

Keep It Simple, Cupid

Deuteronomy 6:5 (KJV) And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

5 Love Languages

Recently my wife was reading a book by Gary Chapman called, “The 5 Love Languages.” In it, he talks about 5 different ways that he has found that people express love to another person.

The 5 ways that he identifies are:

Receiving Gifts

Words of Affirmation

Quality Time

Physical Touch

Acts of Service

In his book, he says that every person has an emotional “gas tank.” Whenever you give someone your affection in the love language that they understand, then you are filling their “emotional gas tank.” I prefer the analogy of an emotional “bank account” because while a gas tank only runs until it is empty, a bank account can be overdrawn. I think the same is true of our emotional state; when someone shows that they love us, our emotional bank account with that person gets a deposit. When we wrong someone, we make a withdrawal from our emotional bank account. That person then must examine your balance. Sometimes you make a small withdrawal, but there is plenty of love in your account balance, so you are fine. Like when you accidentally order your wife regular Coke instead of Diet Coke. It’s a small mistake and you will pay for it, but if her emotional bank account is full, your relationship will survive.

Sometimes you mess up royally and make a withdrawal so big that you wind up being overdrawn on your account. When that happens, you may be making deposits for quite a while before you even get back to zero again. Furthermore, you may find that once you are overdrawn, even the small mistakes cause big problems. That’s because whenever you make that withdrawal, your spouse gets a chance to re-examine the balance on your account. If she opens that account

and remembers that you are already overdrawn, then you get the wrath based on your outstanding balance, not the amount of your last withdrawal.

The other fact to remember is that, just like a bank, your significant other may grow tired of your account being overdrawn and simply close your account permanently. When that happens, you will not be allowed to make any more deposits into your emotional bank account.

The Unexpressed Language

A few months ago, my daughter had a school project where they gave her a robot baby to take home for a week. The baby was programmed to cry when it was time to feed, time to change its diaper, when it needed burping, and other things. My daughter was in class when they explained all the things that the robot baby might need or want and how to care for it.

One Friday night was the regular youth event at church so she left the robot baby with my wife and I. Keep in mind that I had two siblings who were 8 and 11 years younger than I was, so I learned how to change a diaper and warm a bottle at an early age. Furthermore, we had 2 adopted babies of our own and they seemed to survive. And yet when we got this robot baby, that thing cried all evening. We tried changing the diaper, feeding it, burping it... it seemed that no matter what we did, this robot baby was not happy. When my daughter took the robot baby back to school and they plugged it into the computer for a grade, the lowest grade she got was during the time that my wife and I were watching it.

Your spouse is just like that robot baby. (Maybe I should explain that.) That baby had 5-6 things that it needed to be happy, but it only had 1 way of expressing dissatisfaction: to cry. Likewise, if your emotional bank account starts to get below a certain balance, your spouse is going to start to complain. But here is the thing: your husband is not going to come to you and say, "Wife I feel that if you love me you will offer me a minimum of 15 encouraging words per day more than you do currently." Your wife isn't going to say, "Husband, I must have your undivided attention for at least 12 minutes and 34 seconds before 8:00 PM this evening."

What are you going to hear instead?

“Why do you watch football all the time?”

“Why isn’t this house clean? You sit around here all day while I am at work and you can’t dust a little?”

Your spouse is like that robot baby; they are telling you that something is wrong, but they may not be able to articulate it in a way that is obvious at first.

Fortunately, if you listen closely, you will probably find that the person you care about is probably expressing their frustration in one of the 5 way identified by Gary Chapman. They will not tell you what they need; they will tell you what you’re doing. If you listen closely, you will probably find that your spouse will tell you his or her love language.

Making Deposits

So how do you make these deposits into your emotional bank account? Per Dr. Chapman, each person has one (and usually only one) way that they recognize love from another person. Just like a bank may accept cash, but not Beanie Babies, so it is with your spouse and his/her emotional bank account. So, while there are 5 entries in the list of love languages, you only need to learn 1 of them. So, to “keep it simple, cupid” all you need to learn is your significant other’s one and only love language to start going to the bank.

Most people make the mistake of trying to express their love for someone else in the language that they receive love themselves. The problem is when you express your love in a way that the other person is not able to receive it, then the recipient doesn’t see it as love. They may like the gesture, but it’s not love.

Receiving Gifts

Take the first item on the list: receiving gifts. I tend to be someone who gives gifts. They don’t have to be big gifts, but I like to show that I was thinking of you. I have two women in my life who have Receiving Gifts as their love language: my daughter and my mother-in-law. For my daughter, I can buy her a refrigerator magnet from Kansas City and she will see that as a sign that I love her. At

Thanksgiving, I brought my mother-in-law some flowers as a centerpiece for the table. She loved those and got teary-eyed.

But my wife is not someone who receives gifts and sees them as love. She likes it when I bring her coffee, because she likes coffee, but she doesn't see it as love. A few years ago, my company sent me to Europe for a few weeks. I took my wife with me. We were sitting in the middle of Paris on the Champs Elysees. The city was decorated with lights for Christmas and we were sitting on a park bench when I pulled out a new anniversary ring for my wife. I loved her a lot, so I spent a fortune. I got a ring with a huge 2.5 carat diamond. I handed her a gift in the most romantic city on the planet to show her that I loved her.

The next day, she gave it back to me and told me to return it to the store. While she appreciated the gesture, it wasn't love to her. Her love language is not one of receiving gifts. When I try to express my love by giving her a gift, she sees it as a gift, but not as love.

How many ladies have ever received flowers from your husband? How many of you, when you received those flowers, your first thought was, "How much money did you waste on these?" If so, you are someone who does not have Receiving Gifts as your love language. You may think the flowers are pretty or smell nice, but they are not love.

If you have a spouse that has Receiving Gifts as his or her love language, then all you need to do to show them that you love them is to give gifts. "Keep it simple, Cupid." You don't need to waste your time with complicated analyses; speak to your significant other in the language that they understand.

Also, remember that you don't need to bring a million dollars with you every time you go to the bank; the bank will accept deposits of one dollar as well. In the same way, the love of your life doesn't need a huge gift every day. Flowers, refrigerator magnets, anything that shows you were thinking of them and not yourself will be evidence of the love you already have.

Likewise, our other husband, Jesus, has a love language. (You didn't think I was going to let you get away without a spiritual application, did you?) While most of us probably only have a single love language that we understand, the Lord speaks

all of them. He has a favorite (which I will get into next week), but he understands all of them. If you speak any of the 5 love languages to your Spiritual Husband, he will understand it and receive it. So, if you are someone who expresses your love by giving gifts, he can receive those gifts and understands that it is your way of expressing love.

Deuteronomy 6:5 (KJV) And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

That word “strength” sometimes has the context of financial strength. So, you should worship the Lord with all your strength, but the strength does not have to be physical strength. Sometimes your greatest strength can be financial. So, you might be someone who prefers to express your love for the Lord by giving gifts. If you are, the Lord speaks that language. He understands that some people give because they are selfish and want to receive something. Some people give because they want to be seen by others as givers. But there are some who give willingly because it is our love language. We love the Lord and we express that love by giving of ourselves; our time or our money. We don’t expect something back except recognition of our gift as love. God understands the love language of Receiving Gifts.

Words of Affirmation

Words of Affirmation love language means to say something positive to someone else. It can be a compliment, or just a sincere “thank you.” They are words that give someone encouragement and let them know that you are aware of their activities and you approve of their activities.

Proverbs 18:21 (KJV) Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

Some people need to hear that they are appreciated, especially men. Of all the love languages in this list, this is the one that applies to men more than women. People with this love language need to hear compliments and thank-you more than anything else. A good compliment can make a substantial deposit to their emotional bank account. As Solomon said, it is like fruit that they can eat. It sustains them.

Conversely, without words of affirmation those same people will starve. Their emotional bank account gets drained and may become overdrawn. What do starving people do? Did the survivors of the Nazi death camps run out and form a baseball team when they were liberated? No, they could barely move. Their bodies were weak and emaciated. They crunched down like turtles hiding in their shells. People who are physically starving pull inward and try to survive.

In the same way people who are emotionally starving pull inward emotionally as well. They put on a blank face or hide their real emotions behind something more socially acceptable. If they do lash out it is to say something like, "You are always so negative!" or "Why are you always putting me down?" Like the robot baby they are not telling you what they want; they are telling you what they have, but don't like.

How do you recognize the clowns at the circus? They are the ones wearing the makeup. They make you laugh by hiding who they are. In the same way, most comedians are very troubled people. The funny person you know and love is an act, its makeup that they put on so you don't see who they really are. Outside they are fun and happy, but inside they may be starving to death for some words of affirmation.

People with this love language will do almost anything to get a good compliment. They will get discouraged by a negative word and pull their emotions inside, but a positive word is like putting a starving person at the buffet table. They will go crazy and shove every compliment you can give them into their mouths, sometimes without even tasting it.

There was a meme I saw on Facebook that said, "I know the faucet in the bathroom is leaking. You don't need to remind me every year." People who have Words of Affirmation as their love language don't respond well to criticism; they find it discouraging. On the other hand, they respond great to compliments and will often take on more work to get them. So, if you want to get your husband to fix the bathroom faucet, tell him you much you love that he is so handy around the house.

Even more than trying to manipulate someone's behavior, if you love someone with this love language, you will express your love in the language that they

understand. Many women have never told their husbands that they are proud of them, yet it is the one thing that most men are starving to hear.

Keep It Simple, Cupid.

One person who expresses their love language this way is Pastor Paul. Have you ever noticed that when you are talking to Brother Paul that you are the most interesting person he has ever met? I once went to a barbecue with him. Someone brought up some wild turkey meat that they had hunted and cooked. Brother Paul took a bite and told this stranger, "This is the best thing here." I looked over to see if he got a better piece of meat than I did. But Paul wasn't being fake; that's how he is. The most interesting person he has ever met is the person he is talking to right now.

Bro Riffle, you have tomatoes in your garden? That's awesome. I have never seen tomatoes that juicy before.

You got a new car? That's awesome. I have never seen a car that nice.

Words of affirmation are how he expresses his love for us. It is not fake or forced; it is how he genuinely feels. He loves us and he expresses that love through his words.

The Lord also speaks the love language of Words of Affirmation.

Psalms 35:18 (KJV) I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.

Psalms 79:13 (KJV) So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.

Hebrews 13:15 (KJV) By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

So, if we love the Lord, we will sing praises to Him. That is, we will tell him how much we appreciate what he has done for us. We give thanks. We give praise. We tell him how proud we are to be called one of his children. We give words of

affirmation to the Lord and he recognizes those words as an expression of love towards him.

Next week I will continue this message on “Keep it Simple, Cupid.” In the meantime, listen to your loved ones. Listen to what they say they are missing. Try to find their love language. You already love them, but you only need to find the one thing to make them realize it.