Bridging the Gap: Tips for Couples

WHAT IF YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE VALUE SPENDING MONEY ON DIFFERENT THINGS?

The next time you're about to spend money on something your spouse doesn't value as highly as you do, consider…

- **Pausing.**
  Being thoughtful in how you spend your shared money communicates honor to the other person. You may still decide to spend the money, but it's valuable just to stop and consider them first.

  For example: I'd love to buy tickets to that concert. That would be a lot of money to spend on something she wouldn't enjoy as much as I would, though.

- **Acknowledging it.**
  Unexpressed gratitude can feel like ingratitude or entitlement. So, make a point to thank them for supporting the expense. It can be as simple as a text message.

  For example: I know the tickets aren't a priority for you. Thanks for supporting something I love!

- **Reciprocating.**
  It's not productive or healthy to keep a financial scorecard in your relationship, but sometimes it's appropriate to balance the scales by intentionally prioritizing what they value.

  For example: Because we spent money on tickets last month, would you like to plan a night out with friends this month?

The next time your spouse is about to spend money on something you don't value as highly as they do, consider...

- **Focusing on the *why*.**
  Focusing on why the expense is important to them—on what value it brings or need it fills—helps you understand their perspective.

  For example: Even though I don't value the concert tickets, I do value the opportunity they'll give him to unwind and enjoy something he loves.

- **Talking it over.**
  Respectfully acknowledge the difference in your values. Sometimes their decision is based on a misunderstanding.

  For example: I do like that band. But I want to be honest that it's not my first choice for how we spend our extra time and money.

- **Responding generously.**
  View decisions like this as opportunities to show your spouse love and grace.

  For example: I might rather spend money on other things, but I love you and if it's important to you, it's important to me.