

Can't buy me love: Study shows materialistic couples have more money and more problems

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New research to be published Oct. 13 confirms The Beatles' lyrical hypothesis and finds that "the kind of thing that money just can't buy" is a happy and stable marriage.

Scholars at Brigham Young University studied 1,734 [married couples](#) across the country. Each couple completed a relationship evaluation, part of which asked how much they value "having money and lots of things."

The researchers' [statistical analysis](#) showed that couples who say money is not important to them score about 10 to 15 percent better on marriage stability and other measures of [relationship quality](#) than couples where one or both are materialistic.

"Couples where both spouses are materialistic were worse off on nearly every measure we looked at," said Jason Carroll, a BYU professor of family life and lead author of the study. "There is a pervasive pattern in the data of eroding communication, poor [conflict resolution](#) and low [responsiveness](#) to each other."

The findings will be published Oct. 13 in the *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*.

For one in five couples in the study, both partners admitted a strong love of money. Though these couples were better off financially, money was often a bigger source of conflict for them.

"How these couples perceive their finances seems to be more important to their marital health than their actual financial situation," Carroll said.

And despite their shared materialism, materialistic couples' relationships were in poorer shape than couples who were mismatched and had just one materialist in the marriage.

The study's overall findings were somewhat surprising to Carroll because materialism was only measured by self-evaluations.

"Sometimes people can deceive themselves about how important their relationships are to them," Carroll said. "It's helpful to step back and look at where you focus your time."

Provided by Brigham Young University

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