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The Value of a Dollar

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The Value of a Dollar

Men and women express differences on what money means symbolically



by Savannah N. Miller

It's no secret that men and women express differences in behavior. In general, women tend to be more sentimental and nostalgic, and some associate meaning with seemingly insignificant objects; for example, some mothers keep the hair from their child's first haircut. Men, in contrast, are often less attached to material items. A recent study published in *Nature* by Furnham and colleagues found that this same trend exists in regards to money: women associate money with love and friendship, whereas men associate money with freedom and independence.



In this study, 109,472 participants completed a survey via BBC online. About 46 percent of those surveyed identified as male and the rest were female. The mean age of the participants was about 40 years old, and most of them were Caucasian. The questionnaire was 20 questions long, consisting of yes or no questions like, “Do you hold onto, or hoard your money?” “Do you often gamble and spend large sums on your bets?” “When you ask for money are you flooded with guilt or anxiety?” and “Do you spend money on others but have problems spending money on yourself?” These questions aimed to reveal how participants viewed money, and assumptions about the individuals were deduced based on their answers to the questions.

The results of the survey showed that the women surveyed tend to associate money and monetary issues with feelings and emotions. They were more inclined to be generous with money, and used it to buy “tokens of love, esteem, and friendship.” The women also used money as an emotional outlet and frequently engaged in binge spending and “retail therapy.” The study assumed that generosity

and affection were associated with feelings of love, and it therefore concluded that women associate money more with love. In contrast, the men surveyed associated money with power and security, equating money to personal independence and the ability to achieve goals. In other words, men who participated in this study saw money as a means of accomplishing tasks and gaining success.

Though the results of the survey were significant and visibly portrayed the differences in how the sexes perceive money, they were not conclusive. The sample size was small, pertaining to almost exclusively white individuals from England.

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“...women associate money and items with love and friendship, where men associate money with freedom and independence.”

A related gender study colleagues published National Council of found that financial are one of the highest divorce in married with dramatically on finances did not fare run; the study reported

that dissimilarities in financial preferences prevented spouses from feeling like a true couple. So, even though men and women in general may have some disagreements on what “money” really means, it is probably in a person's best interest to find a companion that has similar views to theirs on the matter. 🐾