

How love languages can bring you closer

In any relationship, sometimes life, busyness and stress can get in the way of making our nearest and dearest feel appreciated. In my relationship with my husband we can become negative towards one another – usually because we don't feel heard or appreciated – and resentment begins to rise. It is helpful to pause and consider why the other person is behaving this way, and what I could do to make things better.

One way that I have found helpful to do this is to think about the other person and what their 'love language' is. Love languages are the idea of relationship expert Dr Gary Chapman, who suggests there are five ways in which people commonly express love: through words, gifts, actions, time or touch. There is a helpful online survey you can take (5lovelanguages.com/profile) which quickly tells what your love languages are in order of importance. It can be fun to do with your partner, friend, or child, as these apply to all relationships.

- If your love language is words, reassuring and encouraging words or compliments will communicate love powerfully to you.
- If your love language is gifts, you will tend to appreciate the thoughtfulness and effort behind a gift as well as the gift itself.
- If your love language is actions, you probably show love for someone through the things that you do. It may be tidying the house, making packed lunch for your partner, or a cup of tea in the morning. You will feel loved when someone does things for you.

- If your love language is time you will feel particularly loved when you get to spend uninterrupted quality time with a partner or friend.
- If your love language is touch, then holding hands, a hug or a back rub may be particularly important to you. You will feel good when your partner physically connects with you.

My husband's primary love languages are touch and words. He feels loved when we hold hands, hug and generally have some physical connection. Words are important to him too. My five-year-old daughter seems to appreciate time most of all: she often asks me to watch a film with her, read stories at bedtime, or watch her bounce on the trampoline.

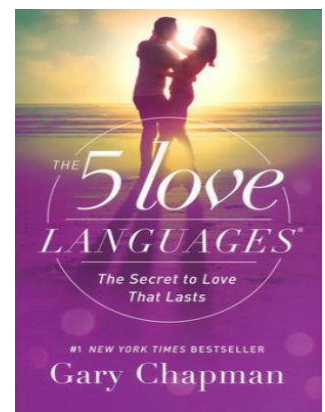
I was taken by surprise at the impact of the love languages one weekend when my in-laws came to stay. On this occasion, my father-in-law put up a shelf, a stair gate and a mirror in our new home. Reflecting on it afterwards I noticed that all of those things he had done for me are what Chapman calls 'actions' and they had made me feel loved, bringing a new warmth and appreciation for him!

At Christmas I noticed the impact of the love languages on a family member. She opened a gift from her sister which was a small wooden plaque with a note: "Forever my sister, always my friend". She was overwhelmed with tears and smiles! She was so touched by the words. Now I know words really matter to her I sometimes try to say something



thoughtful in texts or cards because I know that will mean something to her.

So you have nothing to lose but a lot to gain in finding out your primary love language, and those of the people you are close to. If you are going through a challenging time in a relationship or just realise you have been too busy to appreciate someone properly, then take the quiz, share the results, and look forward to thinking about ways you can make one another feel loved and appreciated!



Available to buy from the [Care for the Family shop](#).



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