

Love Languages: Words that build up

Tammy: Hello my friend! How good to be with you today! I so appreciate that you spend this time with us. And hello Carol! My, you're looking so nice today in your turquoise blouse. Thank you for bringing that plate of cakes to share; they look delicious!

Carol: You're welcome Tammy. You sound in a happy mood today.

Tammy: No, actually I woke up feeling a bit flat. But I'm practising a new love language...

Carol: ... ok- so I'm guessing this love language is *words* that make someone feel special!

Welcome to Women of Hope; and I agree with Tammy, thank you for being with us today. Our friend Fran is here too - hi, Fran and welcome.

Fran: Hi Carol- and hello to you too.

Carol: Were *you* with us when we talked about the five love languages? We said that different people like to receive love in different ways.

Tammy: Since then I've been noticing the different ways that my family shows love. Have you ever tried to work out the best way to show love to someone close to you? For example, some of us show love by giving *gifts*, and some by *doing things* to help someone we love.

Fran: I think knowing about this love language idea is very important. It helps us to understand that others are different to us, and possibly try to reach out to them in a way that suits *them* best. Carol, you said *you* feel loved when your husband takes the time to go for a walk with you after work, and gives you the gift of his *time*, without interruptions.

Carol: That's right. We talked a lot about giving the gift of time, didn't we?

Tammy: Well, today we're talking about the love language of *words*. That's when we show our love to one another by what we *say*- or maybe what we *write*. There are words that really hurt, aren't there? Words that are harsh, and attacking, and cruel. Have you ever felt that someone's words broke your heart?

Carol: I know I have. And my heart always breaks my heart when I hear mothers and fathers telling little children that they are useless, or stupid. That little child might not even know what they did that was wrong, they just know they feel that they don't deserve love. Those kind of words can hurt a child's spirit for ever.

Fran: *We all* need to hear words that encourage us, but some of us *specially* need to hear words that build us up, and that's when we specially feel loved.

Tammy: Do you mean compliments, Fran?

Fran: Well, compliments are part of it. Compliments can build up a person's confidence. It's best to use simple words. You might say: "You look so nice in those clothes!" Or 'The food you made is delicious!' Or 'I really appreciate that you do the shopping for our family. I know it takes a lot of your time and energy.' How would you feel if you heard that?

Tammy: I'd feel that my hard work was worth it, because someone appreciated it. We all need to feel appreciated.

Fran: Do you feel warm inside when someone says words of sincere appreciation to you? I think this in my love language. I treasure a card that I received when I left a job. Everyone wrote what they would miss about me, and I felt really special. But I don't remember the gift they gave me- because gifts don't speak to me the way loving words do.

Tammy: But compliments are not always sincere...people don't always mean what they say.

Carol: You're right Tammy- they may be just saying nice things to manipulate you or get you to do something for them. I think *sincere appreciation* is what I value, not empty compliments.

Fran: And compliments need to be realistic. My husband is great at using words of appreciation, but sometimes he says things like 'You're the best-looking woman here tonight' and I know that's not true at all! (laugh) I think I'd prefer him to say 'That dress really suits you'- something specific. Not that I'm complaining!

Tammy: No, any word of appreciation is good!

Fran: Perhaps you find it hard to *give* appreciation. I'm not very good at it. Here's a good exercise- every day, make sure you say one encouraging thing to the people you live with or work with. Try to notice when they're doing a good job, or making an extra effort, or just need a kind word. You'll find it eases tensions and makes your home or workplace more positive. Watch and see how people react to these words- some people won't notice, but others will really blossom as they receive them; it's like water to thirsty flowers. Those are the people whose love language is words- words that say, 'You're valuable.'

Carol: If you're a wife, perhaps it's been a long time since you last said 'thank you' to your husband for supporting the family. Has he ever heard you say how glad you are that you married him? Husbands (men) especially like to hear these things from their wives.

Tammy: And if you're not glad you married him, at least look for *something* you appreciate, and tell him that.

Fran: Have you ever told your mother or father or grandparents that you noticed what they did for you, and that you appreciate it? They've probably worked hard for you. I think that often we don't thank our parents enough. My mother is 96 and now I'm trying to remember good things from my childhood and thank her for them. I can see how it pleases her, because she feels she can't contribute much now.

Carol: How about your children? Do you praise them for being thoughtful when they help you around the house? Do you tell them how precious they are and what joy they bring to you, just by being who they are?

Fran: That reminds me of a little boy I know. After church he often runs up to the table where there are sweet biscuits and tea, and grabs a handful of biscuits. This week he took four at once, and I was going to stop him, when he said to his mother 'I was bringing you biscuits.' She smiled and said, 'Thank you for thinking of me. That was so kind. Now let's learn to carry the plate so people can *choose* which biscuit they want. And just take one for yourself.' That mother knew quite well he planned to eat the other three, but she focused on praising what she could, before teaching him a better way.

Tammy: She sounds a wise woman. We usually get better behaviour when we spend more time praising what is good and less time criticising what we don't like.

Carol: I was thinking, there are so many people who help us in daily life. Let's not forget to say thank you to the careful bus driver, the cheerful fruit seller at the market, and the postman who faithfully delivers your letters. Have you got a good word to say to each one of them? Who else in *your* life *deserves* a word of thanks, or *needs* a word of encouragement? How might *you* use words to encourage others? You can say these words face to face, or on the telephone, or write letters or emails. Think about how you can build up someone, not tear them down with your words.

Tammy: I've noticed something: when I fill my heart with thankfulness, and look for reasons to be positive, I also begin to see the better side of people and situations. Try it; you might also find that you feel more content instead of comparing and complaining. Maybe you'll be thanking God that you have a home, instead of wishing for a better one. Sure— we can ask God for some cake, but let's thank him first for the bread we already have in our hands.

Carol: We were just saying that you can practise *saying* positive, encouraging things, and that might make you *feel* more positive and grateful. But let's look at it the other way around. Let me read you something from the Bible. The Lord Jesus Christ said:

“. . .To have good fruit you must have a healthy tree; if you have a poor tree, you will have bad fruit. . . The mouth speaks what the heart is full of. A good person brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and a bad person brings bad things out of the badness stored up in him.”

(Matthew 12: 33 – 36)

What did Jesus mean by that? Jesus was saying that whatever we say with our mouths comes out from what we truly feel in our heart. What we speak reflects our real attitude towards people. The words we use show what we believe in; and people will know our character when they hear how we talk about others. So

I think we need to do more than try to say nice things- we need to ask God to change our hearts so that we actually do love others and see them the way God sees them.

Tammy: Carol, why don't you explain more about how God feels about us?

Carol: Well, God sees us all and knows what we're really like. He knows all our sins and failures, he knows how weak we are. But he also sees when we do the right things, and he knows what we could be like. After all, he made us so he sees our good qualities and he knows our potential. God sees our failures and and he loves us in spite of those failures. Since God loves us like that, we can ask him to give us *his* love for those difficult people. He will help us to think of something nice to say to them.

Fran: I know that works. I remember when I was looking after about 25 small boys in a school. One of those boys, Stefan, was really annoying, and he caused lots of trouble. I didn't like Stefan very much. But I prayed for those boys every day, and I prayed for Stefan first. You know, gradually I found that I felt differently about him. I think I began to see him like God did, and God gave me love for him. So if you find it hard to love someone, try praying for God to bless them. Ask for a blessing instead of a curse.

Tammy: You know, you can ask God to fill your heart with his love and goodness...his grace and mercy. Then you'll find words of blessing flowing out from your mouth to touch people's lives.

Carol: We've been talking about love languages, or ways of showing love. Today's love language is *words that build a person up*.

Fran: Can I tell you a story? It's a parable- an ordinary story with a spiritual meaning. We've heard a few of those, haven't we? This is a parable that the Lord

Jesus Christ told to his friends; you can find it in God's word the Bible, in Matthew chapter 25. Listen, and see what you think it really means.

There was a very rich man who went travelling, and he gave three of his employees different amounts of money to invest and use on his behalf, each according to his ability. He gave one five bags of gold, the next he gave two bags of gold, and the third one he gave one bag. Even one bag was worth a large amount of money.

The first two employees traded wisely and made twice as much money as they were given. But the third man secretly dug a hole in the ground and buried the money. He just wanted to make sure he didn't lose any of the money and make his boss angry. He would not take any risks so he made no profit.

When the boss returned, he called them in and asked them to give an account. The third man gave him back the bag of gold; he said 'I was afraid so I didn't take any risks. Here is your money back.' The boss was really disappointed and angry with him. He said he was just *lazy*; he sent him away and wouldn't employ him anymore.

But I really want to tell you about the other two employees. They were happy to tell the boss that they had made a good profit by their hard work. To each of them, the boss said 'Well done, good and faithful servant'. And he gave them more money to manage, and invited them in to celebrate with him.

What do *you* think Jesus was saying in this story? I'll give you a clue; it's not advice about how to invest money!

Carol: I think Jesus is saying that he wants us to use *whatever* he has given to us, to do his work here on earth. We might use our *time*, our *strength*, or the *talents* we have, like being good at something.

Tammy: Or we could use our resources...such as our money, our education, or our home or garden. Whatever we have, we should look for ways to use it to serve God and other people. It sounds like God wants us to work hard and make

the most of what we have, even if it is sometimes difficult or risky. I'm sure this is the spiritual meaning of Jesus' story.

Fran: I absolutely agree with you. But I noticed something else as well. Now if words are your love language, you might have noticed those *words* of the boss. What did the boss say? 'Well done, good and faithful servant!' One day, when I die and meet my Lord Jesus in heaven, he will ask me what I did with all the gifts he gave me. I would love to hear those words from Jesus one day; 'Well done, my good and faithful servant.' Would this make you want to serve God- to think that Jesus will appreciate your efforts and one day he will say, 'well done, good and faithful servant'?

Tammy: That reminds me of another beautiful thing that Jesus said to his friends. He said, 'Just like the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Live in my love.' He added 'I don't think of you as servants, but as friends'. (John 15:15)

Carol: Being Jesus' servant is wonderful- but being his friend? That is even better. Jesus certainly knew how to use words to encourage and build up his friends and followers. He wasn't afraid to let them know that he loved them dearly- just like he loves you dearly.

Fran: If words are your favorite love language, what makes you feel close to God? Do you love to read or hear the words of the Bible? You might like to learn God's promises, and treasure *those* words in your heart. Your prayers are probably full of praise and thanks, because you value words of appreciation.

Tammy: I feel close to God when I *sing* songs of praise. Maybe you could write poems or songs if you're good with words.

Fran: In the Bible we can see that God loves to use this love language. God has given us so many words that build us up and encourage us. What are some of your favorite words from God's word?

Here's one of mine; God says to his people: 'I have loved you with an everlasting love, so I have continued to be faithful to you.' (Jer 31:3) That's like a love letter from God to us.

Carol: I have always loved these words : [Zephaniah 3:17]

The Lord your God is with you; his power gives you victory. The Lord will take delight in you, and in his love he will give you new life. He will sing and be joyful over you!" Imagine the God of the universe singing and being joyful for me and for you!

Tammy: And I love the fact that he always watches over us. In God's Word, the Bible, it says [Psalm 4: 7 – 8], "You have put gladness in my heart, more than in the season that their grain and wine increased. I will both lie down in peace and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Carol: And here are some words from the Bible that we often say here on Women of Hope; God says, 'For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a hope and a future.' (Jer 29:11)

Tammy: There are so many words in the Bible that tell us we're precious to God. If you learn them by heart, God's Holy Spirit can remind you of them at times when you need them.

Carol: Well, Tammy, guess what time it is?

Tammy: It's time to go?

Carol: It seems to come so quickly. I hope we've all been reminded to use words to build up others, to use our gifts to serve others, and to really enjoy God's words of love to us. What will *you* do this week, to use your words well?

Fran: And I want to say, *you* are precious to us, and all your Women of Hope friends. Thank you for being with us today, let's get together again soon.

Tammy: We would be so happy to hear from you. You can write to us in care of this station or at TWR Women of Hope. The email address is TWRWomenofHope@twr.org. That's TWRWomenofHope@twr.org. Or if you missed a program or you want to hear one again visit our website TWRWomenofHope.org or visit our Facebook page. We do hope you will be with us again. Have a great week filled with God's blessings.

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