

The Five Love Languages

Introduction

Making love work: It doesn't have to feel like a chore

Your emotional love language and the language of your spouse may be as different as Chinese from English. No matter how hard you try to express love in “English”, if your loved one understands only “Chinese”, you will never understand how to love each other.

Being sincere is not enough. We must be willing to learn our loved one’s primary love language if we are to be effective communicators of love.

Dr. Gary Chapman’s conclusion after thirty years of marriage counseling is that there are basically five emotional love languages—five ways that people speak and understand emotional love. However, there may be numerous dialects. The important thing is to speak the love language of your spouse.

Communicating love isn’t as easy as feeling “in love,” because it’s quite a different thing. Falling in love is not an act of the will or a conscious choice. It’s effortless. One who is “in love” is not genuinely interested in fostering the personal growth of the other person. If the euphoric pleasure of being “in love” never ended, we might never experience true love and meaningful communication.

Love is something you do for someone else, not something you do for yourself. Most of us do many things each day that do not come “naturally” for us. For some of us, that is getting out of bed in the morning. We go against our feelings and get out of bed because we believe there is something worthwhile to do that day. And normally, before the day is over, we feel good about having gotten up. Our actions preceded our emotions.

The same is true with love. We discover the primary love language of our loved one, and we choose to speak it whether it is natural for us. You might not love the language itself but speaking it will clearly communicate love to your spouse.

Love is a choice. And either partner can start the process today.

The Five Love Languages Profile

| | |
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| 1. I like to receive notes of affirmation from you | A |
| ... I like it when you hug me | E |
| 2. I like to spend one-to-one time with you | B |
| ... I feel loved when you give practical help to me | D |
| 3. I like it when you give me gifts | C |
| ... I like taking long walks with you | B |
| 4. I feel loved when you do things to help me | D |
| ... I feel loved when you touch me | E |
| 5. I feel loved when you hold me in your arms | E |
| ... I feel loved when I receive a gift from you | C |
| 6. I like to go places with you | B |
| ... I like to hold hands with you | E |
| 7. Visible symbols of love (gifts) are very important to me | C |
| ... I feel loved when you affirm me | A |
| 8. I like to sit close to you | E |
| ... I like for you to tell me I am attractive/handsome | A |
| 9. I like to spend time with you | B |
| ... I like to receive little gifts from you | C |
| 10. Your words of acceptance are important to me | A |
| ... I know you love me when you help me | D |
| 11. I like to be together when we do things | B |
| ... I like the kind words you say to me | A |
| 12. What you do affects me more than what you say | D |
| ... I feel whole when we hug | E |
| 13. I value your praise and try to avoid your criticism | A |
| ... Several inexpensive gifts from you mean more to me ... than one large gift | C |
| 14. I feel close when we are talking or doing something ... together | B |
| ... I feel closer to you when you touch me often | E |
| 15. I like for you to complement my achievements | A |
| ... I know you love me when you do things for me that ... you don't enjoy doing | D |
| 16. I like for you to touch me when you walk by | E |
| ... I like it when you listen to me sympathetically | B |
| 17. I feel loved when you help me with my jobs ... around the house | D |
| ... I really enjoy receiving gifts from you | C |

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|--|---|
| 18. I like for you to compliment my appearance. | A |
| ... I feel loved when you take time to understand ... my feelings | B |
| 19. I feel secure when you are touching me | E |
| ... Your acts of service make me feel loved | D |
| 20. I appreciate the many things you do for me | D |
| ... I like receiving the gifts that you make | C |
| 21. I really enjoy the feeling I get when you give me ... your undivided attention | B |
| ... I really enjoy the feeling I get when you do some ... act of service for me | D |
| 22. I feel loved when you celebrate my birthday with ... a gift | C |
| ... I feel loved when you celebrate my birthday with ... meaningful words (written or spoken) | A |
| 23. I know you are thinking of me when you give me ... a gift | C |
| ... I feel loved when you help out with my chores | D |
| 24. I appreciate it when you listen patiently and don't ... interrupt me | B |
| ... I appreciate it when you remember special days with ... a gift | C |
| 25. I like to know you are concerned enough to help with ... my daily tasks | D |
| ... I enjoy extended trips with you | B |
| 26. Kissing me unexpectedly excites me | E |
| ... Giving me a gift for no special reason excites me | C |
| 27. I like to be told that you appreciate me | A |
| ... I like for you to look at me when we are talking | B |
| 28. Your gifts are always special to me | C |
| ... I feel good when you are touching me | E |
| 29. I feel loved when you enthusiastically do some task ... I have requested | D |
| ... I feel loved when you tell me how much you ... appreciate me | A |
| 30. I need to be touched every day | E |
| ... I need your words of affirmation daily | A |

INTERPRETING AND USING YOUR PROFILE SCORE

Your primary love language is the one that received the highest score. You are “bilingual” and have two primary love languages if point totals are equal for any two love languages. If your second highest scoring love language is close in score but not equal to your primary love language, then this simply means both expressions of love are important to you. The highest possible score for any one love language is 12.

You may have scored certain ones of the love languages more highly than others, but do not dismiss those other languages as insignificant. Your loved ones may express love in those ways, and it may express love in those ways, and it will be helpful to you to understand this about him or her. In the same way, it will benefit your loved ones to know your love language and express his or her affection for you in ways that you interpret as love. Every time you or your loved one speaks each other’s love language, you score emotional points with one another. Of course, this isn’t a game with a scorecard! The payoff of speaking each other’s love language is a greater sense of connection. This translates into better communication, increased understanding, and, ultimately, improved romance.

Having a clear picture of your primary and secondary love languages will explain much of your past behavior. Think back over the past and ask yourself, "What have I most often requested from my spouse?" Chances are your answer will lie within the scope of your primary and secondary love languages. You have been requesting that which would meet your deepest need for emotional love. Your requests, however, might have come across as nagging or criticizing and thus driven your spouse away.

Tabulate your scores from the questionnaire above and place them in the corresponding blocks below. Then rank your scores from highest to lowest, and interpret which love language is your primary one based on the key below and to the right.

A: _____

B: _____

C: _____

D: _____

E: _____

The Five Love Languages

A: Words of Affirmation

B: Quality Time

C: Receiving Gifts

D: Acts of Service

E: Physical Touch

Words of Affirmation

Mark Twain once said “I can live for two months on a good compliment.” Verbal appreciation speaks powerfully to persons whose primary Love Language is “Words of Affirmation.” Simple statements, such as, “You look great in that suit,” or “You must be the best baker in the world! I love your oatmeal cookies,” are sometimes all a person needs to hear to feel loved.

Aside from verbal compliments, another way to communicate through “Words of Affirmation” is to offer encouragement. Here are some examples: reinforcing a difficult decision; calling attention to progress made on a current project; acknowledging a person’s unique perspective on an important topic. If a loved one listens for “Words of Affirmation,” offering encouragement will help him or her to overcome insecurities and develop greater confidence.

Quality Time

Quality time is more than mere proximity. It’s about focusing all your energy on your mate. A husband watching sports while talking to his wife is NOT quality time. Unless all of your attention is focused on your mate, even an intimate dinner for two can come and go without a minute of quality time being shared.

Quality conversation is very important in a healthy relationship. It involves sharing experiences, thoughts, feelings and desires in a friendly, uninterrupted context. A good mate will not only listen, but offer advice and respond to assure their mate they are truly listening. Many mates don’t expect you to solve their problems. They need a sympathetic listener.

An important aspect of quality conversation is self-revelation. In order for you to communicate with your mate, you must also be in tune with your inner emotions. It is only when you understand your emotions and inner feelings will you then be able to share quality conversation, and quality time with your mate.

Quality activities are a very important part of quality time. Many mates feel most loved when they spend physical time together, doing activities that they love to do. Spending time together will bring a couple closer, and, in the years to come, will fill up a memory bank that you can reminisce about in the future.

Whether it’s sitting on the couch and having a brief conversation or playing together in a tennis league, quality time is a love language that is shared by many. Setting aside focused time with your mate will ensure a happy marriage.

Receiving Gifts

Some mates respond well to visual symbols of love. If you speak this love language, you are more likely to treasure any gift as an expression of love and devotion. People who speak this love language often feel that a lack of gifts represents a lack of love from their mate. Luckily, this love language is one of the easiest to learn.

If you want to become an effective gift giver, many mates will have to learn to change their attitude about money. If you are naturally a spender, you will have no trouble buying gifts for your mate. However, a person who is used to investing and saving their money may have a tough time adjusting to the concept of spending money as an expression of love. These people must understand that you are investing the money not in gifts, but in deepening your relationship with your mate.

The gift of self is an important symbol of love. Sometimes all your mate desires is for someone to be there for them, going through the same trials and experiencing the same things. Your body can become a very powerful physical symbol of love.

These gifts need not to come every day, or even every week. They don't even need to cost a lot of money. Free, frequent, expensive, or rare, if your mate relates to the language of receiving gifts, any visible sign of your love will leave them feeling happy and secure in your relationship.

Acts of Service

Sometimes simple chores around the house can be an undeniable expression of love. Even simple things like laundry and taking out the trash require some form of planning, time, effort, and energy. Just as Jesus demonstrated when he washed the feet of his disciples, doing humble chores can be a very powerful expression of love and devotion to your mate.

Very often, both pairs in a couple will speak to the Acts of Service Language. However, it is very important to understand what acts of service your mate most appreciates. Even though couples are helping each other around the house, couples will still fight because they are unknowingly communicating with each other in two different dialects. For example, a wife may spend her day washing the cars and walking the dog, but if her husband feels that laundry and dishes are a superior necessity, he may feel unloved, despite the fact that his wife did many other chores throughout the day. It is important to learn your mate's dialect and work hard to understand what acts of service will show your love.

It is important to do these acts of service out of love and not obligation. A mate who does chores and helps out around the house out of guilt or fear will inevitably not be speaking a language of love, but a language of resentment. It's important to perform these acts out of the kindness of your heart.

Demonstrating the acts of service can mean stepping out of the stereotypes. Acts of service require both mates to humble themselves into doing some chores and services that aren't usually expected from their gender. However, these little sacrifices will mean the world to your mate, and will ensure a happy relationship.

Physical Touch

Many mates feel the most loved when they receive physical contact from their partner. For a mate who speaks this love language loudly, physical touch can make or break the relationship.

Sexual intercourse makes many mates feel secure and loved in a marriage. However, it is only one dialect of physical touch. Many parts of the body are extremely sensitive to stimulation. It is important to discover how your partner not only physically responds but also psychologically responds to these touches.

It is important to learn how your mate speaks the physical touch language. Some touches are irritating and uncomfortable for your mate. Take the time to learn the touches your mate likes. They can be big acts, such as back massages or lovemaking, or little acts such as touches on the cheek or a hand on the shoulder. It's important to learn how your mate responds to touch. That is how you will make the most of this love language.

All marriages will experience crisis. In these cases, physical touch is very important. In a crisis situation, a hug can communicate an immense amount of love for that person. A person whose primary love language is physical touch would much rather have you hold them and be silent than offer any advice.

It is important to remember that this love language is different for everyone. What type of touch makes you feel secure is not necessarily what will make your partner happy. It is important to learn each other's dialects. That way you can make the most of your hugging, kissing, and other physical contacts.