

Exploring Love Languages: The key to building and maintaining healthy relationships

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Abstract

Communication is the heart of who we are as human beings. It is just as necessary as food and shelter because communication allows us to develop a civilized society that can transmit valuable information and knowledge. The desire to be loved and nurtured is also a fundamental human need that can be expressed through language. Through a series of interviews, the paper explores five “love languages” developed by Dr Gary Chapman used to communicate emotional fulfillment. The paper challenges the idea that time is a key component to the development of the five love languages. The research demonstrates that over time individuals discover their love language and that of their partner. Time further serves as a learning period that allows couples to recognize the emotional desires of their partner. Time then becomes the impetus for consistent acts of love creating growth between couples as they express love their partner accepts. The five love languages speak to the basic fundamentals needed to communicate love.

Keywords: *Communication. Interpersonal Relationships. Marriage. Love. Language. Time. Emotional Love Tank. Emotional Fulfillment. Trial and Error. Learning. Understanding. Initiative Self Improvement. Discovery. Purpose. Growth. Experiences. Mature Love. Attitude. Strengths. Vulnerabilities. Consistency. Effort. Quality Time. Words of Affirmation. Receiving Gifts. Physical Touch. Acts of Service.*

Communication is a foundational value that allows humans to transmit, receive and exchange information verbally and through symbols and expressions. The role communication plays in our lives is often underestimated. The purpose of communication is for the sender to successfully get their message across to the recipient unambiguously. Good listening establishes accurate comprehension, productivity and can foster healthy relationships.

Interpersonal relationships build and develop as a result of great communication between two or more people. When two or more people can communicate effectively, they learn to understand one another on an intimate level forming a stronger deep connection. These types of relationships are seen between lovers, friends, siblings, co-workers, classmates, kinships, neighbors etc. The need to build love and great communication skills in interpersonal relationships is primary. If comprehension is not a key factor in a relationship, then the relationship is at risk due to miscommunication.

Language is a form of communication both spoken and written in a structured way. The functions of language include communication, expression of identity and emotional release. Dr. Gary Chapman, a well-known anthropologist with BA and MA degrees in anthropology, is a speaker, author and marriage counselor with a passion for people and a passion for helping them form lasting relationships through effective communication. In 1992, Dr. Chapman published a self-help book that introduced a new type of language called the five love languages. His self help book has become the *New York Times* #1 Bestseller, selling more than twelve million copies worldwide and has been translated in fifty different languages. In *The 5 love languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts*, Dr. Chapman recognizes five different ways people speak and understand emotional love. Each of the five ways that Chapman identifies has been proven to strengthen relationships all around the world as it identifies basic human needs and desires.

This theory addresses the importance of knowing and understanding how a partner wants to be loved. Discovering and understanding one's love language requires an individual to let go of expectations and assumptions. To successfully implement love language into interpersonal relationships, one must be transparent and willing to try new ways of communicating for the sake of a healthy and lasting relationship. The five love languages are Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Receiving Gifts, Acts of Service and Physical Touch. Each of these love languages are important as it tries to discover one's emotional needs. Each love language involves actions that one may request from their partner in order to feel emotionally loved and appreciated throughout an intimate relationship.

A person whose love language is Words of Affirmation thrives on kind, humbling and encouraging words from their partner. Receiving affirming words creates the possibility for expression, the element of choice, and inspiration through a soft voice and a loving tone. One whose love language is Quality Time values the undivided and focused attention of their partner while doing an activity they enjoy. The quality of conversation is important to them as they are given the ability to speak and be listened to in a sympathetic dialogue. One whose love language is Receiving Gifts feels emotionally loved by their partner when they are given objects as a visual representation of their love. The receiver takes pride in the gift because the gift serves as a reminder that he/she was thought of. The physical presence of one's partner can also serve as a gift and speaks loudly when one is there in a time of crisis or during an important milestone. A person whose love language is Acts of Service feels emotionally loved when their partner displays an eagerness to do things for him/her that they know will be appreciated. This may include taking out the trash, washing dishes, making dinner etc. Eagerness is an important requirement as demands are prohibited and requests are encouraged as it informs your partner of your emotional desires. Finally, one whose love

language is Physical Touch feels emotionally loved when they are touched by their partner on any part of the body. Refusal to touch one whose primary love language is physical touch can communicate extreme discomfort. Touch can be crucial in times of crisis and some areas can be more pleasurable than others.

Most love languages are derived from one's childhood. For instance, an individual who was hugged, kissed, and comforted by their parent(s) may have a love language of Physical Touch. Being aware of your primary love language is important and should be communicated to receive emotional love from your partner. One discovering the love language of their partner should be willing to speak the language through associated actions with pride. Love language requires initiative and repetitive actions for the sake of pleasing another.

For my research, I wanted to investigate the role time plays on the quality of relationships and how love languages play a part in their happiness over time. To attempt to answer these questions, I have interviewed a total of 7 people who were involved in romantic relationships ages ranging from 21-94. Interviewees were asked a series of questions that required them to recall happy and sad moments with their partners. They were also asked to speak on issues and sacrifices within the relationship and their most requested demands from their partner. The series of questions helped identify their primary love language and gave interviewees an idea of what they thought their partner's love language might be.

Through these series of interviews, I found that time played a vital role in the overall happiness and strength of a relationship. Time and the ability to comprehend love languages went hand in hand as the more time couples spent with one another, the better they were able to understand each other's needs and desires. Overall learning to speak the primary love language of their partner mattered most as the couple was able to better connect and maintain a healthy relationship. Time allowed individuals in an interpersonal relationship to discover their

own primary love language, time served as a learning period that allowed couples to get to know their partner better, and time allowed couples to grow and perform consistent acts to express their love to their partner.

Time allowed individuals in an interpersonal relationship to discover their own primary love language. Before understanding the primary love language of their partner, one must discover their own primary love language to understand their emotional needs and desires. Discovering your primary love language can be recognized through feelings of happiness or isolation/neglect. In his self-help book, Dr. Gary Chapman provides a series of questions that encourages one to recall frequent requests they made of their partner and moments where they felt isolated or unloved. In Chapter 9 of *The 5 love languages* Dr. Chapman states that, “when you are trying to figure out your primary love language, it helps to look back over your marriage and ask ‘what have I most often requested from my spouse’. Whatever you most requested is probably in keeping with your primary love language” (124). When an individual feels neglected by their partner, they notice things that their partner fails to do that would make them feel emotionally loved. Understanding one’s personal love language is key as it gives two lovers in a relationship the opportunity to find their love languages through trial and error. Trial and error is necessary in discovering which language suits best for the fulfillment of your needs and desires. The concept of trial and error refers to the various attempts that a couple makes when trying to discover the best way to communicate with one another. Twenty-two-year-old Sinayah Faulkner has been off and on with her partner Daniel for five years. Although they started on rocky footing, she describes this past year as a growth period that has allowed her to find herself and her personal needs and desires. During an interview, I discovered Sinayah’s love language to be **Receiving Gifts**. She frequently found herself requesting tangible items from Daniel such as balloons, jewelry, cards and dinner dates. Sinayah also recalls a time during her high school

graduation when Daniel was absent during the distribution of diplomas. She expresses that, “his absence hurt me because that was an important accomplishment that I wanted him to enjoy with me” (Faulkner). This moment also signaled Sinayah’s primary love language of receiving gifts as Daniel’s presence served as a gift that she cherished.

Sinayah remembers Daniel expressing how proud he was of her for accomplishing her academic goal through kind and humbling words and emphasizes him saying “babe, I’m so proud of you for being in the top 10 of your senior class” and “You did a great job delivering your speech”. Although she was grateful to receive kind words from Daniel, those words did not equate to the love she would have received if he expressed his proud feelings through a tangible gift such as balloons or a dozen of her favorite roses. In this moment Sinayah understood that **Words of Affirmation** was not her primary love language, but **Receiving gifts** was. Sinayah also expressed her appreciation of Daniel when he comforted her after the death of her grandmother. Daniel’s physical presence served as a gift as he was present during her extensive grieving period. Sinayah described Daniel’s gift of a chain with her grandmother’s name on it as the best gift ever. Sinayah states, “The death of my grandmother was a really hard time for me, so Daniel’s presence really got me through because I was not alone. The chain that Daniel got me in honor of my grandmother held her very last photo taken in the hospital two weeks before her death. It didn’t matter how much he spent, or where he got it from because the thought that was put into ordering the chain made me feel loved” (Faulkner). Daniel successfully spoke Sinayah’s love language of Receiving Gifts by physically being present during an important moment in her life (the loss of her grandmother). The tangible gift that he purchased not only reminded her of her grandmother but was an expression of Daniel’s love.

Over time, trial and error helped Sinayah determine how she wanted to be loved and allowed her to better communicate with Daniel. Time allowed Sinayah to successfully discover

her primary love language of Receiving Gifts through experiences with Daniel over the course of five years. Her experiences with her partner Daniel during her graduation ceremony, the feelings felt when receiving tangible gifts and his overall presence during times in need made her feel emotionally loved and appreciated. These experiences represented the trails that the couple faced which all served a vital purpose in the overall growth of the relationship. Without each trial and error Sinayah would not have been successful in discovering her primary love language.

Discovering ourselves is important as we begin to notice the fuel that sets our soul on fire. The beauty of discovering our primary love language allows us to connect and stay connected with our inner self prior to interacting with others. It is essential to know what we need to feel loved. Will Hong, 52, has been married to his wife for eleven years. The two met while in college, fell off and rekindled years later during a run in a public park. Together the two noticed similar interests in running, traveling, reading, dogs and shared intellectual and political pursuits. In time, Will discovered that his two primary love languages were **Quality Time** and **Words of Affirmation**. Will valued traveling and outgoing activities with his wife as he is obsessed with making memories. Hong reveals that the couple takes annual vacations to the Caribbean to relax and escape responsibilities. As the quality of conversation is another key component of Quality time, Hong also expresses that his introvertive personality makes it hard for him to express his feelings and problems. He states, "I value daily conversations with my wife as we discuss the highs and lows of our day. It's great to know and hear that she understands me and wants the absolute best for me" (Hong). Quality of conversation was important to Will as he was able to seek honest advice and words of affirmation from his companion. Time allowed Will to achieve his knowledge of his primary love languages as he was able to get to know himself through interactions and experiences with his wife. From the

initial thorough conversation with this wife, he discovered that the quality conversations gave him the fuel he needed to be successful and productive through his days. Now that Will has discovered his love language, he can begin to discover ways or actions that his wife can do to make him feel special. This expresses the idea that effort must come from an individual first. They must love and understand themselves before searching for love in another individual.

Will discovered his second love language to be Words of Affirmation as he thrives on encouraging and kind words from his partner. During our interview, he stated that “when my wife would applaud me and tell me how much of a wonderful job, I did that would make me feel extremely good. I am addicted to encouraging words, they make me feel ten times as good, and it makes me want to do more to make her proud” (Hong). Will expresses that days without receiving encouragement from his wife, puts him in a bad mood. Now that Will has discovered his primary love languages to be Words of Affirmation and Quality time, he now knows what to expect and request from others when in an intimate interpersonal relationship.

The concept of trial and error helped Will grow personally and assisted him on his quest to discover his emotional needs and desires. Through several trials when Will felt isolated and unloved by his wife, he better understood himself and his own expectations. The isolation he felt when he craved positive and humbling words from his wife and the joy he felt when going on vacation or engaging in conversation with his wife over time revealed his primary love languages of Words of Affirmation and Quality Time. The experiences and trails between Will and his wife were necessary as it allowed him to understand himself and discover his primary love language. Essentially this major discovery was the key to communication and a healthy relationship with himself and his wife.

When discovering your own primary love language, you learn to love yourself and accept love simultaneously. When two people in an intimate relationship discover their personal love

languages they learn how to communicate better and make requests, rather than demands. Paul Edlund, 77, and Sue Books, 66, have been married for twenty-three years. The couple met at a public dance in Poughkeepsie, NY and began enjoying each other's company at theatre productions, dance camps and dance competitions. The adventurous couple bonded over their love for traveling, nature, mountain climbing, dancing, cooking and their shared political values. Through an hour-long interview with both Sue and Paul, it was discovered that they shared the same primary love language of **Quality Time** as they receive joy from making memories and engaging in sympathetic dialogue with one another. Sue expresses that time has allowed her to get to know her talents and desires in an intimate relationship. Her love for dancing and being outdoors reassured her that her husband would have to value or at least be willing to accompany her on her endeavors. Sue says, "I'm always finding myself asking for more time with Paul through our busy schedules. I want more dances, more trips, more adventures and more food dates" (Books). The couples frequent breakfast dates allow them to engage in dialogue through direct eye contact and is something that Sue valued the most. Dr. Gary Chapman discusses that Quality Time is defined as giving someone your focused/undivided attention (55). Sue and her husband's having breakfast, taking trips and attending dances together time and time again allowed them to do an activity that they both enjoyed. Through the married couple spending time together, they both were able to discover their individual love languages and determine what needed from each other to feel loved.

Time helped Sue to discover her primary love language of Quality time through trial and error. The trials over time of requesting more time with her husband, enjoying dates, adventurous trips and fun activities together helped her discover her emotional needs and desires. Her trials and experiences over time with her husband Paul were necessary as they taught her what she needed to feel loved and appreciated. It is safe to say that If the couple

lacked quality time spent with one another, the relationship would have been weak as Sue would have not discovered her primary love language and would have yearned for emotional fulfillment.

Taking time to discover your primary love language allows you to face your fears, insecurities, self-doubts, strengths and vulnerabilities. Twenty-seven-year-old Elisabeth Bikoko and her boyfriend Tom have been in a relationship for two months. The two immediately connected and Elisabeth concluded that they shared the same primary love language of **Physical Touch**. Elisabeth frequently requests sexual intercourse with her partner at least seven days a week, loves hand holding in public, hugs, kisses and gets a good rest when cuddled. During our interview Elisabeth states that, "I remember cuddling a bear that had his scent all over it to go to bed at night. It was the only thing that made me feel emotionally loved" (Bikoko). Elisabeth has faith that her relationship will work because she has finally discovered her primary love language. For her this is a step towards a healthy relationship as she now knows what specifically to request from her partner. She states "I think it's easier that Tom and I both like to be touched. We like the same things so it should be easy expressing our love" (Bikoko). This is a common assumption that many people make when in a relationship. Just because Tom likes to be touched does not signal that Physical Touch is his primary love language. Two individuals in an intimate relationship do not have to share the same love language to have a healthy relationship. Time was necessary to confirm Elisabeth's identity and her primary love language of Physical touch. Before Tom, she lacked emotional love because she was not being physically touched by her partner. Whether her relationship with Tom works out or not, it served her well as she was able to discover her own primary love language by tuning in with her vulnerabilities.

Elisabeth and Tom met on Tinder and when asked how she would describe her relationship with Tom she stated that, "I have never felt happier and have been looking for this love all along. I never thought that I would fall in love with someone off a free dating site" (Bikoko). Like many other couples, Elisabeth has been through relationship after relationship trying to find her soulmate. She says that "no one clicked and has never loved her the way Tom loves her" (Bikoko). Dr. Gary Chapman describes Elisabeth's situation as "the in-love experience". He states that, "Our dreams before marriage are of marital bliss: We are going to make each other supremely happy. Other couples may argue and fight, but not us. We love each other.... It's hard to believe anything else when you are in love" (30). Elisabeth and Tom are currently romantically obsessed in their new relationship (on a temporary high) and are blinded by each other's actions and naive flaws. They both carry the illusion that everything is perfect and that their love would last forever (euphoric). Chapman also states that, "Eventually, however, we all descend from the clouds and plant our feet on earth again.... Her endearing quirks are now merely annoying. His sharp sense of humor now wounds. Those little bumps we overlooked when we were in love now become huge mountains" (30). Over time, the two would enter reality and fall out of love when they begin to truly learn their partner and notice the warts that were oblivious at the beginning of the relationship.

Elisabeth's experiences and trails with her boyfriend Tom allowed her to discover her primary love language of Physical Touch. Her trails of being denied physical touch from Tom on any part of her body, showed her that she needed to be touched to feel emotionally loved. Over time Elisabeth was able to explore her needs and desires through trial and error when she was unable to have a good night's rest, feel loved when being cuddled, hold hands when in public and cuddle with a tangible item that reminded her of her partner. The experiences and trails were important because it allowed Elisabeth to discover herself and her expectations in an

intimate relationship. Through trial and error for two months Elisabeth learned that not being physically touched leaves her feeling isolated and unloved.

Hogrefe Publishing Group is the leading international scientific publishing company that publishes trusted academic journals and books in the field of psychology, psychiatry and mental health. The company's public website, us.hogrefe.com, provides public access to high-quality scientific journals, reference works and manuals, trusted texts and teaching resources for faculty and students and an award winning Clinical handbook for Psychotropic drugs. Dr. Ruth Yasemin Erol and Dr. Ulrich Orth are two psychology professors who conduct research on personality psychology at the University of Bern in Switzerland. In the scholarly journal *European Psychologist* found on APA PsycArticles database entitled 'Self-Esteem and the Quality of Romantic Relationships' Ruth Yasemin Erol and Ulrich Orth suggests that a high self-esteem is beneficial in a healthy interpersonal relationship. Self-discovery and feeling comfort in one's self will have a positive effect on the partner's happiness within the relationship. The psychological mechanisms included in the article draws a link between self-esteem and the quality of a relationship. Erol's and Orth's findings support the idea that one must be familiar with their emotional needs and desires through a series of experiences. This is important and should be done prior to understanding the needs and desires of their partner.

Time served as a learning period that allowed couples to get to know their partner better. As the relationship matures, we begin to pick up on the actions and notice frequent requests of our partners. In Chapter 9 of Chapman's book he explains that, "another way to discover your primary love language is to examine what you do or say to express love to your spouse. Chances are what you are doing for her is what you wish she would do for you" (124). Sinayah realized that she often found herself shopping for Daniel because she wanted him to shop for her to express her love language of **Receiving Gifts**. In the interview, she states, "he doesn't

really get excited when I surprise him with gifts, all he wants me to do is play video games with him” (Faulkner). It was no surprise that Daniel’s love language of **Quality time** was different from Sinayah’s love language of **Receiving Gifts**. The two did not connect emotionally in the beginning of their relationship because they assumed that they had the same primary love language. This is a common assumption that many couples make when trying to connect emotionally. Dr. Chapman describes that it is perfectly normal for two people in an interpersonal relationship to have two different love languages (16). This stresses the need for couples to discover their own love language and communicate this language to their partners so that they can speak each other’s love languages and vice versa. In this case, time served as a learning period that allowed couples to get to know their partner better.

Time was important in Sinayah and Daniel’s relationship as it allowed the couple to learn and understand the needs of one another. Through her experiences over time trying to love Daniel, Sinayah realized that she has not been speaking Daniel’s love language of Quality Time for the first four years of their relationship. Time allowed her to keep trying to discover his language time and time again. Sinayah learned that Daniels primary love language was different from her primary love language through failing to engage in fun activities with him and his ungratefulness towards tangible gifts that she purchased. If Sinayah had not had the time to discover her partner’s primary love language, the relationship would have weakened and failed as Daniel yearned for emotional fulfillment.

Getting to learn and understand your partner’s love language can guide a couple in the direction of a healthy relationship, where they both are emotionally connected. In *The 5 love languages* Dr. Gary Chapman expresses that the basic human need is to feel loved. He states that, “the desire for romantic love in marriage is deeply rooted in our psychological makeup” (14). In an interview with Anita Nole, a ninety-four year old widow, I learned that her marriage of

sixty four years was fruitful as her husband successfully spoke her love languages of Receiving Gifts and Acts of Service. Mr. Joe Nole and Mrs. Anita Nole maintained an interpersonal relationship from the tender ages of twelve and fifteen. The two grew close to one another from their childhood as they often bonded together over ice cream. Together they connected over common interests such as reading, music, religion and the desire for children, security and stability as both faced depression as kids. Time was crucial in this interpersonal relationship as the couple was forced to split while Joe served on the battlefield during WWII (Nole). This served as a learning period for the Nole's as Anita relied on erratic telegrams from Joe to assure his safety over four long dreadful years. Anita valued incoming telegrams as they served as a gift that symbolizes Joe's love for her. Later his return home from the battlefield became a long-lasting memory as the two reunited at Grand Central station. Here, Joe's presence served as a gift and was an important milestone in the relationship.

From the very beginning of their relationship, the couple seemed to have an understanding of love languages, and as they got older, they both realized their personal needs and desires and they requested them from their partner. Anita was an important figure in my research as she held the longest relationship out of the seven interviewees. Her marriage of sixty-four years showed that she has clearly worked through the "in love experience" and common issues within an interpersonal relationship overtime. Through time Anita and Joe were able to get to know one another better and performed consistent acts to please one another.

Learning the emotional needs of your partner will display a selfless attitude and show your partner that you care about making them feel important. Discovering the love language of your partner is vital as you learn their expectations and learn yourself in the process.

Twenty-one-year-old Andre Bent and his girlfriend Monae have maintained a strong interpersonal relationship for three years. The two started dating after a week of knowing one

another and have spent their relationship spending quality time traveling, cooking, engaging in outdoor activities and sympathetic dialogue. Like most relationships Andre and Monae have two different love languages, his being Quality Time and hers being Physical Touch. During an interview Andre states, "I am not really a physical touch kind of guy because my mom was not affectionate. Monae would often express the desire for me to touch her more" (Bent). Dr. Gary Chapman explains that being selfless and making sacrifices to please your partner is important in a relationship. One must let go of expectations or their habituations and be open to try new things to maintain a healthy relationship (96). Andre selfishly not expressing love to Monae through physical touch easily made her feel neglected and unloved. Andre also states that, "Over time I started to become more selfless and touch her more and I realized that she was much happier" (Bent). Time allowed Andre to learn and understand his partner's love language. He gave up his selfish habituations and made efforts to please his partner for the sake of a healthy relationship. Through selfless actions Andre was able to grow as an individual by learning and overcoming his personal insecurities and vulnerabilities. Discovering his wife's love language did not change Andre, but rather taught him the beauty of implementing other love languages. If Andre and Monae were to break up, he can use this knowledge in future relationships by taking the time to learn the love languages of others while expressing knowledge of his personal desires.

Time allowed Andre to learn his girlfriend's primary love language of Physical Touch. This discovery improved their relationship because he was able to get to know and understand how she wanted to be emotionally loved. Andre not learning Monae's love language would have been detrimental to the healthiness of their overall relationship as Monae would have sought physical touch elsewhere to feel loved and appreciated. Through Andre's experiences trying to love Monae overtime, he not only learned that the two had two different primary love languages,

but he learned that loving Monae required him to let go of his norms and selfish attitudes. Learning to please and love your partner requires being selfless and willing to learn and understand how they want to be loved, not the way you want to love them.

Europe PMC is an open science platform that provides access to science publications and preprints from trusted sources worldwide. With over 5 million abstracts, Europe PMC is free, transparent and community driven as it stands as a repository of choice for many international science funders. The website, <http://europepmc.org/>, allows the public to explore research topics, search for data and follow scientific trends. In the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* found on PubMed database entitled, "Creating Good Relationships: Responsiveness, Relationship Quality, and Interpersonal Goals" Amy Canevello and Jennifer Crocker expresses that responsiveness in an interpersonal relationship will fulfill one's emotional needs and desires. In their article, they agreed with Dr. Shelly Gable, a psychology professor at the University of California in Santa Barbara and Dr. Harry T. Reis, a psychology professor at the University of Rochester in New York, who both share a primary focus on social psychology. Gable and Reis explain that "Responsive relationship partners convey understanding, validation, and caring. They are warm, sensitive to their partners' feelings, and want to make their partners feel comfortable, valued, listened to, and understood" (qtd in Canevello and Crocker 1). The findings in this article supports the idea that learning about your partner is essential for a healthy relationship as it allows one to be responsive towards their desires making their partner feel loved and appreciated. This fosters a deeper connection between couples as they learn to trust and rely on their partner for emotional and physical satisfaction.

Time allowed couples to grow and perform consistent acts to express their love to their partner. Dr. Gary Chapman states that, "Ignoring your partner's love language is like ignoring

the needs of a garden: if we don't weed, water, or fertilize, it will die a slow death" (122). The use of this simile stresses the importance of learning and implementing acts of love for the sake of a healthy and flourishing relationship. One must put in the work for a healthy relationship in order to help each other grow emotionally. After discovering your personal love language and discovering your partner's love language, it is important for a couple to speak the love language of their partner to fill their emotional love tank. An emotional love tank is a metaphor that refers to the frequent emotional connections between lovers. During the duration of a relationship, there are actions that can create a connection or disconnection. The idea of an emotional love tank signals to an individual what they need from their partner to feel emotionally loved and connected. In Chapter 1 of *The 5 love languages* Dr. Chapman states, "when your spouse's [partner's] love tank is full and he feels secure in your love, the whole world looks bright.... But when the love tank is empty and he feels used but not loved, the whole world looks dark and he will likely never reach his highest potential in life" (35). Snayah expresses that after she discovered her love language of **Receiving Gifts** and Daniel's love language of **Quality Time** the two began to make consistent acts to please one another. She states that, "knowledge of the love languages strengthened our relationship as I began to spend more time with him doing things that we both enjoyed with the hopes of pleasing him" (Faulkner). Dr. Chapman explains that if one person in the relationship performs an act that makes their partner feel good, then there is a good chance that their partner would be willing to reciprocate that behavior in order to make their partner feel good as well (160). This will introduce an ongoing cycle of pleasing one another with overflowing love.

Time allowed Snayah and Daniel to grow and rekindle their love after a year of performing consistent acts to express their love to one another. Over time after discovering their own primary love languages and learning the emotional needs of each other, the two used time

to implement their learnings and express love in the way each other wanted to be loved. Over time Sinayah performed acts through engaging in outdoor activities, video games and speaking with Daniel more to show him that she loved him time and time again. Over time Daniel was also able to fill Sinayah's emotional love tank of Receiving Gifts by gifting her tangible items and being there for her during times of need. If the couple had been denied the time to implement acts to express love, the relationship would have weakened and failed.

The idea that individuals are likely to please their partner to receive pleasure in return through consistent acts is shown in Will's relationship with his wife. After Will discovered his wife's primary love language of Acts of Service and his love language of Words of Affirmation, he began to do more chores around their home in order to receive kind words from his partner. Hearing the words "great job cleaning the stove babe" or "thanks for doing the laundry" motivated him to clean the bathroom and clean the attic in hopes of receiving more compliments (Hong). It was a win, win! Knowledge of his wife's love language not only made her happy but made him happy as emotional love was received simultaneously.

Time allowed Will to perform consistent acts to express love to his partner by speaking her love language of **Acts of Service**. His acts of completing chores around the home was beneficial to Will as he was able to foster a positive love cycle between him and his wife. After discovering his primary love language of **Words of Affirmation**, Will was able to communicate his needs with his wife and expect kind and humbling words more often. Over time the couple grew as the more Will spoke his wife's primary love language, the more she spoke his primary love language in return and the healthier their relationship grew. Expressing love to your partner involves consistent acts that you know he/or she will appreciate.

When acts are performed over time an individual in a relationship will expect to be loved during times of celebration and times of need. This is a great thing in an intimate relationship as

both individuals learn to trust and depend on their partner and vice versa. In addition to Receiving Gifts, Anita's second love language was **Acts of Service** as she valued Joe's eagerness to help her around the house and with their two children. During our interview, Anita expressed her appreciation of Joe when he supported her through life risking medical recoveries. Joe discovering Anita's love language of Acts of Service allowed him to perform consistent duties around the house to please her, especially in times of great need. When the couple welcomed their first daughter, the hospital failed to properly care for Anita's incision and consequent infection incurred during the birth of her daughter which left her deeply concerned, helpless and in excruciating pain. Anita spoke of another milestone in her life when she was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent mastectomy surgery (Nole). Not only was Joe patient and there throughout to help her recover with tender care, but he successfully spoke her love language of Acts of Service through accepting her requests.

Anita also recalls a time when Joe willingly accepted her request to renovate their basement and attic. His willingness to do this service and successfully complete this service filled her love tank. However, the service performed by Joe was an act reciprocated by Anita who recognized Joe's emotional need for **Words of Affirmation**. Her encouragement gave him the means to express his passion for carpentry work. In the end, the Act of Service and the Words of Affirmation worked in unison to satisfy the needs of each person in this relationship. He pleased Anita and pleased himself simultaneously. Learning how to reciprocate behaviors works in intimate relationships because an individual does an act to express love with the hopes of receiving love in return. During a marriage counseling session that he includes in his self-help book, Dr. Chapman explains that a relationship is about sacrifices. At times at least one individual must be the bigger person and make an effort to try and save or maintain the relationship while hoping for the best (155). This act can reveal the strength of a relationship

and prove how much an individual wants to make their relationship work by acts of love. If one partner makes an effort to perform acts to express love, this may encourage the opposite partner to show their gratitude by expressing love in a way that suits their partner that made them feel loved. In this case the relationship will strengthen as the couple goes back and forth trying to please just as much as they were pleased. This can be viewed as a healthy competition of love.

Time allowed Joe to learn, understand and perform consistent acts of love for Anita through her love language of **Acts of Service**. Joe's consistent help during Anita's life risking medical recoveries over time filled her emotional love tank. He was able to prove his love for her through providing medical assistance and helping care for the children and house duties over the course of several years. The consistency of Joe's actions showed Anita that he cared for her needs and would make consistent efforts to fulfill them time and time again. Their "mature love state" gave Anita reassurance and Joe quickly became someone whom she could trust and grow with over a lifetime.

Knowledge of one another's love language allows a couple to perform acts of love and make sacrifices for the sake of a healthy relationship. Paul discovering that his wife's love language was **Quality time** encouraged him to sacrifice long work hours. He states that, "Retiring with IBM has granted me more free time to spend with my wife, and I do not regret it. I can now help her around the house which gives me ample time to plan fun things that we both enjoy" (Englewood). Paul also expresses that retiring has allowed him to join Sue with visiting her parents in South Carolina which makes her feel very appreciative that he enjoys quality time with them as well. Today the couple continues to express their love with one another through yearly vacation, dance competitions and weekly breakfast dates on the weekends. As time went on and the couple spent years with one another, they were able to share Quality Time with one

another. Spending time with each other doing activities that they both enjoyed filled one another's emotional love tank and maintained a healthy relationship. Paul retiring with IBM and spending more time with Sue proved to her that he cared about filling her emotional love tank and making her feel appreciated. Over time, his actions became consistent and the more the couple spent with one another, the more they deeply connected emotionally.

Learning your partner overtime through performing consistent acts to express love will strengthen a relationship. Learning and implementing acts of love based on your partner's primary love language is important as it can allow a couple to grow. Implementing acts of love has a positive impact on the strength of a couple as "in love" turns into "mature love". This fact was seen in both Sue's and Anita's relationships with their husbands for 20+ years. Essentially the more time and energy that you invest in filling your partner's emotional love tank, the more mature the relationship would become. If one's relationship will continue to grow and sustain like Anita's and Sue's one must be selfless and willing to perform consistent acts of love over time. Performing acts of love with a selfless attitude makes the relationship genuine and likely to maintain for a long period of time. Anita's marriage with her husband and Paul's marriage with Sue are both examples of mature love as both couples learned how to speak their partners' love languages through a series of actions overtime.

Performing consistent acts to express love to your partner will keep the relationship healthy as one's emotional love tank will be filled. A full emotional love tank will prevent one from seeking that love from another person. In a follow up interview with Andre Bent, he expresses that discovering his partners love language of Physical touch was the best thing that he did for their relationship. He states that, "I started making small touch gestures indoors to make me feel comfortable such as back rubbing and cuddling at night. This quickly escalated to hand holding in public and eventually more sexual intercourse" (Bent). Andre taking the initiative

to speak his partner's love language over time filled her emotional love tank immensely. Seeing her express happiness encouraged him to perform frequent acts to express his love for her. He goes on to express that he has found new spots to touch her for pleasure (Bent). This is what implementing love language is all about. It's about making sacrifices and taking your time when loving your partner. It is no rush when expressing love because love is honest and gentle. Learning over time has an impact on an intimate relationship as it transitions from "in love" to "mature love". Both individuals will learn what it takes to strengthen their relationship and perform consistent acts to display selfless attitudes.

Time allowed Andre to perform consistent acts of love to his girlfriend Monae time and time again. Knowledge of Monae's love language of Physical Touch allowed Andre to implement acts to fulfill her emotional desires overtime. Acts such as back rubbing, cuddling, hand holding, and frequent sexual intercourse were all consistently done more often over time. The more time Andre used to physically touch Monae more, the more she felt loved and appreciated by her partner. Overtime Andre was able to successfully reassure Monae of his love through physical actions, which ultimately strengthened their love for one another. Over time through implementing consistent acts of love, the love between the couple matured.

Sage Journals is a public online database at Seton Hill University that provides public access to trusted academic books and journals in Social Science and Humanities, Health Sciences, Life and Biomedical Sciences and Materials Science and Engineering. The online database site, <https://setonhill.libguides.com/library>, uses WorldCat discovery which allows users to broaden their searches to trusted articles and books worldwide. Dr. Lyndall Strazdins, current psychology professor and Dr. Dorothy Broom, an Emeritus Professor conducts research in the field of Health and Medicine at Australia National University College of Health and Medicine in Canberra. Their primary focuses were on family and health challenges. In the

Journal of Family Issues, an article entitled “Acts of Love (and Work)” by Dr. Lyndall Strazdins, and Dorothy H. Broom explains that expressing acts of love can be done in all interpersonal relationships to fulfill one's emotional love tank. The article states that, “Family members do work to meet people's emotional needs, improve their well-being, and maintain harmony. When emotional work is shared equally, both men and women have access to emotional resources in the family” (1). Their findings support the idea that implementing acts of love will strengthen the quality of a relationship as one uses emotional resources in the family overtime. Equality is very important as both individuals in an intimate relationship equally deserve acknowledgement and love. Putting in effort and doing the work to meet your partner's emotional needs will satisfy your partner, encourage your partner to meet your emotional needs and overall create and maintain a healthy relationship.

Through my research and the series of interviews conducted, I learned that the age of individuals and duration of a relationship is irrelevant. Discovering your primary love language can be used to rekindle relationships, grow two people closer together and make love exciting again. Time is an important factor as it allows for a couple to learn how to love one another the way they want to be loved. Time gives hope to a couple that things will get better with time. When one discovers their love language, they can successfully communicate it to their partner and vice versa. Learning, understanding and speaking your partner's love language will foster happiness. Happiness is bound to be reciprocated if strong efforts are made from both parties. All in all, life and time gives you opportunities to make decisions that align with your values and happiness. Each of the interviewees made decisions to please their partner over a period of time because they valued their interpersonal relationships.

The faster one can discover their own love language, the quicker this language can be communicated and learned by the partner and the more acts can be performed to express love.

In a relationship, both individuals must be kind, patient and willing to make consistent efforts to make their partner feel emotionally loved. This may require one to bury old habits and expectations for the sake of pleasing their partner. The five love languages have been proven to rekindle lost love and make love exciting again through accurate knowledge of their partner's needs. Couples often assume that their relationship is healthy and that their partner is happy because they do not understand the importance of discovering and implementing love languages. Throughout *The 5 love languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts*, Dr. Gary Chapman gives a series of anonymous examples of failed relationships due to the lack of understanding and implementing the five love languages to intimate relationships. The steps one should take when trying to apply the five love languages to their relationship should be taken with care and open mindedness. The steps require transparency, acceptance of vulnerabilities and insecurities and an overall willingness to learn and implement new things for the sake of a healthy relationship. Time is an important factor in implementing Dr. Chapman's love language theory. This process is not meant to be rushed but meant to be understood and handled with care.

One should begin this process by first discovering their own primary love language through exploring their emotional needs and desires overtime. Overtime trial and error is extremely important here as an individual learns their emotional needs through experiences with their partner that left them feeling happy and/or feeling unloved. It is important for one to understand themselves and communicate their needs prior to seeking love from another being or trying to love someone else. The second step to applying love languages to an intimate relationship is learning your partner's primary love language. Learning how your partner wants to be loved through experiences overtime is extremely important for a healthy relationship as one becomes selfless and open minded when trying to please their partner. Overtime they begin

to realize how their partner reacts to their actions and begin to try new actions to compare their effects on their partner. There is no rush in discovering your partner's love language because time allows for trial and error. The last and most important step when trying to implement love languages to an intimate relationship requires both individuals to perform consistent acts to express their love to their partner. Consistent acts will reassure your partner that you care about their emotional needs and would make consistent acts to ensure that their emotional love tank is filled. This will create a mature and healthy relationship and an ongoing cycle of overflowing love. No relationship is perfect, but with knowledge of love languages it can feel close to perfect.

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