



Of Seeds and Flowers



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Volume 32 Issue 2 – Founded in 1982

March 2015

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What is Your Love Language?

Has this ever happened to you? Your husband is having a difficult week and needs to hear some encouraging words, you feel that cooking him a nice dinner will cheer him up. After the dinner, when he is still in the dumps, you're puzzled. Or, maybe your wife is looking for you to spend some time with her – time away from the kids and television. You give her flowers but the flowers don't meet her needs and you are left wondering what you did wrong.

In a fine book entitled **The Five Love Languages** Dr. Gary Chapman describes the different ways in which people give and receive love. If you express love in a way your spouse doesn't understand – that is, your love language is different from his or hers – he or she won't realize you've expressed your love at all. So, the pertinent question is, "Are you and your spouse speaking the same "love language"? Or better, what "love language" do you speak and what "love language" does your spouse speak?

Dr. Chapman identifies five different languages of love: Quality Time, Gifts, Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Physical Touch. Nothing new but a new and perhaps more effective way of looking at the subject – and thereby, for the first time, handling it. At the heart of mankind's existence is the desire to be intimate and to be

loved by another, exclusively, unconditionally. Marriage is designed to meet that desire for intimacy and love. We need to keep our "love tanks" full and we need to keep sharing from those "full tanks". – but in a way that truly meets our spouse's needs not in a way **WE THINK** meets our spouse's needs. (or children's needs, or parent's needs, or co-worker's needs.).



Let's look at each of the love languages.

QUALITY TIME – A central aspect of quality time is togetherness. – not just physical proximity. Togetherness has to do with focused attention. Meet her for lunch. Get a baby-sitter and take her out to dinner, just the two of you. Sit on the back porch. Take a walk and talk. Spend time talking with your children; play some games with them. Quality conversation is the key. Sympathetic listening but also self revelation. "I married him to be with him, but even when he is with me his head and heart seem to be elsewhere." – a common complaint. If your wife is crying for quality time no matter what other "love language" you use she will feel unloved. The object of love is

not getting something you want but doing something for the well-being of the one you love.

GIFTS – For some people receiving gifts is the deepest expression of love. You can hold the gift in your hand and say, "Look, he is thinking of me." "She remembered me." "He loves me." You must love and be thinking of someone to give that person the right gift. The gift is a symbol of that thought and love. Gifts are visual symbols of love. Flowers, a necklace, candy, a tie.

If your spouse's primary love language is receiving gifts you are lucky. It is one of the easiest love languages to learn. – And then there is the gift of self. Physical presence is the greatest gift of all.

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION – Solomon once wrote, "The tongue has the power of life and death". (Proverbs 18:21). Too many couples have never learned the power they have in affirming the goodness and beauty in their spouse. In Proverbs Solomon also noted, "An anxious heart weighs a person down, but a kind word cheers them up." (12:35) "Do you ever look pretty in that dress! Wow!" "I just love the salads that you make." "You look so sharp in that suit." Verbal compliments are one way of showing affirmation. Encouraging words is another. "If you try that I know it will come out great." You have to first learn what is

important to your spouse. You have to see the world from your spouse's perspective. Make a list of the things he/she does for you, for your family. Meditate on your spouse's goodness and affirm all those qualities. "You are so gentle, thoughtful, kind, patient, forgiving, such a lover, listener. "I'm so glad that I married you."

William James, the famous psychologist, once said that the deepest human need is to feel appreciated. Humble words, kind words, forgiving words, can be affirming. There can be many dialects within the same "love language". What is your spouse's primary "love language"? Perhaps he or she is bilingual or trilingual. What is **your** primary "love language"?

ACTS OF SERVICE – In this "love language" you seek to do the things that your spouse would like you do. You seek to please her, to express your love for her by doing things for her. Men like to do this, however, often acts of service is not a woman's primary "love language".

Jesus washed the feet of His disciples and He promised happiness to those "who would go and do likewise". "Serve one another in love", says St. Paul. Checking the oil, cleaning the toilets or litter box, taking out the garbage, mowing the grass, helping with the dishes or cooking or shopping, getting a cup of tea, getting the hair out of the sink, dusting the bookcase, picking up the milk, etc., etc.. If your primary "love language" is acts of service make gentle, loving requests. "Requests give direction to love but demands

stop the flow of love," writes Dr. Chapman.

PHYSICAL TOUCH – The body is for touching. Once you discover that physical touch is the primary love language of your spouse you are limited only by your imagination on ways to express love. Holding hands in public, kiss as soon as you greet your spouse, hug regularly, touch as you pass, shoulder rubs, run your hand through the hair, face stroking, sexual intercourse, hold her as she cries, hold him in his hurt. Remember your spouse is in control as to what kind of touching he or she finds pleasurable. **Ask.** You are learning to speak your spouse's language.



Men, don't automatically think your primary love language is "physical touch" just because you desire sexual intercourse so intensely. If a man doesn't enjoy physical touch at other times and in non-sexual ways it may not be his love language at all.

Each of us has a primary love language and maybe two languages that are of equal value to us. It's important to discover what your primary love language is and not to assume that your spouse has the same language. Obviously, it is important to discover your spouse's primary love language and honor it.

Keep the love tank full.

Three questions Dr. Chapman suggests to help discover your own primary love language.

1. What does your spouse do or fail to do that hurts you most deeply? The opposite of what hurts you most is probably your love language.
2. What have you most often requested of your spouse? The thing you most often requested is likely the thing that would make you feel most loved.
3. In what way do you regularly express love to your spouse? Your method of expressing love may be an indication that that would also make you feel loved.

No matter what your love language is and I think this goes especially for those spouse's whose primary love language is "gifts" and "acts of service" it is still absolutely necessary to take your partner's face in your hands (regularly) look your spouse in the eye and tell them how special, beautiful and wonderful she/he is. No matter how much your spouse likes gifts and service they still need the regular nourishment of touch, affection, words of affirmation. The health of a marriage can be measured by the amount of intimate, quiet time that couples spend together.

The Five Love Languages is only 175 pages. A good read. Also remember God speaks all 5 languages and every dialect of each. He totally knows you and has a total and perfect and personal love for YOU. What a deal!



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A Drop of Rain... A Bit of Sun...

CHOSEN VESSEL by B. V. Cornwall

The Master was searching for a vessel to use; before him were many. Which one would he choose?

"Take me," cried the gold one, "I'm shinny and bright. I'm of great value and I do things just right. My beauty and luster will outshine the rest. And for someone like you, Master, gold would be best."

The Master passed on with no word at all, and looked at a silver urn narrow and tall. "I'll serve you, dear Master, I'll pour out your wine, I'll be on your table whenever you dine. My lines are so graceful, my carvings so true, and silver will always compliment you."

Unheeding, the Master passed on to the brass. Wide-mouthed and shallow and polished like glass. "Here! Here!" cried the vessel, "I know I will do. Place me on your table for all men to view."

"Look at me," called the goblet of crystal so clear, "My transparency shows my contents so dear. Though fragile, am I, I will serve you with pride, and I'm sure I'll be happy
py in your house to abide."

The Master came next to a vessel of wood, polished and carved, it solidly stood. "You may use me, dear Master," the wooden bowl said. "But I'd rather you used me for fruit, not for bread."

Then the Master looked down and saw a vessel of clay, empty and broken it helplessly lay. No hope had the vessel that the Master might choose to cleanse, and make whole, to fill, and to use.

"Ah! This is the vessel I've been hoping to find. I'll mend it and use it and make it all mine. I need not the vessel with pride of itself, nor one that is narrow to sit on the shelf. Nor one that is big-mouthed and shallow and loud. Nor one that displays his contents so proud. Not the one that thinks he can do all things just right. But this plain, earthly vessel, filled with power and might."

Then gently he lifted the vessel of clay, mended and cleansed it, and filled it that day. Spoke to it kindly, "There's work you must do. Just pour out to others, as I pour into you."



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Speaking Softly

Robert Moore is an internationally recognized Jungian psychologist, lecturer and author. He is an authority on cross cultural studies, comparative religion and human spirituality. He presently teaches at the University of Chicago. He addresses both secular and religious audiences but his message is the same for both.

"If you don't pray, if you don't seek silence and your own spiritual growth you will inevitably become either depressed or elated or bounce back forth between the two. Only prayer or quiet meditation, he says, can provide the fine line (spiritual, psychological and emotional) that will keep you from being habitually depressed or obsessed with your own ego." "This is true," he says, "irrespective of whether you are religious or not."

"BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD." Psalms. "STUDY (imagine, STUDY -like homework) TO BE QUIET." St. James. Remember, SILENCE is God's first language. Bidden or unbidden, God is present.

One of the professors I had in college often said to us, "If you are too busy to pray then you are too damn busy." The truth isn't always easy or pretty; that's one way you can identify it.

When the Archangel Raphael departed from Tobias and his son so that they could see him no more, they lay for three hours prostrate on their faces and as the Bible says, "Blessed God". What ought our thanksgiving to be like after receiving communion, the Body and Blood of Jesus, at the Eucharist each Sunday? -not just seeing an angel!

Can you imagine what it must have been like for Mary, the Mother of Jesus, to receive Communion? - and her thanksgiving after? She carried Jesus for nine months in her womb, fed Him, dressed Him, changed His diaper, taught Him to pray, and watched Him die and then, at the hands of one of the Apostles, received her Son in Communion. Just to watch would have been to be transformed!

