

Are you in a  
**Compatible  
Relationship?**



Research Shows  
Living in Conflict or  
**Within a Toxic Relationship**  
is more **Damaging** than  
Being Alone

## Are We Compatible?



### Topics to Discuss

- Timeliness & Punctuality
- Cleanliness & Orderliness
- Money & Spending
- Sex & Intimacy
- Parenting/Discipline
- In-Laws/Holidays
- Friends
- Work/Life Balance
- Physical Health
- Mental Health Care
- Life Priorities & Tempo
- Spirituality & Religion
- Politics
- Anything Important to You

## Relationship Compatibility Checklist

When starting a relationship, before moving in together, when thinking of merging checking accounts, handing out a spare key - and especially before legal commitments are made, it's always a good time to do a Relationship Compatibility Check.

Whether you grab a glass of wine and snuggle up to your favorite love bug for a gentle date night discussion or a hard-hitting interview like you were cast in *A Few Good Men*, start discussing your views on the following areas of your life together, knowing that you can certainly renegotiate your needs and (thank Goodness!) we humans can evolve and mature over time!





# Relationship Red Flags

What are signs of an unhealthy relationship?

## **Demeaning**



Is the person constantly putting you down or overly critical of you?

## **Controlling**



Do they display over controlling behaviors, such as checking your phone/social media, choosing who you spend your time with, or not wanting you to go out without them?

## **Poor Communication**



Is their input the only input in your relationship, things should not be one-sided

## **Love Bombing**



Is the relationship moving faster than you are comfortable with? Are you being told they have never loved anyone like this before (and it's only been several dates)?

## **Emotional Instability**



Do they have difficulty controlling their emotions? Specifically, anger. Are they rude to friends, wait-staff, or your family?

## **Jealousy**



Do they exhibit overly jealous behavior? Are you being accused of meeting someone else if you leave the house, even just going to work?

## **Blaming**



Do they blame all their previous relationship fails on their exes? Do they avoid any blame and claim others are "crazy".

## **Gaslighting**



Do they lie to you or twist the facts to make you feel "crazy?"

## **Violence**



Do they have a history of violence? Bar fights? Domestic abuse history or making threats of violence?





## Keys to Healthy Relationships

Here are a few top tips to follow.

**Keep your promises and their secrets.**

**Give your full attention.** We live in a distraction-filled world. Put your phone down, pay attention, and make eye contact when the other person is talking.

**Send a check-in text or call** on your daily commute or before bed to remind your partner you are there.

**Be open minded.** We grow, we change, and with that may come issues you may not always agree on - but keep an open mind.

Everyone is busy, so **be intentional about scheduling a partner's day once every month** or quarter to give you the opportunity to unwind and re-connect.

**Empathy is key.** Be a sounding board (not necessarily a problem solver) for your partner when they may be going through a rough time.

**Don't put down their friends or a partner you may not like.** Being diplomatic in discussing your concerns is the best approach. Constantly belittling the other person or persons may cause your friend to feel alienated from you.

**Celebrate and champion the successes and milestones of others.** Build them up, don't break them down.



# Love Languages

## » Part 1

### 5 Love Languages

(Dr. Gary Chapman)

#### Words of Affirmation

Focused on specifics about the other person's strengths or traits

#### Quality Time

Real time spent together, focused on each other

#### Acts of Service

Doing for the other person what they would normally have to do for themselves

#### Physical Touch

It's a little of what you think it is and a whole lot more of the intimate connection

#### Gifts

These can be small personal, thoughtful gifts, the value comes from the thought

#### Some are Multilingual

They can give and receive in many/all the languages, but one or two are usually strongest

## Improving Relationships by Speaking Each Other's Love Languages

**The Five Love Languages** are exciting because they're easy and quick to implement and to see results, even for those folks who might not have studied relationships intensively but want to do better (lol or hear they should be doing better!). They are great for people who want to take an honest inventory of how they're doing or if they're doing enough to show love in their relationships. Although the focus is traditionally on romantic relationships, knowing and speaking the love languages of your children, friends, parents, and even co-workers is so important to connect and love them in the way each of them receive and feel loved! Gary Chapman, who wrote the books, has Love Languages for spouses, children, and single people. These are wonderful and transferable skills!

### How do I know the Love Language of Others?

Oftentimes, you can tell how individuals want to receive love by watching what they do/what they say/how they show love to others. You can also tell their love language by what they complain about or what they criticize others for not doing enough of. Couples come into therapy all the time and one partner thinks they're loving the other so well by buying gifts, setting up romantic date nights - even paying the bills so the other doesn't have to. The other partner may have spent years feeling unloved because their primary love language is words of affirmation! All that person knows is "He or she never tells me they're proud of me, that I'm a hard worker, that they respect me."

### How do people even develop a love language?

Love languages have a lot to do with how we attached to our primary caregivers as children – what they taught us about love. Think about it. Why does snuggling up to another person or holding hands make some of us blissfully happy and some of us not so much? Why do some of us use terms of endearment and others not? Why do some of us work so hard to find the "right gift" when others of us send a gift card? How we were shown love is usually how we believe love should be shown to others.

# Love Languages

## » Part 1



### **What about people who were raised by absent or preoccupied caregivers who didn't show much love?**

Well, there is certainly nothing wrong with them, but they can often see the results of these experiences – or lack of love experiences – in their adult relationships. They might be really decent, good people who find it more challenging to understand and honor what their partner or child needs to feel loved. If your parents were neglectful, preoccupied, or even abusive, there is a chance that the things you didn't get might not be of value to you. So, someone trying to love you by saying words or spending time or touching you may have much less meaning to you.

If your caregiver didn't verbally express their loving or proud feelings for you or make time to look at you and see you, there is a chance you don't know how to do it for others. You may think being in the room watching tv is quality time. Or scrolling on your phone when your partner is needing attention is okay. None of those things are necessarily bad, but they can leave the other partner feeling hurt and rejected.

### **We can also learn to do better in loving people even if we didn't get loved in those ways.**

Absolutely! Those folks can also decide **“this is what I didn't have, so this is what I now want to give my children and family.”** And that's amazing! Is it easy to learn? No, not immediately. But what I see is that when these people do love another person and they want to show it, they are invested in asking **“What do you need from me?”** Tell me how I can show you how I feel about you in a way that is meaningful to you.

### **When we know what the languages are, we can learn which ones we need and our loved ones need, and we can even learn how to do more to improve our relationships.**

The Five Love Languages don't purport to be a one-stop cure for all relationship problems. There are still so many valuable parts to therapy, like healing old wounds, learning to communicate in healthy ways, understanding old patterns, learning ways to de-escalate conflict - and so much more. Love Languages is a favorite though, because you can begin to learn to look outside of yourself and learn to meet the needs of others. You can begin to build love - fill up your partner's love tank – and that's an awesome start to a happy relationship.



# Love Languages

## » Part 2

## Improving Relationships by Speaking Each Other's Love Languages

Let's review each of the Five Love Languages in a little more depth, with examples of how they can look and sound in our everyday lives.

### Words of Affirmation

This looks like verbally encouraging and appreciating another person. Be genuine when you're telling them what you like about them, what they do to make you feel loved, and why they're important to you. Looking at them when they're talking and minimizing distractions. This is verbal intimacy.

This sounds like, "I want to tell you how much you mean to me. I don't say it often enough, but I do think it. You are an amazing person because you ..." It also sounds like, "Hey, I really want to tell you how much it means to me that you always..."

Get in the habit of telling your children you love them and why, how excited you are to see them after school, send them a text or write them a card.

### Physical Touch

This looks like hand holding, snuggling on the couch, putting your arm around a person, rubbing their leg, sensual kissing... you get the point. This is physical intimacy. And it's so much more than what some people traditionally think of as being physically intimate.

Usually this is non-verbal love, but when verbally expressed it may sound like, "Can I hold your hand?" "Snuggle up here on the couch with me while we watch our show." And "Could you make extra time tonight for just me and you. I have a bottle of wine." The focus is on intimacy first, not on physicality, friends.

For kiddos, kisses and cuddles, hugs, holding hands, mani/pedis or play wrestling.

### Gifts

This, like Physical Touch, can be misunderstood sometimes. This looks like meaningful objects and tokens of affection. Money is not the issue. It is the thoughtfulness of this gesture that is the true gift like, remembering special occasions or giving personalized presents.

This sounds like, "I saw something today and it reminded me of you." "You have worked so hard lately. I booked you a massage or manicure or 1 night alone to watch tv."

I can't tell you how many men tell me "My wife doesn't like flowers." And I say, "I have never seen a woman get angry that her husband dropped off a small bouquet of flowers to her at work for all the other women to admire and to know how you feel about her." It's okay if she doesn't want you to spend a lot of money on flowers. But if you haven't done it in years, I would recommend you give it a try. Find a treat that does have meaning for your person. And keep trying.

For kids it might be making their favorite dessert, a surprise gift for no special reason... delighting in the gifts or crafts they make for you.

### **Quality Time**

This sounds like "Could I take you to lunch today. I miss you." "Let's get a glass of wine and sit at the table every night for 15 minutes to actually look at each other and catch up."

This looks like weekly date nights, turning your phone off during specific times, not allowing distractions to be more important than the person you love, making eye contact, truly listening to them when they talk.

And for kids, something like taking them out to see a new movie, a Daddy Daughter dance, sitting on the floor playing games with them, going on a bike ride.

### **Acts of Service**

This sounds like, "How can I help you?" "Is there anything I can take off your plate today?"

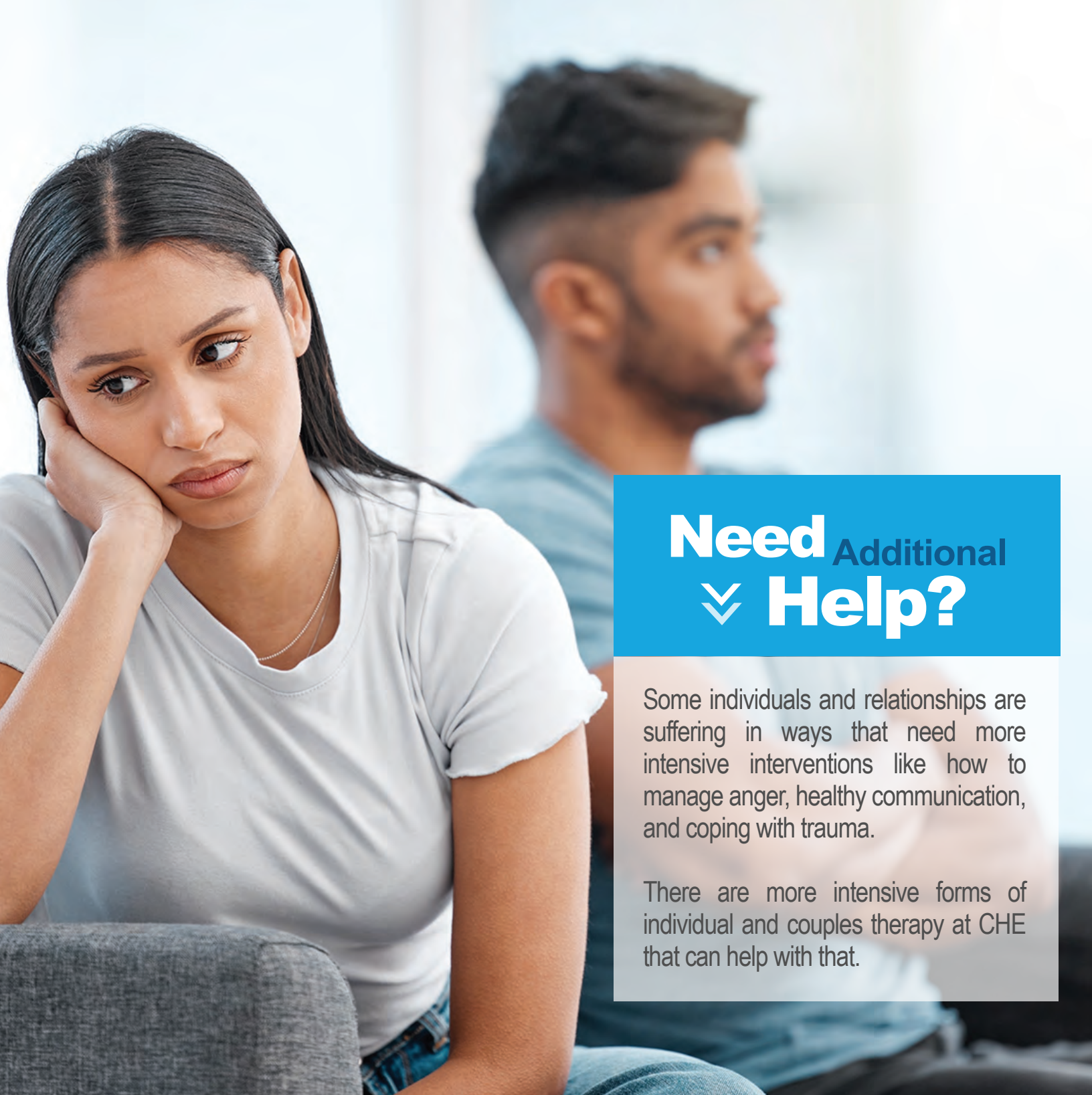
This looks like doing something that the other person would normally have to do to save them time and energy. If you wouldn't normally take out the trash, do that. If you wouldn't normally cook, do that. If you wouldn't normally clean the kitchen after dinner, do that. Breakfast in bed is nice. Helping them with a chore they're doing is good.

And for kids: Maybe help them clean their room, help them walk the dog, help them with their homework.

Again, the beauty of the Love Languages is that they are simple, and you can see immediate results as you begin to fill up the love tanks of the people who mean the most to you. I encourage you to start them and to continue them. If there are some of them that don't come naturally, then decide if you love your people enough to invest in learning and doing new things to show your love. Don't do them once or twice, get a great response and then stop! This is a focused, intentional way to continually show love to the people who are important to you. If at any time you realize you're off track, just be intentional about getting back on track.

These aren't secrets. It is such a gift for a person to sit with you and say "You know what I read on a blog today? I feel a little convicted, like we could each take the tests and see if we are doing what the other needs... I'd be excited to learn new ways to meet your needs and to show you how I feel about you."





## Need Additional ∨ **Help?**

Some individuals and relationships are suffering in ways that need more intensive interventions like how to manage anger, healthy communication, and coping with trauma.

There are more intensive forms of individual and couples therapy at CHE that can help with that.

If you're interested in learning more about our services, and/or would like to just have someone to talk to, please visit us at [www.cheservices.com](http://www.cheservices.com).

You can meet and book a session with one of our compassionate and expert therapists online at our "Meet our Provider" scheduling page: <https://www.cheservices.com/providers>. Or call and speak to a live customer support and scheduling agent at: 888-515-3834

# Additional Resources



If you and your partner are looking to nurture your partnership, resolve a problem, or reconnect, there are many resources available. With so much information available, it is hard to determine what the “right” information may be. To provide relationship resources that are helpful and evidence-based, please see our several recommended resources.

## Books:

“The Art of Loving” by Erich Fromm

“Mating In Captivity: Unlocking Erotic Intelligence” by Esther Perel

“The Normal Heart: The Surprising Secrets of Happy Couples and What They Reveal About Creating a New Normal in Your Relationship” by Chrisanna Northrup and Pepper Schwartz

“Attached: The New Science of Adult Attachment and How It Can Help You Find -- And Keep -- Love” by Amir Levine and Rachel S. F. Heller

“Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples” by Harville Hendrix

“How to Make Love All the Time” by Barbara De Angelis

“The New Rules of Marriage: What You Need to Know to Make Love Work” by Terrence Real

“Conscious Loving: The Journey to Co-Commitment” by Gay Hendricks and Kathlyn Hendricks

“The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts” by Gary Chapman

“Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love” by Sue Johnson

“Marriage Meetings for Lasting Love” by Marcia Naomi Berger

“Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes Are High” by Joseph Grenny, Kerry Patterson, Al Switzler, and Emily Gregory

“The Seven Principles For Making Marriage Work” by John M. Gottman and Nan Silver

“Loving Your Spouse When You Feel Like Walking Away” by Gary Chapman

“No More Fighting” by Alicia Muñoz

“Eight Dates” by John Gottman and Julie Schwartz Gottman

“Healing from Infidelity” by Michele Weiner-Davis

“Beyond Messy Relationships” by Judy K. Herman

“Marriage Counseling and Anxiety in Relationships” by Ester Novak

“Married Roommates” by Allen Wagner and Talia Wagner

“Easy Marriage Counseling” by Emelie A. Blank

“Love Worth Making” by Stephen Snyder, M.D.

# Additional Resources



## Love Language Quiz:

If you are interested in renting or purchasing the book and taking the LL quiz <https://5lovelanguages.com> and learning more, we would invite you to do that. We recommend each person to be mindful of these expressions of love (and that there are different ways to express love) and to see if they are loving the people around them in some or several of these ways every day.

## Web Links:

<https://www.gottman.com/couples/>

<https://www.gottman.com/blog/>

## Workbooks:

“The Marriage Counseling Workbook” by Emily Cook

“Couples Therapy Workbook: 30 Guided Conversations to Reconnect Relationships”  
by Kathleen Mates-Youngman

“The Power of Two Workbook: Communication Skills for a Strong & Loving Marriage” by Susan M. Heitler

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