



speaking the language of *Love*

Valentine's Day is coming—the day our culture devotes to romantic love. Perhaps you have already given some thought to what gift you will give to your loved one this year. Maybe you've given some thought to your own romantic ideal. Will he whisper sweet words of love? Will she buy you that great watch you've been wanting? Will he carve out an evening from his busy schedule for a movie and some cuddles? Whether you plan to buy roses, make a special meal, write a love letter, plan a romantic escape, or just ignore the lovers' holiday, there is one wonderful gift that you can give your partner every day of the year: speaking his or her love language.

In his groundbreaking book *The Five Love Languages*, Dr. Gary Chapman defines five different love styles. Each style is the way someone likes to be loved and feels most appreciated. Learning your own love style, as well as that of your partner, is the best way to love and be loved.

It's quite likely that your love style and your partner's love style will be different. If so, you may need to do a little work and practice acting in the way your partner wants to be loved. Then do a little education—determine your love style and ask for your spouse to do more of what makes you feel truly valued. If you do both of these things, you're bound to see and feel more love in your everyday life.

Chapman's Five Emotional Love Languages:

Words of Affirmation

People who value verbal compliments, such as “Wow, you look beautiful in that dress,” and those who desire encouragement are Words of Affirmation types. Loving comments and statements of appreciation, like “You're an incredible photographer, thank you so much for these pictures!” are what this type craves most.

Quality Time

Spouses who are Quality Time types would like to spend alone time together, focusing only on each other (i.e., not on the football game on TV), while sharing inner feelings, thoughts, and emotions. People who treasure conversation about hopes and dreams while sharing a drink at a local coffee shop are most likely Quality Time types.

Gifts

Most of us love to receive gifts, but this alone does not make someone a Gift type. Gift types look for visual signs of love, such that any gift—big or small, expensive or casual—is likely to be saved, treasured and adored. People of this type often feel that a lack of gifts reflects a lack of love from their spouse.

Acts of Service

Partners who are Acts of Service types feel loved when their spouse does little, everyday things, such as taking out the trash, paying household bills, picking the kids up from soccer practice, and the like. In order to feel loved, an Acts of Service type would like to see their partner go out of their way to care for them: to put in the planning, time, effort, and energy to make daily life a bit easier.

Physical Touch

Physical Touch types are perhaps the easiest types to spot. These partners thrive on physical contact and crave all of the hugs, kisses, and physical attention you can bestow upon them. People of this type are most want to be in close physical proximity to their partner and want to be touched or held with some frequency.

Determining Your Style

Answer these questions to determine your love style:

1. How do you show your love to others?
2. Think back to the moments when you felt most loved, what made them so memorable?
3. What do you really wish your partner knew about how to do things differently?
4. What do you complain about most often?
5. What do you save, keep, treasure, or hold on to most?

From your answers, look for a pattern: do you value physical closeness most? If so, your love style is likely the physical touch style. Do you crave more alone time? If so, your love style is probably the quality time style. Do you secretly desire a new wedding band for Valentine's day? Perhaps you are the gift style type.

Determining Your Partner's Style

To determine your partner's love style, which one of these statements would your spouse most agree with?

1. I feel most loved when my partner expresses feelings for me through physical contact, such as a hug or kiss.
2. I feel most loved when my partner shows affection by taking care of errands, doing household chores, and doing favors for me.
3. I feel most loved when my spouse brings me a very special gift.
4. I feel most loved when my partner pays attention to me, focuses on what I am saying, and plans to spend alone time with me.
5. I feel most loved when my partner tells me how grateful they are for me and talks about how much all the little things I do are appreciated.

Statement 5 = Words of Affirmation style

Statement 4 = Quality Time style

Statement 3 = Gift style

Statement 2 = Acts of Service style

Statement 1 = Physical Touch style

Speaking Your Partner's Love Language

After identifying your love style and your partner's love style, communicate what you've learned in their love style. If you're married to a Words of Affirmation type, tell them "I am so lucky to be married to you, you're the most caring man in the world." Then go on to tell your partner what you've learned and how you think it could help you both, make sure to tell them about your love style and how you'd really like to be loved. If your partner is a Quality Time type, invite them for a romantic dinner and share your new knowledge. Perhaps you're dating a Gift type? If so, write a loving statement inside a silver fortune cookie and present this gift along with a copy of *The Five Love Languages*.

By learning your love language and actively communicating in the love style of your partner, you'll experience a deeper connection than you ever thought possible. Having this knowledge and practicing it daily will be a Valentine's gift that gets better every year! ❖

The Five Love Languages, How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate by Dr. Gary Chapman is available online at www.thefivelovelanguages.com and at bookstores everywhere.



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