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Life Coaching, Dating
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Heartmind Connections

Do You Know Your Date's and Your Expressions of Love?

By Amy Schoen, MBA, CPCC

Let me tell you about one of my clients. During our phone coaching sessions we were discussing his upcoming anniversary with his girlfriend of when they met. He really wanted to make it a special occasion and arranged to take her out for dinner to a very fancy restaurant. He told me he also planned to bring her flowers, as well.

I told him that flowers were a beautiful gesture and appropriate, but flowers eventually die. What women love is jewelry! When you buy jewelry, you would be buying something she could wear to remind her of you and to show off to her friends. I told him, "Just imagine her saying, this is what my boyfriend bought me. Don't you love it?" I also told him that it doesn't have to be expensive. You can buy her a beautiful sterling silver bracelet or a nice necklace for a very reasonable price that look very substantial.

He took my advice, and bought here a beautiful sterling silver and onyx necklace and earring set. He came to our next call and said, "I owe you big! She loved the jewelry I gave her." He felt like a hero and I could hear him beaming on the phone!

Clearly, he hit the mark with one of his girlfriend's expression of love.

The above story illustrates how some people can express love to one another.

What makes you feel special and loved by someone close to you? And how do you express love to the people you care about?

What we are going to explore in this article doesn't have to apply to just a lover, it can be applicable to a close personal friend, a child, and a parent.

Here are six expressions of love- that helps people feel like they matter to you.

1. Validations and Compliments:

This is expressing what you like about a person or what you admire most. I had the habit of thinking to myself, "Wow, I really like her outfit." It's no use keeping it to yourself; you need to tell that person what you are thinking. I realized that when you compliment someone sincerely, you could make his or her day.

2. Time Together

Some couples spend lots of time together. They spend their free time together and they may even work together. Others may only spend time together only on the weekends.

You can have a friendship that requires weekly contact. Or it may be okay to see someone twice a year and maintain a friendship. Some people need lots of personal time together in order to feel special. Others this may not be as important to them. Whatever works for both people is the right way.

3. Helpful Gestures

Do you like it when others do stuff for you? Perhaps your girlfriend cooks you your favorite meal. How about your boyfriend getting your car washed or taken to the dealership for a tune-up? Perhaps a friend helps you buy a new computer or shop for the right home accessories. Here are some other examples of helpful gestures:

- A client who has a flexible work schedule and helps his girlfriend out by waiting for the cable guy to fix her computer while she's at work and she just loves that she feels cared for and special that he offered to do so.

- I have a friend that clips newspaper and magazine articles for me that she thinks may be of interest to me. This is helpful since I don't have that much time these days to read the paper!

4. Tokens of Affections

Do you like to be given gifts? Is that important for you to feel loved? In my introduction- they necklace and earring set was an example of a token of affection.

My grandmother on my Dad's side was infamous for bringing us gifts when we were young. It may be a new doll for me or a match car for my brother. We were conditioned though to the point where when she came to visit, we would say, "What did you bring us!" We were became used to getting these tokens of affection from my Grandmother.

Tokens can be big or small. You can get a friend a bracelet on your vacation to let her know you were thinking of her. I am appreciative when my husband brings home flowers for no significant reason. I like to bring my husband a new shirt as a token of affection. Okay, I may be tired of seeing him wearing the same old thing!

Once I got my parents a weekend stay at a very fancy hotel in the Berkshires from an Auction at a fundraiser- and I gave it to them for their anniversary. They were very appreciative.

Some people really value this and for others it's no big a deal.

5. Physical Connection:

This is the need to have physical touch from another in order to feel loved. This is a very basic need for some.

Let me tell you a story about one of my past boyfriends. Let me say he is a very lovely person- but we were not a good fit overall!

This boyfriend was in his late 30's and had a problem with harmless public displays of affection such as giving a quick kiss hello or holding hands. A good example of this is when I met him for lunch at an empty Thai restaurant where we were the only patrons there. He was uncomfortable to kiss me hello because the wait staff may see it! I had no problem with showing my physical affection for him in public, if you

could call this a public. Clearly we had different expectations and comfort level on this matter!

Some people are touchy people and really thrive with a lot of physical contact and some are not. The Latin Americans will kiss you on both cheeks and the women hold hands. So it depends on your culture and your upbringing.

6. Being there for the Tough Times

Having your close friends or significant other being there for you in bad times as well as good may be a deal breaker for you in a relationship. Will they visit you in the hospital if you are sick or had a horrible accident? Will your steady boyfriend support you emotionally and perhaps financially if you were laid off? Do you understand that someone is busy and can't be there for you or would you just write them off?

I was dating Alan for 3 months and we had just become exclusive. We had visited Alan's sisters in New Jersey and then gone into New York City. Alan had flown back to DC on the evening of September 10th, 2001. I was staying in the city for business for another day. My Mother who lived on Long Island, New York was on travel in London!

Alan became my lifeline during September 11th. We were in constant contact by cell phone until the cells went down. Then we were in contact by email by using the business' computers. He helped me find a friend to take care of my cat since I could not get home that evening or phone anyone. I couldn't get through to Amtrak, and Alan helped me find out if the trains were running or not. He was there to pick me up when I returned to DC since I was planning on flying home. It was then I knew that I could count on him!

So how does this work?

If you don't get love expressed in the manner to which you expect and need, you will feel something lacking in the relationship. You may feel "needy". You definitely won't feel loved. You will wonder why you are sticking around with this person.

So how does this affect your life and your choices of a mate?

It's no accident that I fall for helpful men that flatter! Add a little affection, and I'm all mush! My expressions of love did make me more vulnerable to being manipulated by men whose intentions were not sincere.

So you see this stuff can be great or it can be dangerous too! When dating I had to recognize my needs (some call weaknesses) and adjust my expectations for someone who would be a better match for me with the right values and life goals.

So you may need one expression of love above all to feel loved, or a combination of several like me! Maybe that's where the term high maintenance comes from!

How would you like love to be expressed to you?

From those you are closest with, are you getting what you need to feel loved?

If you are, then tell those people how much you appreciate having them in your life and what they do that really makes you feel special. Everyone appreciates hearing that!

If not, I encourage you to have a heartfelt conversation with your girlfriend, boyfriend, wife, husband, partner, son, daughter or other significant people in your life about how you would like love expressed to you. Give them specific suggestions to make it easy for them to give you what you need.

My husband and I sat down and wrote 10 things that make us feel loved separately and then exchanged it with each other. That way, it came from both sides equally and we don't have to make any assumptions. We both were open to each other's suggestions as a way to enhance our relationship.

When your "loved ones" express love to you in the manner that resonates with you, you will truly feel loved. It's the best feeling in the world!

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Do you enjoy reading the latest monthly Heartmind Connections ezine? I would love to hear your comments on my ezine and any suggestions you may have for future issues. You may contact me at: coachamy@heartmindconnection.com. Please feel free to forward to any of your friends who may be interested in learning more about dating and relationships.

Amy's Vision:

"As a personal life coach, my goal is to bring you the information you need to make intelligent and heartfelt decisions about the most significant relationship in your life. We all desire our best life possible. My hope is that you find this information helpful and achieve all your life long dreams."

Amy Schoen, CPCC

Heartmind Connection™

Life Coach and Dating & Relationship Expert

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240-498-7803

Rockville, Maryland

www.heartmindconnection.com

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