

"I'm not getting on that thing until the shopping basket goes – not cool!"



What's your **LOVE** language?

Make sure you both speak the same lingo when it comes to your relationship. Author and marriage counsellor Dr Gary Chapman tells you how in his book *The 5 Love Languages ...*

At 30,000 feet he put his magazine in his seat pocket, turned in my direction and asked, "What kind of work do you do?" I replied, "I do marriage counselling and enrichment seminars." "I've wanted to ask someone this for a long time," he said. "What happens to the love after you get married?"

The question my friend seated in 5A was asking was the question that thousands of married people are asking today. The desire for romantic love in marriage is deeply rooted in our psychological makeup. But with all the advice offered by media experts, books, the internet, family and friends, why is it that many couples haven't found the secret to keeping love alive after the wedding? The problem is that we've overlooked one fundamental truth: people speak different love languages. ►

THE LANGUAGES OF LOVE

Most of us grow up learning the language of our parents, which becomes our native tongue. Later we may learn additional languages, but usually with much more effort. In the area of love, it's similar. Your emotional love language and that of your spouse may be as different as Mandarin from English – no matter how hard you try to express love in English, if your spouse only understands Mandarin, you'll never understand how to love each other.

Seldom do a husband and wife have the same primary love language. We tend to speak our primary love language and become confused when our spouse doesn't understand what we're communicating. Once you identify and learn to speak your spouse's primary love language, I believe that you'll have discovered the key to a long-lasting, loving marriage.

WHAT'S YOUR LOVE LANGUAGE?

Choose the one statement you prefer from each of the three sets of examples below (your partner should do the same):

- ♥ My fiancé's love notes make me feel goodA
- I love to be alone with himB
- Receiving special gifts from him makes me happyC
- I feel loved when he helps me with my workD
- I love his hugsE
- ♥ I like it when he tells me I look goodA
- I enjoy long trips with my fiancéB
- I look forward to seeing what he'll give me for my birthdayC
- I feel loved when he does the laundryD
- I love holding his handE
- ♥ His reactions to my achievements are so encouragingA
- I love having his full attentionB
- I know he really loves me when he surprises me with giftsC
- It means a lot to me when he helps me with something I know he hatesD
- I love it when he sits close to meE

IF YOU CHOSE MOSTLY A's,
your love language is *words of affirmation*

Verbal compliments or words of appreciation are powerful communicators of love.

ENCOURAGING WORDS "Encourage" means "to inspire courage". All of us have areas in which we feel insecure. We lack courage, which often hinders us from accomplishing the positive things that we would like to do. Perhaps you or your spouse has untapped potential in one or more areas of life. That potential may be awaiting encouraging words from you or from him.

KIND WORDS If we're to communicate love verbally, we must use kind words. That has to do with the way we speak. The statement "I love you", when said with kindness and tenderness, can be a genuine expression of love.

HUMBLE WORDS Love makes requests, not demands. In marriage we're equal partners. If we're to develop an intimate relationship, we need to know each other's desires. If we make our needs known in the form of a request, we're giving guidance, not ultimatums.

IF THIS IS YOUR PARTNER'S LOVE LANGUAGE Set a goal to give your spouse a different compliment each day for a month.

IF YOU CHOSE MOSTLY B's,
your love language is *quality time*

This means giving someone your undivided attention. I don't mean sitting on the couch watching television together. What I mean is taking a walk, just the two of you, or going out to eat and looking at each other while talking. Time is a strong communicator of love.

The love language of quality time has many dialects. One of the most common is that of quality conversation – two individuals sharing their thoughts and feelings. A relationship calls for sympathetic listening with a view to understanding the other person's desires. We must be willing to give advice, but only when it's requested and never in a condescending manner. Here are some practical listening tips:

- ♥ Maintain eye contact when your spouse is talking.
- ♥ Don't do something else at the same time.
- ♥ Listen for feelings and confirm them.
- ♥ Observe body language.
- ♥ Refuse to interrupt.
- ♥ Quality conversation also calls for self-revelation. In order for your partner to feel loved, you must reveal some of yourself, too.

IF THIS IS YOUR PARTNER'S LOVE

LANGUAGE Ask your partner for a list of five activities that he'd enjoy doing with you. Make plans to do one of them each month for the next five months.

IF YOU CHOSE MOSTLY C's,
your love language is *receiving gifts*

Almost everything ever written on the subject of love indicates that at the heart of love is the spirit of giving. All five love languages challenge us to give to our spouse, but for some, receiving gifts, visible symbols of love, speaks the loudest.

A gift is something you can hold in your hand and say, "Look, he was thinking of me," or, "She remembered me." A gift is a symbol of that thought. Gifts come in all sizes, colours and shapes. Some are expensive and others are free. To the individual whose primary love language is receiving gifts, the cost will matter little.

There is also an intangible gift that can speak more loudly than something that can be held in one's hand. Physical presence in the time of crisis is the most powerful gift you can give. Your body becomes the symbol of your love.

IF THIS IS YOUR PARTNER'S LOVE LANGUAGE Keep a "gift idea" notebook. Every time you hear your spouse say, "I really like that," write it down. Select gifts you feel comfortable purchasing, making or finding, and don't wait for a special occasion. Becoming a proficient gift giver is an easy language to learn.

IF YOU CHOSE MOSTLY D's,
your love language is *acts of service*

People who speak this love language seek to please their partners by serving them; to express their love for them by doing things for them. Actions such as cooking a meal, setting a table, washing the dishes, sorting the bills, walking the dog or dealing with landlords are all acts of service. They require thought, planning, time, effort and energy. If done with a positive spirit, they are indeed expressions of love.

I'm not saying become a doormat to your partner and do these things out of guilt or resentment. No person should ever be a doormat. Do these things as a lover.

IF THIS IS YOUR PARTNER'S LOVE LANGUAGE What one act of service has your spouse nagged you about consistently? Why not decide to see the nag as a tag? Your spouse is tagging this particular task as a really important thing to him or her.



"I'm loving this quality time hon, but could you avoid the oncoming traffic?!"

IF YOU CHOSE MOSTLY E's,
your love language is *physical touch*

Holding hands, kissing, hugging and sex – all of these are lifelines for the person for whom physical touch is the primary love language. With it, they feel secure in their partner's love.

"Love touches" don't take much time, but they do require a little thought, especially if this isn't your primary love language or you didn't grow up in a "touching" family. Sitting close to each other as you watch TV requires no additional time, but communicates your love loudly. Touching each other when you leave the house and when you return may involve only a brief kiss, but speaks volumes.

IF THIS IS YOUR PARTNER'S LOVE LANGUAGE While eating together let your knee or foot drift over and touch your partner.

♥ "No single area of marriage affects the rest of marriage as much as meeting the emotional need for love" ♥

We each come to marriage with a different personality and history. We come with different expectations, different ways of approaching things and different opinions. In a healthy marriage, a variety of perspectives must be processed. We need not agree on everything, but we must find a way to handle our differences. When our "love tank" is full, we create a climate that seeks to understand, that is willing to allow differences and to negotiate. I'm convinced that no single area of marriage affects the rest of marriage as much as meeting the emotional need for love. **COSMO**



This is an edited extract from *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts* by Dr Gary Chapman, \$29.95 (dymocks.com.au).