

Expressing Love

It was suggested to Megan to read a certain book on “Love Languages” before she got married. She suggested that we read the book together, I reluctantly accepted. It’s not that I don’t want to make her happy or that I dislike reading, on the contrary that is why I accepted to read the book. I just have an aversion to books that have a purple cover and pink writing. In trying to uphold a manly appearance I normally would shun such an effeminate book. But, because I love my wife-to-be I began reading. I wasn’t disappointed in finding the way the material was presented to be touchy feely. I felt as if I could have been in the middle of an episode Of the Oprah Winfrey Show. As I read the words they would resound in my head in the voice of a self help seminar speaker. I was waiting for him to ask me to repeat along with him “I’m good enough, I’m smart enough, and gosh darnit people like me!”

As I got into the substance of the book I realized that despite the cheesy presentation, there really was an important message to be learned from the author’s observations. I finished the book and felt that what the author had said was important enough to warrant sharing it with my family. Hence this submission will contain my thoughts and reflections on what I have read.

The basic premise is one that is familiar to all of us. No matter how much we love someone else that person won’t feel of our love if we don’t do something to express our feelings. Even our Heavenly Father said if ye love me keep my commandments. The author of the book maintains that there are five basic categories that people use to express and receive love. Those are, 1) Words of affection, 2) Acts of service, 3) Quality time, 4) Gift giving, and 5) Physical touch. I personally have seen examples of each of these expressed by our parents. They are often telling us how much they love us and individually taken us aside to let us know how much we mean to them. They are very self sacrificing and constantly serve each of us. I don’t know

how many sleepless nights they've had staying up to sew a dress or cleaning buildings on top of their regular work load so that we might have the physical things that we want. Time spent as a family has always been a priority and we have always felt love and warmth in how they support us in our various activities. Whether that's attending sporting events or helping to make a pinewood derby car. We have never gone a Christmas or birthday without ample presents from parents and siblings. Lastly, at home physical touch abounds in hugs and kisses and even the occasional Hungarian Kidney Smasher. So these are all ways of showing love and I think we have plenty of personal examples of specifics within these categories.

I don't think that any of what I have shared so far is new or earth shattering for any of us, and I don't really think any of what the book illustrated will be. We have all grown up in a house of love and have felt loved. The part that I found informative is how he takes these concepts that we have learned and synthesizes some important observations about them. The major one being, that people experience love in different ways. The story comes to mind of the patient who goes to see his Optometrist. The Optometrist, who also wears glasses, says to his patient, "here take my glasses, they work for me therefore they should work for you." This was an obvious error in handling the situation, but sometimes it's not so obvious when we are doing it ourselves. For example, I might feel most loved when someone tells me they love and appreciate me. However, if I try and use what works for me on someone who feels most loved when they get quality time, it's not going to work. For all my words, if I don't find out what makes them feel loved they might not feel loved and think my words empty, because they weren't backed by an action. So, the long and short of it is simply to find out what makes people happy, what makes them feel loved, and do those things. I think we all know this, but sometimes we forget, sometimes it's harder than it looks.

We often do what comes most naturally for us. If I like hearing people tell me they love me then I'm more apt to do that. However, if that isn't what comes naturally for me but, it's something that makes another person happy it will require more effort on my part to do it. I personally have never been big on sharing my emotions with others, it's not something that comes natural to me. I found out that this is something important for Megan, and that she was having a hard time over in China for a while, because I didn't let her know verbally how I felt about her. When I finally figured this out I still didn't feel very comfortable doing it, it still didn't come naturally to me, but I wanted her to know so I did it anyway. The key is to just do it. If you love someone make them feel that.

When someone feels loved they will be more likely to return love and then you get an upward spiral instead of a downward one. An easy way to find out what works is to just ask people what makes them happy and do those things for them. Another idea is to try all of these categories and find what works best. Maybe they all work, but some will definitely work better than others.

Maybe all of you have figured this out already, and I'm just slow but I felt that it was a good synopsis of how to let others know you care, so I wrote what I thought might be helpful. I want you all to know that I love you and I have felt loved by you, now it is my responsibility to see what makes you all happy and try and do that.

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