



THE *5 love*
LANGUAGES[®]
OF TEENAGERS

The Secret to Loving Teens Effectively

Gary Chapman

IF YOUR TEENAGER'S LOVE LANGUAGE IS
WORDS OF AFFIRMATION:

Pick and choose among the following ideas to try something new you think your teenager will appreciate.

- *Talk about a goal your teenager would like to reach and verbally encourage them to explore it.*
- *Put a sticky note with some encouraging words on the cereal box they will see in the morning.*
- *Make a habit of mentioning something specific you've observed that highlights your teenager's accomplishments. Examples include, "I really enjoyed the way you picked up your clothes without my asking you," or "I appreciate that you worked so hard to finish your paper for school on time."*
- *Ask what your teenager wants to do after high school. If your daughter says, "I want to work as a physical therapist, helping people recover from difficult injuries," verbally encourage her to find what would be involved in reaching this goal.*
- *Copy or cut out inspirational quotes as you find them in publications and simply attach a note that says, "This really reminded me of you."*
- *If you are artistic, create a painting or drawing that shows how much you love your teenager.*
- *Take a favorite piece of artwork or special note from your teenager to be professionally framed. Then hang it in your home or office.*
- *When you have to be out of town for work or other reasons, leave a series of short notes for your teenager, one for each day you are apart.*

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- *Text your teenager whenever you think of them just to say, “I love you.”*
 - *Place their trophies, best school papers, and other standout works in areas they recognize as important to you such as the refrigerator, the office, or a special scrapbook.*
 - *When your teenager is feeling down, share five reasons why you are proud of them.*
 - *Keep a picture keychain (or pictures on your phone) with current pictures of your teenager and talk about them with your friends—especially when your teenager is around.*
 - *Create an encouragement jar that you and your teenager can use to drop in notes of praise and read together on a regular basis.*
 - *When a teenager makes a mistake trying to do something helpful, first use words to recognize that you knew of their good intentions.*

IF YOUR TEENAGER'S LOVE LANGUAGE IS

PHYSICAL TOUCH:

Need more ideas? Try one or more of these with your teenager this week.

- *Hold hands during family prayers.*
- *Develop a unique handshake or greeting that is only used between you and your teenager. Use it regularly when you say goodbye or meet after being apart.*
- *If your teenager is under stress, gently stroke their head to relax them as your son or daughter tells you about their situation.*
- *Hug and kiss your teenager every day when they leave for school for as long as they will let you, but be sensitive to their resistance, especially when in public.*
- *Shortly after disciplining your teenager, take a moment to give them a hug to show them the discipline was a consequence of their wrong choice and not against them as a person.*
- *Give each other a high five or similar congratulations whenever you catch your teenager doing something positive.*
- *Purchase a gift for your teenager that is touch oriented, such as a soft pillow, blanket, or sweater.*
- *Play games or sports together that require physical touch. This will allow both shared time together as well as touch that is meaningful without appearing forced.*
- *Offer to give your teenager a shoulder massage when they experience an especially difficult day.*
- *For father and son, playful wrestling can often express love, but only if this is an activity enjoyed by the teenager.*

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- *Provide a positive “pat on the back” as a way of communicating love when your teenager accomplishes something significant. (This can also often be helpful when your teenager has not accomplished a goal. Strive to be unconditional in offering love.)*
 - *If you see your teenager already in bed, walk in and pull their blankets up around them.*

IF YOUR TEENAGER'S LOVE LANGUAGE IS
QUALITY TIME:

The biggest commitment in showing love to a teenager desiring quality time is a commitment to change your personal schedule. Sometimes talking together in the car after school or practice to discuss the day is all that is needed, but here are several more creative ideas for your times together.

- *Ask very specific questions about your teenager's day that require more than a "yes" or "no" answer.*
- *Stop what you are doing to make eye contact with your teenager as they tell you something important.*
- *Have your teenager record special events on her phone. Then watch the video together to see what memories she captured.*
- *Have your teenager tell you of places they would like to go and why. Then surprise them occasionally by letting them choose one or arranging it for them ahead of time.*
- *Turn off your television show to watch your teenager's favorite show with them.*
- *If your teenager is driving, take a road trip together to a location of their choosing.*
- *Cook something together for a snack—such as cookies or brownies.*
- *Find silly things to laugh about and laugh about them a lot.*
- *Make a snack for yourself when you make one for your teenager. Then talk about their day together as you eat.*
- *If you have more than one child, arrange for care of the others and take your teenager out for a quick breakfast before school*

or for a smoothie after school.

- Go a few minutes early to pick up your teenager from hockey practice or Student Council. Stay late talking together about his involvement and get to know others involved in the group or on the team, such as teammates, coaches, or teachers. Tell the coach or teacher you appreciate his hard work.*
- If your family is musically talented, sing or play instruments together at home instead of watching television. Even better, choose a specific time each week and make it a tradition.*
- Keep your scheduled times with your teenager on your device and make those dates high priority.*
- Surprise your teenager with tickets or a trip to a special place. A camping trip, basketball game, or trip to the mall can build lifelong memories. Take pictures of the event to further strengthen this surprise.*
- If possible, take your teenager to your workplace one day. Introduce your teenager to your coworkers, include them in your meetings, and talk about what it's like to serve in your particular company.*
- Create "traditions" with your teenager, such as eating ice cream at the same store each time or walking together at a particular park.*
- Choose one or two board games or card games that you regularly play together.*
- Focus family vacations to include significant time being together versus a trip focused on divided parent and teenager activities.*
- Occasionally take family walks or bike rides together. Seek opportunities to spend time together that also include exercise.*

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- *Share more meals together as a family at the table. Make dinnertime a special occasion with lots of pleasant talk about the day. Family prayer can also strengthen this practice.*
 - *Don't give up "tucking in" your teenager at night. You may no longer read bedtime stories, but you can still talk about the day or pray together.*
 - *Spend time doing homework together. This both improves their grades and creates additional quality time (you might also learn something new).*
 - *Plant something together. For those with outdoor-oriented teenagers, time together in a flower garden, planting summer vegetables, or landscaping the yard can create lifelong positive memories.*
 - *Make photo albums or a scrapbook together—either in a book or on your computer. Talk together about the memories you shared in the process.*

IF YOUR TEENAGER'S LOVE LANGUAGE IS ACTS OF SERVICE:

While this chapter discusses the need to train your teenager to grow and to serve others, there are many times when a simple act of service to your teenager provides significant impact. Here are several that express love without ignoring your teenager's need for responsibility.

- *Acknowledge your teenager's uniqueness by shopping together for new paint colors for their room and helping them paint it.*
- *Help your teenager practice for their sports team, such as pitch and catch for baseball, or help rebounding free throws for teenagers participating in basketball.*
- *Assist your teenager on a tough homework assignment.*
- *Make a favorite snack when your teenager is having a difficult day.*
- *Do a chore that usually is your teen's responsibility when they're especially loaded with homework or have tests coming up.*
- *Occasionally wake up a half-hour earlier to make a special surprise breakfast for your teenager. (Make sure she has time!)*
- *Begin teaching your teenager the importance of serving others through regular involvement in a local community group or church ministry. For the independent teenager, allow them to research different opportunities and select the place of service.*
- *When running late for school or other meeting, help your teenager quickly finish what needs to be done so they can arrive on time.*
- *During a time when your teenager is sick, go the extra step by setting up their favorite movie or making their favorite soup.*

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- *Connect your teenager with one of your friends or family members who can help them in an area of interest such as dance lessons, soccer, or piano playing.*
 - *Choose one special area in which you determine to always serve your teenager above and beyond normal expectations. Examples could include making sure school lunch is always made or making a favorite dessert on a regular basis.*
 - *Start a “birthday dinner” tradition where you make your teenager any meal they want on their birthday.*
 - *Help your teenager create flash cards for their upcoming test or quiz. Work together with your teenager until they feel confident with the material.*
 - *If your teenager calls you at work and is in a crisis, sacrifice more time than usual to listen to their situation.*

IF YOUR TEENAGER'S LOVE LANGUAGE IS
GIFTS:

When it comes to gift giving, many parents need to be reminded that the gift is as much about the love behind the giving as it is about the gift itself. Creativity is more important than money when it comes to gift giving for your teenager.

- *Select presents that fit the interests of your teenager—choosing gifts that are perceived as appropriate by your teenager.*
- *When on a shopping trip, give your teenager a set “allowance” that you will pay toward an item they select.*
- *Keep a small collection of inexpensive gifts packed away for your teenager. Then give them one at a time as you sense there is a need.*
- *Carry candy or gum you can give away as a small gift when away from home.*
- *Make a special meal you know your teenager likes, go to a special restaurant, or make their favorite dessert.*
- *Start a collection of unique gift boxes and wrapping papers that can be used to package even the most simple of presents.*
- *When away from home, mail a small package to your teenager with their name on it in large letters.*
- *Keep a “gift bag” of small, inexpensive gifts your teenager can choose from as a reward for doing something positive. These gifts can also include “coupons” for special privileges, like allowing three friends to stay over that weekend or choosing where the family eats the next time you go out.*
- *Give your teenager a “song,” either one you make up or a special song you select that reminds you of them.*

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- *Create a scavenger hunt for a gift that includes a map and clues along the way to the main surprise.*
 - *Hide a small gift in your teenager's coat pocket with an encouraging note attached.*
 - *If you are away from your teenager a few days, leave a small package for each day with a special gift and note reminding how much you love them.*
 - *Instead of spending money on a larger gift for a birthday, host a large birthday party with their friends, encouraging each person to bring a gift or card.*
 - *Consider a gift that lasts, such as a tree you can plant together, a board game you can play together in the future, or a picture they can hang in their room.*
 - *Buy a ring or necklace for your teenager to wear that is just from you.*
 - *For a birthday or Christmas, shop together for a special gift that includes your teenager's opinion in the process. This special gift plus personal involvement in the decision can create a highly meaningful gift.*
 - *During the Christmas holiday season, shop together to purchase a gift for someone in need, partnering with Angel Tree, The Salvation Army, or a similar organization.*
 - *Give hints leading toward a special upcoming gift. A "count-down" of notes such as, "Only four more days until present day," help create huge anticipation and a tremendous amount of love for those who especially enjoy receiving gifts.*
 - *Send flowers or candy to be delivered at school with a note that recognizes an academic or extracurricular achievement.*



Notes

Chapter 1: Understanding Today's Teenagers

1. *YOUTHviews* 6, no. 8 (April 1997): 3; published by the George H. Gallup International Institute, Princeton, NJ.
2. 1 Samuel 3:10 NIV.
3. *YOUTHviews* 6, no. 7 (March 1999): 3.
4. James Garbarino, *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them* (New York: Free Press, 1999), 6–7.
5. *YOUTHviews* 5, no. 9 (May 1998): 2.
6. Jerrold K. Footlick, “What Happened to the American Family?” *Newsweek* (Special Edition), Winter/Spring, 1990, 15.
7. Eric Miller with Mary Porter, *In the Shadow of the Baby Boom* (New York: EPM Communications, 1994), 5.
8. Richard Louv, *Childhood's Future* (New York: Anchor, 1990), 6.
9. Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 40.
10. *Ibid.*, 31, 40, 45.
11. *Ibid.*, 37.
12. *YOUTHviews* 5, no. 1 (September 1997): 1.

Chapter 2: The Key: Love from Parents

1. *YOUTHviews* 5, no. 8 (April 1998): 1; published by the George H. Gallup International Institute, Princeton, NJ.
2. *YOUTHviews* 5, no. 9 (May 1998): 2.
3. *YOUTHviews* 6, no. 8 (April 1999): 3.
4. *YOUTHviews* 5, no. 7 (March 1998): 2.
5. *YOUTHviews* 5, no. 6 (February 1998): 5.
6. Lawrence Steinberg and Ann Levine, *You and Your Adolescent* (New York: Harper, 1997), 2.
7. *YOUTHviews* 5, no. 2 (October 1997): 1, 4.
8. James Garbarino, *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them* (New York: Free Press, 1999), 50.
9. *Ibid.*, 51.
10. Ephesians 1:6 NKJV.
11. Ken Canfield, *The Heart of a Father* (Chicago: Northfield, 2006), 225.
12. Garbarino, *Lost Boys*, 158.
13. Those who struggle with unresolved anger may profit from reading Gary Chapman, *Anger: Handling a Powerful Emotion in a Healthy Way* (Chicago: Northfield, 2015).
14. Garbarino, *Lost Boys*, 138.
15. Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam, 2006), 20–30.
16. David Popenoe, *Life Without Father* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 191; Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Boundaries with Kids* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 46; and Garbarino, *Lost Boys*, 154.
17. Matthew 22:35–40 NIV.
18. Garbarino, *Lost Boys*, 168.
19. *Ibid.*, 132.

Chapter 3: Love Language #1: Words of Affirmation

1. Proverbs 18:21 NKJV.
2. Anne Cassidy, “Fifteen Ways to Say ‘I Love You,’” *Woman’s Day*, February 18, 1997, 24.

Chapter 4: Love Language #2: Physical Touch

1. Ecclesiastes 3:1, 5 NIV.
2. For practical help on anger management, see Gary Chapman, *Anger: Handling a Powerful Emotion in a Healthy Way* (Chicago: Northfield, 2007).
3. *YOUTHviews* 6, no. 8 (April 1999): 1; published by the George H. Gallup International Institute, Princeton, NJ.

Chapter 5: Love Language #3: Quality Time

1. Ross Campbell, *How to Really Love Your Teen* (Colorado Springs: Cook, 2004), 33.
2. Gary Smalley and Greg Smalley, *Bound by Honor* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1998), 98.
3. Eastwood Atwater, *Adolescence* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996), 198.
4. *Ibid.*, 201.
5. Smalley and Smalley, *Bound by Honor*, 107.
6. Lawrence Steinberg and Ann Levine, *You and Your Adolescent* (New York: Harper, 1997), 13.

Chapter 6: Love Language #4: Acts of Service

1. Matthew 20:28 NIV.
2. Matthew 20:26 NIV.

Chapter 9: Anger and Teenagers

1. Counting to one hundred, five hundred, or even one thousand can be an effective means of restraining an immediate and uncontrolled anger response. For suggestions on how this can work, see Gary Chapman, *Anger: Taming a Powerful Emotion* (Chicago: Moody, 2015), 38–40.

Chapter 10: Loving Your Teen in Single-Parent and Blended Families

1. Proverbs 29:18 KJV.
2. Shmuel Shulman and Inge Seiffge-Krenke, *Fathers and Adolescents* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 97.
3. Tom and Adrienne Frydenger, *The Blended Family* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1984), 19.
4. Shulman and Seiffge-Krenke, *Fathers and Adolescents*, 123; Frydenger, *The Blended Family*, 120.
5. Lawrence Steinburg and Ann Levine, *You and Your Adolescent* (New York: Harper, 1997), 13.

Chapter 11: Love and the Desire for Independence

1. Lawrence Steinberg and Ann Levine, *You and Your Adolescent* (New York: Harper, 1997), 150.
2. George Sweeting, *Who Said That?* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 302.
3. *Ibid.*, 370.
4. Lawrence Kutner, *Making Sense of Your Teenager* (New York: William Morrow, 1997), 44.

Chapter 12: Love and the Need for Responsibility

1. Lawrence Steinberg and Ann Levine, *You and Your Adolescent* (New York: Harper, 1997), 16.
2. *Ibid.*

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3. Ibid., 16–17.
 4. Ibid., 16.
 5. See Exodus 20.
 6. The two commandments Jesus said were the greatest were to love God with your whole heart and to love your neighbor as you love yourself; see Mark 12:30–31.
 7. Steinberg and Levine, *You and Your Adolescent*, 187.

Chapter 13: Loving When Your Teen Fails

1. John Rosemond, *Teen-Proofing: A Revolutionary Approach to Fostering Responsible Decision Making in Your Teenager* (Kansas City, MO: Andrews McMeel Publishing, 1998), 170.
2. To find a local chapter of Al-Anon, visit their website at: www.al-anon.org.



THE *5 love*
LANGUAGES[®]
OF TEENAGERS



The 5 Love Languages Test for Teenagers

INSTRUCTIONS:

Your parents have read *The 5 Love Languages for Teenagers* and are wondering if they are speaking your love language. If they haven't already explained it to you, your primary "love language" is basically one of the following: words, touch, quality time, gifts, or service. You know your parents love you because they most often express their love to you through one of these "love languages."

You're going to see thirty pairs of things that your parents might do or say to show love to you. All you have to do is pick one item in each pair that you like better. For some of them, you might like both options—but just pick one. When you're finished picking one from all thirty pairs of items, you'll be able to count your score. That'll tell you and your parents what your main love language is.

You might be thinking, "Great, my parents are trying to 'get to know me better.' They've been reading again." But give them a break!

They just want to make sure that you know they love you. It's pretty bad when a parent thinks that he or she is showing you love, and then one day you say something like "I never knew if my mom or dad loved me." So take this test! You'll learn something new about yourself, and it'll help your parents love you better!

THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES TEST FOR TEENAGERS

Remember, you're going to see thirty pairs of things that parents do or say to show love to their kids. They may be things your parents do or say or that you wish your parents would do or say. Pick only the ONE item in each box that you like the best, and circle the letter that goes with that item. When you finish looking at all thirty pairs, count how many times you circled each letter and transfer that number to the appropriate blank at the end of the test.

1	Asks me what I think	A
	Puts his/her arm around my shoulder	E
2	Goes to my sports events, recitals, etc.	B
	Does my laundry	D
3	Buys me clothes	C
	Watches TV or movies with me	B
4	Helps me with school projects	D
	Hugs me	E
5	Kisses me on the cheek	E
	Gives me money for things I need	C
6	Takes time off of work to do stuff with me	B
	Rubs my shoulders or back	E

7	Gives me cool things for my birthday	C
	Reassures me when I fail or mess up	A
8	Gives me a high five	E
	Respects my opinions	A
9	Goes out to eat or shops with me	B
	Lets me use his/her stuff	C
10	Tells me I'm the best son/daughter in the world	A
	Drives me to places I need to go	D
11	Eats at least one meal with me most every day	B
	Listens to me and helps me work through problems	A
12	Doesn't invade my privacy	D
	Holds or shakes my hand	E
13	Leaves me encouraging notes	A
	Knows what my favorite store is	C
14	Hangs out with me sometimes	B
	Sits next to me on the couch	E
15	Tells me how proud he/she is of me	A
	Cooks meals for me	D
16	Straightens my collar, necklace, etc.	E
	Shows interest in stuff that I'm interested in	B
17	Allows my friends to hang out at our house	D
	Pays for me to go on school or church trips	C
18	Tells me I look good	A
	Listens to me without judging me	B

19	Touches or rubs my head	E
	Sometimes lets me pick out where we go on family trips	D
20	Takes me to the doctor, dentist, etc.	D
	Trusts me to be at home alone	C
21	Takes me on trips with him/her	B
	Takes me and my friends to movies, concerts, etc.	D
22	Gives me stuff that I really like	C
	Notices when I do something good	A
23	Gives me extra spending money	C
	Asks me if I need help	D
24	Doesn't interrupt me when I'm talking	B
	Likes the gifts I buy for him/her	C
25	Lets me sleep in late sometimes	D
	Seems to really enjoy spending time with me	B
26	Pats me on the back	E
	Buys me stuff and surprises me with it	C
27	Tells me he/she believes in me	A
	Can ride in the car with me without lecturing me	B
28	Picks up stuff that I need from various stores	C
	Sometimes holds or touches my face	E
29	Gives me some space when I'm feeling upset or angry	D
	Tells me that I'm talented or special	A
30	Hugs or kisses me at least once every day	E
	Says he/she is thankful that I'm his/her child	A

YOUR SCORE:

- A = Words of Affirmation _____
B = Quality Time _____
C = Receiving Gifts _____
D = Acts of Service _____
E = Physical Touch _____

INTERPRETING YOUR TEST SCORES

Which language received the highest score for you? This is your primary love language. If two tied, then you are bilingual and have two primary languages. If a second language scored almost as high as your primary language, then that means you have a secondary language, and both are important to you. The highest possible score for any single love language is 12, and the total is 30. Your mix might look like this: 11 for your primary, 9 for your secondary, and then 5, 3, and 2 for the others. Or you could have a 12, followed by a distant 6, 5, 4, and 3. What you won't have is an even split (all scores of 6)—that would be highly rare.

Whatever your primary language is, don't write off the others. Your friends and family may express (and need) love in these languages, and you should know this about them. As we speak each other's love languages, we feel known and connected.