

TIPS for TALKING ABOUT HOLIDAY FINANCES

- **Talk early.** Don't wait until your spouse springs for a Harley to talk about limits. Find a time to talk early about how you'll deal with this year's holiday spending.
- **Solve the right problem.** Many couples don't reach resolution because they discuss the wrong problem. For example, if you discover your loved one has rented storage units in neighboring states and stuffed them with hidden binge gifts, the issue now is trust, not spending.
- **Communicate with love and respect.** The most important key to solving problems with loved ones is to ensure they know you respect and love them. If they do, their defenses drop and they begin to listen.
- **Be willing to be wrong.** Approach the conversation with an open mind. For example, it could be that the source of your conflict is not a real budget limitation, but that you don't value holiday gift giving to the same degree as your partner.
- **Hold each other accountable.** Once you reach an agreement, find a way to routinely keep track of spending.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH. The study collected responses via an online survey of 644 individuals in November of 2006. Margin of error is approximately 3%.

LEARN NEW SKILLS. To learn how Crucial Conversations® Training can help you talk about holiday finances with your spouse, visit www.vital-smarts.com or call 1.800.449.5989.

According to our research of more than 600 people, **60 percent** of people either overspend or have a spouse or partner who overspends during the holiday season. And **78 percent** say it is difficult to discuss holiday spending with their spouse or partner—the majority either put it off for months or avoid bringing up their concerns altogether.

The survey revealed that people fear budget discussions because they don't know how to hold these conversations with the offender without damaging relationships or acting like a "Scrooge." In fact, they fear them so much they will employ just about any tactic to avoid an unpleasant conversation on holiday spending.

Here are the top six tactics people use to avoid discussions on holiday overspending:

- 24 percent change or avoid the subject.
- 23 percent hide price tags or receipts.
- 17 percent hide recent purchases.
- 10 percent walk away from the conversation.
- 9 percent tell their spouse/partner "It's *my* money."
- 8 percent change the subject to areas where the other person is "less than perfect."

KEY RESULTS

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