

JAMES R. DAVID, Ph.D.

CORPORATE PEOPLEMAP™ TRAINING, PERSONAL & BUSINESS COACHING,
INDIVIDUAL & COUPLES PSYCHOTHERAPY

14220 BRADSHAW DRIVE, SILVER SPRING, MD 20905-6503 TELEPHONE (301)989-9155
james519@comcast.net www.askdrdavidnow.com

Do You Know Your Beloved's Love Language?

SAN FRANCISCO – “I believe there are thousands of couples who are loving each other, but not connecting,” said Dr. Gary Chapman to 1700 marriage educators at the Smart Marriages conference last week.

He told of a couple who came into his office with the woman complaining, “I feel he does not love me.”

Her husband responded exasperatedly, “I don't know what else to do. I get home before she does, so I start dinner. I wash the dishes. I mow the grass, wax the cars. I help her with the laundry.”

She nods, “He's right, he is a hard working man, we just don't ever talk.”

What's wrong with this couple? Chapman wrote a best-selling book years ago that is still fresh today, “The Five Love Languages.” Most people marry someone whose love language is totally different from their own, yet they assume their partner wants the kind of love he or she longs for.

This husband believes the best way to love his wife is with “**Acts of Service.**” However, what she longs for is “**Quality Time**” spent in eyeball to eyeball discussion. Neither seems to know what the other really wants, so both feel unloved.

Chapman asked the husband “What would be an ideal wife? What would she be like?” He replied “I dream about this. She would fix dinner for me. After dinner, she would wash the dishes. When a button is off my shirt, she would sew it.”

His stunned wife replied, “You told me you like to cook.” She turned to Chapman, adding, “If I knew the man's Love Language was Acts of Service, I would fix dinner. I love to fix dinner. I did not know fixing dinner was important to him.”

Now the husband is stunned “Why didn't someone tell me this? I could sit on the couch talking to her instead of doing this stuff.”

“Thus,” Chapman asserts, “we have to learn each other's language and we have to choose to speak that language. That's why “The Five Love Languages” is so popular. It has spread by word of mouth. People share it with their brother, and pass it around in the family, by using it, and it makes all the difference.”

What are the three other Love Languages?

1. **Words of Affirmation**, to affirm one's spouse. Chapman asked, "Ladies, if you are married has your husband said anything to you like, "you look nice in that!" "Husbands, has your wife said anything similar like "you look tough tonight!""

Many women rarely make such a comment. A common complaint of husbands is "I never hear any words of appreciation. If she says anything she is critical."

As Chapman put it succinctly, "Life and death are in the power of the tongue." Some wives have told him "I can't think of anything good to say about that man."

St. James wrote "No human being can tame the tongue – a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father and with it we curse men who are made in the image of God."

Chapman asserted he never met a man or woman who could not give positive words to a spouse. "A wife who gives a husband a few positive words makes something inside of him want to be better. If a negative word is given he will stay away from her. Words of affirmation motivate people to move to the next level.

2. **Gifts**. In every culture, a gift given is an expression of love. Yet how often do husbands and wives buy gifts for their beloved outside of birthdays, Christmas, Valentines Day or anniversaries?

It is all too rare, which is particularly painful for those spouses for whom a gift is the most cherished yardstick of love. How important are gifts to your loved one?

3. **Physical Touch**: "Babies know love in being physically touched. Holding hands, kissing, embracing the sexual part of a relationship is important," Chapman said. He saw a young couple in an airport, where the woman started rubbing his neck "Every one of you ladies did this when you were dating. The physical touch is a powerful, emotional communicator.

Chapman said that of the five Love Languages, each of us has a primary one that speaks more deeply to us. "Two are about equal for me. I am bilingual. Most of us have a primary and secondary language. Almost never do a husband and wife have the same language."

What is your beloved's love language? Do you speak it?

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