

The Five Love Languages Summary

By Gary Chapman

Falling in love is easy. But staying in love: that's the hard part.

The Five Love Languages introduces different ways that we express and relate to love. We may lean towards Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Receiving Gifts, Quality Time, or Physical Touch. Understanding these love languages helps to identify needs and creates deeper and longer-lasting connections.

Author Dr. Gary Chapman is a priest, anthropologist, and relationship expert. He has dedicated his life's work to exploring the simple yet very complex four-letter word. Love. Giving and receiving love is one thing that makes us human, but the way we express and react to love, tends to get lost in translation.

This summary briefly looks at *The Five Love Languages*, and provides simple yet profound insights that can help us grow closer to the people we love. Chapman suggests that learning one another's love language is the key to building long-lasting relationships.

When it Comes to Love, We all Speak Different Languages

Keeping love alive is a serious business. When it's in jeopardy, we go to therapy, couples' counseling, or maybe even turn to the internet for advice on, "how to rekindle the spark." The problem is that it's difficult to

resolve issues when partners don't understand each other. So Chapman suggests going back to the basics. This approach means looking at language, which forms the basis of connection.

We all grow up speaking a primary language. Later on in life, we may learn a new language, which can take an enormous effort. However, as with all things, practice makes perfect, and the more you speak a particular language, the easier it becomes.

The difficulty arises when we speak a specific language and encounter someone who speaks another. Communication will be limited, so to understand each other, we may try to point, grunt, draw, or even act out our ideas. So, communication can occur, but it'll likely appear awkward and unnatural. Ultimately, for effective communication, we need to learn each other's language.

Love is no different. Your own emotional love language and your partner's language, may be as different as Chinese is from English. And the bottom line is, that if we wish to have reciprocated and loving relationships, then we need to learn our partner's love language. The trouble is that the notion of love is a linguistic and semantic minefield. It can be used to describe anything from our favorite foods, to our favorite activities, to the people who we love most in the world.

The Word Love is Used in a Thousand Different Ways

What are some of the ways that you express the love that you feel?

Often when we try to put words into action, it doesn't always translate how we intended it to. And what may feel like loving behavior for one person, may not appear to be loving for another. How often do you hear parents who overindulge their children, referring to this behavior in terms of love? A family therapist might argue that this is just irresponsible parenting. Furthermore, love may also be used to justify and deny a partner's problematic behavior, such as excessive drinking for example. Outsiders may see this act of turning a blind eye, not as love, but as enabling an unhealthy behavior.

We can't eliminate the confusing nuances of love, but we can learn how to understand the different kinds of love. These different kinds of love are essential to us, and to those around us. Emotional wellbeing is linked to how we're loved, and the psychiatrist Ross Campbell argues that, children have an emotional tank that needs to be filled with love, and this need is something that follows us into adulthood.

Love is a Universal Human Need

On a scale of 0–10, how full is your love tank? What made you think of that number?

Having a full love tank, helps us to feel intimately connected, and safe enough to discuss differences and resolve conflicts. A full love tank also requires us to connect more deeply with our real needs, and those of our partner. And the problem is, many of us have unrealistic expectations of love, because of how it has been mythologized. Falling in love, and being truly loved, are two very different concepts.

The "Honeymoon Period" Doesn't Last Forever

Romantic love, and those tingly warm feelings that you experience in the early part of a relationship, are unsustainable, and that's okay. Society feeds us faulty information when it comes to how love should feel. We tell ourselves that if we're really in love, then this feeling will last forever. However, the longevity of the "in-love" experience is completely fictional, and unsustainable. Psychologist Dr. Dorothy Tennov, has studied the "in-love" phenomenon extensively. She concludes that the average lifespan of a romantic obsession is two years. Eventually, she says, we descend from the clouds and plant our feet firmly on earth again. Our eyes are opened, and we see the warts of the other person. It's at this stage that interactions might start to change from, 'where should we have dinner tonight?' to 'why didn't you get the milk?'

It's at this point that we may question why we said "yes" to the proposal of marriage. We wonder if we should resign ourselves to this reality, or jump ship and try again. But keep in mind that the divorce rate for second marriages is higher than that of first marriages. And, what's more, the divorce rate for third marriages is higher still. This means that the chances of a happier marriage the second or third time around, diminishes significantly.

It's not all doom and gloom though, and long-lasting love can be cultivated. The key is to honor your own emotional needs, and do the same for your partners. Learning the five love languages can help with this.

The Five Love Languages: words of affirmation,

quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service, and physical touch

While each of the languages is important, most of us tend to have one primary type of love language.

Do you like hearing compliments or meaningful affirmations, and are you the type of person who gets very upset by insults?

If you answered 'yes,' then words of affirmation is probably your love language. If this sounds like something your partner would say yes to, then you need to make sure that you give them genuine compliments and tell them you appreciate them often.

Are you the type of person who values full and undivided attention above all else?

If so, then quality time is your primary love language. One-on-one time with zero distractions is what makes this type of person feel most loved. Canceled or postponed dates, and failure to listen, are especially harmful to people who value the importance of quality time. So if this is your partner's love language, then learn to listen deeply, and make an effort to give them your undivided attention as often as you can. Check-in with them and see what they would like to do with you. Don't just assume what they'd like, ask them, and then schedule a time for this.

How do you feel about the giving and receiving of gifts and celebrating birthdays and special occasions?

Giving and receiving gifts is an act of love that's often misunderstood. For most people who have the receiving of gifts as their primary language, what's important, isn't the monetary value or cost involved, but rather the thought and effort that has gone into the gift. Failure to acknowledge the importance of birthdays, or forgetting an anniversary can be soul-crushing for this type of person. Furthermore, gifts that lack meaning or thought may make someone who shows love through gifts feel unimportant or unloved.

The fourth love language, is acts of service. This love language could look like taking out the trash, doing laundry, paying bills, doing the dishes, or fetching the kids from school. Any acts that ease the burden of responsibilities of everyday life, characterize this kind of love. People who value acts of service, appreciate the small things, and breaking commitments, shirking responsibility, or laziness, can make this type of person feel taken for granted and undervalued.

Finally, there's physical touch. Physical touch isn't just about sex. It's hugs, cuddling, holding hands, and gentle gestures. If these things are most important to you; then physical touch is probably your love language. Furthermore, if your partners' physical presence is comforting and necessary, this is a good indicator that you're someone who needs touch to feel valued and loved. Any type of physical neglect would hurt this person the most.

What's Your Dominant Love Language?

While all of the love languages are important, which one resonates most profoundly with you?

Understanding how you try to show love, or what you value and appreciate most from your partner, may help you to determine your love language. Alternatively, you could try to think about some of the ways you've been made to feel loved in the past. The secret is, that once you know your love language, then you'll be able to communicate with your partner, and find out what makes them feel valued and cared for. Maybe they have the same love language as you, or maybe you need to learn how to speak their language?

To dive into more depth on this topic, you could take the quiz on Dr. Chapman's website, [five love languages dot com](http://five-love-languages.com).

In Conclusion

Love manifests in a number of ways, and Dr. Chapman argues that, 'true love cannot begin until the "in-love" experience has run its course.' Healthy relationships occur when both partners feel that their needs are being met. Ultimately, true love is an ongoing choice that needs to be made to make your partner feel secure, loved, and confident. So, learn the love language that your partner speaks, listen to them, and acknowledge what they value most. Because remember, at the heart of any relationship, is the desire to give love, and to be loved in return.