

What is Your Love Language?

When caring for a newborn, it can seem like the baby's needs take up all of a couple's time and energy, leaving you both exhausted at the end of the day. It may seem hard to find any time to express your love and support for each other. So, what can you do to support your relationship? When time and energy are short, how can you convey your love to your partner?

In Gary Chapman's book, *The Five Love Languages*, he illustrates that we each express our love with certain 'languages', and there are certain 'languages' that we hear love in. If someone is saying "I love you" over and over, but using a different language than we naturally speak, it is hard to hear the love coming through.

Here's a quiz to help you both determine your love languages.

	Partner A	Partner B
1. Which of these things could your partner do to help you feel loved?		
a. Give me an hour-long massage.	_____	_____
b. Write a list telling me everything they love about me.	_____	_____
c. Buy me something I have admired in a store.	_____	_____
d. Clean the house while I take a nap.	_____	_____
e. Give up an evening's plans just to spend time with me.	_____	_____
2. If you had a really hard day, what would be the most helpful thing your partner could do?		
a. Curl up on the couch together, let me lay my head in his/her lap	_____	_____
b. Tell me that they love me, and know I'm doing the best I can.	_____	_____
c. Surprise me with a special treat to make up for the rough day.	_____	_____
d. Run errands for me, and make dinner, so I can rest for a while.	_____	_____
e. Spend time together just talking and relaxing and re-connecting.	_____	_____
3. You are late, and in a hurry. What could someone do quickly to express their love?		
a. A hug and a kiss	_____	_____
b. Tell me they love me, and think that I look great	_____	_____
c. Hand me a special snack to eat in the car.	_____	_____
d. Say that they'll take care of taking the trash out.	_____	_____
e. Say they look forward to our next chance to spend time together.	_____	_____
4. A friend has been out of work for a while, and is feeling really down. What do you do?		
a. Give him a hug, or put my hand on his arm while we talk.	_____	_____
b. Tell him how great he is, and what confidence I have in him.	_____	_____
c. Take him out for dinner at his favorite restaurant.	_____	_____
d. Spend a few hours helping him write job applications	_____	_____
e. Set aside time each week to spend together.	_____	_____
5. When you meet with a friend for lunch, she tells you, joyfully, that she is pregnant. Do you		
a. Give her a huge hug.	_____	_____
b. Say "I'm so excited for you, you'll be such a great mom!"	_____	_____
c. Offer to plan her baby shower.	_____	_____
d. Offer to help her complete some projects before the baby comes.	_____	_____
e. Spend a long lunch with her, just talking about babies.	_____	_____

Scoring

Questions 1 – 3 are about what love language(s) you are best able to *hear*, and most enjoy having spoken to you.

Questions 4 and 5 are about what language(s) you feel most comfortable *speaking* to your loved ones. These might be the same, but they're often different.

Here's what the answers indicate about your love language.

A = Physical Touch.

B = Words of Affirmation.

C = Gifts.

D = Acts of Service.

E = Quality Time.

Compare your answers to your partner's answers, or what the answers would be for other support people in your life. In a few lucky couples, each person happens to be most comfortable speaking the love language the other person most needs to hear.

For most of us, though, there are times when our languages are out of synch. It's important to learn what language our loved one(s) hears, so that we can try to speak in that language as much as possible. It's also good if they know what our primary speaking language is, so that if we "miss", at least they know we're trying!

For example, you may have a partner who thrives on words of affirmation, but if you come from a very reserved background, it may be very difficult to give effusive praise and have it sound genuine. You'll try to learn a new language, and they'll forgive you for your stumbles. You can learn to give verbal encouragement as often as possible, and they can learn to translate your quiet "you did a nice job" into the full cheerleader routine they'd love to hear.

Applying the Love Languages to Life as New Parents

Physical Touch: If this is your partner's language, try: stroking her hair, holding his hand, massage, hugging, kissing, rubbing his feet... Be in physical contact whenever possible. Spend time snuggling without baby when possible. (And, if you're not primarily a physical touch person, and are feeling overwhelmed by being in physical contact with the baby so much, encourage your partner to take some snuggle time with baby. They'll both be happy!)

Words of Affirmation: Encouragement and praise are vital to supporting your partner. Acknowledging all the hard work s/he is doing, and validating the way s/he is taking care of the baby and other day to day tasks is very helpful. S/he may be very sensitive to criticism, and may feel unsupported if you do not actively cheer him/her on.

Gifts: Surprise your partner with symbols of affection, and thoughtful little details. Bring home her favorite snack. Take pictures of the baby to share with him at the end of the day. Leave love notes around the house. Any little thing that is done especially for him/her will speak your love loud and clear.

Acts of Service: This partner wants active support with household responsibilities. Help with doing laundry, washing dishes, running errands, making a to-do list together and taking on tasks. Ask them which tasks most need to be done, and focus on those priorities.

Quality Time: This partner needs your Presence. They *do not* want you running errands on the way home from work, or spending time doing household tasks when you could be together. S/he wants someone by his/her side, supporting her just by being there and being attuned to her needs. Arrange for a babysitter and go out on a date!

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