



Different Languages

Film

Angie said that James had not been saying anything about how she looks. How is important to you that your mate compliment your appearance and/or achievements?

Teaching

It doesn't seem odd to us that we need to change our normal, comfortable language when speaking to someone from a different country. Yet, we find it odd that we must change our normal, comfortable language when speaking to our spouse, who in many ways speaks a different language than us.

Communication often fails in marriage relationships because spouses are comfortable speaking their own language, and never quite learn how to speak their spouse's. The truth is, men and women speak different languages. Add to that the context, experiences, and cultures that influenced the language, and you've got two very different types of speech.

Perhaps the best way to learn your spouse's language is to observe how he/she communicates with you and others during normal, non-stressed times. Is he/she more likely to communicate emotions with words (written or oral) or actions? Picking up on these tendencies and noticing a pattern, will allow you to learn how to speak your mate's language.

While there are normal communication tendencies to learn, you can also learn your mate's "love language" as coined by author Dr. Gary Chapman. His best-selling book, *The Five Languages*, lists five languages of love that every person speaks in some varying degree. Understanding these "love" tendencies will also help you speak your mate's language. You can take a free assessment on [Dr. Chapman's site](#).

Keep these ideas in mind when speaking to your spouse, and take the time to learn how your spouse communicates. It will save you a lot of time, heartache, and disputes.

Call to Action/Homework

Study your mate to see how he/she typically communicates with others, and how love is expressed.

Discussion

1. Describe a time when it was very obvious that you and your mate spoke different languages.
2. If you and your spouse are aware of each other's love language(s), how often do you two purposefully speak the other's language(s)



Unmet Needs & Expectations

Film

Angie appeared to enjoy the attention she got from her co-workers. Do you think she would have been as flattered if she regularly heard the compliments from James?

Teaching

The term “unmet needs” gets a lot of attention in marriage counseling sessions, and rightfully so. When a spouse feels like his/her needs are not being recognized and fulfilled, the result is anger, depression, or even feelings of inadequacy. It has been said that every criticism, judgment, diagnosis, and expression of anger is the result of an unmet need. If this is true, then it becomes painfully obvious just how important it is that our needs be recognized and met.

There are two types of unmet needs in marriage: 1) those that can be met in the marriage, and 2) those created outside the marriage that *cannot* be met in the marriage.

Regarding the first need, sacrifice is often required because spouses tend to be opposites from one another. One spouse may need quality time talking while the other spouse may be content with not talking a lot. Moreover, one spouse may need help with the children while the other spouse needs quiet time to relax. Both needs are valid, but someone will have to sacrifice to help meet the spouse’s need. The first key is to communicate the need. It’s unrealistic to expect your mate to meet a need he/she doesn’t know about. The second key to meeting a need in this category is to shun selfishness, and act in God’s grace to give your spouse what he/she needs.

While it is important that spouses do their best to meet one another’s needs, it’s essential that they both recognize that not all needs were created in marriage, and therefore not all of them can be met by the marriage relationship. For example, the absence of a parent - or the lack of love from a present parent - created a need for affection. For others, a traumatic experience or a sexually active lifestyle before marriage or even a poverty-stricken childhood created needs that were brought into marriage. If any of these fit your mate, you might be able to recognize the need, yet remain unable to meet it. In this case, it is important to take the needs to your Heavenly Father in prayer, and if necessary, encourage your mate to visit a licensed [and preferably Christian] professional who can help sort through the issues causing the unmet need.

Call to Action/Homework



Unmet needs are serious, and can wreak havoc in a marriage relationship if left unaddressed. Talk to your spouse to discover his/her needs, and be open to meeting them if you can. If you cannot, still be supportive in helping your mate find a solution to his/her needs.

Discussion

1. What unmet needs do you have that are impacting your marriage?
2. In what ways can you sacrifice to meet your mate's unmet needs?