

smart talk about love

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# Which Love Language Do You Speak?

Turns out love isn't one language, but *five*. And yours might be different than your partner's. The key to a happy relationship? Becoming fluent in both.

BY REBECCA RAPHAEL  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
DARREN WHITTINGTON





If you've ever been in a relationship, you've probably been let down by a significant other who failed to love you properly—as in, the way you needed and expected to be appreciated.

One friend's boyfriend would tell her he loved her more regularly than Google makes a new hire. Yet, on Valentine's Day, he failed to produce a gift. My friend began to sob. Why? "It means he didn't care enough to find one," she bawled. Her conclusion: He must not love her after all.

Maybe your husband does surprise you with just-because gifts, but you'd give any-

### Lena would trade each diamond for a minute of Ethan's BlackBerry-free time.

thing for him to skip one late night at the office to spend an evening at home.

Behind these crossed wires, says Gary Chapman, PhD, best-selling author of *The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate*, lies one key miscommunication: We each speak one primary love language, and unless your partner expresses affection in yours, he might as well be whispering sweet nothings in Sanskrit.

There are five languages, Chapman says: words of affirmation, quality time, gifts, acts of service, and physical touch. "Most couples don't speak the same one," he explains, "but feeling loved is the deepest emotional need we have." Watch—and learn from—three couples on the verge of a breakthrough. Then take our quiz on the next page to find out which *you* speak!

#### COUPLE #1

### Lena, 31, and Ethan, 35

SHE WANTS:

Quality Time

HE GIVES:

Gifts



A few months ago at a party, Ethan overheard his wife, Lena, describe a bracelet she had been fantasizing about for months. When her birthday came, he found it, bought it, and nearly burst with pride as she opened the box. To his surprise, Lena's eyes welled with tears—and not of joy.

What was she thinking? Roughly, this: "You idiot! If you really loved me, you'd give me your time, not diamonds." To Lena, each stone represented a night her husband had cancelled on her to work late. She would trade each diamond for a minute of his BlackBerry-free time.

Ethan was baffled—and angered—by her reaction. "I work my butt off so I can afford gifts like this for her," he fumed. "I put thought into them. But apparently that just isn't good enough."

Dr. Chapman says:

Gifts shouldn't replace expressing love in Lena's language, which is quality time. We all have a "love tank" that needs to be filled, and Lena's is empty.

The couple should put aside 15 minutes each day to connect. Ethan may initially drag his feet for fear "15 minutes" will turn into two hours, but that won't happen once Lena knows that time will be carved out every day.

#### COUPLE #2

### Mary, 41, and Shawn, 36

SHE WANTS:

Words of Affirmation

HE GIVES:

Acts of Service



"What can I do to help you today?" is the first thing Mary hears her husband say when she wakes each morning. His acts of service include building her a garden—one of her favorite hobbies. "And he's a horrible handyman," she laughs.

But Mary really craves verbal affirmation. "When I'm feeling even the slightest bit taken for granted, I wish he'd say 'I love you.' Just today I said, 'Honey, I need you to tell me I'm beautiful,' so he did. But sometimes he gets annoyed and asks, 'How many times do I have to tell you?'"

"He grew up in a family that doesn't express emotions freely," she says. "It's not surprising that his one attempt at a love letter read like a business plan. It's just not who he is—but I'll never stop hoping that he'll write me a sonnet."

Dr. Chapman says:

Shawn should start with baby steps to express his love. He can try saying something sweet about her to a friend or coworker, or it could also be helpful to buy a greeting card, underline the words that are particularly appropriate, and then read them to his wife.

Ultimately, Shawn should aim to compliment Mary at least once a day for a month to create a lasting pattern.

#### COUPLE #3

### Erin, 32, and David, 29

HE WANTS:

Physical Touch

SHE GIVES:

Words of Affirmation



David knows his wife of two years loves him. She tells him every day. And yet, there's one simple thing she doesn't do that would make him deliriously happy.

"I have the best wife, who tells me how much she cares for me, yet the fact that we never hold hands bothers me," he admits. Physical affection was part of his childhood—David's parents were always arm-in-arm, he says. To him, physical affection signifies security: "I think if Erin held my hand while we were walking down the street, it would show other people that she's committed to our relationship."

"I tell him how much I love him all the time," says Erin, baffled by her husband's request. "I'm just not touchy-feely. But I shouldn't have to hold his hand to show he's important to me."

Dr. Chapman says:

Physical touch is a powerful way to communicate love. If Erin isn't accustomed to holding hands in public, David might try holding her hand in, say, an empty parking lot first. If she pulls away, he should tell her what it means to him. This is David's language, so he's got the final word, just as Erin does when it comes to teaching him how to make her feel loved. >>



# Decode Your Love Language

Figure out which one each of you speak, and you'll understand one another better.

Choose the statement from each of the pairs below that sounds most like you, then circle the letter. When you're done, count the number of times you circled each letter, then list the results in the spaces at the end of the quiz. Your primary love language is the one that receives the most points.

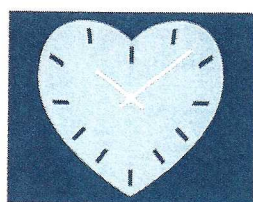
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| <p>1) Sweet notes from my partner make me feel good. <b>a</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>I love my partner's hugs. <b>e</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>2) I feel loved when my partner helps with the laundry. <b>d</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>I like it when my partner touches me. <b>e</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>3) My partner doesn't interrupt me when I'm talking, and I like that. <b>b</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>I never get tired of receiving gifts from my partner. <b>c</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>4) My partner's reactions to my accomplishments are so encouraging. <b>a</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>It means a lot to me when my partner helps with something I know he/she hates. <b>d</b></p> <p>.....</p> | <p>5) I love when my partner compliments my appearance. <b>a</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>I love that my partner listens to me and respects my ideas. <b>b</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>6) I look forward to seeing what my partner gives me for my birthday. <b>c</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>I never get tired of hearing my partner tell me that I am important to him/her. <b>a</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>7) My partner deserves an award for all he/she does to help me. <b>d</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>I'm sometimes amazed at how thoughtful my partner's gifts to me are. <b>c</b></p> <p>.....</p> | <p>8) I never get tired of my partner's kisses. <b>e</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>I love that my partner shows a real interest in the things I like to do. <b>b</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>9) Receiving special gifts from my partner makes me happy. <b>c</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>I enjoy long trips with my partner. <b>b</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>10) I can't help but touch my partner when he/she is close by. <b>e</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>My partner sometimes runs errands for me, and I appreciate that. <b>d</b></p> <p>.....</p> |
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a:..... b:..... c:..... d:..... e:.....



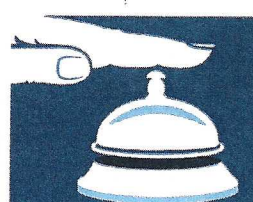
**a:**  
Words of Affirmation



**b:**  
Quality Time



**c:**  
Receiving Gifts



**d:**  
Acts of Service



**e:**  
Physical Touch