, or anxious about money? What did you absorb from that?"*

WHY THIS MATTERS: We default to our parents' style unless we consciously choose otherwise. Naming the default makes it possible to choose.

© True North Money. Print and use freely. Not for resale.

3. Your dream life in 10 years

> *"Picture a typical Tuesday 10 years from now. Where are we? Who's around? What did we do that day? Nothing about money — just the day."*

WHY THIS MATTERS: If you can't agree on the life you're building toward, every financial decision becomes a fight in disguise. The Tuesday picture is the alignment test.

4. Your fears

> *"What scares you most about money? What's the worst-case scenario in your head?"*

WHY THIS MATTERS: Most financial conflicts are really about unspoken fears. Putting them on the table — even just naming them — drops the tension a lot.

© True North Money. Print and use freely. Not for resale.

Part 2: The numbers (prompts 5-8)

What you each want money to do for you, and what your operating rules will be.

5. Your number

> *"How much money would feel like 'enough' to you? Per year, in the bank, in retirement — pick whatever's easiest to picture."*

WHY THIS MATTERS: Most couples never define 'enough.' Then they fight forever because their unspoken numbers are different by 10x.

6. What money buys you

> *"If money is a tool, what's the most important thing you want it to buy? Security? Freedom? Experiences? Status? Time with family?"*

WHY THIS MATTERS: Knowing each other's #1 priority means you can route savings toward what actually matters — instead of optimizing for goals neither of you cares about.

© True North Money. Print and use freely. Not for resale.

7. The split

> *"How should our day-to-day expenses be split? 50/50? Proportional to income? One person covers all and the other handles savings? Something else?"*

WHY THIS MATTERS: There's no 'right' answer. There's only the answer you both agree on. Without explicit agreement, resentment builds quietly.

8. Discretionary money

> *"Should each of us have a personal 'no questions asked' spending account? How much per month?"*

WHY THIS MATTERS: Couples who give each other a small no-judgement personal allowance report fewer money fights. Privacy and trust aren't the same thing.

© True North Money. Print and use freely. Not for resale.

Part 3: The operating rules (prompts 9-12)

The boundaries, the kids' values, the next year's focus.

9. Big purchase threshold

> *"What's the dollar amount above which we have to discuss with each other before spending? $100? $500? $5,000?"*

WHY THIS MATTERS: Pick a number now. Without it, every purchase becomes a potential ambush.

10. Debt

> *"What's your relationship with debt? Are credit cards normal tools, or anxiety triggers? Mortgages — calm or scary?"*

WHY THIS MATTERS: Most debt arguments are emotional. Knowing each other's emotional baseline prevents the math conversation from becoming a personal one.

© True North Money. Print and use freely. Not for resale.

11. Kids and money

> *"If we have or will have kids, what do we most want them to learn about money? What do we want them NOT to inherit from us?"*

WHY THIS MATTERS: This is the easiest place to agree — most parents share a vision. Use the alignment as a starting point for the harder conversations.

12. The next 12 months

> *"What's the single biggest financial goal we should prioritize in the next 12 months? Pick one. Just one."*

WHY THIS MATTERS: One shared focused goal beats five vague goals every time. End the conversation with a single shared answer.

© True North Money. Print and use freely. Not for resale.

After the conversation

Write down the three things you agreed on. The 'agreed' part matters more than the 'right' part.

We agreed:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

WHEN TO REVISIT: *Once a year is plenty. Pick a date you'll both remember — your anniversary, January 1, or the first Saturday after tax season. Mark it in the calendar now.*

© True North Money. Print and use freely. Not for resale.