2006 PRUDENTIAL FINANCIAL'S STUDY ON THE

# FINANCIAL EXPERIENCE & BEHAVIORS AMONG WOMEN



### Acknowledgement

Today's women are very aware of the importance of financial and retirement planning, as well as the need to actively manage their health. And many have moved beyond the "beginner" stage in terms of their knowledge of financial products and services. However, this study—the fourth in a series about the financial experience and behaviors of women—indicates that this awareness and basic knowledge is not inspiring women to take the appropriate actions that will help ensure they maintain their desired lifestyle as they move through the next 20 to 30 years of their life.

As the following pages reveal, various factors "interfere" with women's financial priorities. To help bring to life some of these issues, Prudential Financial's 2006 report includes real stories\* of women who are tackling the challenge of keeping their health and wealth issues in balance.

Please take time to learn from this study and, more importantly, take action.

Vivian Banta Vice Chairman

Prudential Financial, Inc.

Muan Bento

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### Women Wish to Be Financially Fit, But Many Are Sidetracked

Nearly 1 in 3 American women consider themselves more involved in financial decisions than they were five years ago. And, among married women, over a third claim to be "at the head of the table" in the financial decision making in their household. Despite this sense of leadership, women are still uncertain about—and not necessarily on the right path for—achieving their financial goals. Lack of confidence and knowledge, and interference of more immediate responsibilities, combine to sidetrack even those with the best of intentions. American women are clear about their financial goals, but many are not taking action.

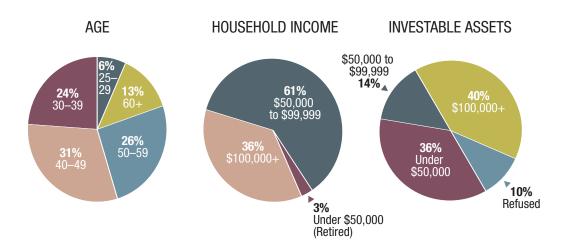
This study touches on some of these inhibitors while also looking at women's expectations, preparedness, knowledge, confidence, and approach to financial issues.

### About the Study

Prudential Financial's study on the Financial Experience and Behaviors Among Women polled 1,007 American women about their financial knowledge, goals, actions taken and confidence in attaining financial goals. The survey was administered from January 25 to February 1, 2006. The margin of error is  $\pm 3\%$  at a 95% confidence level.

Study participants are a national sample of female sole, and joint, heads of households between the ages of 25 to 68, with a 2005 household income of \$50,000 or more, and who use the Internet.

### PROFILE OF WOMEN RESPONDENTS - 2006 STUDY



Note: This report on the Financial Experience and Behaviors Among Women is the fourth in a series. For consistency when comparing 2006 data to the 2004 results, the 2004 data has been restated to represent the same age and income criteria used for the 2006 study. Due to the change in participant criteria for the 2006 study, data from the 2000 and 2002 studies could not be compared for tracking purposes.



Suzanne

43 years old Married, mother of two Marketing Manager

What keeps me up at night is saving for college. I worry about whether or not we'll get any financial aid...if not, we're really going to struggle to pay for eight years of school—or more—for our two boys. As for our own retirement plans, it's one more thing that keeps me up at night, but putting any money in the retirement piggy bank is on hold until we feel more secure about our boys' futures.

### Most Women Don't Make the Financial Honor Roll

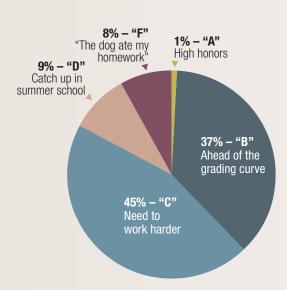
# Two thirds of women grade themselves a "C" or worse

When women were asked to grade themselves on their overall knowledge of financial products and services, only 1% gave themselves an "A". While 37% claimed to be ahead of the grading curve with a "B", most women gave themselves a "C". Almost half (45%) of those polled feel they need to work harder at expanding their knowledge of financial products and services. The balance of women (17%) are failing, or close to it, by their own admission.

### An admitted lack of knowledge

These average grades are rooted in a basic lack of knowledge. But the implications run deeper than that. These grades indicate a crisis in confidence, and perhaps a sense that women are overwhelmed by short-term priorities, leading to little action on the longer-term financial planning they know they need to do.

If you were being graded on your overall knowledge of financial products and services, HOW DO YOU THINK YOU'D DO?



### Clear Financial Priorities, But Low Confidence

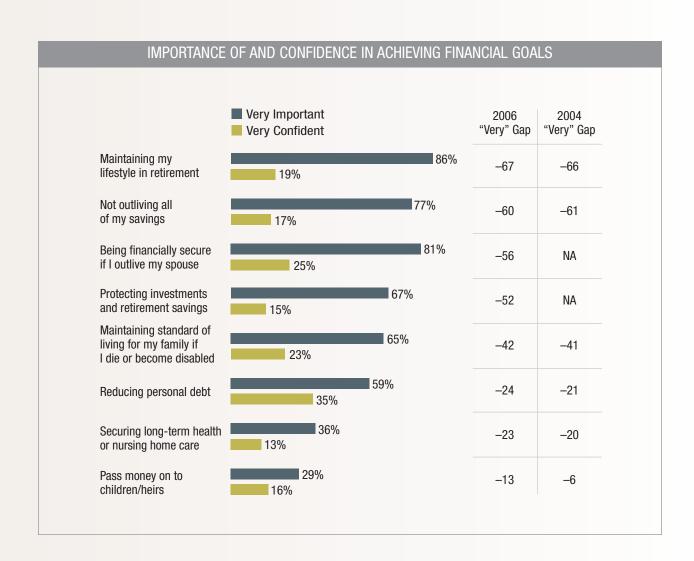
### Retirement confidence gap

Since 2004, there has been no change in women's confidence levels in terms of achieving their financial goals. This is a significant concern for retirement-related goals, where the widest confidence gaps occur. Well over three quarters of women believe maintaining their lifestyle in retirement is a very important priority, yet few are very confident they can achieve it. There is a 67-point gap between women's confidence level and the importance they place on this goal.

### Financial uncertainty poses some risk

There was a slight increase in the confidence gap of "securing long-term health or nursing home care." While 36% believe it is a very important financial goal, only 1 in 10 are very confident that they will be able to achieve it—a rather high level of uncertainty against a potentially high level of financial risk.

Over a third of women are very confident about paying off debt, a shorter-term load on one's shoulders which, in many cases, inhibits individuals from concentrating on other long-term goals.



### No Problem Making Decisions, Especially When the Homework Is Done

### One in 5 are prepared, 4 in 5 need help

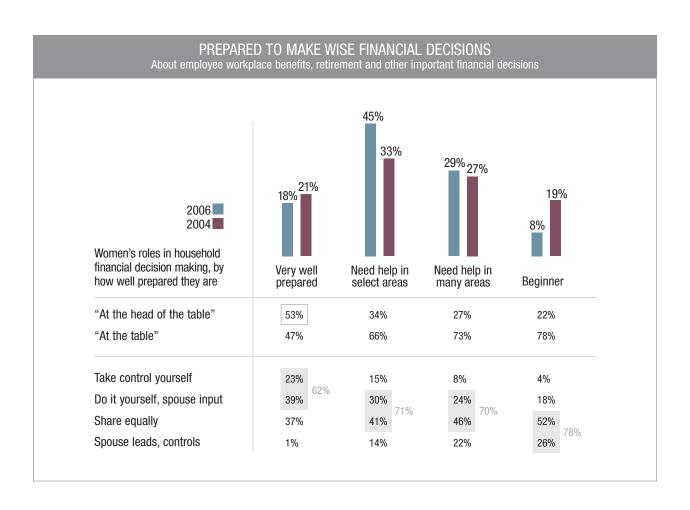
Eighteen percent of women feel that they are very well prepared to make financial decisions. The balance admit they need some kind of help in understanding financial products and services. However, few (8%) consider themselves "beginners."

### Stepping out of traditional roles

When women feel "very well" prepared, they play a leading role in financial decision making for their households over 60% of the time, and more than half

claim to be "at the head of the table." Women who are less prepared are not nearly as likely to take this leadership role. A majority of them "share equally" in the responsibilities.

Whether or not women feel prepared, the chart below demonstrates that some women today are in fact in a leading role in making financial decisions for their family. They may be the single head of the household, or simply the most able and committed to tackle the financial management issues.



### Lessons Still Needed for Many Financial Products

### Understanding of savings accounts is strong

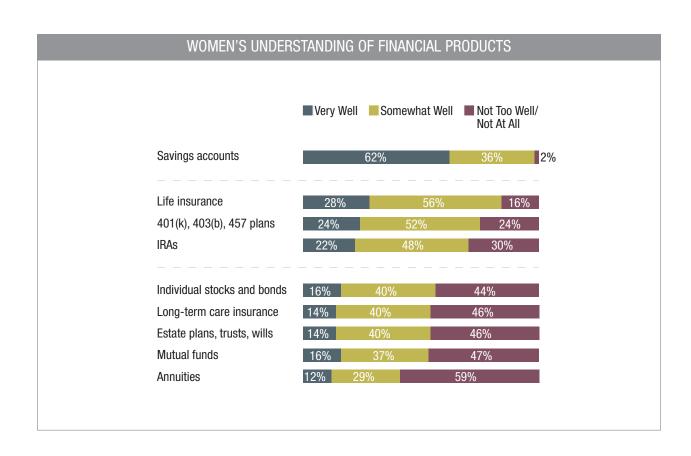
Among the array of financial products and services, women have a firm grasp on savings accounts (98%), insurance (83%), and workplace retirement plans (76%).

Unfortunately, about half do not understand the majority of the key financial products that can enhance their futures. Even mutual funds, the foundation of IRA and 401(k) investments, are not well understood by nearly half of all women.

#### Education could boost confidence

The low levels of knowledge, charted below, prevent the actions that could help women achieve the financial goals women cherish most. Despite 95% of women saying that making sure they don't outlive or fully spend their savings is important, a staggering 6 in 10 know little to nothing about an annuity—the only product designed specifically to guarantee a steady stream of income for life.

Likewise, 46% say they don't understand long-term care insurance, a product that can help cover the expenses related to failing health or debilitating disease that could otherwise wipe out one's savings.





# Women Seek Information From Many Sources

### Face-to-face conversation is preferred

About half of the women surveyed said they prefer to learn about financial products through financial advisors, particularly for investment decisions that affect long-term goals. Yet, less than a quarter (24%) of respondents have actually met with an advisor in the last 24 months. So there appears to be a disconnect between women wanting to learn more through advisors but not taking the necessary steps to actually meet with them.

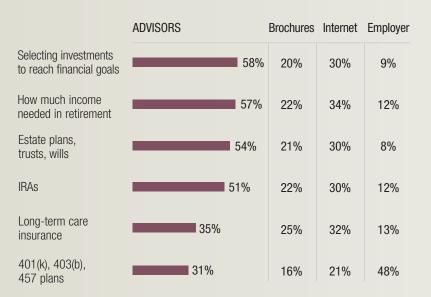
#### Internet and brochures are important tools

Internet and marketing brochures can provide answers to questions and help women better understand products and terminology. Many of these resources also provide analysis and "what if" tools to help women better evaluate options. Based on the low levels of product knowledge and confidence expressed in this study, Prudential believes that materials should be made available that help meet women's specific informational needs.

36 years old Single Registered Nurse

With so many balls in the air, it's a challenge for me to focus on long-term financial planning. I participate in my employer's pension plan, but I should be doing more. Between paying my mortgage and related bills, and managing my elderly mother's finances, the here-and-now is what consumes my time. I know I need the help of a financial planner and took some initial steps—but finding someone I trust to build a relationship with is just one more ball for me to juggle right now.

# PREFERRED SOURCES FOR LEARNING ABOUT FINANCIAL TOPICS



### Lack of Action, Despite the Best Intentions

### Many are willing, fewer take action

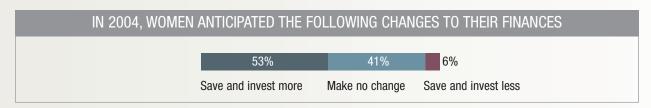
In 2004, over half of the women polled (53%) expected to boost their savings or invest more money over the next 12 months. However, 2006 data reveals that only about 2 in 10 took investment actions—11% invested in stocks or mutual funds for the first time and 14% opened some kind of IRA or retirement account.

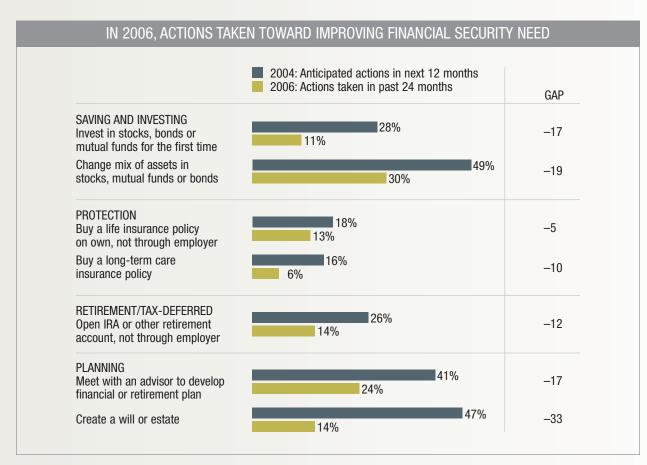
There is clearly a gap between intentions and action. While women are optimistic and have good intentions to save more, the trend we see throughout the data is that saving is secondary to the goal of paying off debt.

### Women simply don't have the time

Another factor challenging women is, no doubt, the busy day-to-day activities that take precedence—family, career, and household and personal chores. Financial planning most often gets put aside.

Take, for instance, planning a will. In 2004, nearly 5 in 10 women (47%) said they intended to prepare a will or an estate plan in the next 12 months. Only 14% have actually done so in the past two years. It's not for lack of importance or intent. The reality is that it's difficult for many to find the time to devote to such matters.





### Retirement: Women's Expectations vs. Reality

### Expectations reflect little diversification

It's no surprise that women list Social Security as their number one income source to fund their retirement—nearly 8 in 10 say they will depend on it. Not too far behind are personal investments and savings (73%) and workplace retirement plans (69%). After that, there's a rather large gap in women's expectations, in terms of how they will generate an income in retirement.

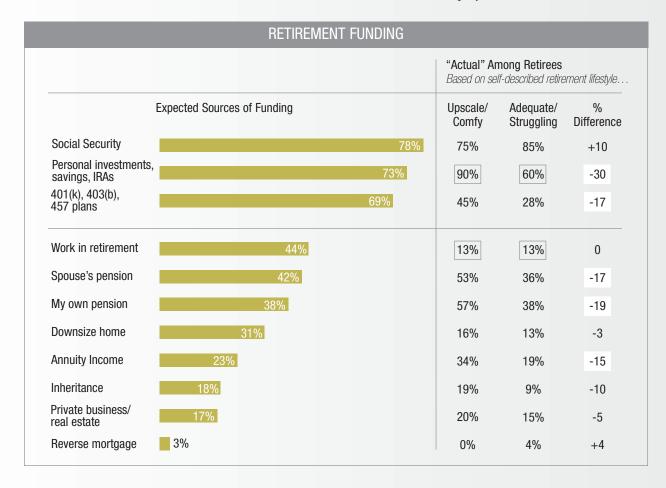
Annuities and reverse mortgages are low on the list of retirement income resources, both of which are the least understood financial products.

# An "upscale/comfy" retirement requires additional involvement

Successful retirees are much more likely to have made extra savings and investments and to have participated in employer-provided defined contribution or defined benefit plans. Preparation during their employment years significantly improved their retirement prospects. Successful retirees are also more likely to report using annuity products for income purposes.

### Working in retirement may not be feasible

Forty-four percent of the women polled expect that they will work to supplement their income in retirement, yet only 13% of current retirees are actually working. The reality is that while many anticipate to continue working, some may not be physically capable of doing so, while others may not be able to secure employment.



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### Eleanor 69 years old

69 years old Widow Retired

I'm enjoying retirement. I'm relatively healthy, living in a nice community, and my family is not too far away. I have four grandchildren! But I realize I'm one of the fortunate ones. My husband managed our finances well, and we had good life insurance. Some of my friends do not have this kind of financial security, and they are really struggling. It's a pity. I think we need to have a better support system for our senior citizens; we've contributed to the growth of this country in so many ways, and in the end many don't have anything to show for it.

### Women Value a Retirement Game Plan

# Very few say they'd leave their financial well-being to fate

When asked to select the style that best describes their personal attitude toward preparing for retirement, 84% of women agreed that "while nothing is certain, careful planning and active involvement can significantly improve my chances of a successful retirement." The rest of the group (16%) had more of a laissez-faire attitude, believing that "much of retirement is beyond my control. I plan to take it as it comes and hope it all works out." This ratio was consistent across all age groups, but showed some difference depending on household income.

### Philosophy affects confidence

Accepting accountability for one's retirement is a great step toward women's financial independence. And this personal attitude does have an impact on how confident women feel about their retirement prospects. For example, 76% of women who believe in careful planning are very or somewhat confident in their ability to maintain their lifestyle in retirement, compared to only 45% of women who feel a comfortable retirement is beyond their control.

Despite one's attitude toward saving, the road to retirement security is often disrupted by other financial challenges.

### PERSONAL ATTITUDE TOWARD PREPARING FOR RETIREMENT



# PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN WHO ARE "VERY/SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT" IN THE FOLLOWING RETIREMENT GOALS...

	Among women who believe in "careful planning"	Among women who believe it's "beyond my control"	% Difference
Maintain lifestyle in retirement	76%	45%	-31
Protect investments and savings	74%	38%	-36
Not outlive retirement savings	72%	50%	-22

### Yet, Debt Tips the Balance Away from Retirement Savings

# Many women struggle when it comes to focusing on long-term goals

It has become the American way. Buy now, pay later. This formula does not include savings. As the diagram below shows, many have landed in a position where financial priorities are knocked off balance by the heavy weight of debt on their shoulders.

Today's women have various goals, but when asked to identify their primary financial goal for this year, 43% said "getting out of debt." This fact tends to overshadow their other important financial goals—like saving, investing, or preparing for retirement, all of which are far behind.







at such a young age.
I'm working full time, in college part time, and living at home. Trying to pay for my classes, a car, and just general living expenses is really tough for a young single person to manage. I'm really looking forward to the day when I don't feel so bogged down with debt and can focus on my longer-term goals...like having a place of my own.

# Couples' Financial Preparedness Is Compromised by Sensitivities to Retirement and Aging

# Financial issues related to mortality, or failing health, fall by the wayside

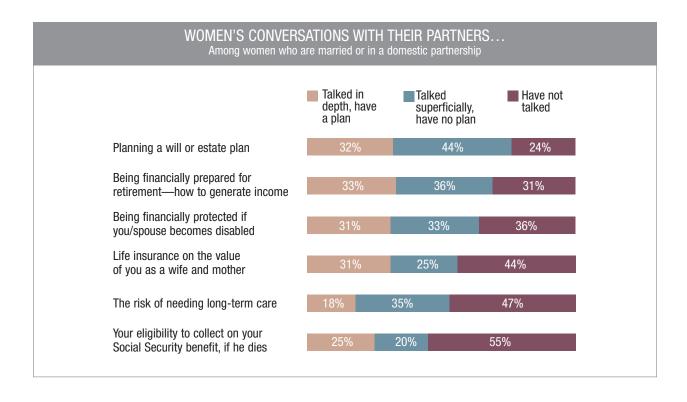
There are sensitivities inherent to financial conversations related to retirement and aging. Many couples find it uncomfortable to plan and discuss products such as life insurance, disability, planning a will, and long-term care needs—all of which deal with failing health and mortality.

Less than a third of the women polled have actually talked in depth with their spouse or partner about these subjects. Women who have not discussed these topics at all, or who have talked only superficially, neglect the full scope of financial planning. Some respondents admitted that they assume their spouse will take care of it. Others said they tend to avoid the issue or simply procrastinate. This inaction could be detrimental to their financial security.

### For many, the retirement dream is all roses

Generally speaking, Americans anticipate their golden years to be happy, healthy and free. Many avoid the thought that there could be a dark side, particularly if faced with unexpected health issues or financial strain.

Only 18% of women have talked with their spouse or partner in depth about long-term care insurance and 33% about how much money they need for retirement, especially if one of them is not in the picture. Both are important issues related to the unfortunate fact that women often outlive their spouse/partner and face retirement alone.



## Women Are Willing to Talk About Aging Issues With Their Partners, But Less Than Half Will Initiate

#### Many women are open to conversation

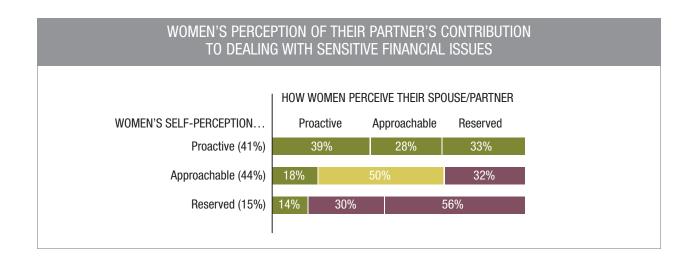
Forty-one percent of women characterize themselves as very open and forward, saying that they are proactive in discussing, researching and purchasing financial products that deal with failing health and mortality. Slightly more than that (44%) claim to be approachable, willing to face the issue if confronted, and at times might initiate conversation or research products. The balance (15%) are reserved and guarded; they talk about these subjects if pressed, and some generally avoid the subject altogether.

Overall, though, many women realize the importance of and are open to discussing these sensitive matters.

### Yet discussions are not occurring

Some relationships are prone to "avoiding the issue." The chart below, based on how women describe themselves and how they perceive their spouse's approach to sensitive financial issues, is designed to highlight women who are best prepared (green) and those who may be at risk (yellow, red).

Women who are "proactive" are all highlighted in green, because in no matter what category her spouse fits, she takes the lead in addressing the necessary financial issues. Women who are "approachable" are more vulnerable and less likely to be prepared. The 18% highlighted in green are probably covered by their "proactive" partner's initiative. But the 82% highlighted in yellow and red, paired with "approachable" or "reserved" partners, may not have the impetus needed to discuss these important planning needs. "Reserved" women are even more at risk.



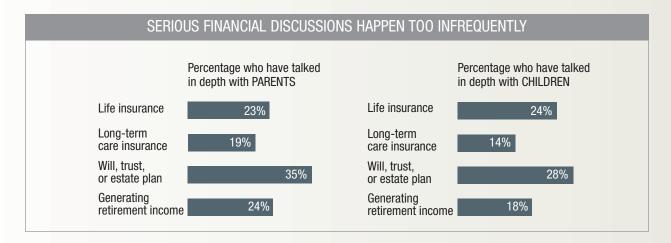
### Money Is Every Family's Best-Kept Secret

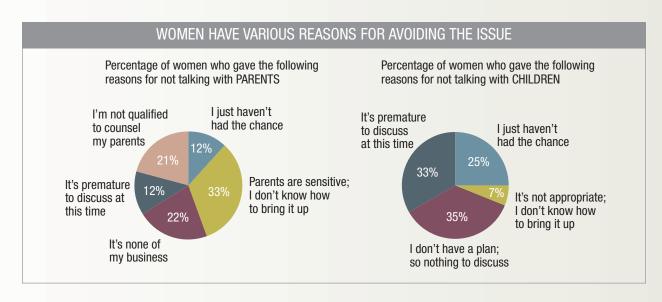
### Courageous conversations are important

Conversations with aging parents are important for the financial well-being of all families. Many women find themselves caring for elderly parents at a time when they should be planning their own retirement. Yet about half of the women polled say they have not had discussions with their parents about such matters, and a quarter of them have only skimmed the issues in conversation. Of the women who have not discussed one or more of these financial topics seriously and in depth with their parents, 33% say they haven't done so because their parents are sensitive about discussing finances, and 22% feel that it is none of their business.

#### "I don't want to be a burden"

Talking to adult children about one's financial preparedness seems to also be a subject women shy away from. Most women do not want to be a burden on their children. Yet about three quarters of the population have not had serious discussions with their children. Long-term care insurance appears to be the least discussed topic, yet the risk of having to care for an aging parent is very real and potentially very expensive if both parent and child are not prepared.





# If the Unexpected Occurs, Who Will Be Better Prepared?

### If you want something done right...

Women who take charge are better prepared for the unexpected. One in 2 "proactive" women have written a will or developed an estate plan and have made plans for funding retirement even with the possibility that they or their spouse might not be in the picture by the time they reach retirement. About 1 in 3 (31%) have prepared for the risk of needing long-term care.

The percentage of women who describe themselves as "reserved" are far less prepared and more than half have not even discussed these important issues. The examples below reveal a behavioral pattern that translates into missed opportunities for many women.

### A CLOSER LOOK AT FINANCIAL CONVERSATIONS

Based on whether women consider themselves "proactive," "approachable," or "reserved")



## Sandhya

52 years old Married, mother of one Small business owner

I own my own business, so I meet with my financial planner quite regularly. He spoke to me recently about long-term care insurance. We might be good candidates for it, considering we're facing some health issues as a family. The drastic increases in healthcare costs and general cost-of-living increases make me wonder how we're going to fund our senior years. My parents were lucky; they had enough savings to help them through their final years. Today's world is just so different...you really need to plan ahead if you want to have any kind of security in your old age.



### What Is the Price of Love?

### The value of all you do

A woman's contribution to her family consists of more than the money she earns. It encompasses all of the tasks done every day to love, protect and care for her family. But the data shows that insuring one's life is often not among those tasks.

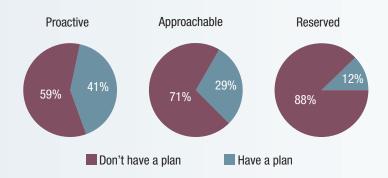
The good news is that nearly a third of the women polled have indeed discussed and prepared for this risk. The balance, however, don't have a plan and 44% haven't even discussed the issue. Among affluent women who have not talked, an alarming 43% are making the assumption that their spouse will take care of it, and 37% say the concern hasn't crossed their mind.

Even those women who consider themselves "proactive" are falling short in acquiring the coverage needed to protect their family. The paradox is that women know what should be done—they understand insurance (84%), and maintaining a standard of living for their family in the event that they die is an important financial goal for them (84%), yet they're not doing anything about it.\* With less than a quarter of them being "very confident" that they can achieve that goal, it begs the question yet again: What needs to happen to get women to take action?

\*This data is not charted below, but these figures result from this study.

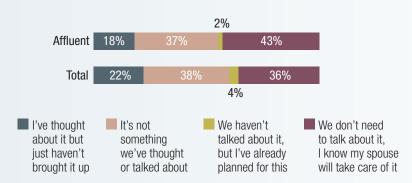
# DO WOMEN "HAVE IT COVERED" WHEN IT COMES TO INSURING THEIR OWN LIFE TO PROTECT THEIR FAMILY?

Based on whether women consider themselves "Proactive," "Approachable," or "Reserved"



#### REASONS FOR NOT TALKING ABOUT LIFE INSURANCE

Based on women who have not discussed with spouse/partner



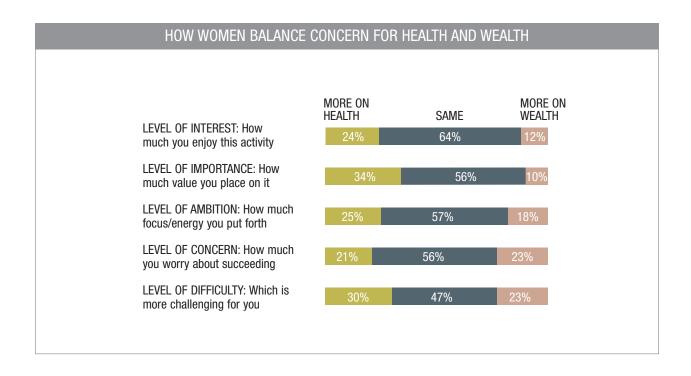
### The Balancing Act

For many women, maintaining and improving health and wealth are core aspects of their lives. While both are important, it is sometimes difficult to put the same amount of energy toward both health and wealth, given the busy day-to-day responsibilities and the interference of other life challenges that women face.

When asked to rate their level of focus on health and wealth, we find that a majority of women are striving for a perfect balance—about 6 in 10 say they put the same amount of energy toward both goals.

In terms of difficulty, we see slightly more of a difference, with 3 in 10 saying that achieving health is more difficult for them personally. However, overall, women appear to be sharing the same level of concern, interest, and priority toward both health and wealth.

Interestingly enough, this balance holds true across all age groups and even across income range, with women over the age of 60 being more ambitious toward health (35%).



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### 2006-2007 "Actions Promised" List

Writing down your financial goals is a great way of committing yourself to them. Seeing your goals on paper can help you prioritize and define the actions necessary to achieve those goals.

### ■ Step 1: Set Your Goals

Do you want to pay off your mortgage, buy a home, begin a retirement plan? Try to be precise and practical when setting your goals.

### Short-term goals (Less than 2 years)

Goal	Month & Year Needed	Approximate Amount Needed	Monthly Amount to Save

### Mid-term goals (3-10 years)

Goal	Month & Year Needed	Approximate Amount Needed	Monthly Amount to Save

### Long-term goals (10 years or more)

Goal	Month & Year Needed	Approximate Amount Needed	Monthly Amount to Save

### Step 2: Assess Your Current Product Knowledge

At the beginning of this report, you saw how women graded their overall knowledge on financial products and services. Thinking about specific products—some of which may help you achieve your goals—how would you grade the level of your understanding, using the academic scale of A, B, C, D or F?

After you've assessed your product knowledge, prioritize the topics you intend to learn more about in the next year.

	Grade	Priority to learn more
Savings accounts		
Life insurance		
401(k), 403(b), 457 plans		
IRAs		
Individual stocks and bonds  Long-term care insurance		
Estate plans, trusts, wills		
Mutual funds		
Annuities		

### Step 3: Define the Actions You Will Take to Achieve Your Goals

Now that you've set some goals and priorities, define some of the steps you can take to help achieve your goals—steps that will translate your intentions into action. Try to make a specific, realistic plan for yourself.

### Example:

By _June 30, 2006_	I plan to Meet with a financial advisor to reassess my retirement savings plan
Ву	I plan to
Ву	I plan to
Ву	I plan to
Ву	I plan to
Ву	I plan to

### Summary

A common thread throughout this study has been one of balance. Today's women strive to equally value and focus on their family and career, as well as their own health and wealth. As some of the data reveals, this pursuit for balance sometimes results in the sacrifice of attention on, involvement in and preparedness for the very important matter of financial decision making for their household. While our study shows that some strides have been made, there is clearly room for improvement.

# 1. Women's self-assessed knowledge of financial products and services is low.

- Nearly half (45%) of the women polled graded themselves a "C," admitting they need to work harder in building their overall knowledge of financial products and services. Only 1% of the women are "A" students, and 37% rated themselves a "B."
- Many women say they don't understand annuities (59%), mutual funds (47%), long-term care insurance (46%), or stocks and bonds (44%).
- Lack of knowledge appears to be the root of women's low confidence levels in their ability to make sound financial decisions.

## 2. Lack of knowledge and preparation deters involvement in financial decisions.

- One in 5 women feel very well prepared to make wise financial decisions; the balance admit to needing some level of assistance.
- Compared to women who are beginners or need lots of help, women who are very well prepared are twice as likely to play a leading role in the financial decision making for their household.

# 3. Intentions don't always equal action. There's a motivating force missing.

- In 2004, over half (53%) of the women polled intended to save and invest more money over the next 12 months, but 2006 data reveals that in the past 24 months only 11% invested in stocks or mutual funds and 14% opened an IRA or retirement savings account.
- Likewise, in 2004, 47% intended to create a will, and in 2006 only 14% said they had done so. And 41% intended to meet with an advisor, while only 24% actually did.
- The discrepancy between intentions versus actions could be attributed to time constraints and the balancing act that women face.

#### 4. Sensitive issues are in dire need of attention.

- Two thirds of respondents say they have not seriously discussed with their spouse financial issues that deal with aging or failing health, such as life insurance or planning a will.
- Women are even less likely to have discussed sensitive financial issues with their parents or children—for example, few have discussed the potential risks of needing long-term care with their parents (19%) or children (14%).
- Eight in 10 women claim to be open to conversation, but well less than half (41%) are proactive in initiating discussion or research on the needed preparations for such sensitive financial issues.

#### 5. Retirement: Women feel they have some control.

- Of the women who believe in "careful planning" when it comes to retirement, about three quarters feel very (15%) or somewhat (59%) confident that they will be able to protect their retirement investments and savings.
- More than 4 in 10 women expect to work in retirement as a source of extra income, but the reality is that about 1 in 10 retirees are currently working.
- Over 70% will look to Social Security, personal savings and employee retirement programs, while less than half are counting on other options for funding retirement—such as pensions (38%), downsizing one's home (31%), or annuities (23%).

## 6. Life insurance: Few women have put a price on their own value.

- About a third of women (31%) say they have seriously considered the work they do as a wife and mother and have a plan for what would be required to replace it in the event that something happened to them. The balance don't have a plan and 42% haven't even talked or thought about it.
- Of the women who haven't discussed this issue with their spouse or partner, 43% assume that their spouse will take care of it.

