

A “Cosmo quiz”: What is your love language?

One of the most important contributions that a partner, friend, or family member brings to labor support is a history of love and support for the birthing mother. You can maximize the benefit of this support by understanding more about how to communicate that love.

In Gary Chapman’s book, The Five Love Languages, he illustrates that we each express our love with certain ‘languages’, and there are certain ‘languages’ that we hear love in. If someone is saying “I love you” over and over, but using a different language than we speak, it is hard to hear the love coming through. Here’s a quiz to help you determine your love languages.

What love language speaks the most clearly to you?

1. Which would be the sweetest thing someone could do for you to show their love?

	Mom	Dad
a. Give me an hour-long massage.	_____	_____
b. Write a poem or list telling me all the things they love about me.	_____	_____
c. Buy me something that I had been admiring in a store.	_____	_____
d. Clean the house or fix the leaky faucet I’ve been meaning to fix.	_____	_____
e. Give up an evening’s plans just to spend time with me.	_____	_____

2. If you had a really hard day, what would be the best thing your support person could do?

a. Curl up on the couch together, let me lay my head in his/her lap.	_____	_____
b. Tell me that they love me, and know I’m doing the best I can.	_____	_____
c. Surprise me with a special treat to make up for the rough day.	_____	_____
d. Run errands for me, and make dinner, so I can rest for a while.	_____	_____
e. Spend time together just talking and relaxing and re-connecting.	_____	_____

3. You are hurrying off to work. What would be a quick way someone could say I love you?

a. A hug and a kiss.	_____	_____
b. Tell me they love me, and think that I look great.	_____	_____
c. Hand me one of my favorite snacks to eat in the car.	_____	_____
d. Say that they’ll take care of taking the trash out.	_____	_____
e. Say they look forward to our next chance to spend time together.	_____	_____

What language are you most comfortable speaking?

4. A friend has been out of work for a while, and is feeling really down. What do you do?

a. Give him a hug, and put my hand on his arm while we talk.	_____	_____
b. Tell him what a great guy he is & what confidence I have in him.	_____	_____
c. Take him out for a nice dinner at his favorite restaurant.	_____	_____
d. Spend an afternoon helping him write resumes and cover letters.	_____	_____
e. Set aside time each week to spend together.	_____	_____

5. When you meet with a friend for lunch, she tells you joyfully, that she is pregnant. Do you:

a. Jump up and give her a huge hug.	_____	_____
b. Say “I’m so excited for you, you’ll be such a great mom!”	_____	_____
c. Offer to host a baby shower & start planning what you’ll give her.	_____	_____
d. Offer to help her complete some projects before the baby comes.	_____	_____
e. Spend a long lunch with her, just talking about babies.	_____	_____

Scoring

Questions 1 – 3 are about what love language(s) you are best able to *hear*, and most enjoy having spoken to you. Questions 4 and 5 are about what language(s) you feel most comfortable *speaking* to your loved ones. These might be the same, but they're often different. Here's what the answers indicate about your love language.

A = Physical Touch.

B = Words of Affirmation.

C = Gifts.

D = Acts of Service.

E = Quality Time.

Compare your answers to your partner's answers, or what the answers would be for other support people in your life. In a few lucky couples, each person happens to be most comfortable speaking the love language the other person most needs to hear.

For most of us, though, there are times when our languages are out of synch. It's important to learn what language our loved one(s) hears, so that we can try to speak in that language as much as possible. It's also good if they know what our primary speaking language is, so that if we "miss", at least they know we're trying!

For example, you may have a partner who thrives on words of affirmation, but if you've come from a very reserved, restrained background, it may be very difficult to give effusive praise and have it sound genuine. You will try to learn a new language, and they'll forgive you for your stumbles. You can learn to give verbal encouragement as often as possible, and they can learn to translate your quiet "you did a nice job" into the full cheerleader routine they'd love to hear.

Partners: Applying the Love Languages to Labor Support.

Physical Touch: If this is mom's language, try: stroking her hair, holding her hand, massage, hugging, kissing, rubbing her feet, just resting your hand on her, shower with her... Be in physical contact throughout labor. If you need to leave the room, give her something to hold on to.

Words of Affirmation: Encouragement and praise are vital to supporting her. She may like a cheerleader. Or, she may prefer quiet, calm, whispered words telling her she's doing great. In late labor, it's fine if you say the same thing over and over again on each contraction. She may be very sensitive to criticism, and may feel unsupported if you do not actively voice your support.

Gifts: In preparation for the birth, tuck a few special surprises away in the birth bag. Her favorite music, her favorite hard candy, a cute hat for the baby, a picture from a recent vacation to use as a focal point. Show that you made an effort to prepare for the birth and for the baby.

Acts of Service: This mom wants active support. She'll love it if you get her a glass of juice, heat up a heating pad for her, get a cool cloth to put on her forehead, bring her a blanket, put the suitcase in the car. She'll appreciate it if you take responsibility for questions that need to be asked, decisions that need to be made, actions that need to be taken.

Quality Time: This mom needs your Presence. She wants someone by her side continuously throughout labor, supporting her just by being there and being attuned to her needs. She wants to know that you're listening to her, that you know what's important to her, and that there's nowhere else you'd rather be than with her. Try not to leave her alone, if possible.

A special message for expectant moms: Labor will consume most of your attention and energy, and it may be hard to feel like you're giving much back to your partner. By understanding what love language he hears most clearly, you can focus your efforts on this area, knowing that even a little gesture goes a long way if it's spoken in the right language.