

A group of people are dining on a rooftop terrace at sunset. A woman in a yellow dress is laughing and holding hands with a man in a blue shirt. Another man in a dark shirt is smiling and looking towards the woman. The background shows a cityscape and hills under a warm, golden sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

*The Secret That Will Revolutionize
Your Relationships*

THE **5** *love*
LANGUAGES[®]

SINGLES EDITION

#1 *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Gary Chapman



*The Secret That Will Revolutionize
Your Relationships*

THE **5** *love*
LANGUAGES[®]

SINGLES EDITION

#1 *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Gary Chapman

*The Secret That Will Revolutionize
Your Relationships*

THE *5 love*
LANGUAGES[®]
SINGLES EDITION

Gary Chapman

NORTHFIELD PUBLISHING
CHICAGO

© 2004, 2009, 2014, 2017 by
GARY D. CHAPMAN

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® . Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com . The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982, 1992 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

2017 edition edited by Elizabeth Cody Newenhuyse

Interior design: Smartt Guys design

Cover design: Faceout Studios

Cover photo: Boone Rodriguez (boonerodriguez.com)

Author photo: P. S. Photography

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Chapman, Gary D.

The 5 love languages singles edition / by Gary Chapman.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-8024-1140-2

1. Single people—Religious life. 2. Love—Religious aspects—Christianity. I. Title.

BV4596.S5C46 2004

248.8'4—dc22

2004006514

ISBN: 978-0-8024-1481-6

We hope you enjoy this book from Northfield Publishing. Our goal is to provide high-quality, thought-provoking books and products that will help you with your real needs and challenges. For more information on other books and products that will help you with all your important relationships, go to 5lovelanguages.com or write to:

Northfield Publishing
820 N. La Salle Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60610

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Printed in the United States of America

To the many singles who have shared with me their relationship struggles and joys. May this book bring more joy and less struggle.



Contents

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Introduction](#)

[1. Single Adults: Significant and Growing](#)

[2. This Is It: The Key to Your Relationships](#)

[3. *Love Language #1* : Words of Affirmation](#)

[4. *Love Language #2* : Gifts](#)

[5. *Love Language #3* : Acts of Service](#)

[6. *Love Language #4* : Quality Time](#)

[7. *Love Language #5* : Physical Touch](#)

[8. You Go First: Discover Your Primary Love Language](#)

- [9. Family: Connect the Dots with Your Immediate Family](#)
- [10. Dating Relationships—Part 1: Love Languages and Your Significant Other](#)
- [11. Dating Relationships—Part 2: Should Love Lead to Marriage?](#)
- [12. They're Not Just for Romantic Relationships: Roommates, Classmates, and Coworkers](#)
- [13. Single with Kids: Love Languages and Single Parents](#)
- [14. Success: Love Is the Key](#)
- [Appendix: The 5 Love Languages Profile](#)
- [Appendix: Online Dating: Benefits, Pitfalls, and Things to Consider](#)
- [Notes](#)
- [More from the Publisher](#)



Acknowledgments

Many strands of influence have intertwined to produce this book. First, I was greatly influenced by those singles who read my original *5 Love Languages* book for married couples and encouraged me to write a sequel for singles. Without their encouragement I would never have begun the journey.

The second strand of influence was the scores of singles who shared with me their encounters with love, or the lack of love, which shaped their lives. Their stories keep this book from being an academic treatise. I have wept and danced with them, and I hope the reader will experience both the pain and the excitement of love. All names have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals, but their stories are true.

The words and paragraphs were keyboarded by Tricia Kube and Martha Jones. Tricia has been my administrative assistant for more than twenty years, and Martha has been my valuable part-time assistant. Kay Tatum was the computer guru who pulled all the technical strands together and wove the

individual chapters into a manuscript. Without the help of these three dedicated ladies, the words of this book would still be rolling around in my head.

Shannon Warden has served as my research assistant. She spent numerous hours interviewing singles and helping me weave their stories into the fabric of the love-language mosaic. She also produced the “love language profile” found in the conclusion of the book. I deeply appreciate her contribution.

The Northfield Publishing team has done their usual job of encouraging me in the project. Randall Payleitner and Jim Vincent assisted me greatly in their editorial suggestions. Thanks to Bailey Utecht for her research updates. Greg Thornton and Bill Thrasher believed in the project from the beginning and encouraged me to take the five love languages message to singles. The entire publishing team is committed to helping singles have loving relationships. Their personal interest in the book has motivated me to keep “weaving” the strands.

In releasing this new edition, I want to thank Betsey Newenhuyse for her editorial expertise and Connor Sterchi for supplying the appendix dealing with online dating. Each of them has enhanced this updated edition.

As always, my wife, Karolyn, has been supportive of this project. She has worked with me through the years as we have sought to develop friendships with singles. Our lives have been greatly enriched from these relationships. It is our hope that this book will encourage singles to pursue “love” above all else, knowing that to pursue love is to pursue God.



Introduction

When I wrote *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts*, I never dreamed its message would spark such a response. Total sales are now more than 10 million copies. Each year the book has sold more copies than the year before. *The 5 Love Languages* has been translated into fifty foreign languages around the world.

I have been asked on many occasions to explain its phenomenal success. The only answer I have is that its message focuses on our deepest emotional need: the need to feel loved. For married couples, it provides the insights and practical tools for keeping emotional love alive in a marriage. Thousands of couples have indicated that the idea of the five love languages brought “new life” to their marriage.

Because the book was written specifically to married couples, I did not anticipate that numerous single adults would also read it. I often encounter single adults like Jill, who said, “I know you wrote *The 5 Love Languages* for married couples, but I want you to know that it has greatly helped me in all of

my relationships.” I meet singles like Nathan, a senior in college, who told me, “I never understood my roommate until I read your book. You’ve got to write a version of *The 5 Love Languages* for single adults.” And so, my motivation for writing this edition comes from the many, many single adults who have expressed these same needs and desires.

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 love languages have enhanced each of their relationships.

Nothing has more potential for strengthening one’s sense of well-being than effectively loving and being loved. Whatever your situation—never married, divorced, 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.

NOT JUST FOR ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

The remaining chapters will help you learn how to love and be loved by speaking these love languages. In chapter 9 you will discover how to apply the principles of the five love languages in understanding your parents, siblings, and the rest of your family. Chapters 10–11 will explore dating relationships, the possibility of marriage, and the importance of love languages in building a successful marriage relationship. Chapter 12 will focus on communicating love to roommates, classmates, and coworkers—the love languages aren't just for romantic relationships. Chapter 13 has guidelines for single parents communicating love to their children. Finally, in chapter 14, we'll focus on love as the key to success.

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.



1

SINGLE ADULTS:

Significant and Growing

If you're reading this book, chances are you're either single or know someone who is. More than half of all American adults are single—50.2 percent of us. (By contrast, in 1950 that number stood at about 22 percent.¹)

Twenty percent of American adults have never married—a number representing a “historic high.”² The median age of a first marriage has risen to twenty-seven among women and twenty-nine among men. This means that, in the general population among people eighteen to twenty-four, almost four out of every five (78 percent) have never been married.

1. Divorced. It is difficult to get a true handle on the divorce rate in this country, although the “one out of every two marriages” number has been widely debunked. But Professor Scott Stanley of the University of Denver notes that a young couple marrying for the first time today has a lifetime

divorce risk of 40 percent, “unless current trends change significantly.” ³ The point is, millions of Americans are “single again” due to divorce; millions more are separated from their spouses. Research indicates that almost 87 percent of separated couples proceed to obtain a divorce. ⁴

2. Widowed. Widowhood is definitely gender-based. Four out of five adults who are single because of the death of their spouse are females. Sixty-six percent of all women sixty-five and older are widowed. ⁵

3. Single parents. Today there are about 12 million single-parent families in the United States, 80 percent of them headed by women. One in four children under the age of eighteen is being raised without a father—one out of every three families. ⁶

DIVERSE YET UNITED

Clearly, single adults are a 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 yourself and your place in the world. At the heart of these pursuits is the need as an unmarried person to give and receive emotional love.

There’s no denying that the single life can sometimes be better referred to as the lonely life. Loneliness can mean sexual longing, raising kids alone, grieving the loss of a spouse or significant other, struggling to find someone to connect with, financial uncertainty, facing an empty Friday night, and much more. But at the core, these people are all dealing with the same thing: the need for close, significant relationships with people who care about them, are there for them, will walk through life with them.

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.

THE MAN WITH THE METAL HALO

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.

Rob responded, "Hello, I hope you're having a good morning." His inviting smile beckoned me into conversation. I discovered that he had suffered spinal injuries in a hiking accident. The older couple was his mom and dad.

The three had planned a family trip to the Grand Canyon two years earlier. The first year money was a problem, so they postponed their dream. Then Rob had his accident and they couldn't leave home. Now that Rob was doing somewhat better, they had come to see the canyon. When the family originally planned the trip, they intended to hike to the foot of the canyon. Their dream had been altered but not destroyed. So they planned to spend the week enjoying the sights.

Rob wheeled his chair into position for a great view of the trail and canyon, and he and his parents were soaking in the awe-inspiring panorama. I commended them for not giving up on their dream and wished them well.

My son and I continued our week together exploring the canyon. Toward the end of the week, I ran into Rob in the lobby of the Bright Angel Lodge. Because of our earlier encounter, it seemed I was seeing an old friend. We ended up talking for two hours. Rob shared his story about the fall that resulted in his injuries and the determined efforts of the rescue workers who flew him out by helicopter. He told me about the pain and the emotional struggle of those early days when he wasn't sure he would ever be able to walk again. He had a number of brushes with depression, had lost a new job opportunity, and spent many weeks in physical therapy.

When I asked what had enabled him to come through that experience and still have such a vibrant spirit, his answer was simple. "Love," he said. "That's the only way I could have made it. Mom and Dad were with me through the whole thing, and I had a girlfriend ... not a romantic relationship, but a close friend who came to see me every day in those early weeks. I don't think I would have made it without her. She brought me hope. She encouraged me in my therapy, and she prayed with me. I had never had a girl pray with me before. There was something about the way she talked to God

that gave me hope. Her words were like rain on my parched emotions.

“We’re still good friends. Her love and the love of my folks brought me through.”

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 lots of time in learning the language of technology, not just at work but for social purposes. Things like texting, the Internet (and Internet dating sites), and social networking through Facebook, Instagram, blogging, and on and on. If so, you have reaped the benefits. Unfortunately, most single adults (and most people in general) have spent more time thinking about technology than they have studying love.

IT DOESN’T MAGICALLY HAPPEN!

I agree with Professor Leo Buscaglia, who spoke and wrote often about love. He said, “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.” [Z](#)

I have invested many years 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 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 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 to change you and your 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?*

THIS IS IT:

The Key to Your Relationships

It is safe to assume that everyone reading this book has relationships. The question is: what is the quality of these relationships?

Positive and affirming relationships bring great pleasure, but unhealthy relationships can bring deep pain. I would be so bold as to suggest that life's greatest happiness is found in good relationships, and life's deepest hurt is found in bad relationships. If you feel loved by your mother, then the maternal relationship brings you a feeling of comfort and encouragement. On the other hand, if your relationship with your mother is fractured, you probably suffer feelings of abandonment. And if you were abused by your mother, you likely feel hurt and anger, maybe even hatred.

IT STARTS WITH OUR PARENTS

Lack of love from parents often motivates children to go searching for love in other relationships. This search is often misguided and leads to further disappointment. For a number of years my son, Derek, has worked with “street” people. A few years ago he said to me, “I’ve never met anyone on the street who had a good relationship with his or her father.”

Whether you want them to or not, all of your relationships are impacted by the relationship you have, or had, with your parents. The nature of that relationship will have a positive or negative influence on all other relationships.

Some single adults have felt unloved by one or both parents. To compensate for the emptiness, they have poured themselves into positive pursuits and have accomplished admirable goals in many areas, but they have been unsuccessful in building positive relationships with other adults. Most have never stopped to ask, “What do I need to learn about love in order to build successful, positive relationships?” Understanding the five love languages will answer that question.

OBSESSIVE LOVE, COVENANT LOVE

Relationships are never static. All of us experience changes in relationships, but few of us stop to analyze why a relationship gets better or worse. Most divorced singles did not enter marriage with a goal of divorcing. In fact, most of them were extremely happy when they married. They would have characterized their marital relationship as positive, loving, and affirming. Obviously something happened to the relationship. By the time they divorce they are saying such things as, “My spouse is unloving, uncaring, self-centered, and sometimes just mean.” Ironically, the other spouse often makes similar statements about them. What happened?

With thousands of marriages ending in divorce every year, isn’t it time to stop and ask why? Why do good marriages go bad? Why do people become single again? After many years as a marriage counselor, I am convinced that the answer lies in the misunderstanding that most people have about the nature of love.

Western society is largely addicted to romantic love—yet at the same time we’re very ignorant of the facts about love. We have bought into the concept that love is something that happens to you. It is magical, obsessive,

exhilarating. If you have it, you have it; and if you don't, you don't, and there is nothing you can do about it. While this description of love can be fairly accurate, it only describes the first stage of a romantic relationship. It certainly does not describe the second and more important stage of romantic love. Let's look at these two stages of a relationship.

Stage One: "In Love"

Did you know there has been extensive scientific research done on the "in love," obsessive stage of love? The late Professor Dorothy Tennov wrote a classic book, *Love and Limerence*, in which she concluded that the average life span of this stage of love is two years. ¹ During this obsessive stage of love, we live under the illusion that the person with whom we are in love is perfect ... at least, perfect for us. Our friends can see his or her flaws, but we cannot. Your best friend may say, "I don't like how he gets angry with you." Your response may be, "Oh, he's just emotional. And he always apologizes after he blows up." Your brother may say, "But she's been married three times!" To which you respond, "Those guys were all losers before. She deserves to be happy. I'm going to make her happy."

During this initial stage of love, we have other irrational thoughts, such as, "I'll never be happy unless we are together forever. Nothing else in life really matters." Such thinking often leads a student to drop out of college and marry his or her lover, or just to move in together. In this stage of love, differences are minimized or denied. We just know that we are happy, that we have never been happier, and we intend to be this happy for the rest of our lives.

This stage of love does not require a lot of effort. I was in the Philadelphia airport one afternoon when a young lady I'll call Carrie walked up to me and introduced herself. She reminded me that we had met at a conference some two years earlier. During our conversation I learned she would be getting married in about six weeks. In fact, she was on her way to see her fiancé, who was stationed at a naval base near Chicago. When I told her I was on my way to lead a marriage seminar, she asked, "What do you teach at those?"

"I help couples learn how to work on their marriage."

"I don't understand," Carrie replied. "Why would you have to work on a marriage? If you have to work on it, doesn't that mean you probably shouldn't have gotten married in the first place?"