

# THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES

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singles edition

gary chapman

NORTHFIELD PUBLISHING  
CHICAGO

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Though my writing and counseling have focused primarily on marriage and family, I continually find myself right in the middle of a culture alive with single adults. Years ago, I started a single-adult ministry in the church that I attend and where I have served as a counselor for many years. For nine years I immersed myself in the joys and struggles of single adults. We did all kinds of fun stuff together, living life alongside one another. Some of the small groups were focused more on “growth” for people who were doing well and we had “support” groups for those who were going through more difficult times. It was during these times of growth and support that I was able to spend hundreds of hours in individual counseling with single adults who faced an array of emotional and relational issues. That ministry is still a thriving part of our church family today.

Married or single, young or old, every human has the emotional need to feel loved. When this need is met, we move out to reach our potential for God and our potential for good in the world. However, when we feel unloved, we struggle just to survive. I am deeply convinced that the truths in this book will enable single adults to learn the skills that lead to loving and being loved.

Now it is important for you to understand that this volume is not a rehash of the original *5 Love Languages* with a new cover on it. The five love languages have not changed, of course, but in the following pages we will focus on their application to single adults. I am indebted to the hundreds of single adults who have shared their stories of how the five

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Nothing has more potential for strengthening one's sense of well-being than effectively loving and being loved. Whether you've never been married, you're divorced, or you're widowed, your deepest emotional need is to feel loved, and your greatest successes will be obtained by loving others. This book is designed to help you do both of these things effectively.

In the first two chapters, we will explore who single adults are and why love is the key to relationships. In chapters 3–7, you will learn about each of the five love languages. In chapter 8, you will discover your own primary love language and how to discover the love languages of others.

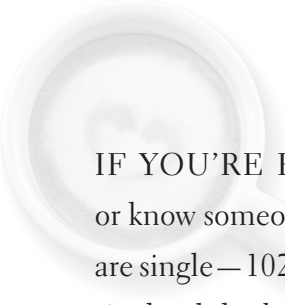
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Come with me on this journey into the personal lives of dozens of single adults who have found that life's greatest discovery is in learning how to give and receive love properly.

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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. More than four of every ten American adults are single—102 million Americans.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the United States has more single adults than any other nation in the world except China and India.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, it wouldn't be accurate to lump all single adults into the same group. There are at least five very different categories of single adults. The largest numbers of singles are those who have never been down the aisle (those to whom this book is largely directed), but the other four groups also command our attention. Here are the five groups:

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Clearly, single adults are a very 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

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There's no denying that the single life can sometimes be better referred to as the lonely life. Singleness, depending on your category of singleness, puts different struggles of loneliness in your path. Loneliness can mean virginity, feeling left behind, raising kids alone, grieving the loss of a spouse, struggling to find someone to connect with, insecurity, unmet desires, and much more. But at the core, this group of people are all dealing with the same thing: not being married. There is an inevitable loneliness that, whether occasional or constant, all single people have to face. There's no denying the importance of keeping significant relationships in your life, not necessarily of the romantic kind, but friendships and family relationships.

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.

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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.

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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 time in learning the language of technology, right? Things like texting, the Internet, and social networking through Facebook. If so, you have reaped the benefits. Unfortunately, most single adults (and most people in general) know more about these things than they do about love. The reason for this is obvious: they have spent more time perfecting technology and less time studying love.

## **SOMETHING’S MISSING**

I agree with Professor Leo Buscaglia, who said:

*Psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, anthropologists and educators have suggested in countless studies and numerous research papers that love is a “learned response, a learned emotion.” . . . Most of us continue to behave as though love is not learned but lies dormant in*

*each human being and simply awaits some mystical age of awareness to emerge in full bloom. Many wait for this age forever. 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.*<sup>11</sup>

I have invested the past thirty-plus years of my life 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 to all singles—whether never-married, once-married, or married several times—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 really 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, more succinctly, to change individual 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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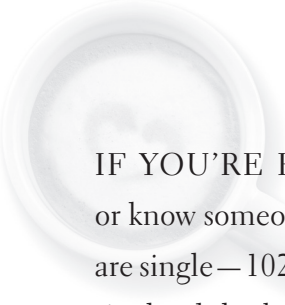
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Then Rob added, “I hope someday I can help someone else the way they have helped me.”

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 time in learning the language of technology, right? Things like texting, the Internet, and social networking through Facebook. If so, you have reaped the benefits. Unfortunately, most single adults (and most people in general) know more about these things than they do about love. The reason for this is obvious: they have spent more time perfecting technology and less time studying love.

## **SOMETHING’S MISSING**

I agree with Professor Leo Buscaglia, who said:

*Psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, anthropologists and educators have suggested in countless studies and numerous research papers that love is a “learned response, a learned emotion.” . . . Most of us continue to behave as though love is not learned but lies dormant in*



*each human being and simply awaits some mystical age of awareness to emerge in full bloom. Many wait for this age forever. 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.<sup>11</sup>*

I have invested the past thirty-plus years of my life 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 to all singles—whether never-married, once-married, or married several times—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 really 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, more succinctly, to change individual 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?