

## **Marriage Matters #1 – Discovering Each Other’s Needs**

### **Introduction**

How do you know that your spouse loves you? What are the things she/he does that convey that message to you? What do you do to show that you love him/her? Saying, “I love you” is good but if it is not backed up by evidence then it is just 3 words with no meaning no matter how passionately they may be spoken. Gary Chapman in his book *The Five Love Languages* identifies 5 distinct ways of expressing love to another person:

1. Speaking **loving affirming words** - encouragements, compliments or gratefulness for example. E.g. “Thank you for your help with that letter I was having difficulty writing.”
2. Spending **quality time** with each other. Perhaps just sitting and listening, really listening with interest, to how your spouse’s day has gone or doing an activity together - just the two of you.
3. Giving your spouse a **thoughtful present**. Here it’s the thoughtfulness that counts not the value of the present (if he or she is concerned with the value this isn’t their love language!). It might be a red rose left on a pillow, a candle of a favourite scent or a playlist specially compiled of favourite tracks that speak of your life together.
4. Touch can speak much louder than words for some people and **physical affection** in the form of a hug, a kiss or holding hands all the way through to making love will convey love if this is your or your spouse’s love language.
5. “Show me your love by your actions” may be your principle. For some people love demonstrated by **kind actions** says it most clearly. Kind actions might be routine things such as cooking or doing domestic chores but they might also be the out of the blue action like making a favourite cake or cleaning her/his car when it wasn’t expected.

### **Exercise – Discover Your Love Languages**

6. Write down six specific occasions on which you’ve specifically known your spouse’s love for you. They might be a major event or something very minor but it was significant to you. E.g. if an evening in together made you feel special that might indicate that quality time is important to you.
7. Look at what you’ve put down and try to put the 5 ways of showing love in an order of importance to yourself. Then without showing each other what you’ve written down try and list your spouse’s “love languages” in order of priority.
8. When you’ve done that show each other what you’ve written down and discuss it together.

### **Comment**

At the end of your discussion you will hopefully understand each other a little better and know how you might show your spouse, convincingly, that you love them and want to do it.

### **Action**

Make a mental, or diary, note to do something in the next few days that will speak of your love for your spouse – if you’ve done this together they’ll be watching for it!