



# Venus/Mars and Planet Money

By Evelyn Preston



I usually cheer  
“Vive la  
difference!”  
between men  
and women...

just not when it comes to finances. Like other important communication issues, money matters often fall into the Mars/Venus tug-o-war between genders. It’s a shame. Women are wired to excel at money management because they’re practical, realistic and open-minded.

Unfortunately, due to mixed messages from home and society, too many women remain number-phobic and scaredy-cats about investing. Most men, however, are taught to “speak financial.” They’ll brave some risk for rewards, file mistakes under experience and move on without guilt.

The twain must meet because money talk between spouses or partners lays crucial groundwork for building a financial fortress for the benefit of both parties.

**Question:** *In this volatile economy, I just want to put our money in the bank and not risk losing a dime. My husband insists on “playing the market” to earn more for our retirement.*

**Answer:** According to Donald Bergis, Founder of Regent Wealth Management, you can have your safety and your spouse’s go-for-growth at the same time. Depending on your ages, needs and resources, Don advises

exploring the latest fixed or indexed annuity programs that will guarantee an on-going income stream you cannot outlive. This can leave some discretionary funds your husband can invest for longer term appreciation.

**Question:** *My husband always handled our finances but now that I’m widowed, I’m afraid to make a decision on my own. What’s the best way to proceed?*

**Answer:** Seek professional advice but don’t abdicate—investigate! Attend financial seminars and interview experts armed with questions and information related to your personal situation. Regent Wealth Management, like many Bay Area financial firms, regularly hosts educational seminars about long term investment programs that are safe and suitable. Local adult-ed and community colleges offer financial workshops/courses, and radio/print ads tout Bay Area meetings from estate planning to pension rollovers. Listen, learn and become a smart shopper. Just as in choosing computers, contractors or clothes, if the people or product aren’t comfortable or a good fit, don’t buy!

**Question:** *My father derived all his income from individual bonds but I learned that although the income remains constant, the bond value will drop as interest rates rise. As a woman on her own, how can I maintain an income without losing principal?*

**Answer:** Holding a bond to its maturity guarantees the principal (although the underlying value of bond funds constantly rises and falls). Annuities lock in initial principal with income available after age 59½. Individual dividend paying stocks from proven companies like IBM and AT&T

or carefully selected mutual funds are worth exploring for their surprisingly long term records of income and safety of principal.

**Question:** *I’m over 70½ and must take out the RMD (required minimum distribution) from my IRA mutual funds every year. However, I plan to immediately reinvest these shares in the same funds but as a taxable account. What’s the best way to accomplish this?*

**Answer:** Before year end, check the Ex-Dividend date (Nov./Dec.) when funds pay out any earnings. You can use these dividends and capital gains as part or all of the RMD and reinvest them into your taxable account at a lower share price. This “buy-low” advantage always reflects the size of the distribution. Ask if the mutual fund company will automatically set up the transfer at the proper time.

**Question:** *Between Government regulations and the multitude of investment vehicles, finances can become so time consuming and confusing. What’s the best way to entice my daughters into learning more about money management?*

**Answer:** Get them started making money and they’ll be hooked! Show positive compounding via bank savings accounts, begin regular mutual fund/stock investments in food, fashion and female oriented companies they use daily, contrast the negatives of interest payments and debt. Money’s seductive in our society.

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