

H A R L A N R I C H A R D S

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The Five Love Languages
By Gary Chapman

I recently reread Gary Chapman's book, "The Five Love Languages," to refresh my memory regarding how to express love to a significant other. Mr. Chapman took the time to analyze what makes a loving relationship work. His book is the result of his analysis and is a very useful guide for whoever wants to learn how to express love effectively.

His premise is that there are 5 basic ways ~~to~~ people express and receive love. Not all people use the same avenue of expression. The key to any relationship is communicating with your partner in the specific language of love he or she relates to. The 5 love language are:

Words of Affirmation

"Complements, words of encouragement, and requests rather than demands all affirm the self-worth of your spouse. They create intimacy, heal wounds, and bring out the full potential of your other half." (p. 186)

Quality Time

"Spending quality time together through sharing, listening, and participating in joint meaningful activities communicates that we truly care for and enjoy each other." (p. 188)

Receiving Gifts

"Gifts are visual symbols of love, whether they are items you purchased or made, or are merely your own presence made available to your spouse. Gifts demonstrate that you care, and they represent the value of the relationship." (p. 190)

Acts of Service

"Criticism of your spouse's failure to do things for you may be an indication that 'acts of service' is your primary love language. Acts of service should never be coerced but should be freely given and received, and completed as requested." (p. 192)

Physical Touch

"Physical touch, as a gesture of love, reaches to the depths of our being. As a love language, it is a powerful form of communication from the smallest touch on the shoulder to the most passionate kiss." (p. 194)

Finding the primary love language that allows your mate to feel loved and then communicating in that language, is the key to a successful relationship. Often, you can deduce your mate's primary language just by how he or she responds to your actions.

It would be better, in my opinion, to actually raise the subject and discuss it. Having both partners read the book would be best but if one of you isn't much of a reader, then discussing it and explaining it will work just as well. When both of you know about the 5 love languages and which one your partner prefers, it is easier to meet your partner's emotional needs.

You both don't have to have the same language to have a fulfilling relationship. It is simply a matter of communicating with your mate in his or her language and having your mate do the same for you. You may not care at all about being told your mate loves you, but if that is his or her primary language, then that's what you need to do. Just make sure your partner knows your primary language so he or she isn't trying to show you how much you are loved using their primary language instead of yours.

Good luck and I pray that everyone will find the fulfilling relationship which will meet their emotional needs in their primary language.