

# Contents of Set

*The 5 Love Languages*

*Things I Wish I'd Known Before We Got  
Married*



*THE* **5** *love*

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*LANGUAGES*<sup>®</sup>

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*The Secret to Love  
That Lasts*

Gary Chapman

NORTHFIELD PUBLISHING  
CHICAGO

# *Contents*

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Acknowledgments	9
1. What Happens to Love After the Wedding?	11
2. Keeping the Love Tank Full	19
3. Falling in Love	27
4. Love Language #1: Words of Affirmation	37
5. Love Language #2: Quality Time	55
6. Love Language #3: Receiving Gifts	75
7. Love Language #4: Acts of Service	91
8. Love Language #5: Physical Touch	107
9. Discovering Your Primary Love Language	119
10. Love Is a Choice	131
11. Love Makes the Difference	141
12. Loving the Unlovely	149
13. A Personal Word	165
Frequently Asked Questions	171
The 5 Love Languages Profile for Couples—for Him	191
The 5 Love Languages Profile for Couples—for Her	197
Notes	205

## *What Happens to Love After the Wedding?*

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At 30,000 feet, somewhere between Buffalo and Dallas, he put his magazine in his seat pocket, turned in my direction, and asked, “What kind of work do you do?”

“I do marriage counseling and lead marriage enrichment seminars,” I said matter-of-factly.

“I’ve been wanting to ask someone this for a long time,” he said. “What happens to the love after you get married?”

Relinquishing my hopes of getting a nap, I asked, “What do you mean?”

“Well,” he said, “I’ve been married three times, and each time, it was wonderful before we got married, but somehow after the wedding it all fell apart. All the love I thought I had for her and the love she seemed to have for me evaporated. I am a fairly intelligent person. I operate a successful business, but I don’t understand it.”

“How long were you married?” I asked.

“The first one lasted about ten years. The second time, we were married three years, and the last one, almost six years.”

“Did your love evaporate immediately after the wedding, or was it a gradual loss?” I inquired.

“Well, the second one went wrong from the very beginning. I don’t know what happened. I really thought we loved each other, but the honeymoon was a disaster, and we never recovered. We only dated six months. It was a whirlwind romance. It was really exciting! But after the marriage, it was a battle from the beginning.

“In my first marriage, we had three or four good years before the baby came. After the baby was born, I felt like she gave her attention to the baby and I no longer mattered. It was as if her one goal in life was to have a baby, and after the baby, she no longer needed me.”

“Did you tell her that?” I asked.

“Yes, I told her. She said I was crazy. She said I did not understand the stress of being a twenty-four-hour nurse. She said I should be more understanding and help her more. I really tried, but it didn’t seem to make any difference. After that, we just grew further apart. After a while, there was no love left, just deadness. Both of us agreed that the marriage was over.

“My last marriage? I really thought that one would be different. I had been divorced for three years. We dated each other for two years. I really thought we knew what we were doing, and I thought that perhaps for the first time I really knew what it meant to love someone. I genuinely felt that she loved me.

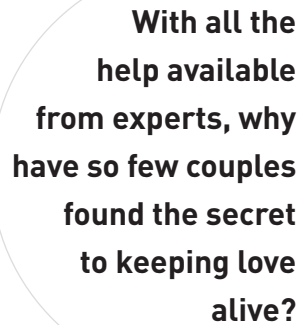
“After the wedding, I don’t think I changed. I continued to express love to her as I had before marriage. I told her how beautiful she was. I told her how much I loved her. I told her how proud I was to be her husband. But a few months after marriage, she started complaining;

about petty things at first—like my not taking the garbage out or not hanging up my clothes. Later, she went to attacking my character, telling me she didn't feel she could trust me, accusing me of not being faithful to her. She became a totally negative person. Before marriage, she was never negative. She was one of the most positive people I have ever met—that's one of the things that attracted me to her. She never complained about anything. Everything I did was wonderful, but once we were married, it seemed I could do nothing right. I honestly don't know what happened. Eventually, I lost my love for her and began to resent her. She obviously had no love for me. We agreed there was no benefit to our living together any longer, so we split.

“That was a year ago. So my question is, What happens to love after the wedding? Is my experience common? Is that why we have so many divorces in our country? I can't believe that it happened to me three times. And those who don't divorce, do they learn to live with the emptiness, or does love really stay alive in some marriages? If so, how?”

The questions my friend seated in 5A was asking are the questions that thousands of married and divorced persons are asking today. Some are asking friends, some are asking counselors and clergy, and some are asking themselves. Sometimes the answers are couched in psychological research jargon that is almost incomprehensible. Sometimes they are couched in humor and folklore. Most of the jokes and pithy sayings contain some truth, but they are like offering an aspirin to a person with cancer.

The desire for romantic love in marriage is deeply rooted in our



**With all the help available from experts, why have so few couples found the secret to keeping love alive?**

psychological makeup. Books abound on the subject. Television and radio talk shows deal with it. The Internet is full of advice. So are our parents and friends and churches. Keeping love alive in our marriages is serious business.

With all the help available from media experts, why is it that so few couples seem to have found the secret to keeping love alive after the wedding? Why is it that a couple can attend a communication workshop, hear wonderful ideas on how to enhance communication, return home, and find themselves totally unable to implement the communication patterns demonstrated? How is it that we read something online on “101 Ways to Express Love to Your Spouse,” select two or three ways that seem especially helpful, try them, and our spouse doesn’t even acknowledge our effort? We give up on the other 98 ways and go back to life as usual.

### THE TRUTH WE’RE MISSING

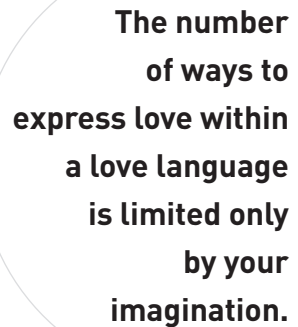
The answer to those questions is the purpose of this book. It is not that the books and articles already published are not helpful. The problem is that we have overlooked one fundamental truth: People speak different love languages.

My academic training is in the area of anthropology. Therefore, I have studied in the area of linguistics, which identifies a number of major language groups: Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, English, Portuguese, Arabic, Greek, German, French, and so on. Most of us grow up learning the language of our parents and siblings, which becomes our *primary* or native tongue. Later, we may learn additional languages—but usually with much more effort. These become our *secondary* languages. We speak and understand best our native language. We feel most comfortable speaking that language. The more

we use a secondary language, the more comfortable we become conversing in it. If we speak only our primary language and encounter someone else who speaks only his or her primary language, which is different from ours, our communication will be limited. We must rely on pointing, grunting, drawing pictures, or acting out our ideas. We can communicate, but it is awkward. Language differences are part and parcel of human culture. If we are to communicate effectively across cultural lines, we must learn the language of those with whom we wish to communicate.

In the area of love, it is similar. Your emotional love language and the language of your spouse may be as different as Chinese from English. No matter how hard you try to express love in English, if your spouse understands only Chinese, you will never understand how to love each other. My friend on the plane was speaking the language of affirming words to his third wife when he said, “I told her how beautiful she was. I told her I loved her. I told her how proud I was to be her husband.” He was speaking love, and he was sincere, but she did not understand his language. Perhaps she was looking for love in his behavior and didn’t see it. Being sincere is not enough. We must be willing to learn our spouse’s primary love language if we are to be effective communicators of love.

My conclusion after many years of marriage counseling is that there are five emotional love languages—five ways that people speak and understand emotional love. In the field of linguistics, a language may have numerous dialects or variations. Similarly, within the five basic emotional love languages, there are many dialects. The



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of ways to  
express love within  
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is limited only  
by your  
imagination.**



number of ways to express love within a love language is limited only by one's imagination. The important thing is to speak the love language of your spouse.

Seldom do a husband and wife have the same primary emotional love language. We tend to speak our primary love language, and we become confused when our spouse does not understand what we are communicating. We are expressing our love, but the message does not come through because we are speaking what, to them, is a foreign language. Therein lies the fundamental problem, and it is the purpose of this book to offer a solution. That is why I dare to write another book on love. Once we discover the five basic love languages and understand our own primary love language, as well as the primary love language of our spouse, we will then have the needed information to apply the ideas in the books and articles.

Once you identify and learn to speak your spouse's primary love language, I believe that you will have discovered the key to a long-lasting, loving marriage. Love need not evaporate after the wedding, but in order to keep it alive, most of us will have to put forth the effort to learn a secondary love language. We cannot rely on our native tongue if our spouse does not understand it. If we want them to feel the love we are trying to communicate, we must express it in their primary love language.

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*YOUR TURN*

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*How does your spouse respond when you try to show affection?*

# Things I Wish I'd Known Before We Got Married



**GARY D. CHAPMAN, PhD**

**NORTHFIELD PUBLISHING**

CHICAGO

# C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTION 9

## **I Wish I Had Known . . .**

CHAPTER ONE 15

*That being in love is not an adequate foundation for building a successful marriage*

CHAPTER TWO 21

*That romantic love has two stages*

CHAPTER THREE 33

*That the saying “Like mother, like daughter” and “Like father, like son” is not a myth*

CHAPTER FOUR 41

*How to solve disagreements without arguing*

CHAPTER FIVE 51

*That apologizing is a sign of strength*

CHAPTER SIX 65

*That forgiveness is not a feeling*

CHAPTER SEVEN 75

*That toilets are not self-cleaning*

CHAPTER EIGHT 83

*That we needed a plan for handling our money*

CHAPTER NINE 93

*That mutual sexual fulfillment is not automatic*

CHAPTER TEN 101

*That I was marrying into a family*

CHAPTER ELEVEN 115

*That spirituality is not to be equated with “going to church”*

CHAPTER TWELVE 127

*That personality profoundly influences behavior*

EPILOGUE 145

APPENDIX 149

*Developing a Healthy Dating Relationship*

NOTES 163

RESOURCES 165

## I Wish I Had Known . . .

*That being in love is not an*  
**ADEQUATE FOUNDATION**  
*for building a* **SUCCESSFUL**  
**MARRIAGE**

**I**t should have been obvious, but I missed it. I had never read a book on marriage so my mind was not cluttered with reality. I just knew that I had feelings for Karolyn that I had never felt with any other girl. When we kissed, it was like a trip to heaven. When I saw her after an extended absence, I actually felt chill bumps. I liked everything about her. I liked the way she looked, the way she talked, the way she walked, and I was especially captivated by her brown eyes. I even liked her mother and volunteered to paint her house—anything to let this girl know how much I loved her. I could not imagine any other girl being more wonderful than she. I think she had the same thoughts and feelings about me.

With all of these thoughts and feelings, we fully intended

to make each other happy the rest of our lives. Yet, within six months after marriage, we were both more miserable than we had ever imagined. The euphoric feelings were gone, and instead, we felt hurt, anger, disappointment, and resentment. This, we never anticipated when we were “in love.” We thought that the positive perceptions and feelings we had for each other would be with us for a lifetime.

Over the past thirty years, I have done premarital counseling sessions with hundreds of couples. I have found that most of them have the same limited perspective about being in love. I have often asked couples in our first session this question: “Why do you want to get married?” Whatever else they say, they always give me the big reason. And the big reason is almost always the same: “Because we love each other.” Then I ask a very unfair question: “What do you mean by that?” Typically they are stunned by the question. Most say something about a deep feeling that they have for each other. It has persisted for some time and is in some way different from what they have felt for other dating partners. Often they look at each other, they look at the ceiling, they giggle, and then one of them says, “Well, ah . . . oh, you know.” At this stage of my life, I think I do know—but I doubt that they know. I fear that they have the same perception of being in love that Karolyn and I had when we got married. And I know now that being in love is not a sufficient foundation on which to build a successful marriage.

Some time ago I had a call from a young man who asked if I would perform his wedding ceremony. I inquired as to when he wanted to get married and found that the wedding date was less than a week away. I explained that I usually have from six to eight counseling sessions with those who desire to be married.

His response was classic: “Well, to be honest with you, I don’t think we need any counseling. We really love each other and I don’t think we will have any problems.” I smiled and then wept inwardly—another victim of the “in love” illusion.

We often speak of “falling in love.” When I hear this phrase, I am reminded of the jungle animal hunt. A hole is dug in the midst of the animal’s path to the water hole, then camouflaged with branches and leaves. The poor animal runs along, minding his own business. Then all of a sudden it falls into the pit and is trapped.

This is the manner in which we speak of love. We are walking along doing our normal duties when all of a sudden, we look across the room or down the hall, and there she/he is—wham-o, “we fall in love.” There is nothing we can do about it. It is completely beyond our control. We know we are destined for marriage; the sooner the better. So, we tell our friends and because they operate on the same principle, they agree that if we are really in love, then it is time for marriage.

Often we fail to consider the fact that our social, spiritual, and intellectual interests are miles apart. Our value systems and goals are contradictory, but we are in love. The great tragedy stemming from this perception of love is that a year after the marriage, a couple sits in the counselor’s office and say, “We don’t love each other anymore.” Therefore, they are ready to separate. After all, if “love” is gone, then “surely you don’t expect us to stay together.”

### **When “the Tingles” Strike**

I have a different word for the above-described emotional experience. I call it “the tingles.” We get warm, bubbly, tingly feelings for a member of the opposite sex. It is the tingles that motivate us to go out for a hamburger with him/her. Sometimes we lose

the tingles on the first date. We find out something about them that simply shuts our emotions down. The next time they invite us for a hamburger, we are not hungry. However, in other relationships, the more we are together, the tinglier the feeling. Before long, we find ourselves thinking about them day and night. Our thoughts are obsessive in nature. We see them as the most wonderful, exciting person we have ever known. We want to be together every possible moment. We dream of sharing the rest of our lives making each other happy.

Please do not misunderstand me. I think the tingles are important. They are real, and I am in favor of their survival. But they are not the basis for a satisfactory marriage. I am not suggesting that one should marry without the tingles. Those warm, excited feelings, the chill bumps, that sense of acceptance, the excitement of the touch that make up the tingles serve as the cherry on top of the sundae. But you cannot have a sundae with only the cherry. The many other factors that we discuss in this book must be a vital consideration in making a decision about marriage.

Being in love is an emotional and obsessive experience. However, emotions change and obsessions fade. Research indicates that the average life span of the “in love” obsession is two years.<sup>1</sup> For some it may last a bit longer; for some, a bit less. But the average is two years. Then we come down off the emotional high and those aspects of life that we disregarded in our euphoria begin to become important. Our differences begin to emerge and we often find ourselves arguing with the person whom we once thought to be perfect. We have now discovered for ourselves that being in love is not the foundation for a happy marriage.

For those of you who are currently in a dating relationship and are perhaps contemplating marriage, I would encourage you

to read the Appendix of this book, located on page 149. I believe that the primary purpose of dating is to get to know each other and to examine the intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, and physical foundations for marriage. Only then are you able to make a wise decision—to marry or not to marry. The questions contained in the learning exercises in the Appendix will assist you in discussing these foundations.

### Talking It Over

- 1.** On a scale of 0–10, how strongly do you feel the “tingles” for the person you are dating?
- 2.** If the average “life span” of the tingles is two years, how much longer can you expect to have the euphoric feelings?
- 3.** To what degree have you explored the more important issues of compatibility in the following areas?
  - intellectual dialogue
  - emotional control
  - social interests
  - spiritual unity
  - common values
- 4.** If you would like to explore these areas more fully, you may wish to use the questions found in the appendix, “Developing A Healthy Dating Relationship” on pages 149–161.