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*Love Languages*

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# *Learn to Speak Your Spouse's Love Language*

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/communication-and-conflict/learn-to-speak-your-spouses-love-language/learn-to-speak-your-spouses-love-language> By Gary Chapman

What is your primary love language? What makes you feel most loved by your spouse? What do you desire above all else?

If the answer to those questions does not leap to your mind immediately, perhaps it will help to look at the negative use of love languages. What does your spouse do or say – or fail to do or say – that hurts you deeply?

Ignoring our partner's love languages is like ignoring the needs of a garden: If we don't weed, water or fertilize, it will die a slow death.

When you're trying to figure out your primary love language, it helps to look back over your marriage and ask, "What have I most often requested of my spouse?" Whatever you have most requested is probably in keeping with your primary love language. Those requests have probably been interpreted by your spouse as nagging – but in fact, they have been your efforts to secure emotional love from your spouse.

Another way to discover your primary love language is to examine what you do or say to express love to your spouse. Chances are what you are doing for her is what you wish she would do for you. If you are constantly doing acts of service for your spouse, perhaps (although not always) that is your love language. If words of affirmation speak love to you, chances are you will use them in speaking love to your spouse. Thus, you may discover your own language by asking, "How do I consciously express my love to my spouse?"

But how can we speak each other's love language when we are full of hurt, anger and resentment over past failures?

Love doesn't erase the past, but it makes the future different. When we choose active expressions of love in the primary love language of our spouse, we create an emotional climate where we can deal with our past conflicts and failures.

The "in-love" experience is on the level of instinct. It is not premeditated; it simply happens in the normal context of male-female relationships. It can be fostered or quenched, but it does not arise by conscious choice. It is short-lived (usually two years or less) and seems to serve for humankind the same function as the mating call of the Canada goose.

The "in-love" experience temporarily meets one's emotional need for love. It gives us the feeling that someone cares, that someone admires us and appreciates us. Our emotions soar with the thought that another person sees us as number one, that he or she is willing to devote time and energy exclusively to our relationship. For a brief period, however long it lasts, our emotional need for love is met.

In time, however, we come down from that natural high back to the real world. If our spouse has learned to speak our primary love language, our need for love will continue to be satisfied. If, on the other hand, he or she does not speak our love language, our tank will slowly drain, and we will no longer feel loved. Meeting that need in one's spouse is definitely a choice. If I learn the emotional love language of my spouse and speak it frequently, she will continue to feel loved. When she comes down from the obsession of the "in-love" experience, she will hardly even miss it because her emotional love tank will continue to be filled.

Meeting my wife's need for love is a choice I make each day. If I know her primary love language and choose to speak it, her deepest emotional needs will be met, and she will feel secure in my love. If she does the same for me, my emotional needs are met and both of us live with a full tank.

"What if the love language of your spouse is something that doesn't come naturally for you?" I am often asked this question in my marriage seminars, and my answer is always, "So?"

When an action doesn't come naturally to you, it is a greater expression of love.

We are talking about love, and 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. Why? 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 spouse, and we choose to speak it whether or not it is natural for us. Love is a choice. And either partner can start the process today.

My conclusion after many years of marriage counseling is that there are five emotional love languages – five ways that people speak and understand emotional love.

# 5 Love Languages Explained



## 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. Kind, encouraging, and positive words are truly life-giving.



## QUALITY TIME

In the vernacular of 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 your significant other feel truly special and loved. Distractions, postponed dates, or the failure to listen can be especially hurtful. Quality Time also means sharing quality conversation and quality activities.



## 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. Gifts are visual representations of love and are treasured greatly.



## 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. Finding ways to serve speaks volumes to the recipient of these acts.



## 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. Physical touch fosters a sense of security and belonging in any relationship. Once you discover that physical touch is the primary love language of your spouse, you are limited only by your imagination on ways to express love.

# Discovering Your Spouse's Love Language

Most of us grow up learning the language of our parents and siblings, which becomes our *primary* or native tongue. Later, we may learn additional languages – but usually with much more effort. These become our *secondary* languages. We speak and understand our native language best. We feel more comfortable speaking that language. The more we use a secondary language, the more comfortable we become conversing in it. If we speak only our primary language and encounter someone else who speaks only his or her primary language, which is different from ours, our communication will be limited. We must rely on pointing, grunting, drawing pictures or acting out our ideas. We can communicate, but it is awkward. Language differences are part of human culture. If we are to communicate effectively across cultural lines, we must learn the language of those with whom we wish to communicate.

In the area of love, it is similar. Your emotional love language and the language of your spouse may be as different as Chinese is from English. No matter how hard you try to express love in English, if your spouse understands only Chinese, you will never understand how to love each other. Being sincere is not enough. We must be willing to learn our spouse's primary love language if we are to be effective communicators of love.

Seldom do husband and wife have the same primary emotional love language. We tend to speak our primary love language, and we become confused when our spouse does not understand what we are communicating. We are expressing our love, but the message does not come through because what we are speaking to them is a foreign language. Once we discover the five basic love languages and understand our own primary love language, as well as the primary love language of our spouse, we will then have the needed information to apply the ideas in the books and articles.

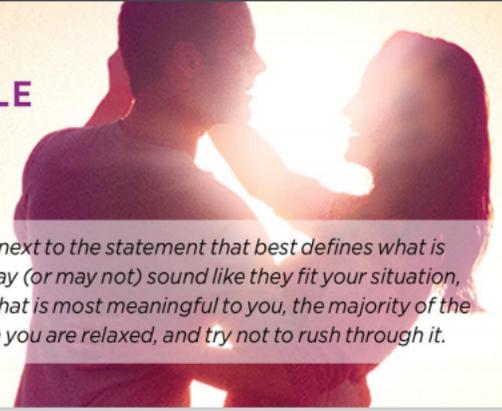
Once you identify and learn to speak your spouse's primary love language, I believe that you will have discovered the key to a long-lasting, loving marriage. Love need not evaporate after the wedding, but to keep it alive, most of us will have to put forth the effort to learn a secondary love language. We cannot rely on our native tongue if our spouse does not understand it. If we want them to feel the love we are trying to communicate, we must express it in their primary love language.

## 5 Love Language Quiz

There is a good chance by this point you have been able to come up with a pretty good guess of both your love language and the love language of your spouse! However, we recommend that you and your spouse **BOTH** take a quick 5 Love Language Quiz to get find out your top 2 love languages. Once you have both taken the quiz discuss the results together.

## LOVE LANGUAGES PERSONAL PROFILE FOR COUPLES

Below you will see 30 paired statements. Please circle the letter next to the statement that best defines what is most meaningful to you in your relationship. Both statements may (or may not) sound like they fit your situation, but please choose the statement that captures the essence of what is most meaningful to you, the majority of the time. Allow 10 to 15 minutes to complete the profile. Take it when you are relaxed, and try not to rush through it.



- 1** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- A** I receive a loving note/text/email for no special reason from my loved one.
  - E** my partner and I hug.

- 2** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- B** I can spend alone time with my partner - just the two of us.
  - D** my partner does something practical to help me out.

- 3** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- C** my partner gives me a little gift as a token of our love for each other.
  - B** I get to spend uninterrupted leisure time with my partner.

- 4** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- D** my partner unexpectedly does something for me like filling my car or doing the laundry.
  - E** my partner and I touch.

- 5** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- E** my partner puts his/her arm around me when we're in public.
  - C** my partner surprises me with a gift.

- 6** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- B** I'm around my partner, even if we're not really doing anything.
  - E** I hold hands with my partner.

- 7** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- C** my partner gives me a gift.
  - A** I hear "I love you" from my partner.

- 8** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- E** I sit close to my partner.
  - A** I am complimented by my loved one for no apparent reason.

- 9** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- B** I get the chance to just "hang out" with my partner.
  - C** I unexpectedly get small gifts from my partner.

- 10** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- A** I hear my partner tell me, "I'm proud of you."
  - D** my partner helps me with a task.

- 11** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- B** I get to do things with my partner.
  - A** I hear supportive words from my partner.

- 12** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- D** my partner does things for me instead of just talking about doing nice things.
  - E** I feel connected to my partner through a hug.

- 13** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- A** I hear praise from my partner.
  - C** my partner gives me something that shows he/she was really thinking about me.

- 14** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- B** I'm able to just be around my partner.
  - E** I get a back rub or massage from my partner.

- 15** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- A** my partner reacts positively to something I've accomplished.
  - D** my partner does something for me that I know they don't particularly enjoy.

- 16** *It's more meaningful to me when...*
- E** my partner and I kiss frequently.
  - B** I sense my partner is showing interest in the things I care about.

# LOVE LANGUAGES PERSONAL PROFILE FOR COUPLES



**17** *It's more meaningful to me when...*  
**D** my partner works on special projects with me that I have to complete.  
**C** my partner gives me an exciting gift.

**18** *It's more meaningful to me when...*  
**A** I'm complimented by my partner on my appearance.  
**B** my partner takes the time to listen to me and really understand my feelings.

**19** *It's more meaningful to me when...*  
**E** my partner and I share non-sexual touch in public.  
**D** my partner offers to run errands for me.

**20** *It's more meaningful to me when...*  
**D** my partner does a bit more than his/her normal share of the responsibilities we share (around the house, work-related, etc).  
**C** I get a gift that I know my partner put thought into choosing.

**21** *It's more meaningful to me when...*  
**B** my partner doesn't check his/her phone while we're talking.  
**D** my partner goes out of their way to do something that relieves pressure on me.

**22** *It's more meaningful to me when...*  
**C** I can look forward to a holiday because of a gift I anticipate receiving.  
**A** I hear the words, "I appreciate you" from my partner.

**23** *It's more meaningful to me when...*  
**C** my partner brings me a little gift after he/she has been traveling without me.  
**D** my partner takes care of something I'm responsible to do but I feel too stressed to do at the time.

**24** *It's more meaningful to me when...*  
**B** my partner doesn't interrupt me while I'm talking.  
**C** gift giving is an important part of our relationship.

**25** *It's more meaningful to me when...*  
**D** my partner helps me out when he/she knows I'm already tired.  
**B** I get to go somewhere while spending time with my partner.

**26** *It's more meaningful to me when...*  
**E** my partner and I are physically intimate.  
**C** my partner gives me a little gift that he/she picked up in the course of their normal day.

**27** *It's more meaningful to me when...*  
**A** my partner says something encouraging to me.  
**B** I get to spend time in a shared activity or hobby with my partner.

**28** *It's more meaningful to me when...*  
**C** my partner surprises me with a small token of their appreciation.  
**E** my partner and I touch a lot during the normal course of the day.

**29** *It's more meaningful to me when...*  
**D** my partner helps me out - especially if I know they're already busy.  
**A** I hear my partner specifically tell me, "I appreciate you."

**30** *It's more meaningful to me when...*  
**E** my partner and I embrace after we've been apart for a while.  
**A** I hear my partner say how much I mean to him/her.

Now go back and count the number of times you circled each individual letter and write that number in the appropriate blank below.

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## RESULTS

- A:** \_\_\_\_\_ WORDS OF AFFIRMATION  
**B:** \_\_\_\_\_ QUALITY TIME  
**C:** \_\_\_\_\_ RECEIVING GIFTS  
**D:** \_\_\_\_\_ ACTS OF SERVICE  
**E:** \_\_\_\_\_ PHYSICAL TOUCH

### Which love language received the highest score?

This is your primary love language. If point totals for two love languages are equal, you are "bilingual" and have two primary love languages. And, if you have a secondary love language, or one that is close in score to your primary love language, this means that both expressions of love are important to you. The highest possible score for any single love language is 12.



Knowing the love languages is powerful, but knowing *how* they work in your relationships—that's the game changer.

GET THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES' APP



LEARN MORE AT [5LoveLanguages.com](http://5LoveLanguages.com)

# *Discussion Questions with your Partner:*

*(Take Turns Answering Each Question)*

1. Share your 5 Love Languages Results with One Another:
2. Were you surprised by one another's top 2 love languages?
3. How well do you feel you speak your partner's top love language?
4. How well do you feel your partner speaks your top love language?
5. What are positive examples of how your partner has spoken your love language?
6. What are ways your partner could improve in speaking your love language?
7. What is one activity you are going to do this week to actively speak your partner's love language?