

Translating the languages of love

How many languages do you speak? You might be surprised to know that everyone speaks at least two – their mother tongue and the language of love.

There are five different languages of love, according to writer Gary Chapman, who devoted a book to exploring the notion.

Don't make the mistake of thinking a love language has to be verbal – for some people it is, but there are four other languages used to express love. Problems arise when partners speak different love languages – a bit like giving a compliment in French and getting one back in Cantonese.

So what are these languages of love?

The first love language is **Words of Affirmation**. People who use this love language put into words what they love about their partners, using verbal credit and praise. They do this one on one, but also publicly, so the world can see that their partners are really valued by them.

These people make a point of saying what they like about a person, rather than what they don't like.

Of course, the Words of Affirmation language doesn't suit everyone. Some people speak the second language of love, which is the **Quality Time** language.

Practitioners of this one put other things aside and give undivided attention to their partner. They arrange time to do fun things together, rather than just sitting around or doing chores.

The Quality Time believers create a real sense of togetherness, which then follows through to conversations, because they give their full attention to what their partner is saying.

Love language no.3 is the one retailers adore, the **Language of Gifts**. But it mustn't be a cynical exercise in gift one-upsmanship. People who are good at this love language tend to buy things to cheer the other person up. They put an enormous amount of thought into buying the right gift.

It needn't be anything expensive, the value is in the recipient's happiness and the simple joy of giving.

The gift becomes a symbol of love. This love language can hit trouble when the gift recipient doesn't understand how significant the act of gift giving is, so the gift giver needs to ensure the partner understands this language of love, and the recipient needs to be sensitive to what's behind the gift.

The fourth love language is **Acts of Service**. The adherents of this language put thoughts and planning into exactly what might please their partner, and they have good antennae for picking up on a messy kitchen or overloaded washing basket, and do a lovely cleaning job as their way of saying "I love you".

The difference between a housework task being done as an expression of love rather than a necessary task is that it's done voluntarily and with love behind it, rather than resentment.

Again, there might need to be a little communication for partners to really understand that the Acts of Service love language is just as real as any other, but it can be a little harder to interpret if you haven't grown up with it.

The final Language of Love is **Physical Touch**. We're not talking sex here, but intimacy and romance. It's the hand holding, the arm around the shoulder, or stroking his or her face when you look at them, as well as the more common kissing and hugging.

People who use this language are trying to make the partner feel like the most special person in the world, and general succeeding.

So take a moment to think about your language of love, and whether your partner's love language is the same.

Understand how different people express love and affection, and life is full of romantic possibilities.

Survival tips

- **Couples often speak different language of love.**
- **If your partner's love language is different from yours, try to understand it and enjoy it.**