

## Love Languages

The first couple I interviewed was Karen and Scott. They've been married for 22 years and have no children. They had never heard of the five Love Languages so it was great being able to introduce them to the information and have them discuss their answers.

I found it interesting that Karen answered quickly and was quite sure of her answers. Scott had to think about it a little more and wasn't as confident. When they shared their answers with each other they got two of them the same and they were both quite happy with that. They both enjoy spending time together so that came up. They shared how they had just spent time going to the craft store the day before. He stayed in the car and let her shop as long as she wanted. She expressed her appreciation that he was so willing to go with her. Watching them discuss the answers and share their stories was helpful in seeing how well they communicated with each other. You could tell they were open to expressing their needs and being mindful of each other.

She said his number one love language was Words of Affirmation and he disagreed. He said it was spending time together. They discussed what they thought and part of it was a difference of interpretation of what words of affirmation meant. She said she thought the words gave him respect and he thought the words were just compliments which he said he didn't need. I liked the discussion they had about the differences. It was clear they were both interested in having the other person understand what they were saying to each other. They came to an understanding and we moved on.

Scott mentioned he was not surprised that she had physical touch as her number four where this was number two for him. By their conversation you could tell physical touch was higher on his list than hers. He instituted hugs in the morning before they left for work so there was a physical connection to start the day. He likes to hold her hand or snuggle while watching TV at night but she is

usually drawing or doing something crafty so she's busy. It was fascinating to me they were so open and honest about their feelings. I thought it was a great interview.

The second couple I interviewed was Fred and Ethel (they preferred I use their stage names). They have been married for 34 years and have one adult son living on his own. They had never heard of the love languages either.

Same as before, Ethel was much quicker coming up with her answers and Fred took a little longer. They were not surprised at all that none of their answers matched and they were all over the place. Ethel did list touch as one of Fred's most important love languages. He was quite surprised she had it as one of her top three. It was quite fascinating watching them discuss their answers together. They were very relaxed about it all. Deferring to each other with their answers. They've learned to read each other's verbal and physical cues and give space where needed. They said they were both people pleasers. They seemed to have a very comfortable and easy-going relationship. It was actually nice to see. They mentioned they were quite a boring couple. I didn't think so at that time but after thinking about it maybe they could spice things up by doing something different together. At the next session, I'll give them some homework to mix things up a bit.

I really enjoyed the assignment and can see the benefit of talking to a couple about their different styles of love language. It was great to see them interact with each other and see how they communicate when they agree and disagree. These two couples don't seem to have any serious issues but there's always room for improvement and it might be nice for them to try something different and step up their game to spice things up.

This was just an initial interview but I can see how this can be useful helping a couple learn how to communicate and understand the other partners language and learning how they communicate their love to each other. I can see how interesting and useful it would be to talk about the love language of

your parents and what you received as a child and how that plays out in your marriage relationship. What seems natural for you to express based on what you've received. Also, what might not be comfortable for you but is necessary to your partner to feel loved. This opens the door to understanding what each person needs and why and how to express it. Also, how to recognize when your partner is expressing their love but not necessarily in your language. Talking about love languages and how your family of origin expresses love is a great way to start looking at family patterns. I think it gives the couple something tangible to look at and gives words and recognition to actions that they might not have seen as communicating love. I can see how using this in a session and giving homework can help the couple start to see patterns in their own relationship. It can help each person be more mindful and intentional about expressing love to their partner in a very specific way. Scott from the first couple mentioned that women need love and men need respect, I think he read that in a book somewhere. The same one I read! The important thing to remember and to help the couple develop in their relationship is what your spouse needs and wants NOT what the general man or general woman needs. I think knowing and understanding the different love languages and being mindful of your spouse's preferences is a great way to show your spouse how much you care. I really liked this assignment and will use it in my sessions in the future when appropriate. It's about knowing what the love languages are and paying attention to what your spouse is saying and/or doing to show love. Ultimately, knowing about love languages and being mindful of the love language of your friends and/or family can enhance any relationship.