**Understanding the Five Love Languages**

Posted on July 1, 2010 by [Theresa Fung](http://www.healthyplace.com/blogs/theunlockedlife/2010/06/about-theresa-fung-author-of-the-unlocked-)

He thinks he’s showing you love by buying you flowers. You think flowers are better left in the garden and just want him to help you fix the kitchen sink. In love language terms, he may as well be speaking Swahili to you. While his efforts at romance are admirable, he’s wasting his money on Gifts while he really should be engaging in Acts of Service.

One of the most useful wedding presents I received is the book [*The Five Love Languages*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0802473156/healthyplacecom) by Gary Chapman. While the book’s Christian overtones may not be everyone’s cup of tea, the book is filled with real examples of couples with problems and practical advice on how to make sure you and your partner are communicating effectively.

**The five languages of love are:**

1. **Quality Time** – giving your undivided attention, and spending some “real” quality time together.
2. **Words of Affirmation** – using words and compliments to express love.
3. **Gifts** – receiving visual symbols of affection with thoughtful and meaningful messages (not to be confused with the gold-digger).
4. **Acts of Service** – expressing love by doing things for your spouse such as household chores.
5. **Physical Touch** – hugs, kisses, holding hands, and of course sex.



The book examines how two people who genuinely love one another can have a rocky relationship if they are not speaking their spouse’s primary love language. Our upbringings play a huge role in shaping our main love language. Couples often have different love languages, or ways of feeling loved, and may need to learn a love language that is foreign to them in order to connect with their partner.

I grew up in a household where expressing affection through words happened as frequently as a solar eclipse; in our house, you *did* things (Acts of Service) to show you cared. As luck would have it, my husband’s primary love language is Words of Affirmation. So, I have to work on paying him more compliments and he has to put away the dishes, take out the garbage, mow the lawn, and pretty much anything else I ask of him. Sorry, hon.

*Determining Your Spouse’s Love Language*

For some, your partner’s primary love language may be glaringly obvious, and for others you may need to dig a bit deeper. If you are unsure of your spouse’s primary love language, try paying attention to the things he/she asks of you and make a list—you might uncover some interesting patterns. Or better yet, just ask your partner what makes him/her feel most loved.

Check out Gary Chapman’s website [The 5 Love Languages](http://www.5lovelanguages.com/) for more helpful resources such as quizzes on how to determine your own love language and that of your partner.

*Speaking Your Spouse’s Love Language*

If your partner’s primary love language is:

**Quality Time** – set aside time each day (even 20 minutes) where you can be alone without distractions. **Words of Affirmation** – try to give your spouse one compliment a day, and write a nice letter. **Gifts** – try making a gift; nothing says “I love you” more than something handmade (no matter how crappy it turns out). **Acts of Service** – make a list of the things your spouse has asked of you and do them without being told. **Physical Touch** – try holding hands and giving massages.