



What is your love language?

Many of you are aware of the idea of love languages. Almost 25 years ago, Dr. Gary Chapman first came out with the book, “The 5 Love Languages.” Since then, over ten million copies have been sold and the book has been translated into 50 languages. Pretty impressive! More recently, Dr. Chapman wrote another book with Paul White entitled, “The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace.”

At Family Business Counsel, we have just begun using a tool associated with Dr. Chapman’s work. It’s a brief assessment you can find at:

<http://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile/>

I would encourage you to take the assessment. If you aren’t familiar with this idea of love languages, let me list them for you:

- Receiving Gifts
- Acts of Service
- Words of Affirmation
- Physical Touch
- Quality Time

My top two are Words of Affirmation and Physical Touch. Parenthetically, it’s amazing how many men have Physical Touch in their top two... Like “they” have always said (☺), “Men’s minds always go there...”

Recently, we had a family business client take the assessment. And then, at a meeting they all shared their Languages of Appreciation (their Love Languages). As we discussed their results two things happened: first, they became aware of what kinds of expression of appreciation really means something to them individually. And secondly, they realized:

***Not everyone “measures” love
the same way.***

Our natural reaction is always (I know I say be careful with that word... but this is an exception ☺...) to try and express love and appreciation in the “language” we most appreciate. BUT, if I try and show love to my spouse in the way I most receive love, and if that language is on the bottom of her list, guess what? Fireworks will go off – and not the kind we had when we shared our first kiss! When I try and share love the way I receive it, not only may I not sense my spouse appreciates it, she may actually be offended by the way I’m trying to communicate love.

So, be attentive to your spouse’s, your business partner’s, your co-worker’s, your children’s love language – language of appreciation.

***Show them you care enough
about them to “study” them
well enough to know
what really matters to them.***

Back to the client we took through this exercise. At the end of the meeting, I gave them some homework. For each of their team members, I asked them to write out the following phrase:

***I will show _____
love by _____.***

By the next meeting, they had all done their homework! And when we went round and shared, it was quite a powerful experience. The positive atmosphere in the meeting room was palpable. I wish all family businesses could practice this kind of commitment and understanding all the time... Having said that, so you don’t think we got too sappy, one of the younger team members shared his statements with all of his teammates. He then turned to me and said (speaking proudly of the homework he’d done – the statements he’d written out for each member of the team), “That’s good stuff... huh, Mark?” Maybe you had to be there to appreciate it, but I laughed my head off. We all did!

The combination of “pin-drop moment” as they all shared along with the throw-your-head-back laughter made for a (for those of you who remember) “Kodak moment.”

Take time to learn your own love language. Then take time to learn the “languages” of those around you. Then, practice what you’ve learned. You’ll be glad you did! Even more importantly, those around you will be glad you did!