

The Five Love Languages

By Gary Chapman

The number one emotional experience reported by folks is feeling the presence of God in their lives. The emotional high of being in love (which lasts around 2 years) is the second highest emotional experience people have. That's why it is difficult to try and talk some sense into someone who is in the midst of falling in love. Chapman stated that obsessive love can render people mentally incompetent. "There's not much difference between being in love and being insane."

After the first or second year of marriage, when the initial "tingle" is starting to fade, many couples find that their "love tanks" are empty. They may have been expressing love for their spouse, but in reality they were speaking a different language. One of our deepest desires is to feel that we are genuinely loved by our spouse. In fact, if we feel loved, the whole world looks bright. But if we do not feel loved, then the world begins to look dark. The best way to fill your spouse's love tank is to express love in their love language.

The key to meeting each other's need for love is to learn what really makes the other person feel loved, and do it regularly.

Out of these five languages, each of us has a primary love language. One of these speaks more deeply to us than the other four. If you don't speak each other's primary love language, you may be sincere in speaking the others, but your spouse will not feel loved. When you speak their primary love language their love tank will be filled and you will have a happy spouse. If you want to see the emotional warmth return to your marriage, then discover each others primary love language and speak it regularly.

A husband's love language is words of affirmation and so he tells wife what a great dinner she prepared, how pretty she is, what a great job she did on the house today, how glad he is

that she is his wife, etc. letting her know how wonderful he thinks she is before he heads out to a board meeting, letting her know he wished he could be with her and how much he appreciates her understanding about the board meeting....he believes that he has added credits to her love bank with these words....

But her love language might be quality time and so she didn't hear those words of affirmation, thinking instead that if he really cared about her, he would stay home from the meeting and so for every hour that he is gone, he is actually making withdrawals from her love bank. She sees something on TV that she would like to share with him, but "the board meeting is more important than she is..." Each of us has a primary love language. Usually, couples don't have the same love language.

Since you may be speaking what you need, you can discover your own love language by asking yourself these questions:

- ~ **How do I express love to others?**
- ~ **What do I complain about the most?**
- ~ **What do I request most often?**

Speaking in your spouse's love language probably won't be natural for you. Dr. Chapman says, "We're not talking comfort. We're talking love. Love is something we do for someone else. So often couples love one another but they aren't connecting. They are sincere, but sincerity isn't enough."

Here are Chapman's Five Emotional Love Languages...

Words of Affirmation

This is when you say how nice your spouse looks, or how great the dinner tasted. These words will also build your

mate's self image and confidence. Sincere compliments and encouraging words-this person always has something nice to say and they often expect kind words in return. One hallmark of this language is the way people ask for what they want, i.e. "Love makes requests, not demands" Requires humility, Demands are put-downs implying "I am important and you are not. Do this for me, your desires don't matter." A humble request looks like this-giving choices-"You probably have more important things to do, but would you consider doing this? I would be grateful".

One of the deepest human needs is the need to feel appreciated. Words of Affirmation meet that need in many individuals.

"The object of love is not getting something you want but doing something for the well-being of the one you love. It is a fact, however, that when we receive affirming words we are far more likely to be motivated to reciprocate."

Quality Time

Some spouses believe that being together, doing things together and focusing in on one another is the best way to show love. If this is your partner's love language, turn off the TV now and then and give one another some undivided attention. Quality Time-People show their love by simply being there, by spending time with their mates. "It is a matter of being completely there, being a companion, not just taking up space. It does not mean that we have to spend our moments together gazing into each other's eyes. It means we are doing something together and we are giving our full attention to the other person." (This fits Harley's recreational companionship category) Chapman breaks this down into two components: One is simple togetherness, the other is quality conversation.

Togetherness has to do with being "present" with the person you are with. Its not just spending time together, it is time that is focused on the other person. It is doing something together.

Quality conversation requires involvement, eye contact, full attention (active listening), listening THROUGH the words for the feelings being expressed, understanding the body language, not much interruption, a soul-to-soul connection not just mind to mind. "Words of affirmation focus on what you we are *saying*, whereas quality conversation focuses on what we are *hearing*."

Gifts

It is universal in human cultures to give gifts. They don't have to be expensive to send a powerful message of love. Spouses who forget a birthday or anniversary or who never give gifts to someone who truly enjoys gift giving will find themselves with a spouse who feels neglected and unloved. Some communicate their love in the language of gift giving and they look to receive it from others in the same way. Gifts are visual symbols of love, not a matter of money, tokens of our feelings for the other...an investment of a certain amount of emotion, wisdom, time, expense, and effort in the process of imagining, creating, choosing, buying, wrapping, or transporting a gift to you, all because of love. These gifts are often displayed, similar to trophies all around them, not because they are greedy and put emphasis in "things" but because of the way they prize the love behind the token of love. It is physical evidence of love involved.

Acts of Service

Discovering how you can best do something for your spouse will require time and creativity. These acts of service like vacuuming, hanging a bird feeder, planting a garden, etc., need to be done with joy in order to be perceived as a gift of love. A person who speaks this language sees love in doing

things for others and expects this same kind of action from others. Our Lord Jesus gave a simple but profound illustration of expressing love by an act of service when he washed his disciples feet. He found ways to show his love through a servant attitude.

In some ways I see this as similar to the gift giving in that some of the acts of service may be help around the house, remodeling, etc. visual things that show one's love. It is more than cooking a special dinner. It may include baking a favorite cake as an extra to show love. It is helping to pack his or her suitcase for a trip and maybe putting in love notes, or a baked goodie, bubble bath or whatever else, you know he/she would like. Lehman, once a year, deposits his wife in a motel with flowers, books, room service, etc. and leaves her for a weekend to give her space while he deals with the kids. Now that is above and beyond the call of duty, but you can see how loved she must feel.

Physical Touch

Physical touch is a powerful communicator of marital love. Sometimes just stroking your spouse's back, holding hands, or a peck on the cheek will fulfill this need. It goes beyond sex, but seems to display itself in guys via sex, but it is more than sex. It is about big and little kisses, hand-holding, backrubs, arm around the shoulder, playing footsie, sharing an armrest at the movies, lightly stroking a hand...etc. For some individuals, physical touch is their primary love language. Without it they feel unloved and insecure. Implicit love touches require little time but much thought, especially if physical touch is not your primary love language and you did not grow up in a family where this was part of your daily living. Sitting close to one another as you watch a show may communicate love to another person. Touching your spouse as you walk through the room where he or she is

sitting takes a moment, but may express value. Holding each other before you leave the house and again when you return may involve a short kiss and hug, but will speak volumes to the person who values this as their love language.

The Opposites of Your Primary Love Language

Everyone has a primary love language, but seldom does a husband a wife have the same love language. One wife, whose primary love language was quality time, but her husband seldom spent time with her said, "He gives me nice gifts for my birthday and special occasions and wonders why I am not excited about them. I don't want gifts, I want him." Do you see the importance of speaking each other's primary love language? Earlier I mentioned that there are three key questions to ask to discover your love language. They were: (1) What do I complain about the most? (2) What do I request most often? (3) How do I normally show my love to others?

You can also turn them around and you can discover the love language of your spouse.

- (1) What does he/she complain about the most?
- (2) What does he/she request most often?
- (3) How does he/she normally show love to others?

LOVE LANGUAGE IDEAS

Here are a few ideas for you to better understand your spouses love language. When you discover what they need to "feel" loved, it then becomes an adventure to uncover what you can do to meet this need.

Words of Affirmation

1. Begin to write down important encouraging ideas in a notebook titled, "Words of Affirmation". Start collecting ideas,

words, and phrases that you hear or read which focus on building another person up.

2. Make a list of everything you appreciate about your spouse. Keep looking for the positive aspects about the other person. Add to the list often and then share it in creative ways.

Quality Time

1. Make a list of the things that your spouse likes to do with you. If you are unsure of what these are – ask! Start to set aside time to do these things. Get the date on the calendar, put it in your Day Timer, and make it a priority. Keep talking about what both of you feel are quality activities you can enjoy together!

2. Key Tips for being “present” with your spouse.

a. *Maintain eye contact* when your spouse is speaking.

b. *Don't listen to your spouse and do something else at the same time* (turn the TV off, put the paper down, stop and look!)

c. *Listen for feelings.* Ask yourself, “What emotions is my spouse experiencing right now?” Respond by verbalizing what you hear. For example, “It sounds to me like you are feeling disappointed because _____.” That gives your spouse a chance to clarify his feelings. It also communicates that you are listening intently to what they are saying.

d. *Observe the body language of your spouse.* Don't just listen for words; see what they are trying to say by the way expressions and body language of the person.

e. *Refuse to interrupt.* Research has shown that the average person only listens for 17 seconds before

interrupting and interjecting their own ideas. The goal is to discover the thoughts and feelings of the one you are listening to.

Receiving & Giving Gifts

1. Make a list of all the gifts your spouse has expressed excitement about through the years. Ask your spouse what gifts have meant the most to them and why they made them feel that way.

2. Gifts do not have to be expensive, but they need to express your value for the person receiving the gift. Begin to find those things that would visually show the person “how” you value them.

Acts of Service

1. If this is the love language of your spouse you can start by asking the question:
“_____, what are 3 things that I can do for you that would help show my love for you?” Have that person rate them in importance and find ways to respond to these needs.

2. If this is your love language, write down the things that matter most to you in this area. Help your spouse discover ways to speak your love language. Don't try to guilt or coerce the person, but find ways to gently express what you need.

Physical Touch

1. Take some time over the next few weeks to observe how your spouse responds when you are physically close. Does he or she like one kind of touch more than another?

2. The key to discovery is to ask. Begin a process of discovery together. “What are some of ways I physically express myself that help you to feel most loved?”

The Five Love Languages Worksheet

The Five Love Languages

- Words of Affirmation
- Quality Time
- Receiving & Giving of Gifts
- Acts of Service
- Physical Touch

"I feel most loved by my husband/wife when

Discovery Questions...

What is your primary love language?

If you are unsure of what your love language is. Take a look back over your marriage and ask...

What have I most often requested (or desired) from my spouse? The thing that you most often requested (or wished to express) is likely the thing that would make you feel most loved.

(FOR MORE INSIGHTS GO TO:
<http://www.5lovelanguages.com>)

What does your spouse do or fail to do that hurts you most deeply? The opposite of what hurts you most is probably your love language.

In what ways do you regularly express love to your spouse? Your method of expressing love may be an indication of what would make you feel most loved.

When we love someone, we are genuinely committed to that person. It may not always "feel" like love is supposed to feel. That is natural and inevitable. The whole idea of discovering your love language and that of your spouse is to DO those things that would help them FEEL loved. It is a genuine expression of love to give when this action does not come easily to you.

You may find that it is easier for you to speak a certain love language that shows your love to the other person. Continue to observe, discover, and try ways of expressing love and value that may make all the difference in your marriage. It is something that takes time. One key question to ask and to look for ways to give positive feed back to each other is:

- How am I doing in speaking your love language?

Remember to be affirming, helpful, and positive in what you do for each other.