



EMPOWERING PARENTS TO RAISE
THEIR CHILDREN TO BE SUBSTANCE-FREE

Talk Early And Often About Alcohol, Tobacco And Other Drugs. Even When It Gets Tough

Know! The Five Love Languages of Tweens/Teens

According to Marriage and Family Counselor Gary Chapman Ph.D., there are five basic languages of love that we all speak, our tweens/teens included. His theory is that each person has a primary love language, one that speaks louder and deeper to an individual than the other four love languages. In the case of our children, if we do not know and speak their primary love language sufficiently, they may never feel truly loved, regardless of our other expressions of love.

Dr. Chapman asks parents to visualize their child having a love tank. So long as that love tank is full, our sons and daughters feel loved by us, and they are better equipped to handle the road-bumps during their journey through adolescence. However, children whose love tanks run dry are more likely to struggle through the teen years and look for love in all the “wrong places.” Certainly no parent wants that for their child! Therefore, we must get to know the five love languages, and discover which one(s) touches our child’s heart most deeply.

The Five Love Languages, according to Dr. Chapman:

PHYSICAL TOUCH: Hugs, kisses and tender touches – When our children are little, we cover them in kisses, give them hugs and hold their hands. But as children grow older, many parents feel awkward with physical touch. Yet if this is a child’s primary love language, appropriate physical show of affection communicates warmth, safety and love and is just as much needed in adolescence.

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION: Words of love, encouragement and support – When our children were toddlers learning to walk for example, affirmation came easy. “You can do it,” many of us would say, empowering them to take that first step. Our tweens/teens still thrive on words of encouragement and support, and they still need to hear it from us. Every child also needs to hear their parents say, “I love you.” If this is their primary love language, they may need to hear it more often than others.

QUALITY TIME: Your undivided attention – This can be challenging regardless of your child’s age. We’re all busy, but it is vitally important to carve out time regularly where you can zero-in on your child and give him/her your full attention. This can be as simple as sitting on the couch together chatting about his/her day, taking your son or daughter to see a movie, going bowling or just grabbing frozen yogurt together. If this is a child’s primary love language, extra time together must be a priority.

RECEIVING GIFTS: Not to be confused with materialism – Some parents speak the primary language of gift-giving to show their love. They put not just money, but time and effort into choosing meaningful, thoughtful gifts. Yet when gift-giving is used exclusively, to some parents’ surprise, many children on the receiving end feel unloved. Gifts may speak the language of love to some, but not to all.

ACTS OF SERVICE: Doing things for our children out of love (not just obligation) – This may be helping your child with homework, driving him/her to the bus stop on a chilly day or getting their sports gear together for them before they head to practice. It is expressing your affection by lightening their load. Such acts make children feel truly

Talking regularly with kids about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using.

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loved and valued – especially those who primarily speak this love language. Now that you know the five languages of love, it is time to discover which language is most likely to fill your child's love tank. Dr. Chapman has created an online *Love Language Quiz* to assist - and it is well-worth the few minutes it takes. Knowing and speaking your child's primary love language creates a better sense of connection between the two of you, which translates into increased understanding and communication and ultimately, an improved relationship with your son or daughter.

To go to the *Love Language Quiz for Teens*, visit:
<http://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile/teens/>.

For more information on *The Five Love Languages*, and to go to the *Love Language Quiz* for other age groups, including adults, visit: <http://www.5lovelanguages.com/> (click on *Discover Your Love Language*).

Source: [Chapman, Gary. December 2012 issue of Thriving Family Magazine: Speaking the Right Love Language – Love Languages and Your Teen.](#)