

FINANCIAL FOMO

A SURVEY ABOUT MONEY
AND RELATIONSHIPS





Strong relationships with family and friends can bring great happiness, offering a dependable support system to help achieve personal goals and dreams.

However, mixing money and personal relationships can be uncomfortable. People have different financial aims and priorities, and they face varying levels of success in reaching their desired outcomes. This can lead to anxiety and fear about one's financial situation and how to accomplish personal financial goals. Involving spouses, parents, friends and children in these discussions can surprise even the most confident person.

Being comfortable discussing finances can significantly influence personal goals and relationships. Keeping up with the financial achievements of close contacts can strain relationships, and worries about cost and affordability can stop Americans from participating in activities with friends and family. Additionally, due to a desire for privacy and fear of embarrassment, not everyone feels at ease discussing their finances with others.

CFP Board sought to better understand how Americans interact with those close to them regarding financial issues and how money affects those relationships. To do this, CFP Board's Research team conducted a survey from January 12-13, 2026. The 14-question survey explores the intersection of money and relationships among a diverse group of Americans.

The research team sent the survey to randomly selected Americans ages 25 to 64 nationwide, sourced through online survey provider Alchemer. The panel ensures the data collected reflects a reliable demographic and geographic representation of the U.S. population. The survey received 1,138 responses, the data from which are subject to a sampling error of +/- 2.9% at the 95% confidence interval. The survey data form the basis of this report.

A Survey About Money and Relationships



83% of Americans are **comfortable** discussing money with at least one person close to them.

2 out of 3 Americans

declined participating in a social commitment **due to cost** in the past 2 years.

You're Invited!

Reply:

Yes

No

Maybe

Comments:

56% of Americans who decline an event did not divulge that cost was reason the to friends/family.

Why Americans avoid financial conversations with loved ones:

Privacy

Different money priorities and values

Embarrassment

Fear of conflict



More Americans trust financial advisors

than any other resource when seeking financial advice.



(Dis)comfort With Money

Money can be a tough topic for many to manage alone, and not having someone to confide in can lead to feelings of isolation. Having someone nearby who understands their situation, offers advice and provides moral support can be crucial. Eighty-three percent of Americans say they are comfortable talking about money and personal finances with a family member (including a spouse), friend or co-worker.

Seven in eight Americans who have a spouse or significant other (87%) say they are comfortable discussing money with their partner. In comparison, fewer than half of Americans feel comfortable sharing financial matters with close friends (48%), parents or in-laws (43%), and siblings or extended family (42%). Americans are even more hesitant to talk about personal finances with co-workers, with only one in five feeling comfortable.

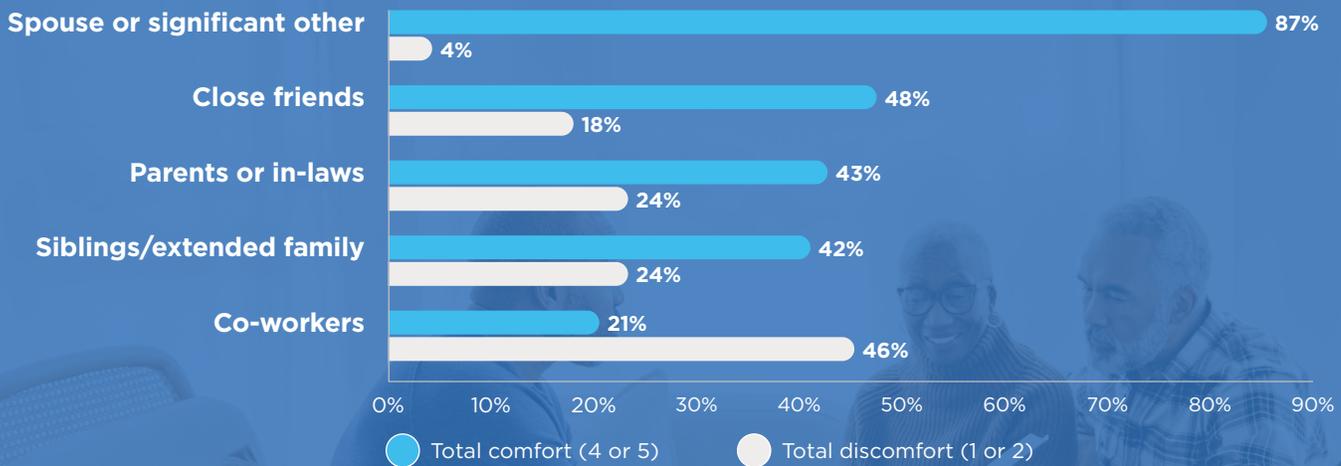
However, younger Americans age 40 and under are more likely to feel comfortable discussing money with close friends (56% vs. 42%), parents or in-laws (49% vs. 38%), siblings or extended family (47% vs. 37%), and co-workers (27% vs. 16%) than those over age 40.

83%

of Americans say they are comfortable talking about money and personal finances with a family member, friend or co-worker.

Most Americans Are Comfortable Talking With Spouses About Money, Less So With Friends and Family

(Percentage Distribution of Comfort Level Based on a 5-Point Scale)



	Total comfort with spouse or romantic partner	Total comfort with close friends	Total comfort with parents or in-laws	Total comfort with siblings/extended family	Total comfort with co-workers
All	87%	48%	43%	42%	21%
Married	86%	47%	42%	39%	22%
Single	N/A	49%	43%	45%	21%
Income \$75,000+	88%	53%	46%	45%	25%
Income <\$75,000	86%	43%	40%	39%	16%
Ages 25-40	91%	56%	49%	47%	27%
Ages 41-64	85%	42%	38%	37%	16%

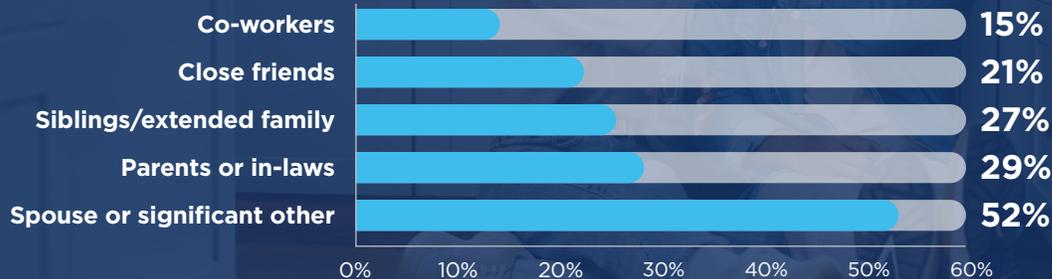
Being comfortable discussing finances with someone doesn't mean money isn't a source of tension. In fact, 57% of survey respondents say money has caused tension with someone they know well, often with their spouse or partner.

More than half of Americans who are married or in a serious relationship report experiencing financial tension with their partner. Many have also had financial conflicts with family members, including parents or in-laws (29%) and siblings or other relatives (27%). Even 1 in 5 survey respondents said they face significant financial tension with a close friend.

Younger Americans age 40 and under are more likely to report relationship tensions caused by money conversations with close friends (28% vs. 16%), parents or in-laws (36% vs. 22%), and siblings or extended family (32% vs. 22%) than those over 40.

57%
of survey respondents say money has caused tension with someone they know well, often with their spouse or partner.

Three in Five Americans Have Experienced Money-Related Tension With Someone They Know, And Most Likely It Is With Their Spouse or Significant Other (Percent of Respondents)



	Tension with spouse or romantic partner	Tension with close friends	Tension with parents or in-laws	Tension with siblings/extended family	Tension with co-workers
All	52%	21%	29%	27%	15%
Married	52%	22%	27%	25%	17%
Single	N/A	23%	31%	28%	14%
Income \$75,000+	51%	20%	27%	25%	15%
Income <\$75,000	52%	22%	30%	29%	14%
Ages 25-40	55%	28%	36%	32%	19%
Ages 41-64	49%	16%	22%	22%	11%

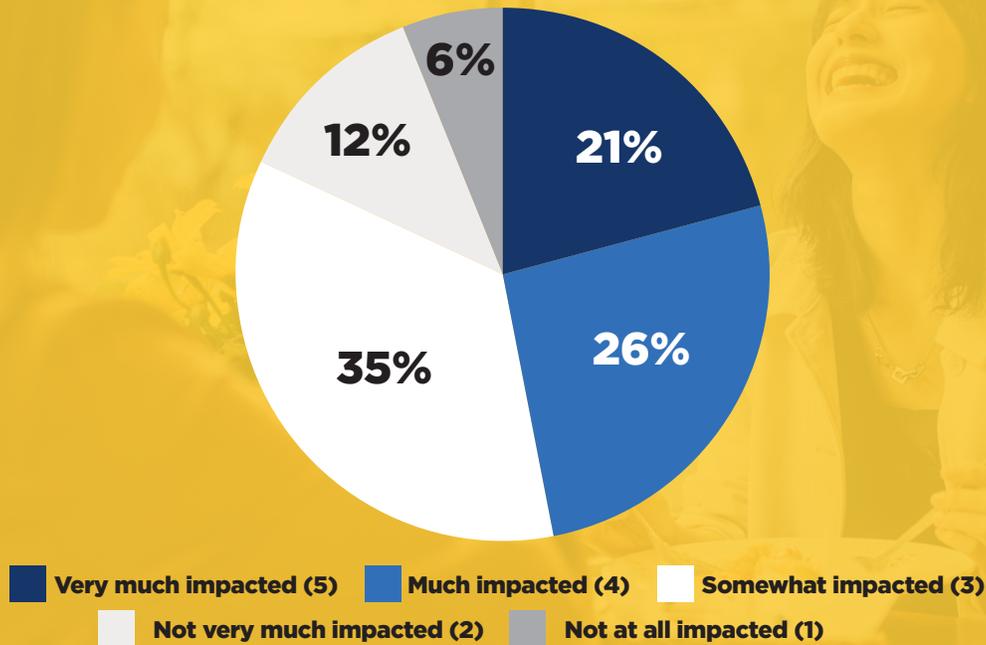
Social Pressure

The financial well-being of others can greatly influence how people view their own finances. This might include feeling inspired to achieve something greater for themselves, feeling envy toward someone close who has attained material success that they have not, or gaining gratitude and a desire to help those facing bigger financial struggles. Nearly half of Americans (47%) say that the financial situations of close friends or family have much or very much impacted their views on personal finances, either in a positive or negative way. Another 35% say their views have been “somewhat” impacted.

Not everyone reflects equally on their peers’ financial status. Married couples are more likely than single Americans (53% vs. 39%) to believe that the financial conditions of those close to them have caused them to reconsider their own financial perspectives. The same trend applies to younger Americans age 40 and under, who compare their financial situations with their peers more often than older Americans (53% vs. 41%).

4 in 5 Americans Say The Financial Situations of Those Close to Them Have Impacted Their Thinking About Personal Finances

(Percentage Distribution)



Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

	Very much/much impacted	Somewhat impacted
All	47%	35%
Married	53%	31%
Single	39%	40%
Income \$75,000+	51%	33%
Income <\$75,000	42%	38%
Ages 25-40	53%	34%
Ages 41-64	41%	36%

Not only can the financial situations of other people influence one’s view of personal finance, but others’ success (or failure) in reaching their goals can also create problems. For example, six out of seven Americans (85%) say they feel out of sync with their friends’ spending.

Many Americans feel out of sync with friends in their ability (or inability) to achieve desired financial outcomes. These include:

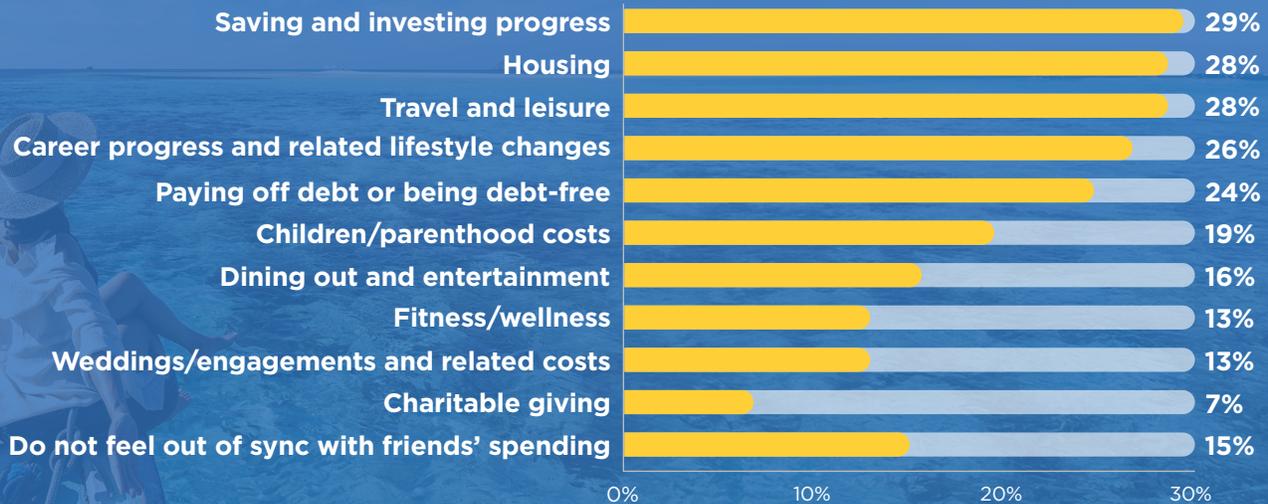
- Saving and investing progress, such as having an emergency fund or retirement savings (29%).
- Career progress and related lifestyle changes, including growth in their career and income (26%).
- Paying off debt or being debt-free (24%).

In other cases, survey respondents were not well aligned with their friends in enjoying the benefits of achieving financial goals. Such goals include:

- Housing, including purchasing a home (28%).
- Travel and leisure (28%).
- Having and taking care of children, including affording child care, activities and school (19%).
- Dining out and entertainment (16%).
- Fitness and wellness, such as gym memberships and personal care (13%).
- Weddings and their related costs (13%).

Most Americans Feel Out of Sync With Their Friends’ Spending

(Percentage of Respondents Selecting as a Top 3 Spending Area Out of Sync With Friends)



	Saving and investing progress	Housing	Travel and leisure	Career progress and related lifestyle changes	Paying off debt or being debt-free	Children/parenthood costs	Dining out and entertainment	Fitness/wellness	Weddings/engagements and related costs	Charitable giving	Do not feel out of sync with friends' spending
All	29%	28%	28%	26%	24%	19%	16%	13%	13%	7%	15%
Married	27%	27%	27%	25%	23%	22%	17%	14%	13%	7%	15%
Single	29%	27%	27%	27%	24%	17%	16%	10%	16%	6%	18%
Income \$75,000+	27%	27%	30%	24%	23%	20%	14%	14%	15%	9%	14%
Income <\$75,000	31%	30%	27%	28%	26%	18%	18%	13%	12%	5%	16%
Ages 25-40	28%	35%	26%	31%	23%	24%	17%	14%	16%	5%	13%
Ages 41-64	29%	23%	29%	22%	26%	15%	16%	13%	10%	8%	18%

Family and friends can bring great joy, camaraderie and opportunities to gather for fun and to celebrate occasions big and small. However, getting together with loved ones often comes with a hefty price. If someone cannot afford, it they might have to opt out. Two-thirds of Americans (67%) report declining to participate in a social event at least once in the past two years, primarily due to cost.

Many Americans skipped events and experiences due to their expense, such as:

- Joining a group trip or vacation (30%).
- Dining out or participating in nightlife with friends (30%).
- Attending a concert, show or sporting event (28%).

Additionally, some missed out on opportunities to celebrate with family and friends, including:

- Family holiday gatherings (23%).
- Gift exchanges for birthdays or celebrations (20%).
- Birthdays or other celebrations (17%).
- Attending a wedding (13%).

Often, these same family and friends are unaware of why someone chose not to participate in a social gathering with them. Of Americans who skipped at least one social commitment in the past two years, 56% did not tell their friends or family that cost was the primary reason. Single Americans are even more likely than married people to hide that cost was the main reason for not participating (63% vs. 55%).

Two in Three Americans Have Skipped Social Events and Commitments With Family and Friends Because Of The Cost (Percent of Respondents)



	Joining a group trip or vacation	Dining out or participating in nightlife with friends	Attending a concert, show or sporting event	Joining family holiday gathering	Exchanging gifts for a birthday or holiday	Attending a birthday or anniversary celebration	Attending a wedding	Participating in kids' events	Attending a baby shower	Have not skipped social commitments due to cost
All	30%	30%	28%	23%	20%	17%	13%	12%	9%	33%
Married	32%	29%	28%	23%	20%	18%	16%	14%	10%	33%
Single	22%	30%	25%	24%	20%	18%	8%	8%	8%	33%
Income \$75,000+	34%	28%	30%	22%	18%	18%	15%	13%	9%	34%
Income <\$75,000	27%	31%	27%	25%	22%	17%	12%	10%	9%	32%
Ages 25-40	33%	35%	34%	25%	20%	19%	15%	13%	10%	24%
Ages 41-64	28%	25%	24%	22%	20%	15%	11%	10%	7%	40%

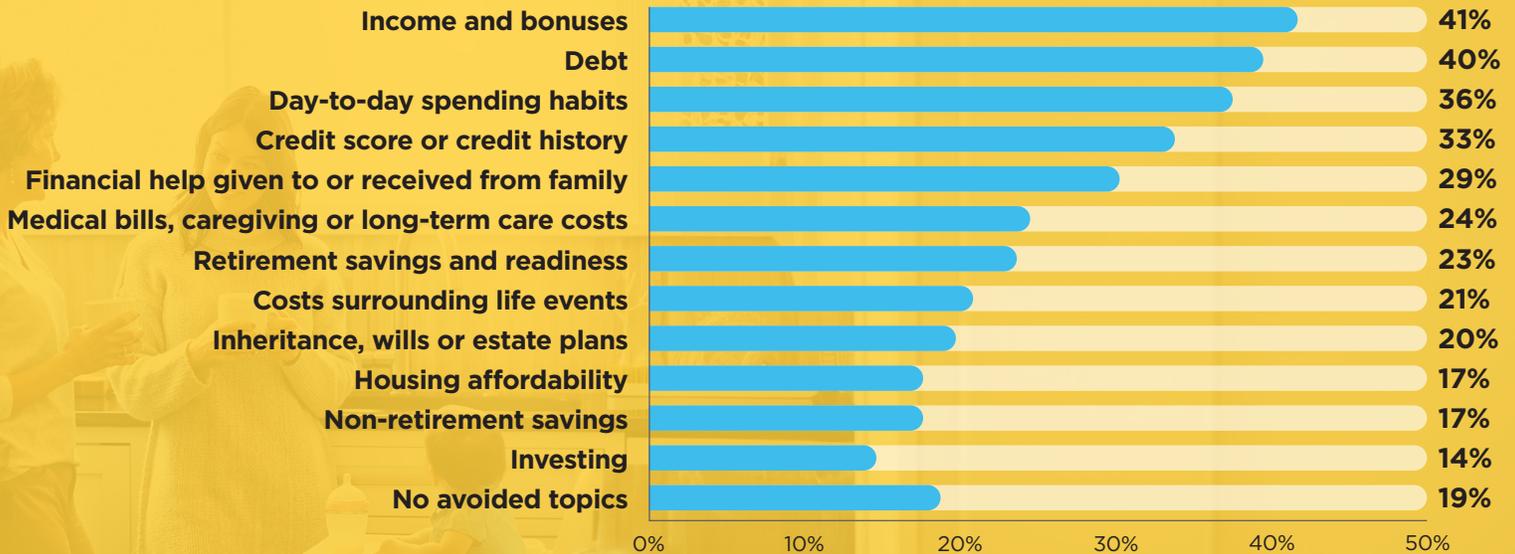
Avoiding Hard Conversations

Many people find it hard to talk about money and finances with others. They fear it might lead to arguments, hurt feelings or reveal irreconcilable differences with loved ones. Four in five Americans (81%) say they intentionally avoid discussing one or more financial topics with family and friends.

People steer clear of discussing a wide range of financial topics with those close to them. The most commonly avoided topics are income (including bonuses) (41%) and debt (40%). Over a third of respondents also report avoiding conversations about daily spending habits (36%) and credit history (33%). Americans frequently avoid discussions related to family finances, including receiving or giving financial support (29%) and estate planning (e.g., wills, inheritances) (20%).

Americans Most Avoid Discussing Financial Topics Like Income/Bonuses, Debt and Day-to-Day Spending Habits With Friends and Family

(Percent of Respondents)



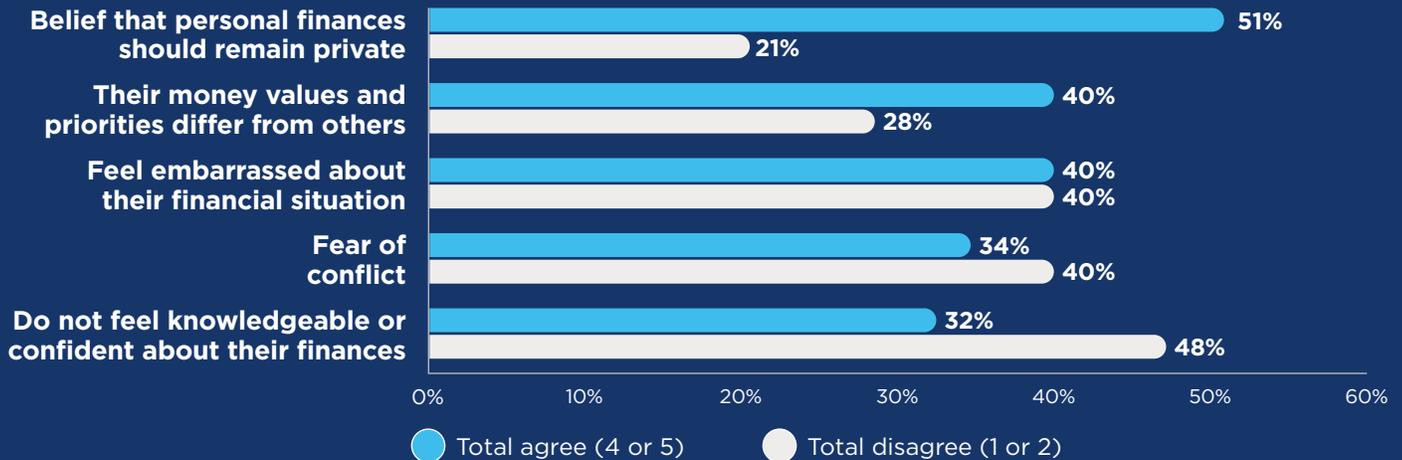
	Income and bonuses	Debt	Day-to-day spending habits	Credit score or credit history	Financial help given to or received from family	Medical bills, caregiving or long-term care costs	Retirement savings and readiness	Costs surrounding life events	Inheritance, wills or estate plans	Housing affordability	Non-retirement savings	Investing	No avoided topics
All	41%	40%	36%	33%	29%	24%	23%	21%	20%	17%	17%	14%	19%
Married	45%	43%	35%	35%	28%	26%	27%	22%	22%	18%	18%	16%	17%
Single	34%	33%	32%	31%	26%	20%	18%	21%	19%	15%	12%	10%	24%
Income \$75,000+	47%	41%	35%	33%	26%	24%	27%	22%	21%	17%	18%	15%	15%
Income <\$75,000	35%	39%	37%	34%	31%	23%	19%	19%	20%	17%	15%	13%	22%
Ages 25-40	36%	40%	40%	32%	27%	22%	18%	23%	17%	17%	14%	13%	18%
Ages 41-64	44%	39%	33%	35%	30%	24%	27%	19%	23%	16%	18%	15%	19%

People avoid financial conversations with those closest to them for various reasons, with the desire for privacy being most common. For just over half of Americans, believing that personal finances are a private matter prevents them from discussing money with friends and family. Two in five survey respondents report having different values and priorities regarding money compared with their loved ones, and fear of embarrassment also plays a role in avoiding these discussions, while a third cite a desire to avoid conflict.

Younger Americans age 40 and under are more likely than older Americans to avoid financial discussions with friends and family due to differing values and priorities (45% vs. 36%).

Privacy, Differing Money Values and Fear of Embarrassment Are Why Americans Avoid Financial Conversations With Family and Friends

(Percentage Distribution of Respondents on Their Level of Agreement on Reasons They Avoid Financial Conversations With Those Close to Them Based on a 5-Point Scale)



	Belief that personal finances should remain private (Total agree)	Their money values and priorities differ from others (Total agree)	Feel embarrassed about their financial situation (Total agree)	Fear of conflict (Total agree)	Does not feel knowledgeable or confident enough about their finances (Total agree)
All	51%	40%	40%	34%	32%
Married	53%	43%	39%	34%	35%
Single	48%	40%	40%	34%	31%
Income \$75,000+	51%	38%	36%	31%	31%
Income <\$75,000	51%	43%	43%	36%	32%
Ages 25-40	51%	45%	45%	34%	35%
Ages 41-64	50%	36%	35%	33%	29%

Having the Hard Conversations

While many people may dread doing so, most have sat down with a partner, friend or family member to have an honest conversation about finances. Nine in 10 Americans report having had a potentially uncomfortable discussion about money.

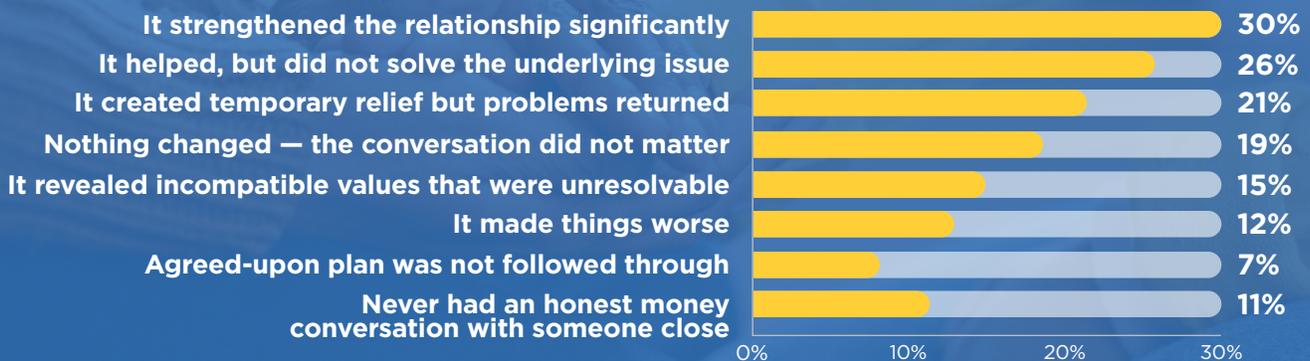
The outcomes of these conversations have varied. In fact, only 30% of Americans say their most recent money talk significantly strengthened their relationship with someone close to them.

More often, people find that these difficult money conversations yield mixed, not fully satisfactory outcomes. A quarter of Americans (26%) report that, while helpful, the conversation did not resolve the underlying issue. Others were less positive, with survey respondents saying it changed nothing (21%), provided only temporary relief with problems returning (19%) or that the agreed-upon plan was not implemented (7%).

Sadly, for some Americans, the money talk exacerbated an already challenging situation. For example, 15% reported that a conversation with family or friends revealed incompatible values, while 12% reported that the conversation made things worse.

Americans Report Mixed Outcomes Resulting From Their Money-Related Conversations With Family and Friends

(Percent of Respondents)



	It strengthened the relationship significantly	It helped, but did not solve the underlying issue	It created temporary relief but problems returned	Nothing changed	It revealed incompatible values that were unresolvable	It made things worse	Agreed-upon plan was not followed through	Never had an honest money conversation with someone close
All	30%	26%	21%	19%	15%	12%	7%	11%
Married	38%	27%	21%	18%	16%	13%	8%	9%
Single	17%	20%	16%	27%	14%	12%	6%	18%
Income \$75,000+	37%	25%	20%	19%	17%	11%	6%	10%
Income <\$75,000	23%	27%	18%	22%	13%	14%	8%	13%
Ages 25-40	30%	29%	23%	18%	18%	16%	7%	12%
Ages 41-64	30%	23%	14%	23%	12%	9%	7%	11%

Future Money Conversations With Spouses and Significant Partners

Most Americans in a committed relationship expect to have several financial conversations with their spouse or significant other in the near future. Key topics they plan to discuss in the next year include:

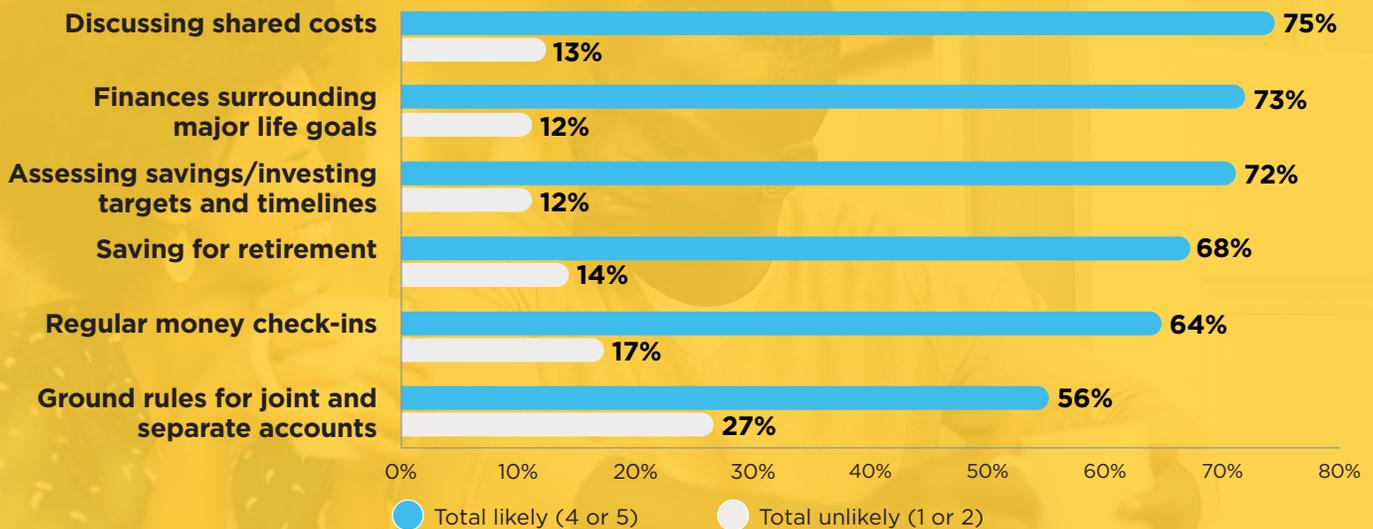
- Sharing costs (75%).
- Finances related to major life goals such as marriage, buying a home, having children and college (73%).
- Reviewing savings and investing goals with timelines (72%).
- Saving for retirement (68%).

Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of Americans in such relationships expect to regularly check in on their finances (64%), with 56% expecting to discuss ground rules for joint and separate bank and investment accounts.

Survey respondents earning over \$75,000 are more likely to prioritize discussions on all these financial topics compared to those earning less than \$75,000.

Americans Are Likely to Have Conversations With Their Spouse or Significant Partner About Shared Costs, Major Life Goals and Savings/Investment Targets

(Percentage Distribution of the Likelihood of Having a Conversation in the Year Ahead Based on a 5-Point Scale)



	Discussing shared costs (Total likely)	Finances surrounding major life goals (Total likely)	Assessing savings/investing targets and timelines (Total likely)	Saving for retirement (Total likely)	Regular money check-ins (Total likely)	Ground rules for joint and separate accounts (Total likely)
All	75%	73%	72%	68%	64%	56%
Married	77%	75%	75%	74%	67%	59%
Single	-	-	-	-	-	-
Income \$75,000+	78%	79%	78%	77%	69%	60%
Income <\$75,000	70%	66%	65%	58%	58%	51%
Ages 25-40	78%	78%	75%	66%	66%	59%
Ages 41-64	72%	70%	71%	70%	63%	54%

Trusted Sources for Financial Advice

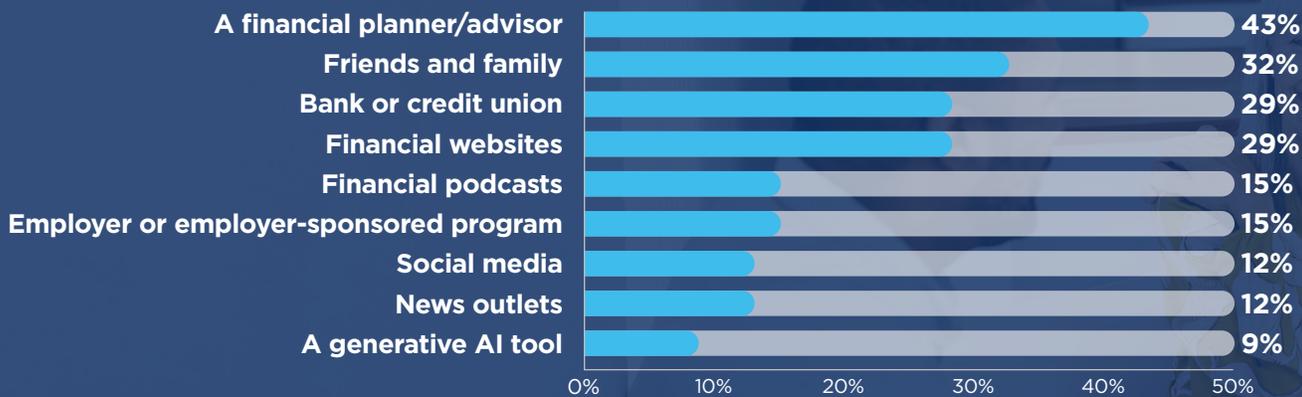
Information and advice can help people manage their financial challenges, including those affecting their relationships with loved ones. Americans have many options when seeking financial advice.

One way to approach financial conversations is by finding an ethical and competent advisor who can discuss personal finances without judgment and with clients' best interests in mind. Access to a financial advisor, such as a CFP® professional, who is duty-bound to act in clients' best interests, can be essential for feeling comfortable enough to start discussing finances.

More Americans are likely to trust financial advisors than any other resource when seeking financial advice (43%). This percentage exceeds the trust placed in people close to them, like friends and family (32%). Other trusted sources include financial institutions such as banks or credit unions (29%) and financial websites (29%). Fewer Americans trust financial advice from sources like financial podcasts (15%), employer or employer-sponsored programs (15%), social media (12%), news outlets (12%) and generative AI tools (8%).

More Americans Trust Financial Advice From Financial Planners Than From Any Other Source

(Percent of Respondents — Allowed to Select Up to 3 Options)

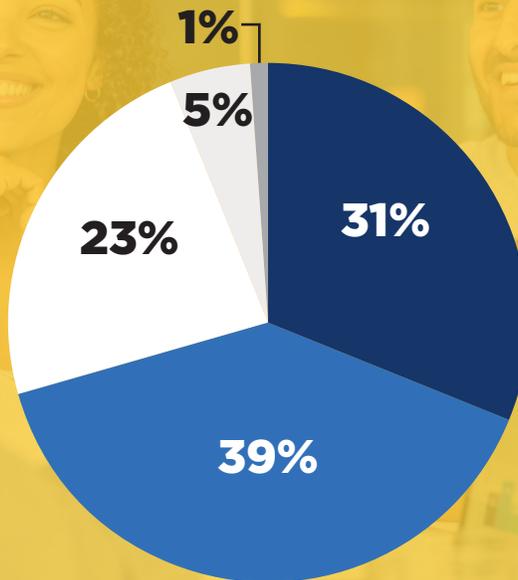


	A financial planner/advisor	Friends and family	Bank or credit union	Financial websites	Financial podcasts	Employer or employer-sponsored program	Social media	News outlets	A generative AI tool
All	43%	32%	29%	29%	15%	15%	12%	12%	8%
Married	44%	30%	27%	31%	18%	16%	13%	15%	8%
Single	39%	33%	32%	30%	14%	14%	13%	8%	9%
Income \$75,000+	46%	30%	27%	32%	19%	17%	13%	14%	10%
Income <\$75,000	41%	34%	32%	27%	12%	13%	12%	9%	7%
Ages 25-40	41%	34%	28%	29%	19%	15%	14%	11%	9%
Ages 41-64	46%	31%	30%	30%	13%	14%	10%	12%	7%

Having access to a competent, independent financial advisor, such as a CFP® professional, can be a helpful step toward greater comfort discussing personal finances. Nearly three-quarters of Americans (71%) would feel at ease discussing financial topics with such an advisor if they had access to one.

71% of Americans Would Be Comfortable Discussing Financial Topics With A Competent, Independent Financial Advisor

(Percentage Distribution)



■ Very comfortable (5)
 ■ Comfortable (4)
 ■ Somewhat comfortable (3)
 ■ Uncomfortable (2)
 ■ Very uncomfortable (1)

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

	Total comfort (4 or 5)
All	71%
Married	73%
Single	64%
Income \$75,000+	77%
Income <\$75,000	65%
Ages 25-40	73%
Ages 41-64	69%



As Americans manage their financial lives, focusing on open communication with loved ones about money can be highly beneficial. Some may hesitate to discuss their finances with family or friends due to privacy concerns or differing values about money. Many Americans report that their most recent financial conversations with loved ones led to positive, constructive outcomes. Others have experienced tension during money-related discussions, leaving them unsure of what steps to take next.

Honest communication can support personal finances and strengthen healthy relationships when approached thoughtfully. Although financial talks can feel awkward initially, avoiding them altogether can lead to more tension. Working with a competent facilitator could reduce tension and lead to not only better financial outcomes but also more fulfilling relationships.

Everyone has different comfort levels when discussing money, but Americans understand the value of expert guidance in reaching their financial goals. Working with a competent, ethical financial professional, such as a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® professional, can provide the confidence to discuss finances openly. CFP® professionals' commitment to acting in their clients' best interests allows them to provide personalized, holistic support to help Americans achieve both their financial and life goals.



From January 12–13, 2026, CFP Board’s Research team sent a 14-question survey to randomly selected Americans ages 25 to 64 nationwide, as sourced by online survey provider Alchemer. The panel’s design ensures that the data collected reflects a reliable demographic and geographic representation of the U.S. population. The survey generated 1,138 responses, the data from which serve as the basis of this report and are subject to a sampling error of +/- 2.9% at the 95% confidence interval.

ABOUT CFP BOARD

CFP Board is the professional body for personal financial planners in the U.S. CFP Board consists of two affiliated organizations focused on advancing the financial planning profession for the public’s benefit.

CFP Board of Standards sets and upholds standards for financial planning and administers the prestigious CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® certification — widely recognized by the public, advisors and firms as *the standard* for financial planners — so that the public has access to the benefits of competent and ethical financial planning. CFP® certification is held by more than 107,000 people in the U.S.

CFP Board Center for Financial Planning addresses diversity and workforce development challenges and conducts and publishes research that adds to the financial planning profession’s body of knowledge.

