

What is Your Love Language?

There is a joke among marriage counselors about the couple who went to the lawyer to begin divorce proceedings. The attorney asked the couple what had brought them to the point of considering divorce. The wife was quick to respond. She replied, "He never tells me that he loves me anymore." The husband was shocked at this response. He gasped and said "Honey I told you that I loved you when I married you. If anything changes I'll let you know." They walked out of the attorney's office hand in hand and lived happily ever after.

This joke would be more humorous if it were not a reality in so many lives. Many people fail to adequately communicate their love to those in their lives. Sometimes this failure occurs because they simply do not know how to express their love in a meaningful way to the intended recipient. Frequently spouses will behave in a marriage just as they saw their own parents interact. This gives little room for individual differences and needs.

Our loved ones usually communicate their love to us in the manner they would like love communicated to them. For example let us look at the boy who goes shopping for his Grandma and buys her a teddy bear. He would love to receive a teddy bear so he is sure that this is obviously the best gift for her. Sadly, I regularly counsel adults who make this same mistake.

Research is finding that adults as well as children have love languages. Love languages describe how we are each individually wired to give and receive meaningful communications of love. The love languages are generally broken into five different languages with many different dialects writes world-renowned speaker, counselor, and author of *The Five Languages of Love*, Gary Chapman. The five love languages are: quality time, words of affirmation, gifts, acts of service, and of course physical touch.

Quality Time: Quality time means being in your loved ones presence and hopefully giving them your undivided attention. **Your loved one needs to be made to feel that they are more important than what is going on around them Too often couples can act like strangers while sitting in the same room.** Individuals with this primary love language enjoy spending time together.

Word of Affirmation: Those with this language are refueled by hearing praise and thanks. Words help them to feel appreciated, encouraged and validated. They

respond positively to written and verbal encouragement. Proverbs 18:21, tells us that ,”Death and life are in the power of the tongue....”

(comma)

Gifts: All cultures express love by gift giving. Spouses with this language feel appreciated when they receive gifts. Gifts can be purchased or made. Sometimes they can be as simple as a bouquet of wildflowers picked on the way home from work. It is the thought and the frequency which count.

Acts of Service: This means doing something for the one we care about. It may mean helping with the dishes, fixing the leak in the bathroom, or repairing a bike tire. We must be attuned to the specific service needs of our loved one to be most effective. 1John 3:18 reminds us to love in deed.

Physical Touch: All marriages should have physical sexual intimacy, but physical touch may mean different things to each spouse. Some also have need for meaningful touches such as hugs, hand holding, kissing, and gentle acts of physical contact throughout the day. Sadly this is a gift that is often withheld from spouses.

Chapman teaches that you can learn about languages by answering three questions: “How does my spouse most often express love to me?” “What does your spouse complain about most often?” “What does your spouse request most often?”

I encourage you to complete your own love language profile at www.fivelovelanguages.com