

LANGUAGES OF LOVE

Krzysztof and Mela Pawlusiow

Prague, Czech Republic

May 2007

The idea of “languages of love” speaks of the way we communicate love to people, who matter the most to us - our wives, husbands, parents, children, siblings and friends. Through mixture of personal preferences and life experiences, each one of us develops an individual way of expressing and receiving love.

When two people prefer the same or mostly the same ways of showing love, their affection for each other is well communicated and deeply enriches their relationship. However, when two people differ significantly in the ways they would like to show and receive expressions of love, a potential for miscommunication exists, in spite of positive and supportive feelings that they may have for each other. It is much like people from different countries speaking different languages. They may always attempt to communicate through gestures and facial expression, but it will be difficult to establish well developed connections between them until at least one person - or preferably, two - make an effort to learn another language.

Below is a short description on each of the five languages of love described in Gary Chapman’s book *Five Languages of Love* along with some questions that may give you a better understanding of your preferred way of expressing and receiving love. It is possible that you will be able to identify with two or even three of those, but for most people one of those languages is prominent, and others play a supportive role. Which way of expressing affection communicates the loudest “I love you” in your life?

1. Words of Affirmation

Some people feel loved the most when others express their affection through affirming words. It can take the form of simple statements of appreciation - commonly known as compliments. Mark Twain said some time ago: “I can live for two months on a good compliment”. Another form is encouragement - giving recognition for work already done and inspiring to continue at the task or challenge undertaken, however small or big it may seem.

How can you know if your love language is Words of Affirmation?

Do you like to receive notes of affirmation from your loved ones?

Are words of acceptance important to you?

Do you like when others speak to you in kind words?

Do you value praise of others and try to avoid their criticism?

Do you like when others compliment your achievements and appearance?

Do you feel loved when others celebrate your birthday with meaningful words?

Do you feel loved when others tell you how much they appreciate you?

Do you need words of affirmation from others every day?

2. Quality Time

Some people feel loved the most when others devote their time and undivided attention to them. In this language all life's small issues and details are set aside to be with and for the loved person. One form of it is meaningful conversation about experiences, thoughts, feelings and desires, unhurried and free from interruptions and giving quick solutions.

Another form of that love language is spending time together in activities that are of interest to both people and help to strengthen their relationship. Such activities also provide a rich source of memories to cherish and discuss at later time.

How can you know if your love language is Quality Time?

Do you like to spend one-on-one time with your loved ones?

Do you like being together with your loved ones when doing things?

Do you feel close to your loved ones while talking or doing something together?

Do you like when people listen to you sympathetically?

Do you feel loved when others take time to understand your feelings?

Do you enjoy the feeling you get when others give you their undivided attention?

Do you appreciate when others listen patiently and don't interrupt you?

Do you like when others look at you when you're talking together?

3. Receiving Gifts

Some people feel loved the most when they are given some tangible symbols of love - gifts. For them a fact that someone else devoted time, effort and money to find something that could be given as a gift, very strongly communicates affection and the interest that they desire. Gifts don't have to be expensive or extraordinary - what counts is remembrance and thoughtfulness. Also, sometimes those gifts don't have to be material - in times of need and difficulties, the greatest gift one may give is simple presence and support.

How can you know if your love language is Receiving Gifts?

Do you like when your loved ones give you gifts?

Do you feel loved when you receive gifts from others?

Are visual symbols of love (gifts) very important to you?

Do several inexpensive gifts from loved ones mean more to you than one large gift?

Do you like receiving gifts made by your loved ones?

Do you feel loved when your loved ones celebrate your birthday with a gift?

Do you know your loved ones are thinking of you when they give you a gift?

Is receiving a gift for no special occasion exciting for you?

4. Acts of Service

Some people feel loved the most when others express their care and affection through helpful behaviors. A very strong form of this love language is giving practical help in doing home chores. Doing something for a loved person communicates interest and willingness to share life's burdens - and participating together with the joys that it may bring. However, such help has to be motivated by love, not by duty - or even worse, but only submitting to repeated appeals for help. Another form of this particular language is noticing and expressing appreciation for all the things that a person does for his or her family.

How can you know if your love language is Acts of Service?

Do you feel loved when your loved ones give you practical help?

Do things that your loved ones do affect you more than what they say?

Do you know others love you when they do things for you that you don't enjoy doing yourself?

Do acts of service performed by others make you feel loved?

Do you appreciate the many things that your loved ones do for you?

Do you enjoy the feeling when others do some act of service for you?

Do you like to know that your loved ones are concerned enough to help you with your daily tasks?

Do you feel loved when your loved ones enthusiastically do some task you requested?

5. Physical Touch

Some people feel loved the most when others express their affection through physical contact. Sexual expression is only one of many dialects of that language and speaking the language of physical touch may not be limited only to that. Such people desire love to be expressed through many different forms of touch, however the preferred ways of being touched are very individual and differ from person to person. The key to expressing love to a mate whose love language is physical touch is to learn how and when he or she wants to be touched.

How can you know if your love language is Physical Touch?

Do you feel loved when your loved ones touch you?

Do you like holding hands with your partner?

Do you like to sit close to your loved ones?

Do you feel closer to your loved ones when they touch you often?

Do you like your loved ones to touch you when you walk by?

Do you feel secure when your loved ones touch you?

Is it exciting for you when your partner kisses you unexpectedly?

Do you need to be touched every day?