

## Love Currency: Learning How to Exchange Love

Individuals like to give and receive love, however usually they do this in their own unique way. When two people have a relationship they express love in these unique ways, and sometimes these emotional expressions get misread. Learning to express love in a way that other family members can understand is an important part of the emotional health of your family.

Each individual has an emotional bank account. We make emotional deposits in others accounts by expressing love in the way that makes sense to those we care about. We occasionally have to make withdrawals by giving constructive feedback or following through with consequences.

Gary Chapman, Ph.D. identified five primary love languages. Giving love in a variety of ways is helpful, however, when we speak each other's primary love language, it will touch more deeply and will more rapidly fill the emotional bank account. If we ignore each other's primary love language, using the other four forms of currency is not likely to fill the emotional bank account.

According to Gary Chapman Ph.D., There are five primary love languages:

**Words of Affirmation.** This means giving sincere and specific words of praise. If you are not able to praise results you should praise efforts. This also means expressing words of affection (saying I love you or I enjoy being with you). It is good to speak affirming words in front of family members although with teenagers, it may not be a good idea to speak to them in front of peers.

**Physical Touch.** This means hugging, cuddling, kissing, back rubs, pats on the back, arm wrestling, etc. There are many different kinds of touch. With teenagers it is important to find the appropriate time to touch. Inappropriate physical touch includes anything that is physically or sexually abusive.

**Quality Time.** This does not refer to proximity, but rather to togetherness. This means really listening and validating each other like, teaching instead of preaching and participating in quality activities. The most important thing is to focus on the person that you are spending quality time with and not try to do other things at the same time (i.e., don't try to fold laundry and have a heart- to- heart conversation with your teen at the same time).

**Acts of Service.** As parents you probably feel that you give constant service to your children and you are probably right, but to show love through service you have to check your attitude. Making the child feel guilty for all that you do around the house is not going to help them feel loved. Manipulation is not showing love. "I will drive you to the mall if you clean your room," is not giving an act of service. Some acts of service may include teaching someone how to do something they don't know how to do. Teaching your daughter to do laundry before she goes to college is a definite act of service.

**Gifts.** Gifts are visible, tangible evidence of emotional love. Again, a true gift is not used to manipulate someone into doing something you would like him or her to do. Giving gifts should be done with some sort of ceremony. Remember the purpose of the gift is to express emotional love. Gifts may also include things of little monetary value but things that are

treasured for what they mean to the family. Gifts should never be given to take the place of true love. (This kind of gift giving is done by busy or absentee parents who are trying to make up for their deficits as parents by giving gifts.)

Each of you should list the 5 love languages in order from how you most like to receive love to how you least like to receive love (#1 being your primary love language). Also list the ways you tend to express love to other members of your family.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

How do you like to receive love?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

How do you like to express love?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

How do you like to receive love?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

How do you like to express love?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

How do you like to receive love?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

How do you like to express love?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Possible Discussion Questions:

- Are your current ways of showing love being recognized?
- How could you better express and receive love?
- What could you do this week to express love in the primary love language of your family members?

For more information check out [The Five Love Languages](#), and [The Five Love Languages of Teenagers](#) by Gary Chapman, Ph.D.

