

Keeping Love Alive On the Dementia Journey



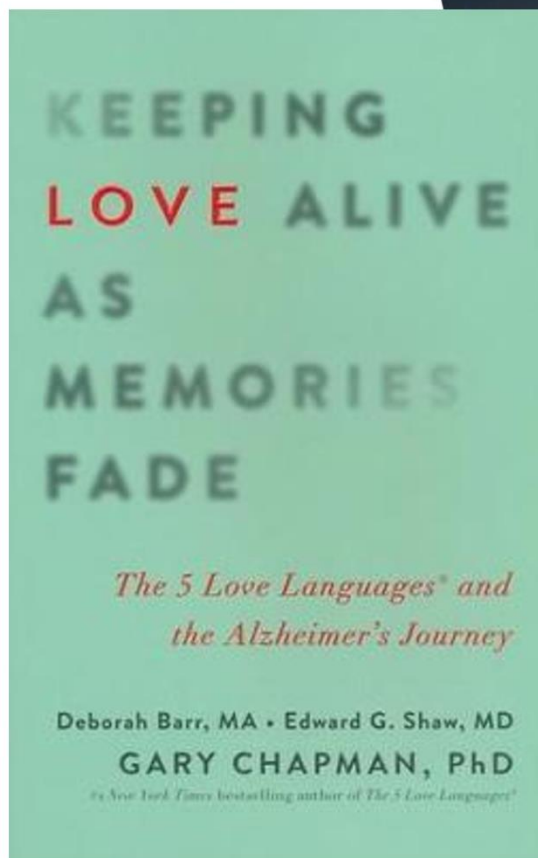
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Keeping Love Alive as Memories Fade

The 5 Love Languages and the Alzheimer's Journey

by, Deborah Barr, Edward Shaw,
and Gary Chapman





♥ “We embraced as we cried, speaking our love for one another in **silence...**”



Our most basic emotional need is to be genuinely loved by another...

A LOVE that is given by CHOICE

What if the person you love eventually becomes **unable** to express love back to you?



HESED (Hebrew word):

The depth and beauty of the choice driven kind of love that the love languages EXPRESS...

HESED is not just a **feeling**, but an **ACTION**

- ♥ Blend of love and loyalty
- ♥ Love that can be counted on
- ♥ Security of faithfulness
- ♥ Intervenes on behalf of loved ones and comes to their rescue



About The 5 Languages of Love

- ♥ Based on the concept of “INTENTIONAL LOVE” and the love tank, an **emotional tank** waiting to be filled
- ♥ The ways individuals perceive emotional love is so distinct from one another that they essentially comprise 5 different “languages” or channels of communication....Gary Chapman
- ♥ Each of us has at least one language that communicates emotional love to us more than the others.



The 5 Languages of Love

- ♥ **Words of Affirmation** - words of appreciation and acknowledgement, saying encouraging words, kind words to the person but also to others about the person (*emotionally devastated and hurt by insults and harsh words*)
- ♥ **Quality Time** - giving someone your full attention, quality conversation, sharing thoughts and feelings, quality activities and experiences (*hurt by distracted and halfhearted listening, postponing of promised time together*)
- ♥ **Gifts (Receiving gifts)** - visible symbol of love, thoughtfulness and effort behind the gift is precious, sends “I love you” message, sees physical presence as a gift as well (*is left feeling empty in a relationship void of tangible tokens of love*)



The 5 Languages of Love continued

- ♥ **Acts of Service** - doing helpful things for another, purpose is to lighten the load for the other person, requires thought, planning, time and effort- what's MOST meaningful to that person (*hurt by laziness, others leaving messes they have to deal with, forgotten or empty promises to help*)
- ♥ **Physical Touch** - deliberate touch that requires your full attention to deliver, incidental touch, touch and closeness sends the clearest "I love you" message (*any kind of unkind touch, physical abuse or neglect causes emotional pain*)



What's Your LOVE Language?



Let's find out....
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Group Exercise



Your Love Language Personal Profile



— Discover your Love Language —

— Discover your Love Language —

The deep human need for love does not disappear with a dementia diagnosis....

But what does happen is the person with the disease loses their ability to manage their side of the relationship. The ability to receive emotional love endures far longer than their ability to express it. Probably to the very end of the disease journey.

“no matter what goes on in the human brain, there’s a core-something that allows them to continue feeling love, it’s in their “being”they can feel it, they just don’t know how to speak it.”



The amygdala is responsible for emotional memory....basically unaffected

- ♥ Despite their difficulty connecting thoughts, people with dementia are still able to **FEEL DEEPLY**
- ♥ Meaningful relationships can be maintained but it's going to be "*different*." You're going to find meaning in "*different*" ways
- ♥ Maintaining this kind of relational intimacy or closeness is **BOTH intentional** and *sacrificial* for the care partner... calls for the requirement of repeated "love by choice" decisions
- ♥ This allows the person with dementia to still recall the emotional aspects of something even when they cannot recall the factual content.....
- ♥ The feeling of being loved can persist even after the actions or words that delivered the "love message" are forgotten



What changes in dementia that impacts person's ability to express love to others...Disease "unplugs" the emotional connection

- ♥ Gradually become apathetic
- ♥ Lose the ability to initiate anything
- ♥ Lose motivation and desire to be emotionally connected to others

APATHY is a **consequence** of the disease **NOT** an indication of a **lack of love** for their spouse or adult children.



Boils down to 4 **HAPPY** Chemicals the brain makes in response to emotional connection...

- ♥ Endorphins are released when we laugh
- ♥ Serotonin increases when a person feels significant or important to others
- ♥ Oxytocin is produced when we are hugged or when we receive a gift
- ♥ Dopamine rewards all these positive responses and helps us to want to repeat them over and over



Common Care Partner's reaction to the disconnect....

- ♥ Emotionally *pull away*
- ♥ Grieving losses they are anticipating
- ♥ Guilt over how they feel and their own needs
- ♥ Anxiety and fear about how to maintain a meaningful relationship
- ♥ Feelings of inadequacy
- ♥ Mentally start disengaging for self preservation
- ♥ **GOOD NEWS**.....Love can change the future

It **is** possible for anyone to re-establish or improve emotional connection to the person with dementia

It's **good** for **you** and **them**! Creating happiness for another person literally reduces stress, brain inflammation, and body health for **BOTH** people! Can slow progression as well.



How Do I Know What Love Language to Use With my Loved One with Dementia?

Answer these three questions....

1. Before Dementia, how did your loved one most often express love to you and others? (People most often express love to others the way that they like love spoken to them)
2. Before Dementia, what did your loved one complain about most often? (complaints often reveal our own inner desires)
3. Before dementia, what requests did your loved one make of you and others most often?



Communicating Love to People with Dementia

Using the 5 Love Languages

Love is NOT dependent upon intellectual abilities. Its about ways you can still share affection with the person with dementia.



#1 Words of Affirmation.....

- ♥ Favorite song lyrics sung together
- ♥ Affirm what an incredible job they did on something....about the effort Not the end product
- ♥ Tell them “I love you”
- ♥ Answer each repeat question like it’s the first time you are hearing it.
- ♥ Talk to them about the important things in their life (even if they can’t remember)
- ♥ Compliment them on how beautiful or handsome they look (even if they are a “hot mess” 😊)
- ♥ Give and read cards and letters to them that are meaningful
- ♥ Tell them your so proud of all they have accomplished in you life together
- ♥ Brag about them when others are present with the two of you
- ♥ Sing them to sleep



#2 Quality Time/Quality Moments

- ♥ Meaningful music that encourages playful interaction (Hokey-Pokey) dancing
- ♥ Read a favorite book or story over and over- talk about pictures
- ♥ Reminisce with old photos, important significant things they have accomplished, your wedding album and talk about that day
- ♥ Watch their **favorite** movie over and over and have their favorite snack
- ♥ Go for a ride in the car together to just look at the landscape, houses, trees, flowers
- ♥ Bake something together and share it
- ♥ Color or paint in an adult coloring book or do simple puzzles together
- ♥ Tell stories
- ♥ Do what makes them **happy**
- ♥ Facilitating love through music – remarkable improvement – ability for rhythm and music appreciation endures a long time into the journey



#3 Gifts (Receiving gifts)

- ♥ Connection and appreciation of material things will progressively decline
- ♥ Really special treats they love like a piece of chocolate, ice cream cone, chocolate chip cookie.....Whatever is special to them
- ♥ A small surprise package to open
- ♥ Sending a special card or photo to them in the mail
- ♥ An adult oriented coloring/art book and adult colored pencils or markers
- ♥ Special personal music on an iPod with earphones/ listen or sing together
- ♥ Be generous with the gift of your time and attention



#4 Acts of Service, Acts of Kindness....

- ♥ Always make eye contact no matter what they say or how they say it
- ♥ Include them in your conversations- talk with them not around them
- ♥ Let them help you at whatever level they still can, kitchen, cleaning, sorting, whenever they want to contribute... don't focus on what they are incapable of, instead figure out what piece is still possible for them to contribute.
- ♥ Help them groom and talk about them participating in choices of what they wear, make up, cologne, shaving, hair
- ♥ Advocate for them, smile as you come and go, let them be right
- ♥ Therapeutic validation....when they complain or are delusional, empathize, validate how they feel, apologize for what happened
- ♥ Plan pleasant things to engage in during your interaction
- ♥ "I love you so much, I'm so happy I can do this with you"

#5 Physical Touch (being close)

- ♥ Use favorite music...toe tapping, clapping, holding them and swaying, dancing
- ♥ Hold hands and walk, or sit watching a movie
- ♥ Give hugs and kisses if it feels good to them
- ♥ Sit close to them on sofa, pull up chair next to them, hold them if they feel anxious or afraid
- ♥ Rub their feet or back, use scented lotions, gently stroke their cheek (mother/child connection)
- ♥ Hold a baby, puppy, pillow, stuffed animal
- ♥ Do nail care, trim, file, polish, lotion hands...Holding them as you work
- ♥ Hand on their shoulder, pat on the back, arm around their waist

Remember to allow others to **SPEAK LOVE** to you as a Care Partner.....



Share with your inner circle your love languages and how they can help you

It will flex based on your current situation and circumstances (examples)

ALL of us have the emotional need to feel loved by the MOST SIGNIFICANT people in our lives...

- ♥ IF you feel loved by the significant people in your life....Your **LOVE** tank is full
- ♥ As a Care Partner your tank often has punctures in it, or it might be a gaping hole. Your loved one with dementia cannot reciprocate filling your tank so you have to allow others to do that for you. Caregiving is a TEAM sport.
- ♥ YOU MUST take care of your own tank in order for you to speak “love” to your person with dementia by CHOICE and with INTENTION.
- ♥ Remember loving someone with dementia is about not just a feeling but about a choice that takes ACTION. “Loving the Unlovely” at times
- ♥ Love becomes a “**moving target**” when living with dementia





Closing Love Story



Thank you!



Questions and answers.....

