

The Prince and The Pauper: Closing the Gap Between You and Your Cutie's Lifestyles (or Wallets)



By Kristin Mattern

Love can cross boundaries, conquer differences, and even span oceans, but being in a relationship with someone who is Cartier when you are simply Kay can be a bit tricky. Maybe you and your partner are on an equal footing in terms of cash, but you're a savvy saver, and he's a spend-thrift. If you and your significant other's lifestyles (or wallets) are on opposite sides of the fence, here are some tips to bring you closer

together.

1. Show him what you're about: Money is a sore spot in a lot of relationships. Rather than sweat it out that you don't make enough moola, realize that it isn't the dollars that matter – it's *you* and the role you play in the relationship that counts. Be yourself and show off your unique qualities. Perhaps you're really funny or you always know the right thing to say. Even if you're not bringing in the dough, you still have many other assets that are just as important.

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2. Appreciate his gift giving: Perhaps you're one of those people who feels uncomfortable when bestowed with gifts. If that sounds like you, figure out why you feel this way. As Dr. Georgina Rose, licensed physician and author of *Are You Ready for the One?*, says, "The moments of joy brought on by purchasing a special present or enjoying a memorable meal are worth more to some than the feeling of a greater security from your bank account." Gift giving is a way for many people to show affection, and showing that you're grateful for his sweet gesture is the best way to return the favor.

3. You squirrel it away and he spends like it's candy: It can be challenging to your relationship when you save every penny and your partner spends as if he's the next Rockefeller. "We each have different values when it comes to money and often these are based on our childhood and the way we saw our parents deal with materialism," explains Dr. Rose. "If you realize how insignificant the actual dollars are and try to understand the real value behind it, then your partner's expenses may be justified. Maybe what seems like a splurge for you is in fact a way of enjoying life."

4. Communicate, communicate, communicate: Try not to judge your boyfriend for his gift giving, and instead, make an

effort to understand the gratification his spending brings to him. Rather than jump down his throat for making a big purchase when you feel like the two of you should be saving, talk it out. Keep in mind that you can't half listen to his reasons and then have it out with him. *Really* listen to him. Try to understand why it makes him happy to buy you things and then explain how it makes you feel without undercutting his feelings. Communication is the only way to shorten the gap between your different views on how to spend or save.

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5. Remember that money can't buy love: As the Beatles say, money doesn't win hearts. At the end of the day, money issues can actual boil down to a factor of different life values. If you really dislike spending and materialism and your partner is all about the bling, then it might be time for a split. If you can't see eye-to-eye on how to manage your finances, there's a good chance that many other aspects of your life won't line up as well.

Money is always a tricky part of life to navigate. The key is be understanding of why your significant other spends and discuss your own feelings about the subject. In the end, it's a question of values and making sure you are both on the same page.

How have you handled money troubles in your relationship? Tell us in the comments below!