The Five Love Languages

How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate

GARY CHAPMAN

Learning Activities & Leader Guide

Written by Amy Summers

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MARRIED MORE THAN 35 YEARS to Karolyn, Dr. Gary Chapman is the man to turn to for help in improving or healing our most important relationships. His own life experiences, plus over 30 years of pastoring and marriage counseling, led him to publish his first book in the Love Language series, *The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate*. Millions of readers credit this continual best-seller with saving their marriages by showing them simple and practical ways to communicate their love to their partner.

Since the success of his first book, Dr. Chapman has expanded his Five Love Languages series to specifically reach out to teens, singles, men, and children (coauthored with Dr. Ross Campbell).

He is the author of numerous other books, including *Five Signs of a Loving Family, The Four Seasons of Marriage, Anger: Handling a Powerful Emotion in a Healthy Way, The Five Languages of Apology, and Hope for the Separated*. Dr. Chapman travels the world presenting seminars, and his nationally syndicated radio program airs on over 100 stations.

Dr. Chapman also serves as senior associate pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He and his wife have two grown children and currently live in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

**Amy Summers** wrote the learning activities and leader guide for this study. Amy’s primary career is chauffeur and social secretary for her children Aaron, Rachel, and Philip. She is also an experienced writer and Sunday School leader. In addition to her parenting and writing responsibilities, Amy works part-time as a writing tutor at the local elementary school. She is a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. She and her husband, Stephen, raise their children in Arden, North Carolina.
WELCOME TO THE FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES! Before you begin your study, there are a couple of things I would like to point out. First of all, this book is designed for individual study in preparation for a small-group meeting each week. You will benefit most from the material if you study a portion each day rather than trying to complete all the material for the week at one sitting. This will give you more time to concentrate on the message and what it has to say to you. The personal learning activities are designed to help you apply to your life what you are learning. Please don’t skip over these activities. They will also prepare you for your small-group session where you will be asked to share some of your responses.

Consider the following suggestions to make your study more meaningful:

- Release your mind and heart. Be willing to step out of your comfort zone as you learn how to best express your love for your spouse.
- Pray sincerely both alone and with others that you will be open to how to best love your spouse through his or her love language.
- Keep a journal of things you learn throughout your study. Your memory will not always recall these things, but your journal will!
- Share freely with others what you are learning. Listen as others share their experiences as well. You can learn valuable things from each other.

Dr. Chapman said, “I have not written this book as an academic treatise to be stored in the libraries of colleges and universities. I have written not to those who are studying marriage but to those who are married, to those who have experienced the ‘in love’ euphoria. I have written to those who entered marriage with lofty dreams of making each other supremely happy but in the reality of day-to-day life are in danger of losing that dream entirely. It is my hope that thousands of those couples will not only rediscover their dream but will see the path to making their dreams come true.”

\(^1\)The content for this workbook comes from The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman, Moody Press, Chicago, IL, ©1992.
“Love is something you do for someone else, not something you do for yourself.”
Learning to Speak Love

________________ is the most important word in the English language.

________________ is the most confusing word in the English language.

Inside every child is an _____________________________.

________________ also have a love tank.

The Five Love Languages

1. _____________________________
2. _____________________________
3. _____________________________
4. _____________________________
5. _____________________________

Each of us has a _____________ love language.

By nature, we speak _____________ love language.

We have to _____________ how to speak the _______________________ love language.

When the act doesn’t come _______________, it’s a greater _______________ of love.

Love is something you do for ___________________, not something you do for yourself.

Discovering a Child’s Love Language

1. Observe their _______________.
2. Notice what they _______________ of you most often.
3. Observe them as they _______________ with other children.
WHAT HAPPENS TO LOVE AFTER THE WEDDING? The desire for romantic love in marriage is deeply rooted in our psychological makeup. Why is it that so few couples seem to have found the secret to keeping love alive after the wedding? The answer to this question is the purpose of this study.

The problem is that we have overlooked one fundamental truth: People speak different love languages. In the area of linguistics, there are major language groups. Most of us grow up learning the language of our parents and siblings, which becomes our primary, or native, tongue. Later we may learn additional languages but usually with much more effort. These become our secondary languages. We speak, understand, and feel most comfortable speaking our native language. If we speak only our primary language and encounter someone else who speaks only his or her primary language, which is different from ours, our communication will be limited. We can communicate, but it is awkward. If we are to communicate effectively across cultural lines, we must learn the language of those with whom we wish to communicate.

In the area of love, it is similar. Your emotional love language and the language of your spouse may be as different as Chinese from English. No matter how hard you try to express love in English, if your spouse understands only Chinese, you will never understand how to love each other. You must be willing to learn your spouse’s primary love language if you are to be an effective communicator of love.

When it comes to expressing love to one another, I speak English and my spouse speaks:

☐ English—We understand each other’s expressions of love.

☐ Spanish—I don’t fully understand my spouse, but I can pick up a few love-phrases here and there.

☐ Chinese—My spouse is trying to tell me something, but I have no idea what he or she is saying.

☐ Martian—My spouse and I are on completely different planets.

My conclusion after 30 years of marriage counseling is that there are basically 5 emotional love languages—5 ways people speak and understand emotional love. In the field of linguistics, a language may have numerous dialects or variations. Similarly, within the five basic emotional love languages, there are many dialects.
The number of ways to express love within a love language is limited only by one’s imagination. The important thing is to speak the love language of your spouse.

Seldom do a husband and wife have the same primary emotional love language. We tend to speak our primary love language, and we become confused when our spouses don’t understand what we are communicating. We are expressing our love, but the message does not come through because we are speaking what, to them, is a foreign language. Therein lies the fundamental problem, and it is the purpose of this study to offer a solution.

Once we identify and learn to speak our spouse’s primary love language, we will have discovered the key to a long-lasting, loving marriage. Love need not evaporate after the wedding, but in order to keep it alive most of us will have to put forth the effort to learn a secondary love language. We cannot rely on our native tongue if our spouses don’t understand it. If we want them to feel the love we are trying to communicate, we must express it in their primary love language.

Keeping the Love Tank Full

Psychologists have concluded that the need to feel loved is a primary human emotional need. Child psychologists affirm that every child has certain basic emotional needs that must be met if he is to be emotionally stable. Among those emotional needs, none is more basic than the need for love and affection, the need to sense that he or she belongs and is wanted. With an adequate supply of affection, the child will likely develop into a responsible adult. Without that love, he or she will be emotionally and socially retarded.

Dr. Ross Campbell, a psychiatrist who specializes in the treatment of children and adolescents says, “Inside every child is an ‘emotional tank’ waiting to be filled with love. When a child really feels loved, he will develop normally but when the love tank is empty, the child will misbehave. Much of the misbehavior of children is motivated by the cravings of an empty ‘love tank.’”

The emotional need for love is not simply a childhood phenomenon. That need follows us into adulthood and into marriage. We needed love before we “fell in love,” and we will need it as long as we live. The purpose of this study is to focus on the kind of love that is essential to our emotional health.
Could it be that deep inside hurting couples exists an invisible “emotional love tank” with its gauge on empty? Could the misbehavior, withdrawal, harsh words, and critical spirit occur because of that empty tank? If we could find a way to fill it, could the marriage be reborn? With a full tank would couples be able to create an emotional climate where it is possible to discuss differences and resolve conflicts? Could that tank be the key that makes marriage work?

I am convinced that keeping the emotional love tank full is as important to a marriage as maintaining the proper oil level is to an automobile. Running your marriage on an empty love tank may cost you even more than trying to drive your car without oil. What you are about to read has the potential of saving thousands of marriages and can even enhance the emotional climate of a good marriage. Whatever the quality of your marriage now, it can always be better.

Below are two love tanks. Draw a needle on your love tank to signify how much your craving for love is being fulfilled by your spouse. Draw a needle on your spouse’s love tank to signify how well you think you are fulfilling his or her need to be loved.

Compare your responses with your spouse’s responses. Ask God to use this study to help you and your spouse fill each others’ love tanks to full and overflowing!
Learning the Five Love Languages

In weeks 2-6 we will look in depth at the five love languages. Here I will simply provide a brief introduction to each.

Words of Affirmation
Mark Twain once said, “I can live for two months on a good compliment.” Verbal appreciation speaks powerfully to persons whose primary love language is words of affirmation. Simple statements such as, “You look great in that suit.” or “You must be the best baker in the world! I love your oatmeal cookies.” are sometimes all a person needs to hear to feel loved. Another way to communicate through words of affirmation is to offer encouragement.

Quality Time
Quality time is more than mere proximity. It’s about focusing all your energy on your mate. A husband watching sports while talking to his wife is not spending quality time with her. Unless all of your attention is focused on your mate, even an intimate dinner for two can come and go without a minute of quality time being shared.

Quality conversation is very important to a healthy relationship. It involves sharing experiences, thoughts, feelings and desires in a friendly, uninterrupted context. Quality activities are also a very important part of quality time. Many mates feel most loved when they spend physical time together, doing activities they love to do.

Receiving Gifts
Some individuals respond well to visual symbols of love. If you speak this love language, you are more likely to treasure any gift as an expression of love and devotion. People who speak this love language often feel that a lack of gifts represents a lack of love from their mate. Luckily, this love language is one of the easiest to learn.

These gifts need not come every day or even every week. They don’t even need to cost a lot of money. Free, frequent, expensive, or rare, if your mate relates to the language of receiving gifts, any visible sign of your love will leave your spouse feeling happy and secure in your relationship.
Acts of Service
Sometimes doing simple chores around the house can be an undeniable expression of love. Even simple things like laundry and taking out the trash require some form of planning, time, effort, and energy. Just as Jesus demonstrated when He washed the feet of His disciples, doing humble chores can be a very powerful expression of love and devotion to your mate.

Even when couples help each other around the house, they may still fight because they are unknowingly communicating with each other in two different dialects. It is important to learn your mate’s dialect and to work hard to understand what acts of service will show your love.

Physical Touch
Many mates feel the most loved when they receive physical contact from their partner. For a mate who speaks this love language loudly, physical touch can make or break the relationship.

Sexual intercourse makes many mates feel secure and loved in a marriage. However, it is only one dialect of physical touch. It is important to learn how your mate speaks the physical touch language. Take the time to learn the touches your mate likes. They can be big acts, such as back massages or lovemaking, or little acts such as touches on the cheek or a hand on the shoulder. It’s important to learn how your mate responds to touch. That is how you will make the most of this love language.

Discovering Your Primary Love Language

Discovering the primary love language of your spouse is essential if you are to keep his or her emotional love tank full. But first you need to discover your own love language. Having heard the five emotional love languages, some individuals will know instantaneously their own primary love language and that of their spouse. For others, it will not be that easy. Several methods can be used to help determine your love language as well as the love language of your spouse.
Ask Key Questions

What Makes Me Feel Most Loved By My Spouse?
What do you desire above all else? If the answer does not leap to your mind immediately, perhaps it will help to look at the negative use of love languages. What does your spouse do or say or fail to do or say that hurts you deeply? If your deepest pain is the critical, judgmental words of your spouse, then perhaps your love language is words of affirmation. If your primary love language is used negatively by your spouse—that is, he does the opposite—it will hurt you more deeply because not only is he neglecting to speak your primary love language, he is actually using that language as a knife to your heart.

What Have I Most Often Requested of My Spouse?
Whatever you have most requested is probably in keeping with your primary love language. Those requests may have been interpreted by your spouse as nagging. They have been, in fact, your efforts to secure emotional love from your spouse.

How Do I Express Love to My Spouse?
Chances are what you are doing for her is what you wish she would do for you. If you are constantly doing acts of service for your spouse, perhaps (although not always) that is your love language. If words of affirmation speak love to you, chances are you will use them in speaking love to your spouse.

   But remember, that approach is only a possible clue to your love language; it is not an absolute indicator. For example, the husband who learned from his father to express love to his wife by giving her nice gifts expresses his love to his wife by doing what his father did, yet receiving gifts is not his primary love language. He is simply doing what he was trained to do by his father.

After reviewing the five love languages and considering the three key questions, write below what you think is:

your primary love language _____________________________________

your spouse’s primary love language ____________________________