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BRIEF

Most people say money doesn't matter when it comes to love. In a new [study from Avvo](#), only 31 percent of respondents said it takes a lot of money to make a serious relationship or marriage work. Sixty-nine percent of respondents said dating doesn't have to cost a lot of money (although 53 percent acknowledged that it can).

And according to 79 percent of survey respondents, marriage should be about sharing your life with someone you love. But other data in the study clearly shows the relationship between love and money is often contentious.

The Finances of Love

Money can still make, break, and even prevent relationships and marriages from happening. Among divorced Americans, 17 percent said disagreements about money contributed to their [divorce](#).

More than half of respondents said they would refuse to marry someone who is deep in debt. "Younger Americans, and Americans with less income, may be more familiar with debt, and therefore more comfortable marrying into it," says Nika Kabiri, study author and law and society analyst at Avvo. But even among millennials, 55 percent said no to wedding a partner with substantial debt. Among the oldest respondents, that percentage rose to a whopping 70 percent.

Finances also played a role in keeping some couples together, but not necessarily in a positive way. Fourteen percent of respondents who have ever been in a serious relationship say they stayed longer than they wanted to because they couldn't afford to leave.

The number is even higher among women, where 17 percent have stayed in a bad relationship because it was more affordable. Sunk costs can be a factor as well – 9 percent have stayed in a relationship because they had already spent a lot of money to make it work.

Couples can improve their odds by talking about money before pooling it. Getting a [prenuptial agreement](#) can help eliminate some of the fear of debt going into marriage and may prevent some of the disagreements about money management that can lead to divorce. Even couples who are already married can get on the same financial page with a [postnuptial agreement](#).

See the full [Avvo relationship study](#).

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