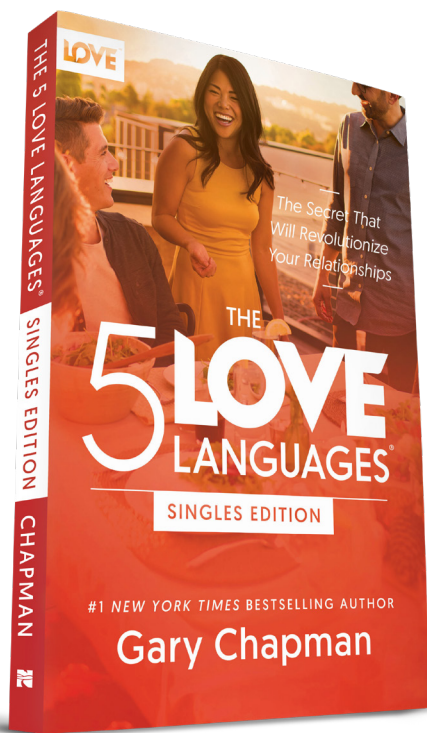




With more than 20 million copies sold, *The 5 Love Languages®* continues to strengthen relationships worldwide. Although originally crafted for married couples, the love languages have proven applicable to families, friends, and even coworkers. *The 5 Love Languages® Singles Edition* will show you how.

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SINGLE ADULTS:

Significant and Growing

If you're reading this book, chances are you're either single or know someone who is. Approximately half of all American adults are single—46.4 percent of us. (By contrast, in 1950 that number stood at about 22 percent.¹)

Twenty percent of American adults have never married—a number representing a “historic high.”² The median age of a first marriage has risen to twenty-seven among women and twenty-nine among men. This means that, in the general population among people eighteen to twenty-four, almost four out of every five (78 percent) have never been married.

1. Divorced. It is difficult to get a true handle on the divorce rate in this country, although the “one out of every two marriages” number has been widely debunked. But Professor Scott Stanley of the University of Denver notes that a young couple marrying for the first time today has a lifetime divorce risk of 40 percent, “unless current

trends change significantly.”³ The point is, millions of Americans are “single again” due to divorce; millions more are separated from their spouses. Research indicates that almost 87 percent of separated couples proceed to obtain a divorce.⁴

2. Widowed. Widowhood is definitely gender-based. Four out of five adults who are single because of the death of their spouse are females. Sixty-six percent of all women sixty-five and older are widowed.⁵

3. Single parents. Today there are about 12 million single-parent families in the United States, 80 percent of them headed by women. One in four children under the age of eighteen is being raised without a father—one out of every three families.⁶

DIVERSE YET UNITED

Clearly, single adults are a diverse group of people. However, they are still united by those factors that hold all of us together as humans. Everyone wrestles with values, morals, relationships, and meaning. If you are a single adult, just like everyone else, you’re seeking to understand yourself and your place in the world. At the heart of these pursuits is the need as an unmarried person to give and receive emotional love.

There’s no denying that the single life can sometimes be better referred to as the lonely life. Loneliness can mean sexual longing, raising kids alone, grieving the loss of a spouse or significant other, struggling to find someone to connect with, financial uncertainty, facing an empty Friday night, and much more. But at the core, these people are all dealing with the same thing: the need for close, significant relationships with people who care about them, are there for them, will walk through life with them.

No matter which category of singleness you may fall into, as a single adult you want to feel loved by the significant people in your life. You also want to believe that others need your love. Giving and receiving love is at the center of every single adult's sense of well-being. If you feel loved and needed, you can survive the pressures of life. But without love, life can become exceedingly bleak.

THE MAN WITH THE METAL HALO

I first met Rob on one of my trips to the Grand Canyon (one of nature's most beautiful portraits). On the south rim of the canyon, somewhere near the Bright Angel Trail, I spotted Rob and two older adults. He wasn't hard to spot because he was wearing a back brace with a metal halo that circled his head. I gave him a friendly nod and a smile, my way of saying hello.

Rob responded, "Hello, I hope you're having a good morning." His inviting smile beckoned me into conversation. I discovered that he had suffered spinal injuries in a hiking accident. The older couple was his mom and dad.

The three had planned a family trip to the Grand Canyon two years earlier. The first year money was a problem, so they postponed their dream. Then Rob had his accident and they couldn't leave home. Now that Rob was doing somewhat better, they had come to see the canyon. When the family originally planned the trip, they intended to hike to the foot of the canyon. Their dream had been altered but not destroyed. So they planned to spend the week enjoying the sights.

Rob wheeled his chair into position for a great view of the trail and canyon, and he and his parents were soaking in the awe-inspiring panorama. I commended them for not giving up on their dream and wished them well.

My son and I continued our week together exploring the canyon. Toward the end of the week, I ran into Rob in the lobby of the Bright Angel Lodge. Because of our earlier encounter, it seemed I was seeing an old friend. We ended up talking for two hours. Rob shared his story about the fall that resulted in his injuries and the determined efforts of the rescue workers who flew him out by helicopter. He told me about the pain and the emotional struggle of those early days when he wasn't sure he would ever be able to walk again. He had a number of brushes with depression, had lost a new job opportunity, and spent many weeks in physical therapy.

When I asked what had enabled him to come through that experience and still have such a vibrant spirit, his answer was simple. "Love," he said. "That's the only way I could have made it. Mom and Dad were with me through the whole thing, and I had a girlfriend . . . not a romantic relationship, but a close friend who came to see me every day in those early weeks. I don't think I would have made it without her. She brought me hope. She encouraged me in my therapy, and she prayed with me. I had never had a girl pray with me before. There was something about the way she talked to God that gave me hope. Her words were like rain on my parched emotions.

"We're still good friends. Her love and the love of my folks brought me through."

Then Rob added, "I hope someday I can help someone else the way they have helped me."

Rob is a living example—both of the power of love and the single adult's deep need to love and be loved. Love is the fundamental building block of all human relationships. It will greatly impact our values and morals. I am also convinced that love is the most important ingredient in the single's search for meaning.

That is why I feel compelled to write this book on the five love languages. What you will read in the following pages has the potential to enhance every area of your life. Reading this book will require time, but I assure you that it will be time well invested. You have likely invested lots of time in learning the language of technology, not just at work but for social purposes.

Things like texting, the Internet (and Internet dating sites), and social networking through Facebook, Instagram, blogging, and on and on. If so, you have reaped the benefits. Unfortunately, most single adults (and most people in general) have spent more time thinking about technology than they have studying love.

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IT DOESN'T MAGICALLY HAPPEN!

I agree with Professor Leo Buscaglia, who spoke and wrote often about love. He said, “We seem to refuse to face the obvious fact that most of us spend our lives trying to find love, trying to live in it and dying without ever truly discovering it.”⁷

I have invested many years in helping people discover how to emotionally connect with each other—how to actively give and receive love, not passively wait for it to somehow magically happen. I can say with confidence that if you will read and apply the information given in the following chapters, you will discover how to give and receive love more effectively. You will discover the missing ingredient in some of your past relationships, and you will learn how to build wholesome, supportive relationships by learning to speak other people’s primary love language and better understand your own primary love language.

Much of the pain in broken relationships in our world stems from the truth that many of us in Western culture have never been serious students of love. We haven't taken it seriously enough to learn how it actually works. In the following pages you will meet dozens of single adults from all categories and all ages who have discovered that a proper understanding of love really does have the potential to change the world—and to change you and your relationships.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- 1. To what degree do you feel loved by the significant people in your life?*
- 2. In a time of need, have you experienced the love of a friend like what Rob described: "I don't think I would have made it without her"? If so, how did your friend show his or her love?*
- 3. Have you been a friend to someone in need? How did you express your love?*
- 4. How successful have you been in giving and receiving emotional love?*
- 5. How interested are you in studying the nature of love and learning new ways to express love?*

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