

The five love languages of Children

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In raising children, everything depends on the love relationship between the parent and child. Only the child who feels genuinely loved and cared for can do their best. You can love your child, but if they don't FEEL loved-speak in their love language-they will not feel loved. Few parents know how to transfer their heartfelt love to the hearts of their children.

Unconditional love: is a full love that accepts and affirms a child for who they are, not for what they do.

Conditional love is based on performance and is often associated with training techniques that offer gifts, rewards, and privileges to children who behave or perform in desired ways.

Unconditional love can prevent problems such as resentment, felling of being unloved, guilt, fear, and insecurity. Only through unconditional love will a child be able to deeply understand their behaviors, whether good or bad. Unconditional love shows love to a child no matter what. We love regardless of what the child looks like; regardless of their assets, liabilities, or handicaps, regardless of what we expect them to be; and most difficult of all, regardless of how they act.

If children feel genuinely loved by their parents, they will be more responsive to parental guidance in all areas of their lives.

You have to PRACTICE Unconditional love and remember it may be difficult at first.

Teens act different than little children, and a thirteen-year-old will respond differently than a seven-year-old. But we must remember they are still minors, not mature adult, so we can expect them to fail at times. Show patience with them as they learn to grow.

Children need all five languages of love to keep their emotional tanks full. This means that parents must learn how to speak in all the languages. The value is not only for your children, but for the people with whom they will live and associate. One mark of a mature adult is the ability to give and receive appreciation through all the love languages-physical touch, quality time, words of affirmation, gifts, and acts of service. Few adults are able to do this; most of them give or receive love in one or two ways only.

If your child is under age five, don't expect to figure out his primary love language. You can't.

Things to remind yourself about your children:

1. They are children.
2. They will tend to act like children.
3. Much childish behavior is unpleasant.
4. If I do my part as a parent and love them, despite their childish behavior, they will mature and give up their childish ways.
5. If I love them only when they please me (conditional love), and if I express my love to them only at those times, they will not feel genuinely loved. Therefore, their development and behavior is as much my responsibility as theirs.
6. If I love them unconditionally, they will feel comfortable about themselves and will be able to control their anxiety and their behavior as they grow to adulthood.

PHYSICAL TOUCH:

Physical touch is the easiest love language to use unconditionally, because parents need no special occasion or excuse to make physical contact. Those who speak the love language of physical touch need more touching, but all children need the hugs and caresses of adults to feel the truth of “I Love You.” Some fathers withdraw from hugging and kissing their teenage daughters, feeling that it is inappropriate at this stage. In fact, just the opposite is true.

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION:

In communicating love, words are powerful. Words of affection and endearment, words of praise and encouragement, words that give positive guidance all say, “I care about you.” A child reaps the benefits of affirming words for a lifetime. Conversely, cutting words, spoken out of short-lived frustration, can hurt a child’s self-esteem and cast doubts about his abilities. The tone of voice, the gentleness of mood, the ambiance of care all communicate emotional warmth and love. In two-parent households, the parents should encourage one another; if you’re a single parent, have trusted friends or relatives who will bolster your spirits and energy.

QUALITY TIME:

Quality time is a parent’s gift of presence to a child. They feel truly loved because they have their parent all to themselves. This does not require that you go somewhere special. Quality time is focused attention. It means giving a child your undivided attention. It will mean a sacrifice of you and your time. Quality time should include pleasant, loving eye contact. This is mostly needed by the father in the home. You schedule other people and things into your calendars- why not your children?

GIFTS:

For parents to truly speak-gifts- the child must feel that his parents genuinely care. For this reason, the other love languages must be given along with the gift. The idea behind this is that if the gift is deserved, then it is payment. A true gift is not payment for services rendered; rather, it is an expression of love for the individual and is freely given by the donor. A child who doesn't feel truly loved can easily misinterpret a gift, thinking it is conditionally given. Giving gifts has little to do with the size and cost of the gift, but has everything to do with the love given with it. Do not shower a child with gifts trying to substitute the other love languages! Too many gifts make them lose special meaning, and the child becomes emotionally dead to receiving gifts.

ACTS OF SERVICE:

Parenting is a service-oriented vocation! Don't mistake it for acts of service. We serve our children, but as they are ready, we teach them how to serve themselves and then others. Acts of service can become a model for your child's service and responsibility. Don't view acts of service as a way to manipulate your children! The ultimate purpose for acts of service to children is to help them emerge as mature adults who are able to give love to others through acts of service. This includes not only being helpful to cherished loved ones, but also serving persons who are in no way able to return or repay the kindness. Your children need to see in you the traits you want them to develop. You can teach them by example to show concern for others.