

The Practice of Marriage (Learning Your Spouse's Love Language—Part 2)

Key Thought: Oneness grows only through the consistent practice of marital love by both spouses.

(Corollary: Isolation develops through the inconsistent practice of marital love by one or both spouses.)

Introduction: The ability to speak the same language is critically important for people (i.e. person to person, groups, nations, etc.) understanding and working together cooperatively (see Genesis 11:6—Tower of Babel).

- **Principle:** The development of oneness between a couple is greatly facilitated by the ability to “speak” one another’s emotional love language.
- **Definition:** ‘Love language’—An individual’s preferred style, pattern, method, or manner of giving and receiving love.

Basic Love Language Concepts:

1. Everyone has a love language.
2. People speak different love languages.
3. People speak the same love language but in different “dialects”.
4. Most have a preferred language (or two) in which they like to give and receive love.
5. Most are not aware that their spouses’ love language is usually different from their own.
6. Most give love in the way they want to receive it. As a result, their expression of love is sometimes not fully appreciated by the receiving spouse.
7. To penetrate your mate’s soul you must learn to speak his/her love language.

Biblical reminder: More than 20 times in the New Testament we are instructed to give love (i.e. speak a love language). It is a *command*, not a *demand* that we are to make. Nowhere in Scripture is love referred to as a *right* but a *responsibility*. The Holy Spirit must create the fruit of self-sacrificing love—the desire to give ourselves away to another (see Gal. 5:22).

The Five Love Languages:

1. Gifts

“Every man is a friend to one who gives gifts.” (Prov. 19:6)

2. Service

“Having loved His own who were in the world, He now showed them the full extent of His love...so He got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him.” (John 13:1,4,5)

3. Time

“Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, ‘I’ll work seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel.’ ...So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.” (Gen. 29:18,20)

4. Touch

“How beautiful you are and how pleasing, O love, with your delights! Your stature is like that of the palm, and your breasts like clusters of fruit. I said, ‘I will climb the palm tree; I will take hold of its fruit.’ May your breasts be like clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples, and your mouth like the best wine.” (Song of Songs 7:6-9)

5. Words

“Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.” (Prov. 16:24)

- **Question:** Do you know what your mate’s love language is? (It may be a combination of different languages). **Are you “speaking” it on a consistent basis?**
- **Helps:** If you don’t know your mate’s love language, stop guessing and ask! Ask for input and observe what he/she values; discover the secret wishes of your spouse’s heart.

□ Gifts

1. Need not always be expensive.
2. Give the kind of gift that she/he truly desires (e.g. Many men consider romantic gifts such as ceramics, cards, love notes, flowers, small surprises, etc. as “trinkets”, “silly”, or a waste of money. She sees them as a demonstration of his tender feelings toward her. He will typically give a “practical” present. Be careful! *You may be speaking the “right” language but a different dialect*).
3. Gifts are for more than special occasions (i.e. birthdays, anniversaries, etc.). They should be regular and creative.

□ Service

1. Service requires a servant’s heart (i.e. humility, sacrifice, unselfishness, etc.)
2. A servant serves by meeting real needs.
3. A servant serves with a gracious attitude (i.e. not grudgingly).

- Taking care of the kids while she shops, relaxes, takes a leisurely bath, etc.
- Doing the dishes while she watches television.
- Running errands to save her time.
- Cooking dinner for her and the children
- Completing the “fix-it” jobs around the house
- Run a load of clothes, fold and put them up.
- Bringing him a cup of coffee in bed.
- Cooking regularly and creatively.
- Help the kids get their baths and in bed.
- Walk and/or feed the dog

□ **Time**

1. The emphasis is on quantity and quality.
2. Time must be set aside or “carved-out” for one another due to the “tyranny of the urgent.”
3. Men and women may share the same language of time, yet speak different dialects; (Men—a shared activity; Women—meaningful conversation. He focuses on doing, she focuses on feelings.)

□ **Touch**

1. Some kinds of touching feel wonderful, others are irritating. Understanding your spouses’ preferences is vital (i.e. hugs, kisses, holding hands, and sitting close are strictly private acts for some, more public for others.)
2. Men, in general, judge the happiness of their marriage by the frequency of intercourse. Women, in general, find romance and passion more satisfying than the physical act itself.

□ **Words**

1. Personal words of love, encouragement, and kindness can penetrate our mate’s soul with life-changing, extraordinary power.
2. The most powerful words one spouse can say to another are, “I love you” and “I need you”.
3. The right word at the right time is a gift beyond monetary value.

Application: Discover the emotional love language of your partner and start speaking it on a consistent basis. You’ll love it—so will they!

