

## Your Love Language

Oh how I love thee, but how should I show you the ways?

Valentine's Day is fast approaching and the explosion of red and pink everywhere you turn makes the topic of love hard to ignore. One of the love hot topics that I've seen when working with couples is partners feeling at a loss about how to demonstrate their love in a meaningful way to their partner. For example, have you ever gone out of your way to cook a special meal for your partner and been less than impressed with their appreciation (or lack there of)? Or maybe you tell your partner you love him or her frequently but they still seem unsure of your feelings for them?

According to Gary Chapman, author of *The Five Love Languages*, this is because we often show our partners how we feel about them in our own "love language" and not theirs. Growing up, we learned to show love in ways our families did. For example, some families are very verbally expressive with compliments and others are physically touchy-feely giving hugs and kisses frequently. Just as some families speak French and others speak Spanish, we learn to express our love in a language we have learned. So when two people come together who were raised speaking different "languages," they find, in order to effectively communicate love, it's time to learn a second language! So if you feel your partner hasn't quite gotten the message of how much you love them, read on to figure out other languages you can use.

**1. Words of Affirmation:** These can include compliments ("Great dinner honey!" or "I really appreciate you taking out the garbage."), encouraging words for something your partner has set as a goal ("I bet you'd write a great book!"), kind words (this can include forgiving your partner for a wrongdoing), and humble words (this can include making requests "I'd love it if you could paint the bathroom this weekend" instead of demands "Do you ever think you'll paint the bathroom?!?").

**2. Quality Time:** Give each other your undivided attention. Go for a walk, turn off the T.V. for 20 minutes, go to dinner and look at each other and talk, or any other activity that, now that you're thinking about it, your partner has asked you to do with him or her.

**3. Receiving Gifts:** Gifts can be bought, found, or made. It can be a tangible item or the gift of yourself, standing next to your partner in a time of need. According to Chapman, this is the easiest second language to learn.

**4. Acts of Service:** This language includes doing things your partner wants you to do. Examples include mowing the lawn, doing laundry, bathing the kids, making dinner. When any of these are done with a smile and not out of fear, guilt, or resentment, they are expressions of love.

**5. Physical Touch:** Examples include holding hands, kissing, embracing, massaging, and sex. It can be as simple as a quick peck out the door or sitting next to each other on the couch.

So when thinking of a gift for your loved one this year (and all year!), consider which one of the five love languages your partner speaks fluently. Choose an example from that category and they're sure to hear your message loud and clear.