

## **UNDERSTANDING THE FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES**

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### **Words of Affirmation**

One time when my wife and I were visiting our daughter and son-in-law and our two grandchildren, our son-in-law took the garbage out after dinner. When he walked back into the room where we were talking with our daughter, she looked up and said, “John, thanks for taking the garbage out.”

Inside I said, “Yes!” because I knew the power of appreciation. I can’t tell you how many men and women have sat in my office over the past 30 years and said to me, “I work my tail off every day, yet my spouse acts like I haven’t done a thing. I never get a single word of appreciation.”

If your spouse’s primary love language is words of affirmation, your spoken praise and appreciation will fall like rain on parched soil. Before long, you will see new life sprouting in your marriage as your spouse responds to your words of love.

### **Acts of Service**

Do you remember the old saying, “Actions speak louder than words”? For some people, that is particularly true of love. If acts of service is your spouse’s primary love language, nothing will speak more deeply to him or her emotionally than simple acts of service.

Maxine, who had been married for 15 years, came to my office one day because she was frustrated with her marriage. Listen to what she said: “I don’t understand David. Every day he tells me that he loves me, but he never does anything to help me. He just sits on the couch watching TV while I wash the dishes, and the thought never crosses his mind to help me. I’m sick of hearing ‘I love you.’ If he loved me, he would do something to help me.”

Maxine’s primary love language is acts of service (not words of affirmation), and even though her husband, David, loved her, he had never learned to express his love in a way that made her feel loved. However, after David and I talked and he read *The Five Love Languages*, he got the picture and started speaking Maxine’s love language. In less than a month, her love tank was beginning to fill up, and their marriage moved from winter to spring.

The next time I talked to Maxine, she said, “It’s wonderful. I wish we had come for counseling 10 years ago. I never knew about the love languages. I just knew I didn’t feel loved.”

### **Receiving Gifts**

In every society throughout human history, gift giving has been perceived as an expression of love. Giving gifts is universal, because there is something inside the human psyche that says if you love someone, you will give to him or her.

What many people do not understand is that for some people, receiving gifts is their primary love language. It’s the thing that makes them feel loved most deeply. If you’re married to someone whose primary love language is gift giving, you will make your spouse feel loved and treasured by giving gifts on birthdays, holidays, anniversaries and “no occasion” days.

The gifts need not be expensive or elaborate; it’s the thought that counts. Even something as simple as a homemade card or a few cheerful flowers will communicate your love to your spouse. Little things mean a lot to a person whose primary love language is receiving gifts.

## **Quality Time**

If your spouse's love language is quality time, giving him or her your undivided attention is one of the best ways you can show your love. Some men pride themselves on being able to watch television, read a magazine, and listen to their wives, all at the same time. That is an admirable trait, but it is not speaking the love language of quality time.

Instead, you must turn off the TV, lay the magazine down, look into your mate's eyes, and listen and interact. To your spouse, 20 minutes of your undivided attention – listening and conversing – is like a 20-minute refill of his or her love tank.

Men, if you really want to impress your wife, the next time she walks into the room while you are watching a sporting event, put the television on mute and don't take your eyes off her as long as she's in the room. If she engages you in conversation, turn the TV off and give her your undivided attention. You will score a thousand points and her love tank will be overflowing.

## **Physical Touch**

We have long known the emotional power of physical touch. That's why we pick up babies and touch them tenderly. Long before an infant understands the meaning of the word love, he or she feels loved by physical touch.

In marriage, the love language of physical touch includes everything from putting a hand on your mate's shoulder as you walk by, touching his or her leg as you're driving together, and holding hands while you're walking to kissing, embracing and sexual intercourse.

If physical touch is your spouse's primary love language, nothing communicates love more clearly than for you to take the initiative to reach out and touch your mate.