

MONEY

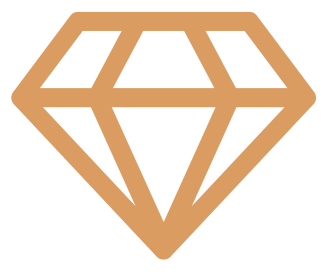
Financial management is often a **source of conflict** for couples.

Money causes tension when there isn't enough, when it isn't allocated correctly, and when there are different ideas surrounding its purpose.

The conflict grows out of a lack of understanding and communication around money and how it relates to your relationship.

If you need assistance getting out of debt, practical budgeting advice for today, or saving for the future – there are many resources available specifically to help couples improve their financial management skills.

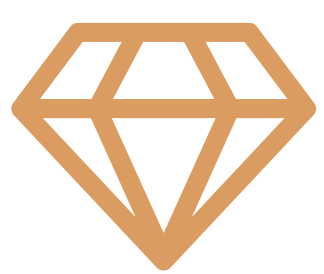
The goal here is to help you understand how money impacts your relationship with your partner.



The first step to gaining understanding is to be aware of your own experiences with money. We first learn about money from our **family of origin**; it's where we learn how to spend, how to save, and what money means. These ideas may change throughout life, but the influence of first impressions is significant.

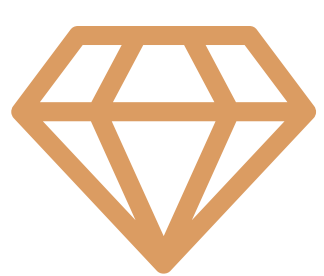
Practicing assertive communication with your partner about emotions you have surrounding money (fear, joy, anxiety, etc.) is important because it helps your partner begin to understand how you relate to money.

If your partner is actively listening to your message, they will be primed to acknowledge your feelings when making financial decisions in the future and vice versa.



Another step towards understanding how money impacts your relationship is to discuss the practical aspect of money – income vs. expenses – and the responsibilities that come with it.

The balance that works for your relationship may not be completely equal, but that's ok; the key is finding a balanced distribution to which you agree.



A final step to understanding is recognizing the way in which money can strengthen your relationship, perhaps through generosity and giving.

Family of origin refers to the group of family members with whom you grew up which often includes parents and siblings.

DISCUSSION

// What aspects of your relationship does money control? What specific financial situations have a direct effect on the satisfaction of your relationship? When it's payday, does this translate to an extravagant date night? When you have to pay the monthly bills, does this often prompt an argument? Explain how it feels to carry guilt associated with money (earn too much/little, have more in debt, etc.).

// What are your financial goals as a couple? Are your goals **short or long term**? How do you and your partner each contribute to reaching goals? What are your individual financial goals independent of your partner?

// Discuss the unexpected – What is your plan for the unexpected? Who is responsible for reaching out to a trusted resource if finances become a serious concern?

// What financial lessons did you learn from your family of origin? Which financial practices or habits have you kept and which did you change? What did money mean to you as a child (status, security, enjoyment, control)? Do you still believe that?

// How does financial generosity contribute to your relationship? How does the act of giving strengthen your relationship? How much financial support will you and your partner provide to family members (aging parents, adult children, etc.) if needed?

// Consider the future – What is your plan for how you will financially prepare for new phases in your life together (children, retirement)? In what ways will a new phase of life have financial implications? What are your and your partner's ideas around inheritance and estate planning?

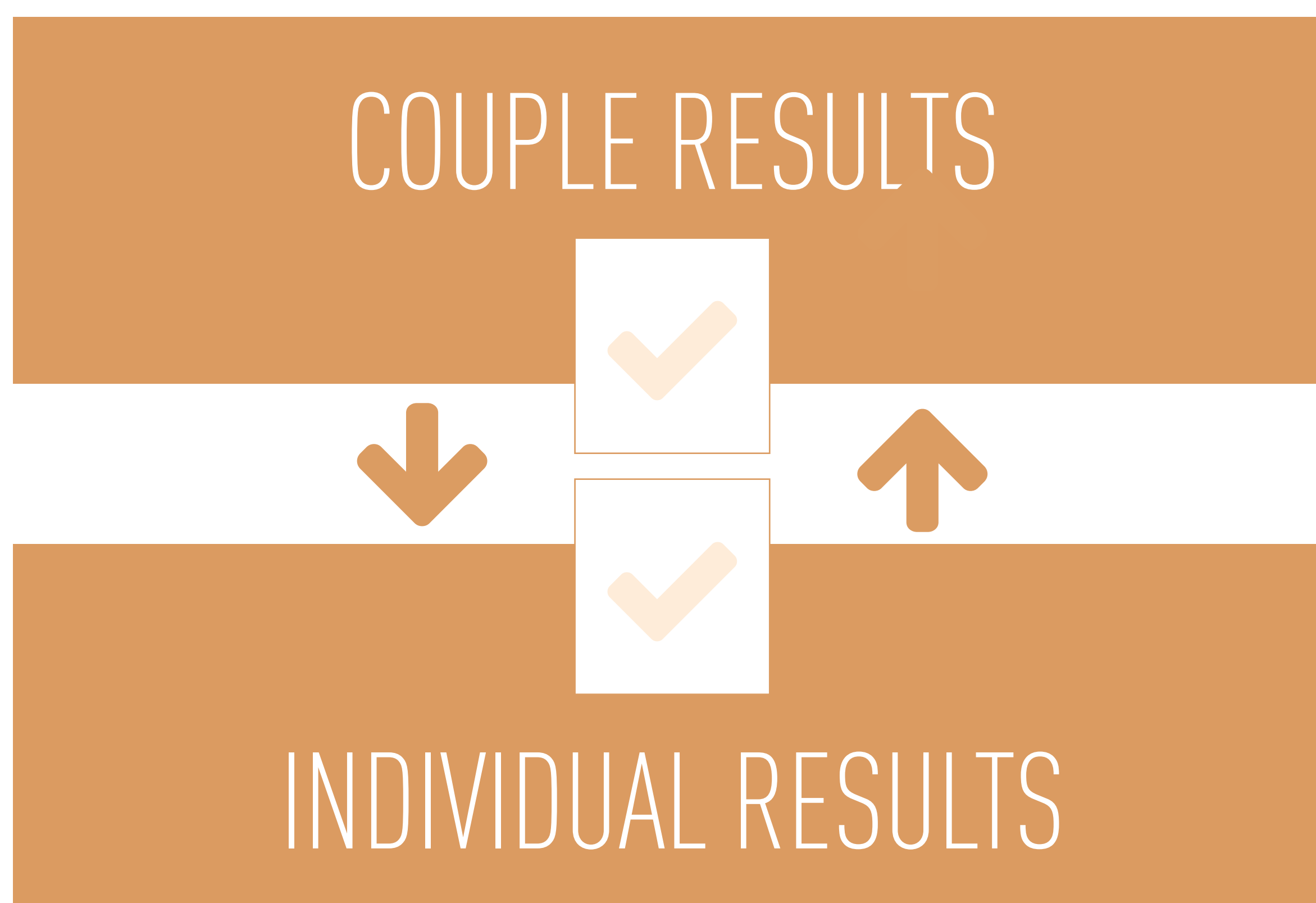
The length of a **short term goal** is typically six months to one year, while the length of a **long term goal** is one to five years.

CHECK IN WITH CHECKUP

Check in with your Couple Checkup results

by reviewing the *Financial Management* section of your report.

Are you surprised by the suggested discussion items?



Does this accurately reflect how you feel about money in your relationship?

TAKEAWAY

Money has the potential to become a point of contention in your relationship; be proactive and begin to understand how money influences the relationship you have with your partner.

APPLICATION

Begin to understand how you and your partner relate to money – and how that in turn impacts your relationship – by asking “Why?” Ask to understand, not to judge yourself or your partner. Ask yourself why when you choose to pay more than the balance due on your student loans each month; ask why your partner felt it is important to give to local charities. The idea is to identify the reasoning behind the financial decision and apply that learning to all around more awareness of the impact of money.

NEXT STEPS

Be more mindful of your money by learning something new with your partner. Find a local class to attend on a financial management area that interests you and your partner (investing, debt reduction, budgeting, etc.). Plan to have a discussion afterwards about money and your relationship in the context of the new learning.

SECTION SUGGESTION

Consider exploring **Forgiveness** or **Roles** next.