



The Secret Languages of Lasting Love



Sarah Tolmie, Life & Love Coach & Celebrant

“The two biggest problems that occur in relationships are negative emotions and unfulfilled needs. Understanding each other’s love language and using it to express your love for them can address both these issues.

With sky-rocketing rates of divorce, and even higher rates for second and third marriages, how worthwhile would it be, how many hearts, families and marriages would it save, for couples to take the time to learn each other’s love language?” Sarah Tolmie.

How is it that such promising relationships and marriages, which begin with love, happiness and good intentions, flounder over time as love loses out to the day-to-day realities and demands of life?

According to Life & Love Coach and Celebrant Sarah Tolmie, “What tends to happen in troubled relationships is that each couple is talking in a different language and subsequently they can feel they are giving out love and not receiving any back. This leads to negative emotions and feeling your needs are not being met. Quite simply, you are not being told you are loved in the language you understand”.

There are five basic languages of love and everyone has a primary way of both giving and receiving love. Learning each other’s love language and expressing love to your partner in **their** primary love language (which might be different to yours) is the single most effective way to ensure you maintain and grow a loving relationship. It is also the best way to repair a stagnating relationship and even save a marriage in crisis.

“Once falling in love has run its course, and it does, the art of real loving happens. This kind of loving is an act of choice, a rational, volitional decision to love a person with discipline, energy and effort. Unfortunately what can often happen is each partner reverts back to their comfort zone which is their own primary love language and soon we can feel taken for granted, unappreciated and unloved. Learning each others Love Language is an easy way to begin conscious loving habits and practices that build a strong foundation of love. ,” said Sarah.

The primary love languages are quality time, acts of service, gifts, physical touch, and words of affirmation.



DEFINITIONS OF THE LOVE LANGUAGES

Gifts

Please don't think of this one as a sign of materialism. Significant rituals and times of celebration almost always involve gift exchange or gift giving. A gift is a tangible, visible symbol that someone is thinking of you. Remember the expression "it's the thought that counts". In the language of gifts it is as much about the act of securing the gift and giving it that shows love. Gifts can be purchased, found or made. A gift can also be intangible, the gift of self or 'presence'. Eg. at the time of crisis, accompanying someone to a funeral, being present for your wife at the birth of your child. Listen to a person's language for indications, for example, when they say, "to have him with me through that experience was the greatest **gift** he could have given me".

Acts of Service

Doing things you know your partner would like you to do, and doing them with a positive spirit and intention to please them by the act serving, doing and helping, is the love language of Acts of Service. Eg help around the house, with the kids, running an errand. It is the thought of love expressed by the planning, time, effort and energy. Acts of Service can be undertaken with initiative, by taking notice or a partner can ask for them, but remember – 'requests give directions to love, but demands stop the flow of love'. A demand takes the choice out of it and can cause resentment, and removes the essence of the 'act of service' where the intention comes from love and a 'positive spirit'.

Words of Affirmation

Verbal compliments, or words of affirmation, praise, encouraging words, kind words, humble words, are all powerful communicators of love. Words of Affirmation can be direct or indirect (ie. Saying nice things about your partner to others too). They can be spoken or written eg. Cards, love letters, sms and email. Whether words of affirmation are your language or not, remember everybody negatively reacts to words of criticism. Criticism hurts. Criticism is death by a 1000 cuts to a relationship. Learn to give feedback in a tender, constructive and specific way, sandwiched between two positive comments specific to the issue.

Quality Time

Quality time is about giving someone your undivided attention. Eye contact, listening, doing things **together**. (Being in the same room reading your own book is not reading together!). The activity is less relevant than the 'feeling' and the emotions shared and created. A dialect of quality time can be quality conversation....(not to be confused with words of affirmation. If your partner's language is quality time/conversation, it is more about hearing, not saying – not badgering with questions and talking, but a genuine desire to understand her thoughts, feelings and desires).

Physical Touch

From when we are babies and children we experience physical touch as a way of communicating emotional love. In a relationship, physical touch is also a powerful vehicle for communicating love – holding hands, kissing, embracing and sexual intercourse. The sense of touch is not localized to one area of the body - the body has tactile receptors all over it. The language of physical touch can be explicit and demand full attention (back rub, massage, sex) or implicit, such as a slight touch as you walk by or the squeeze of the hand during a movie. Remember, physical touch can make or break a relationship (it can communicate love **and** hate) and for many, physical violence is an absolute deal breaker. For people whose primary love language is physical touch, infidelity is an especially painful, often insurmountable relationship breaker.



REAL LOVE IS A CHOICE

Love is a basic and essential human need. It affects our sense of security, self worth and significance. It gives life meaning. Just like a car needs petrol to go, a relationship needs love to grow. When we have a full 'emotional love tank' our relationship will flourish and grow. If our 'love tanks' are empty, it will stagnate, stall and break.

In the context of a marriage or relationship, if we do not feel loved, our differences and problems are magnified and it becomes a battlefield rather than a haven. Whilst expressing love alone is not the only answer to relationship differences and problems, it creates a climate of security and respect from which couples can seek answers, discuss differences and resolve conflicts. Love will bring out the best in each other.

When the euphoria of the 'in love' experience fades (when all the languages are being fired off), this is when true love, real love begins. The decision to love your partner involves a conscious choice, and act of will, effort and discipline. Your partner's love language may not come natural to you, however when you **choose** to love your partner you can and will find appropriate ways to express that decision.

What is YOUR Primary Love Language?

At a guess....is it

- a) Gifts
- b) Words of Affirmation
- c) Physical Touch
- d) Quality Time
- e) Acts of Service

What is your PARTNERs Primary Love Language?

At a guess....is it

- a) Gifts
- b) Words of Affirmation
- c) Physical Touch
- d) Quality Time
- e) Acts of Service

What is your CHILDS Primary Love Language?

At a guess....is it

- a) Gifts
- b) Words of Affirmation
- c) Physical Touch
- d) Quality Time
- e) Acts of Service

Questions to help you determine your primary love language:

What makes you feel most loved by your partner?

What do you desire above all else?

What have you most often requested of your spouse?

What do you do or say to express love to your spouse? Chances are what you are doing for them is what you wish they would do for you!



RELATED CONVERSATIONS

Know thyself.

The new integrated modern psychologies all recognize the power of our unconscious mind to direct our programmed behaviours, values, beliefs and memories. Our human struggle is the journey towards wholeness, and completing the full expression of who we are as a person. What this means in the context of relationships is that we can tend to treat our partner as the missing piece of the puzzle, hence the phrase, “our other half”. It is also revealed in a common sentiment, such as “with my partner I feel whole, I feel complete”.

Carl Jung goes as far to say that we ‘marry our unconscious mind’. What is meant by that is we are drawn to our partner by a powerful unconscious ‘recognition’ that this person is a person who by the very match of their traits with yours will reveal you to yourself. They will make you grow. And in a many ways, the goal of relationships is not to make us happy, it is to make us grow. Loving someone and having someone love us, is about expanding, enriching and exploring “Us”. Our partners reveal ourselves to us, the light and the shade, the known and the hidden. Where there are problems in a relationship, it is simply an indicator of where you need growth and knowledge about yourself.

The minute I first heard my first love story, I started looking for you not knowing how blind that was. Lovers don't finally meet somewhere; they're in each other all along.
Rumi

The price you pay for not taking responsibility for your own pain is the failure to realise that you can change your conditions by changing your thoughts.

The other person doesn't have to consciously join you in the change....just whoever is saner at the time. Everything you need in life already exists inside your head.

Marianne Williamson

You create your reality.

You cannot change another person. You can only change yourself, change your perception and change your response to a situation and your environment. What you focus your thoughts on is what you get. It is the Law of Attraction, energy flows where attention goes, and it works in relationships too.

If you are in a relationship where only one party is currently willing to apply the ‘love languages’ approach, don't lose heart. It takes only one person to change the direction of the conversation. Once **you** think differently, and therefore behave differently, it opens up new possibilities and potential for those around you to also respond and behave differently. And then everything changes.

If you can accurately understand your partners primary love language and begin to converse again that way with them, then their love tank will begin to fill again. Loving feelings can return and this can open the door for you to begin the necessary open and honest conversation about your needs too. You can tell them the source of the changes within you and begin to request reciprocity in your love language. Don't expect your partner to intuit your needs. You will need to speak up and clearly articulate them. And just like learning a new language, they may not be fluent straight away.



Love thyself.

Essential to true loving is an honest, real and grounded love for yourself. If you are not filling up your own love tank with a healthy dose of self love and care, what you are unconsciously communicating to others is, "it is not worth your time and energy loving me because I don't even love myself".

Life is love
and love is life
Bagavad Gita

Self love is not only necessary and good, it is a prerequisite for loving others. Are you speaking to yourself in your own primary love language? Are you giving yourself quality time for self reflection? Are you listening to yourself and honouring your thoughts and feelings? What is the conversation in your head? Are you taking care of your body? Are you doing things for yourself that you need? Are you rewarding yourself with a well deserved gift?

Sometimes we can become so far removed from loving ourselves that we don't remember how to do this. Or we overcompensate in unhealthy and misdirected ways such as overeating, overspending, being highly critical, affairs or promiscuity, or becoming a martyr of self sacrifice. If you need help to overcome issues that affect your ability to love and respect yourself, get the help you need and remove the limiting blocks within you that prevent you from fulfillment in life and love.

Negative Emotions and Limiting Decisions/Beliefs

You can't drive a car forward by looking through the rearview mirror. Similarly, you can't move forward into your future when you are held and focused on the past. Carrying negative emotions, hurts and resentments will stymie relationship reconciliation and growth. Similarly, all of us have created limiting decisions and beliefs of ourselves and others that keep us bound in deeply imprinted and programmed behaviors that may not serve us any more. In addition to practising the 'love languages' approach, couples need to individually take responsibility to clear their baggage and search within themselves for the resources, strengths and abilities they need to acquire to grow and create the future they want.

Using Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) techniques, Time Line Therapy®, Hypnosis and Quantum Linguistics, by gaining understandings between the conscious mind and unconscious mind you can release negative emotions and limiting decisions that have defined your reality to date, and create real change through new behaviours, thinking decisions, beliefs and values. For real and lasting change, positive thinking and will power alone is not enough. There are powerful forces at work that keep you reverting to old patterns and behaviours, and sabotaging change with limiting beliefs and internal conflicts. That powerful force is the prime driver of human behaviour called our **unconscious mind**.

All learning and behaviour is programmed into us at the unconscious level. Created by our experiences in life, our unconscious mind stores our memories and emotions and forms the values and beliefs that are the basis of our behaviour. Many of our behaviour patterns, of course, are healthy and work for us just fine. But those which were formed based on negative emotions and limiting decisions, (even if we can't remember the root cause of these emotions or decision), stop us successfully achieving our goals and successfully integrating a change for the better.

Your mind is a powerful and willing tool for learning and change. Your body and your unconscious mind are continually responding to your thoughts and emotions. Gaining mastery over your thoughts and emotions has a direct effect on your body, on behaviour and on your potential to create your own reality. If you are willing to change, then you **can** make the changes quite easily and quickly to create a new future, a more aware and evolved you, and achieve your goals.



Family Love

The power of love languages is not only relevant to spouses and lovers, it can also be applied to how you communicate with your children and interrelate as a family too. Think about how love was expressed (or withheld) in your family when you were a child. These deeply ingrained imprints and patterns can often unconsciously appear in your own family dynamic. Are you recreating the same patterns? Have you modelled your parenting (consciously or unconsciously) on how love was expressed by your parents and is it working for you now?

Have you ever heard people tell their family ‘story’ and claim one sibling was the favourite, the one the parents loved more? Maybe it is simply love languages lost in translation. Maybe strained relationships between parents and kids can be softened and better understood once you view them with a new perspective.

How is it that kids from good homes can go off track and act out in antisocial, dangerous and even criminal ways? Could it be their emotional love tanks are empty too? Much misbehaviour in children and teens could be traced back to empty love tanks.

We may love our kids equally, but siblings can have different primary languages. Observe your child. Watch how they express love to you and others. That is a clue to their love language. When family members start speaking each other’s primary love language, the emotional climate of a family can be greatly enhanced.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

The following resources not only saved my marriage but have led me on a spiritual journey of self discovery and union with myself and within my marriage. They are only the tip of the iceberg of many wonderful resources available for couples, but I have revisited these ones often as both theoretical and practical reference material. I gratefully acknowledge the wisdoms contained and draw heavily on these philosophies and understandings in my coaching and counseling work.

The Five Languages of Love, Gary Chapman

Getting The Love You Want – A Guide For Couples, Harville Hendrix, Ph.D

The Path to Love, Deepak Chopra

Return to Love, Marianne Williamson

The Art of Loving, Erich Fromm

The Psychology of Romantic Love, Robert A. Johnson

“Children who feel loved by their parents & peers will develop a primary love language based on their unique psychological makeup and the way their parents and significant others express love to them.

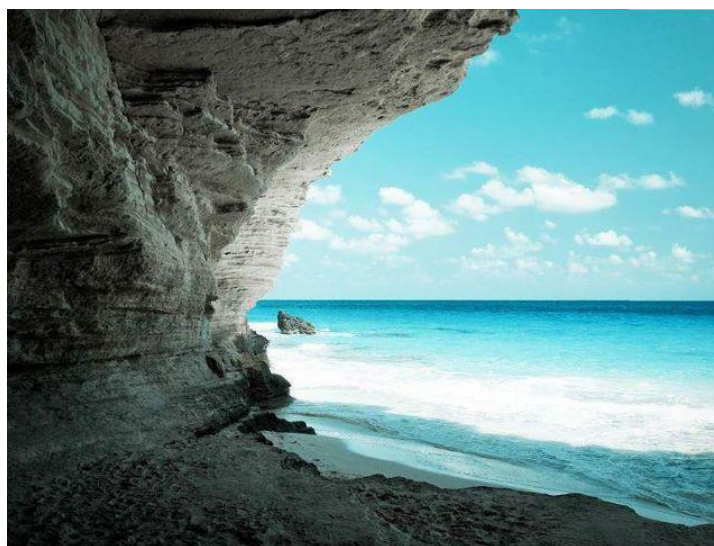
Children who do not feel loved by their parents & peers will also develop a primary love language however it will be somewhat distorted in much the same way as some kids learn poor grammar and have an underdeveloped vocabulary”.

Gary Chapman



"The law of Love is based on abundance; we are completely filled with Love all the time, and our supply is always full and running over. When we give our Love unconditionally to others with no expectations of return, the Love within us extends, expands, and joins. So by giving our Love away we increase the Love within us and everyone gains." -- Gerald G. Jampolsky

"Do not underestimate the Power of Thoughts. Just as Water has the Power to shift and mold Earth's Landscape; Your Thoughts have the Power to shift and mold the Landscape of your Life." -- Chuck Danes



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