You've read the book—now talk about it! You want to grow closer as a military couple, so put its ideas into action in your marriage or special relationship. Here, chapter by chapter, are some printable discussion starters for both couples and groups.

What Happens to Love in a Military Marriage?

1. The opening illustration raises questions many married and divorced individuals are asking today. In your marriage, perhaps you have asked some of the same questions. Drawing from your own marriage experience, what other questions might you add to those?

2. What solutions have you found useful in solving some of the problems that couples face in their marital relationships?

3. Dr. Chapman states that "the desire for romantic love in marriage is deeply rooted in our psychological makeup." As we strive to fulfill that desire, what is the basic truth many are missing?

4. What are primary and secondary languages? How does each function in our marriages? In our other relationships?

5. As we communicate with our spouses, what is the key to our being effective communicators of love?

NOTES:

Keeping the Love Tank Full

1. How would you define love? Given your exposure to Dr. Chapman's concept of five love languages, might your definition have room for additional thought and development?

2. What fuels our need for love? Why is it an ongoing need?

3. Discuss the "love tank" metaphor the author describes. How often do you focus on your spouse's love tank? How successful have you been keeping it filled?

4. Are you alert to signs that your spouse might be crying out for love? Are you gauging the possibility that his or her emotional love tank could be running on "empty"? What are some of the things that can cause one's tank to dry up?

5. As you seek to grow in your marital relationship, what are some of the benefits of keeping your spouse's emotional love tank at the proper level?

NOTES:

Falling in Love

1. Have you had a "falling in love" experience? As you reflect, how much of it was illusion, and how much of it was reality? What were some of the illusions you had?

2. How long can we expect to sustain an "in love" experience? Early on, why do we tend to believe this euphoric state is so real? When reality sets in, what are some of the ways the illusion of intimacy evaporates?

3. What is the nature of real love? Contrast what it means to "fall in love" with experiencing "real love." What characteristics of real love separate it from a euphoric, in love experience?

4. What is our most basic emotional need? What do we need to realize to begin aligning with our spouse and meeting that need?

5. When couples find themselves falling out of love, what are their two common courses of action? The author has good news for married couples who have lost their "in love" feelings? Describe the author's third alternative.

NOTES:

Love Language #1: Words of Affirmation

1. What makes verbal compliments work as motivators?

2. Do you take the time to encourage your spouse? In what way or ways have your words of encouragement helped your spouse realize hidden or latent potential?

3. Dr. Chapman points out that the keys to providing the right kinds of encouragement are: (1) empathy; and (2) seeing the world from your spouse's perspective. Is this an area you might be able to improve upon? What creative steps can you suggest for learning what is important to your spouse?

4. When we have wronged our spouse, what role can kind words play in reconciliation and forgiveness? How do such words become an expression of love?

5. What is the best way we can handle yesterday's failures? Why are Words of Affirmation a powerful means of restoring intimacy?

6. Give examples of humble words. What do humble words communicate to our spouse?

7. When military spouses are separated during deployments, "speaking" Words of Affirmation can be challenging. Which suggestions on pages 59-60 might work for you? What other ideas can you add?

NOTES:

Love Language #2: Quality Time

1. Describe the author's concept of Quality Time. What are some ways we can invest Quality Time with our spouse? With our families?

2. What is focused attention? What is its goal?

3. Intentionally investing in Quality Time is especially challenging in a military lifestyle. How can an attempt to "store up" Quality Time in anticipation of a deployment or move be unsatisfactory?

4. The author teaches that quality conversation is one of the dialects of Quality Time. In what ways does quality conversation differ from Words of Affirmation? How could you enhance your conversations with your spouse?

5. Discuss the author's five guidelines for engaging quality conversation. Do you consider yourself a good "quality conversation" listener? Can you identify ways you can become a better listener?

6. Dr. Chapman suggests that if we need to learn the language of quality conversation, we should begin by noting the emotions we feel away from home. What are some good examples of events to note during the course of this exercise? What is the point of this exercise?

7. Contrast the "Dead Sea" and "Babbling Brook" personalities. Which are you? Which one describes your spouse? What are keys to making these opposite personalities more compatible?

8. The author suggests several ways to express Quality Time during deployment. Which can you try? Discuss your favorite. Can you suggest other activities in which you and your spouse can engage?

NOTES:

Love Language #3: Receiving Gifts

1. What makes receiving a gift so special? How does it become an expression of love between two people?

2. If your spouse's primary love language is Receiving Gifts, what beginning steps can you take to become a proficient gift–giver?

3. What is the key to becoming an effective gift–giver? In what ways might gifts be both an immediate and lasting investment in one's marital relationship?

4. Describe the gift of self. How does the power of presence become a symbol of love?

5. Discuss Dr. Chapman's excellent suggestions for speaking the love language of giving gifts during deployments. Which ones appear to be a good fit for your spouse?

NOTES:

Love Language #4: Acts of Service

1. Explain how Acts of Service function as a love language. Why do Acts of Service qualify as expressions of love?

2. How did learning about the love language of Acts of Service help Nathan and Erin?

3. Dr. Chapman draws three truths from his illustration of Dave and Mary's relationship. Discuss each truth and what we may learn from each.

4. Should Acts of Service become acts of manipulation, they are no longer acts of love. To prevent such occurrences, what does learning the love language of Acts of Service require of us? What should be our response if our spouse's primary love language asks something of us that seems inappropriate to our role?

5. Both active service members and those at home are called upon to perform Acts of Service as a matter of course. Discuss the suggestions for personalizing Acts of Service at the end of this chapter and add some of your own.

NOTES:

Love Language #5: Physical Touch

1. Discuss the power of touch as a love language. If this is your spouse's love language, what are some considerations in learning your spouse's love dialect with this language?

2. Why are concepts like "open marriage" so damaging to a marital relationship? How might marital unfaithfulness impact a spouse whose love language is Physical Touch?

3. Nonsexual physical touch can be a powerful communicator during times of crisis and disappointments. Reflect on events where your spouse's hug or touch provided you the strength to make it through the crisis.

4. Dr. Chapman relates the story of Joe and Maria. From their marriage counseling, what did Patsy and Pete discover to be their root problem? What might we learn from their experience regarding our own spouse and our aligning with his or her love language?

5. Is Physical Touch your spouse's love language? If so, during deployment you may need to increase your efforts on his or her secondary love language. What suggestions at the end of this chapter can you try?

NOTES:

Love Language Scramblers

1. The "military style of communications can drown out any love language" (p. 141). Why is this? How can attitudes and moves to action work in your favor?

2. We have discussed the need to love our spouse the way they most need to feel loved when we're together, but the challenge is learning to speak our spouse's love language when we are apart. How can realizing that the need to feel loved does not go away help?

3. Describe the unique challenges reintegration can bring.

4. Combat redeployment, PTSD, and other trauma present many challenges. Describe when and why emotional withdrawal can be common for both spouses. You and your spouse's love language may shift or need adaptation. Can you relate to this? See 5lovelanguages.com/militaryedition for resources dealing with trauma.

NOTES:

Discovering Your Primary Love Language

1. The author mentions two kinds of people who may have difficulty discovering their primary love language. What are those two kinds, and for what reasons might they experience difficulty in determining their love language?

2. Do you know for certain your primary love language? What might be your secondary language or languages? Dr. Chapman suggests spending time writing down what you think is your primary love language. Then, as you weigh them, list the other four languages in their order of importance.

3. Now write down what you think is the primary love language of your spouse. List the other four in order of importance as well. When time permits, sit down with your spouse and discuss what you guessed to be his or her primary love language. Then tell each other what you consider to be your own primary love language.

4. Dr. Chapman provides questions we can ask ourselves to help us discover our primary love language. Discuss these approaches and determine which works best for you. Perhaps you and your spouse may find it helpful to do this exercise together.

NOTES:

Love Is a Choice

1. We are all likely guilty of poor choices in the past. If not dealt with, how can hurt, anger, and resentment affect a marital relationship over time?

2. How can our expressions of love, within the context of knowing our spouse's love language, enable us to deal with past conflicts and failures in our marriages?

3. Why does the "in love" experience eventually fail to meet one's need for real love after time? Explain what the author means by "love is a choice." How do our choices make a difference in our relationships?

4. Dr. Chapman explains that our actions must precede our emotions. What does he mean by that statement? Why is that order essential?

NOTES:

Loving the Unlovely

1. Describe the situation Ann faced in her marriage. What hypothesis did Dr. Chapman suggest to Ann? Upon what foundation did he build his hypothesis?

2. Drawing from the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke, what does Dr. Chapman consider to be love's greatest challenge? What is the nature of this challenge?

3. Dr. Chapman draws a specific principle from Jesus' sermon in Luke 6:38. Read this passage. Discuss this principle and how it applied to Ann's situation. How applicable is this principle to all relationships?

4. Have you ever been in a "loving the unlovely" relationship (not necessarily marriage)? How did you handle it?

5. Review the author's assessment of Ann and Glenn's experiment and his recommendations to his readers. Discuss his four steps toward regaining a healthier marriage.

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