

## Languages of Love

Your love language may differ from your child's. Each of us speaks and understands one that makes it easy for us to feel loved. If you try to communicate using only your native language, it may be foreign to other people. To be understood, you need to know and speak your family's language. Which one is it?

1. **Words of Affirmation**: Verbal expressions of appreciation, compliments, praise, and thanks, conveyed for the well being of the one you love. Such communication demonstrates: ***encouragement***: it inspires and motivates (not pressures) another to pursue a latent interest or achieve personal potential; ***kindness***: it encompasses loving tones and truthful statements to build intimacy, express understanding, share difficult feelings or show forgiveness; and ***humility***: it requests instead of demands, asks instead of nags.
2. **Acts of service**: happily doing things you know your child would like you to do or helping your family with tasks that need to be done. Examples might include helping keep their room clean, taking them to a friend's house, helping with homework, ironing, cooking or going out for dinner, or attending a fun outing. Such acts require thought, time, planning, and effort. They are done in love not fear, or guilt, resentment or duty and may go against social or family stereotypes.
3. **Receiving Gifts**: Tokens or symbols of affection, caring, remembrance and thoughtfulness. They may be ***tangible gifts***: little (or big) presents that you've found, made or purchased, given either at a special time or for no specific occasion; or ***gifts of self***: your physical presence in important moments or times of crisis.
4. **Quality Time**: Focused, undivided and uninterrupted attention, despite busyness and business. It is demonstrated in: ***togetherness***: not just proximity, but in the simple emotional connection and enjoyment of being with each other; ***meaningful conversation***: sympathetic (not just solution-oriented) dialogue and active listening to share feelings, thoughts, and desires in a friendly uninterrupted context; and ***shared activities***: doing things together that interest one or both of you just in order to create a unique experience and mutual memory.
5. **Physical Touch**: communication of your love through the body's nerve endings, with sensitivity to what methods, circumstances, and timing your child finds satisfactory. It includes hugs, kisses, hand holding, back scratching, sitting close, or hair stroking. It also encompasses long, empathetic embraces and tender touches of understanding when your child is in tears or times of crisis.

Dr. Gary Chapman