

Introduction

The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate is a 1995 book by Gary Chapman. It outlines five ways to express and experience love that Chapman calls "love languages": gifts, quality time, words of affirmation, acts of service (devotion), and physical touch (intimacy). Chapman's book claims that the list of five love languages is exhaustive.

Chapman argues that, emotionally, people need to receive love and uses the metaphor of a 'love tank' to explain peoples' need to be loved. He also writes that people should not use the love languages that they like the most but rather the love languages that their loved ones can receive. Each person has one primary and one secondary love language.

The basic gist of the 5 Love Languages is that people have different ways of expressing and understand emotions (love). By this I mean that partner 1 may use a different method than partner 2, but also that partner 1 may express emotion in one way and understand it differently. Though it seems pretty common that it is both expressed and understood the same way. These five love languages are:

Dr. Gary Chapman's book, The Five Love Languages can be purchased at your local bookstore or <http://www.amazon.com>

Words of Affirmation

Actions don't always speak louder than words. If this is your love language, unsolicited compliments mean the world to you. Hearing the words, "I love you," are important--hearing the reasons behind that love sends your spirits skyward. Insults can leave you shattered and are not easily forgotten.

Quality Time

For those whose love language is spoken with Quality Time, nothing says, "I love you,:" like full, undivided attention. Being there for this type of person is critical, but really being there--with the TV off, fork and knife down, and all chores and tasks on standby--makes you significant others feel truly special and loved. Distractions, postponed dates, or the failure to listen can be especially hurtful.

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Receiving Gifts

Don't mistake this love language for materialism; the receiver of gifts thrives on the love, thoughtfulness, and effort behind the gift. If you speak this language, the perfect gift or gesture shows that you are known, you are cared for, and you are prized above whatever was sacrificed to bring the gift to you. A missed birthday, anniversary, or a hasty, thoughtless gift would be disastrous--so would the absence of everyday gestures.

Acts of Service

Can vacuuming the floors really be an expression of love? Absolutely! Anything you do to ease the burden of responsibilities weighing on an "Acts of Service" person will speak volumes. The words he or she most want to hear: "Let me do that for you." Laziness, broken commitments, and making more work for them tell speakers of this language their feelings don't matter.

Physical Touch

This language isn't all about the bedroom. A person whose primary language is Physical Touch is, not surprisingly, very touchy. Hugs, pats on the back, holding hands, and thoughtful touches on the arm, shoulder, or face--they can all be ways to show excitement, concern, care, and love. Physical presence and accessibility are crucial, while neglect or abuse can be unforgivable and destructive.



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