

ISS PYAR KO KYA NAAM DUN?

Annie Benedict

Love; the most prominent word in the English language and the most misunderstood one. Well, why shouldn't it be? Where one could feel loved by simply spending time with their loved ones, another would feel the same way through a warm hug, a thoughtful gift or even a kind word. Though love seems like the glue holding all relationships together, there is certainly no 'one kind' of loving. We all experience love differently.

● Not quite clear? Let me walk you through some examples.

You might have experienced that buying expensive gifts for your mom to atone for some wrong you did, didn't seem to make her happy, and you kept scratching your head thinking, "Mein kuch bhi karu, Mum-my kabhi khush hi nahi hoti!" or "I bought her this, I bought her that, she still seems upset!".

Well, what do you think is going wrong here?

Clearly, you are showing love which YOU think is the best way to feel loved and not trying to love her in the way SHE would feel loved. Maybe she just wanted you to finish a task that you said you would do or just needed a heartfelt apology from your end. It could be anything! You just need to know her language, her 'Love Language'.

Love is lifeless without expressing it. When we love someone, we try to make it known; communicating through words or actions. Once you get the communication right, you can work through any conflict that arises in the relationship.

Love is meant to be shared, to be shown. When one talks about communication it merely doesn't mean how you say but how well you are heard and understood. Expressing love obeys the same ground rule. You can't be speaking English and expect a native Chinese to understand you. You may be saying this in the best way intended, but it's of no use unless it makes sense to the other. So, the bottom line is, you need to learn the language of the other person. The way they talk and vice versa.

Dr Gary Chapman, an American Counselor and author, came up with 'Five Love Languages': five different ways of expressing love – and receiving it – from the other. During his sessions with couples, Chapman began noticing a pattern. He realized that most of the problems arose due to misunderstanding each other's needs. This led to the discovery of the Five Love Languages in which he describes how to use these languages to show your care to the ones you love in a way that speaks straight to their heart. Let's understand them one by one.

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

“The tongue has the power of life and death”
Proverbs 18:21

“Words of affirmation” is about expressing love emotionally through spoken words, appreciation or praise. When this is a person’s primary love language, you can make their day by simply complimenting them through spoken words, cute notes or just a text saying – “thinking about you.” For these people, a kind and encouraging word goes a long way. These verbal compliments are best expressed in simple, straightforward statements of affirmation, such as:

- “You look sharp in that suit.”
- “Wow! You look absolutely amazing in that dress!”
- “I really appreciate you cleaning up the room tonight.”

QUALITY TIME

“A central aspect of quality time is togetherness. I do not mean proximity.... Togetherness has to do with focused attention.” (Chapman, 2010, p. 89)

Someone with this love language demands “undivided attention”. They feel most loved if you are wholly present and focused on them. Not just being present physically, but being present with them emotionally and mentally. This doesn’t mean sitting together in one place but doing two different things; it means putting down your phone, turning off any other distractions, making eye contact and actively listening. Listening not to respond, but listening to understand and empathize with what they say and feel. People with this love language are looking for quality over quantity. If your loved one’s

language is quality time,

- Simply sit together and ask them how their day was and then pause to listen, uninterruptedly.
- Take a walk together through a familiar place and ask them about their memories and experiences related to that area.
- Set an activity to do together every day or at least weekly, like, cycling, going for a walk or a drive or catching up on your favorite snack on a weekend.
- Plan a getaway every now and then.
- Most importantly, ask your loved one what would they enjoy doing the best and try to implement it.

RECEIVING GIFTS

“Gifts are visual symbols of love.” (Chapman, 2010, p. 113)

For someone with this love language, gift-giving is seen as a symbol of love and affection; they hold a high emotional value. If your loved one’s love language is receiving gifts, you can become a proficient gift giver; It is one of the easiest love languages to learn! They often remember every gift they have received from their loved ones because it makes such an impact on them – it tells them you really know them.

Gifts come in all shapes, sizes and colours, they may be purchased, found (a wildflower growing along the way) or simply made (a colourful note or a handmade card) and need not be expensive. It doesn’t matter whether it costs money, it is more what is behind the gift that appeals to them.

- Try a parade of gifts: Leave a box of chocolate for your loved one; have a special meal delivered in the afternoon; give

them a shirt in the evening. When they ask, “What’s going on?” you respond: “Just trying to fill your love tank!” (Chapman, 2010, p. 125)

- Let nature be your inspiration: The next time you take a walk, keep your eyes open for a gift for your loved one. It could be a flower, a pebble or even a stick.
- You may even attach special meaning to your natural gift. For example, a smooth stone may symbolize your marriage with many of the rough places now polished. (Don’t be afraid to get a little cheesy!)
- Value handmade originals
- Offer the gift of presence. Say to your partner: “I want to offer the gift of my presence at any event or on any occasion you would like this month. You tell me when, and I will make every effort to be there.” (Chapman, 2010, p. 127)

ACTS OF SERVICE

“Actions speak louder than words.”

An act of service is a physical expression of a thoughtful and emotional gesture. For people whose primary love language is acts of service, they receive love when you seek to please them by serving them lovingly, by doing things for them. It could be cooking a meal, washing the car, doing the dishes, dusting the shelves, brooming the house, refilling water bottles, or restocking the eatables before they run out. All these acts require thought, time, effort, energy, and presence which done in a good spirit, are truly expressions of love.

When you take the initiative to ease some of their (your loved one’s) responsibilities and burdens, it helps them feel taken care of, secure, and immensely loved in return. A few things you can do for your loved one are:

- Pick up their favourite snack when shopping for groceries
- Open the door for them.
- Randomly take them out to their favourite restaurant after a long day.
- Buy things before the supply gets over.
- Complete the work they haven’t had the time to do yet, like organizing the drawer or cleaning out the fridge.
- Encourage them to do something for them, like seeing their friends or doing an activity they like but don’t do often
- Show interest in their hobby by attending an event they care about
- Make a list of all the requests your loved one has made of you over the past few weeks. Select one of these each week and do it as an expression of love.

PHYSICAL TOUCH

People with physical touch as their primary love language feel love through physical affection. Touch is indeed one of the most sensitive and primal ways to communicate emotional love and care right from the mother-infant relationship. Innumerable research and infant observation studies have revealed that children who are held, hugged and kissed by their primary caregiver (mostly the mother) develop a stronger sense of self and have a healthy emotional life than those who are neglected for long periods without physical contact.

Physical touch is also a powerful vehicle for communicating marital love such as holding hands, embracing, cuddling or just a kind tap on the shoulder are all ways of communicating emotional love to one’s partner. For those, whose physical touch is their primary love language, without it, they feel unloved. And with it, their affective (emotional) tank is full and they feel loved and reassured by

their partner.

Most specifically, having touch as a love language means that small physical gestures—such as having you put your arm around them in public or snuggle up close to them on the couch while watching TV together—matter a lot more to them than things like gifts or saying “I love you.”

But one also needs to understand that this love language holds the power to make or break a relationship, communicating hate or love. A slap in the face, which is detrimental to any child, will be devastating to a child whose primary love language is touch. Similarly, a warm hug, that communicates love to any child, will shout bouts of love to the child whose primary love language is physical touch. The same holds true for adults.

If your loved one's language is physical touch,

- Whenever you appreciate them, tap them on their shoulders or hold their hand and say the words.
- Give them a hug if they are feeling low.
- As you walk from the car to the shopping mall, reach out and hold your spouse's hand.
- While your spouse is seated, walk up behind them and keep your hand on their shoulders.
- Whenever you pray, hold your partner's hand and pray.
- When family or friends are visiting, sit close to your spouse, touch their arm in their presence or simply place your hand on their shoulder. It says, “Even with all these people in our house, I still see you.”
- When your spouse arrives home, meet him or her one step earlier than usual

and give your mate a big hug.

- Sit close to your spouse when you're watching a movie. Cuddles go a long way!

We all receive love differently and when needed, we have to learn to give love differently. Knowing your and your loved one's love language is one of the single most crucial things in a relationship. However, it is possible sometimes for your partner/friend to have the same love language as yours, but mostly, it is different and one needs to make an effort to learn and imply the same because only by truly recognizing and expressing/receiving the right love language can one satisfy their emotional needs.

So, this week, spend some time with yourself and find out what YOUR love language is and how you expect to be loved. After you've truly understood your love language and your needs, try to find out about your family and loved ones' language. And how do we do that? Well, surprisingly, you can take the following quiz to identify yours!

<https://5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/love-language/>

Knowing the love language is a game changer! It helps break down misunderstandings and aids in the relationship's quality. And most importantly my dear readers, do not, I repeat DO NOT EXPECT YOUR PARTNER TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU. Put in a habit of asking and telling each other – “How would you like to be loved?”, “I felt loved when you did (this)... or when you said (that)... ” etc. Know that your friend/partner cannot read your mind! Trust me, not even a psychologist can do that (spoiler alert!). So, remember that communication is the key; key to genuine, loving and lasting

relationships.

So, do not be afraid to love! Be patient with yourself and with those around you. Finding out a love language cannot take place overnight, but in the meantime, know that your efforts count! It is an effort you put in every day, a choice you make every day – to love yourself and to love someone. It is a bumpy ride, but it is unreservedly worth it. It is undoubtedly, a wonderful feeling to be loved and to love. For,

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails.” (1 Corinthians 13)

Love,
Annie Benedict
A fighter and a lover
Oh! And yes, a Counselling Psychologist :D