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*The*  
*Five Love*  
*Languages*  
*for*  
*Singles*

Gary Chapman



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*Single Adults: Significant and Growing*



Single Adults:  
*Significant  
and Growing*

IF YOU'RE READING THIS BOOK, chances are you're either single or know someone who is. More than four of every ten American adults are single – 88.5 million Americans. In fact, the United States has more single adults than any other nation in the world except China and India.

Of course, single adults are not a homogeneous lot. There are at least five categories of single adults, each very different from the others. The largest category of singles is those who have never been down the aisle, but the other four also command our attention. Here are the five groups:

1. *Never married.* Age eighteen and older, this group is 49 million strong. The median age of a first marriage has risen to twenty-five among women and twenty-seven among men. This means that, in the general population among people eighteen to twenty-four, almost nine out of ten (87 percent) have never been married.

2. Divorced. Today, at any one time, 10 percent of all adults are divorced. Over time, however, many more married adults suffer through a divorce. Within five years, 20 percent of all marriages end in divorce. Within ten years, one-third of all couples will be divorced, and within fifteen years, 43 percent will be divorced.

3. Separated but not divorced. These are individuals who are still legally married but no longer live under the same roof. In lifestyle they are more single than married. The separated status, however, is temporary. These individuals will either reconcile with their spouses or go on and formalize their separation by legal divorce. Research indicates that 97 percent of white women (and 75 percent of nonwhite women) who separate from their husbands end up divorced within five years of the separation.

4. Widowed. Widowhood is definitely gender biased. Four out of five adults who are single because of the death of a spouse are females. Nearly half of all women sixty-five and older are widowed, compared to only 14 percent of all men.

5. Single parents. One hundred years ago, fewer than one out of every hundred adults was a single parent of a child under eighteen. Today there are more than twelve million single parents with children under eighteen in their care—almost one out of every three families. Obviously, many single parents are also divorced. But a growing number of single parents have never been married. Among those who are single moms, 40 percent were never married to the father of their children. Thus a growing number of never-married singles are also single parents.

### **DIVERSE YET UNITED**

It is obvious from this overview that single adults are very diverse. However, they are united by those factors that hold all

of us together as humans. If you are a single adult, you're seeking to understand yourself and your place in the world. Every single wrestles with values, morals, relationships, and meaning. At the heart of this pursuit is the need as an unmarried person to give and receive emotional love.

Whatever the category, as a single adult you want to feel loved by the significant people in your life. You also want to believe that someone needs your love. Giving and receiving love is at the center of the single adult's sense of well being. If you feel loved and needed, you can survive the pressures of life. Without love, life can become exceedingly bleak.

### **THE MAN WITH THE METAL HALO**

Rob illustrates the power of love when one is almost overcome by the problems of life. I first met Rob on one of my trips to the Grand Canyon (which in my opinion is one of nature's most beautiful portraits). On the south rim of the canyon, somewhere near the Bright Angel Trail, I spotted Rob and two older adults. He was not hard to spot, because he was wearing a back brace with a metal halo that circled his head. I gave him a friendly nod and a smile, my way of saying hello.

Rob responded, "Hello, I hope you're having a good morning." His smile was inviting, so I entered into conversation. I discovered that he had suffered spinal injuries in a hiking accident. The older couple was his mom and dad.

The three had planned a family trip to the Grand Canyon two years earlier. The first year money was a problem, so they postponed their dream. Then Rob had his accident and they couldn't leave home. Now that Rob was doing somewhat better, they had come to see the canyon. When they originally had planned the trip, they intended to hike to the foot of the canyon. Their dream had been altered but not destroyed. So they

planned to spend the week enjoying the sights of the canyon.

Rob had wheeled his chair into position for a great view of the trail and canyon, and he and his parents were soaking in the fabulous view. I commended them for not giving up on their dream and wished them well.

My son and I continued our week together exploring the canyon. Toward the end of the week I ran into Rob in the lobby of the Bright Angel Lodge. Because of our earlier encounter, it seemed I was seeing an old friend. We ended up talking for two hours. Rob shared his story about the fall that resulted in his injuries and the determined efforts of the rescue workers who flew him out by helicopter. He told me about the pain and the emotional struggle of those early days when he wasn't sure he would ever be able to walk again. He had a number of brushes with depression, had lost a job opportunity which he was pursuing at the time of the accident, and spent many weeks in physical therapy.

When I asked what had enabled him to come through that experience and still have such a vibrant spirit, his answer was simple. "Love," he said. "That's the only way I could have made it. Mom and Dad were with me through the whole thing, and I had a girlfriend... not a romantic relationship, but a close friend who came to see me every day in those early weeks. I don't think I would have made it without her. She brought me hope. She encouraged me in my therapy, and she prayed with me. I had never had a girl pray with me before. There was something about the way she talked to God that gave me hope. Her words were like rain on my parched emotions.

"We're still good friends. Her love and the love of my folks brought me through."

Then Rob added, "I hope someday I can help someone else the way they have helped me."

## THE POWER OF LOVE

Rob is a living example-both of the power of love and the single adult's deep need to love and to be loved. Love is the fundamental building block of all human relationships. It will greatly impact our values and morals. I am also convinced that love is the most important ingredient in the single's search for meaning.

That is why I feel compelled to write this book on the five love languages. What you will read in the following pages has the potential of enhancing every area of your life. Reading this book will require time, but I assure you that it will be time well invested. You have likely invested time to learn the language of computers. If so, you have reaped the benefits. Unfortunately, most single adults know more about computers than they do about love. The reason should be obvious. They have spent more time studying computers than they have studying love.

## THE MISSING INGREDIENT

I agree with Professor Leo Buscaglia, who said,

*Psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, anthropologists and educators have suggested in countless studies and numerous research papers that love is a "learned response, a learned emotion." ... Most of us continue to behave as though love is not learned but lies dormant in each human being and simply awaits some mystical age of awareness to emerge in full bloom. Many wait for this age forever. We seem to refuse to face the obvious fact that most of us spend our lives trying to find love, trying to live in it and dying without ever truly discovering it.*

I have invested the past thirty years of my life in helping people discover how to emotionally connect with each other-

how to give and receive love. I can say with confidence to all singles-whether never married, once married, or married several times-that if you will read and apply the information given in the following chapters, you will discover how to give and receive love effectively. You will discover the missing ingredient in some of your past relationships, and you will learn how to build wholesome, supportive relationships by learning to speak people's primary love language.

Much of the pain in broken relationships in contemporary society stems from the truth that many of us in Western culture have never been serious students of love. In the following pages you will meet scores of single adults from all categories and all ages who have discovered that love really does have the potential for changing the world.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER**

1. To what degree do you feel loved by the significant people in your life?
2. In a time of need, have you experienced the love of a friend like the one Rob described: "I don't think I would have made it without her"? If so, how did your friend show his or her love?
3. Have you been a friend to someone in need? How did you express your love?
4. How successful have you been in giving and receiving emotional love?
5. How interested are you in studying the nature of love and learning new ways to express love?