



All I want for Christmas is youuuuuuuuuuu,” crooned no person ever who’s love language is “gifts”.

Love languages are the ways we communicate love – that is, how we show love to other people and how we feel it from others. According to author Gary Chapman, there are five all up, and everyone uses different ones in different combinations.

When people with different love languages fall in love, they can often run into trouble.

In my recent two articles I covered the first two love languages: words of affirmation; and acts of service.

Today, I’m talking about what may be one of the pricklier languages of the lot: gifts.

You think kids enjoy Christmas day the most?

Ha! A person with a “gifts” love language is experiencing levels of bliss and joy those small children with their cherubic faces and unspoiled optimism can only dream about.

From someone who falls into this category, I can’t tell you how over the moon I was when my husband bought me a pair of \$12 rubber boots for the recent Midnight Oil concert.

Little did I know how incredibly useful they were about to become in the torrential monsoon.

When it comes to the gifts love language, it’s really, really important to try to get away from the mindset that the person is materialistic. Some people absolutely are materialistic, don’t get me wrong.

For the gift person, it’s more the time, thought, and effort that goes into the gift that truly expresses the love than the thing itself.

THE THOUGHT DOES MATTER

BEST GIFTS ARE THOSE WHERE GIVERS TAKES TIME TO CONSIDER RECIPIENTS

WORDS: JOANNE WILSON

A small, thoughtful gift – say something as simple as a pair of rubber boots or replacing the tea pot you broke recently (I hope he’s reading), is a grander expression of love to them than an expensive bracelet they have no want or need for. (OK, I lie, I wouldn’t refuse that either.)

A non-gift person might feel the pressure of the bigger, the better whereas the gift person just wants to feel that you really understand them and thought of them that day.

If you feel helpless to have found yourself locked in with a partner with a gifts love language, simply start with the thought, the love and the understanding, not the price tag.

Knowing that it’s the thought that truly does count, and not some tired cliché, will go

a long way to establishing a healthy relationship with your gifts love language spouse.

If you’ve previously bought into the misconception that gifts prove your love to this person, why don’t you combine it with a love language you understand better?

If you know your partner is stressed, mix it with the ‘touch’ or ‘quality time’ love language such as something massage-related.

Cards attached to presents allow you to use words of affirmation. Alternatively, profess your heart-felt love with some romantic prose when you hand over the present. How about two tickets to the cricket for you and your sporty lover? A box of their favourite popcorn would even do it for some people.

Non-gift love language people can struggle with the thought they must buy presents all the time. This isn’t true. Simply surprise and delight at random unexpected times or when they might need a lift the most.

As a heads-up, please, please whatever you do – remember birthdays and anniversaries.

Your gift love language spouse is likely buying you presents to express their love.

Think back over the last year at how many gifts you’ve received from them. You’ll notice they’re things you’ve valued, wanted, or needed. If you’re not a gift person, you’re probably taking those presents for granted and don’t register as signs of affection. You might even think they’re trying to placate you with gifts to avoid showing affection?

I suspect every one of those gifts you’ve received was their way of saying “I love you, I listen to you, I know who you are, and I know what you need.”

So, ignore Mariah Carey and her misleading lyrics that some people don’t want a lot for Christmas, there is just one thing they need, they don’t care about the presents, underneath the Christmas tree. Yes, they probably want you for their own... accompanied by your incredibly thoughtful gift behind their back.

It’s early November, so you have plenty of time to lovingly trawl the shops or internet for that special something and have it by Christmas. No, you can’t hire a buyer’s agent for this one but feel free to secretly research with their friends or family. Still at a loss? Ask them what they like.

Watch this space next week to spend a moment with me reading about the love language of quality time.

CONTROL STRESS WITH EVERY BREATH

Hamish McMichael

You won’t find a form of relaxation or meditation that doesn’t emphasise breathing. Breathing is one of the few essential activities that our body must do.

Five minutes without breathing will put most people in critical danger. Adults take about 15 breaths a minute, or 900 breaths an hour, or more than 20,000 breaths a day.

Breathing doesn’t just affect our physiology it also drives our psychology. Try this experiment with me:

Experiment 1:

Imagine that you’re being chased by a pack of wild dogs? How would you breathe? Imagine you are hiding in a cave from the pack hoping not to be discovered. Notice the tension in your body, the tension in your

neck and how your breathing has become shallow and fast. Now it’s unlikely you’ll be chased by a pack of wolves.

Experiment 2:

This time imagine you’re late for an important meeting at work and stuck in traffic that isn’t moving. You’re listening to the radio and hearing about the latest mass shooting. Your phone is out of battery so you can’t call ahead, it’s a smoking hot day and, of course, your air-conditioning just stopped working. Bring your attention back to your breath. Did you notice that it was similar to the breathing pattern you adopted for fleeing from the dog pack?

This panic breathing is the ‘go to’ when your body is under stress. The problem with this breathing is it can tighten your chest, back and neck muscles. Taking shallow breaths means you don’t get as much oxygen into your body, which your brain needs to

make good decisions. Your brain thinks you’re being chased by wild dogs, which makes it harder to think clearly, and your gut stops digesting food because your body is in flight mode, not relax mode. Prolonged panic breathing can ruin your health.

Experiment 3:

No dogs or traffic jams this time. You’re on a beautiful Sunshine Coast beach and it’s a perfect day. You’re lying on the beach in the shade with the gentle sound of waves breaking on the shore. You don’t need to be anywhere but here. All you can feel is the warm sand under your towel and a light breeze. Notice how your breathing slows down. If you put a hand just below your ribs on your stomach you’ll notice that when you breathe in your belly expands and your hand is pushed out. Put your other hand on your upper chest. When you breathe in deeply your lower hand should move first followed

by your top hand. This draws more air into your lungs and more oxygen into your body.

Do 10 slow breaths feeling your hands rise and fall. Notice any changes in your level of stress? Slow breathing is one of the easiest, most effective ways to immediately change your stress levels. It’s such an easy and effective tool that is totally underutilised in our busy lives.

Breathing is a simple, effective way of reducing your stress levels. We use breathing to help clients start their recovery at the end of an exercise session. We also encourage clients to breathe when they’re in stressful situations, and to help them digest their food.

I challenge you to try 10 slow breaths just before you start your work day, and when you get home to see your family at the end of the day. With a clear, unstressed mind, it’s amazing how different the world can look.

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