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Can You Speak The Many Languages Of Love?

Ashley Nicole Brewer

It took a long time for me to realize how frequently my husband tried to tell me how in love with me he was. I did not hear him say, "I love you," because I did not know how to speak his love language. The signs were there. In fact, he was throwing them right in front of me. If we had been playing baseball, and I was up to bat, I would have struck out. I mean, it would have been as though I just stood there, bat in hand, and completely still, just watching the white leather ball with its red stitching fly right by me, as though I were completely unaware I was supposed to swing at the ball. This might sound silly at first, but it does make sense. According to Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell, M.D., there are five "love languages," which they explain in further detail in their book *The Five Love Languages*. Through quality time, physical touch, words of affirmation, acts of service, and gifts, people express and communicate their feelings. Knowing how people express their feelings can make all the difference. Just like other languages to communicate successfully, the people participating in the conversation must be able to understand the language being spoken. Otherwise confusion, chaos, and complications will result.

My husband devotedly gets up every morning at 6 o'clock, gets ready, and leaves for work. Sometimes he goes straight from his full-time job as a welder's assistant to working on an old Ford truck for the farmer south of town. There are days that I don't see him again until 10 o'clock that night. I know many women who would get terribly upset if this were their situation. I used to be one of those women. Frustrated with all his time away, I felt as though he could care less if he got to spend any time with me at all. My feelings were, "If he really loved me, he would want to spend more time with me," leading me to feel unloved. This, of course, caused many heated arguments derived from the simple fact that I didn't have the comfort of knowing he loved me. My "love language" speaks through "quality time," and his didn't. All I wanted was a little time and attention from him. Before long, all I noticed or paid any attention to was what he was not doing for me.

Exhausted from the many hours of physical labor he had put in that week, my husband looked as though his legs had just completely given out on him, leaving him no other choice but to finally sit down. That Sunday, he actually made it home for the day around 2 o'clock, so he spent the rest of the afternoon doing chores. He looked beyond tired. He had smudges of dirt smeared where he had tried earlier that day to wipe away the sweat that had been dripping down his face. He had torn the sleeve on his shirt. There was even oil in his hair. Strangely, at the same time, he looked very pleased and content. He leaned back, feet crossed at the ankles, and his head resting in his hands behind his head. He thought about all that he had done that week. He had not been home much, but without complaining or even a second thought, he had taken out the trash, fixed the fence, mowed the

yard, and changed the oil in the car. He even did some other little things that I had flat out forgotten I had mentioned needed doing sometime earlier in the week. My husband was trying to tell me through "acts of service" that he loved me. In his heart and mind, he was doing everything he could think of to express and communicate to me that he did love me. It was not that he did not want to spend time with me. It was not that he wanted to work on the fence or take the trash out, but he was trying to make me happy and show he loved me. He did this by financially taking care of me, and thoughtfully remembering the little requests I had made, and doing them as soon as he had the chance. He didn't understand why I wasn't happy and was beginning to feel as though I was not accepting or approving his efforts; therefore he didn't feel loved.

I was willing to stop doing laundry. I did not care if the dishes were done. I hated to cook. I did those things, but only when I had to. I definitely did not do them with an enthusiastic attitude. I would, however, curl up on the couch with him to watch a movie, even if I really had not a single desire to see it. I would sit and watch him shoot pool, just glad I was there with him. I would sit and watch him mess with whatever it was under the hood of the car that had been annoyingly clanking around all week. I would go with him to go pick up some part just for the ride and the time with him. It didn't bother me a bit when he would roll his eyes, sigh, and shake his head as I turned the radio station yet again. I spent a ton of time doing things I could care less about to make him happy. Neither he nor I knew how speak the same love language. If I knew how to speak his language, I would have realized that he didn't really care if I watched him do anything, or if I went with him to the corner store and back. Not that on some level he didn't enjoy it, but these things just didn't scream "I LOVE YOU" to him. No, it was those times that I cleaned home and really cleaned the house (not just the quick fix pick up.) For him, coming home to food that consisted of more than just reheating something that had already been pre-packaged was what made him happy. When he opens his drawer and finds it full of clean matched socks, it's just like me wrapping my arms around his neck and professing my undying love. That is what means the most to him and makes him feel loved.

We both love each other. It took some time for us to put it all together. People only communicate in one language, until they are taught how to speak in a different one. I finally realized that we were just looking at things differently and I started to respond to him in a way that he could understand. Then, I explained to him the best I could the theory. It was not very long after that when the conversation started to make more sense. I did my best to convey my feelings of endearment in a way that spoke to him. He was picking up on how to articulate to me in a way that didn't leave me displeased. It wasn't that we did not want to please each other before, we just didn't know how. It was like we were stuck in a tornado, I was hot and he was cold, and even though we tried, our efforts worked against each other, leaving the damage behind. If people want to avoid the confusion, elation, and complications a good and very helpful start is to learn how to detect and communicate using the different "love languages."