



This past weekend my husband and I benefited from some sound marriage advice (Hold on before you go spreading rumors about our troubled relationship and impending divorce.). We attended our church's quarterly Marriage Enrichment Seminar. Its purpose was to help strengthen marriages by equipping couples with practical tools that help make their relationships' foundation stronger. The discussion was centered on communication and finance—two issues in marriage that are often cited as top reasons for divorce. The good news is that if you work on the goal of having more effective communication, improvements in your financial situation will most likely follow. One key lies in learning to speak your spouse's language.

While it's true that most every couple desires good communication, some don't know how to achieve it. Best-selling author, Gary Chapman, offers good insight on the subject in his book, *Five Love Languages*

. He explains that all people have a love language—one of five ways that they express or interpret love—1. Words of Affirmation 2. Quality Time 3. Receiving Gifts 4. Acts of Service 5. Physical Touch. On the website, a free assessment is available to help you and your mate identify your top love language—

www.5lovelanguages.com

The key is recognizing your spouse's language and then speaking it (The same principles apply to your kids too). Does your *honey* enjoy it when you spend quality time (without TV) with her?

If so, sit down next to her, without distractions, and just talk. Does she melt like butter whenever you give her gifts (not expensive, just thoughtful ones)? Make a point to do that on a regular basis. Does your man respond most to physical touch? Rub his while he watches TV or massage his head (this shouldn't always lead to intercourse, but when it does, great, he needs that too). When your spouse senses that you are communicating love on

Good Communication = Happy Marriage + \$\$ Saved

Written by Marcia Humphrey
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his

terms and in a way that

he

appreciates, he'll be more responsive to everything, including working on the family budget or planning your next big family goals. The primary aim should not be to get your spouse to do what

you

want him/her to do. Instead it should be about realizing that, as husband and wife, you are on the same team and it's crucial to create a safe haven, where the family's best interest is foremost. Good communication unites any team and builds strength and confidence in all the members—husband, wife, and kiddos.

Don't wait until you have a major marital strife before you decide to work on your marriage. Make it a priority to improve your communication, dream together, and speak the language of your spouse. In fact, it is healthy to evaluate your relationship as a couple on a regular basis and to receive insight from other trusted confidants; close (mature) friends, a pastor, or marriage counselor. When you give attention to building effective communication within your marriage it helps to provide a type of insulation from some of the inevitable matrimonial trials and challenges of life. In addition, couples who value and strive for successful communication are giving a gift to their children—stability, respect, and hope for the future. Show your spouse you care by communicating in his/her love language today. Enjoy!

Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at low costs. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.