

The  
**FOUR**  
ELEMENTS  
of  
**ROMANCE**

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An excerpt from **The FOUR LAWS of LOVE**

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# Meeting an UNSPOKEN NEED or DESIRE in Your Spouse

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## 1

The first step is to start paying attention to each other and to focus on our spouse's needs and desires as we did in the beginning. We need to begin again to preemptively love our spouse as we did when we first fell in love. As Jesus told the church in Ephesus, we need to "do the first works." It is that simple. Even though you may not feel like doing it or even have strong emotions against doing it—it is the only road home for restoring the dynamic love you desire.

Let me explain it to you another way: our greatest need is love. And there is a formula for why we fall in love with someone. Half of why we fall in love is because there is something we like and admire in a person. The other half of why we fall in love is because we like the way the other person makes us feel about ourselves. You never fall in love with someone who rejects, ignores, or criticizes you.

Romantic love places a very high value on us and that is why we love it and need it. Not only am I attracted to you and admire you, but you pursue me and meet my needs and desires preemptively. You make me feel good about myself, and I like that a lot.

I promise you that romantic love has the power to take an entropic, dead marriage and return it to its dynamic state. If you find that your marriage isn't what it once was and there is a lack of romance in your

relationship, be the first person to do the right thing and to set an example. Don't get discouraged if things don't change overnight. Be committed and consistent and trust God for the results.

# Speaking LOVE in Your Spouse's LANGUAGE

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2

A common misconception is that women need romance and men don't. Men and women need romance every day. But they need it in different ways and in a manner that meets their basic marital needs. The four major needs of men and women in marriage are completely different.

## **The four major needs of women in marriage are:**

- **Security** – Knowing her needs and desires will be met in a faithful manner by a sacrificial and sensitive husband.
- **Open and Honest Communication** – Having unhindered access to her husband's thoughts and feelings through loving, patient, and regular communication with him.
- **Soft, Nonsexual Affection** – Feeling valued and cared for as a whole person and not just a sex object through regular and gentle affection that is nonsexual.
- **Leadership** – Having a husband who is the loving initiator of the well-being of the marriage and family but who treats her as an equal.

## **The four major needs of men in marriage are:**

- **Honor / Respect** – Being talked to and treated with dignity and as though he is believed in and valued.

- **Sex** – Having his sexual needs met in a regular and energetic manner.
- **Friendship with His Wife** – Having his wife as his best friend and doing enjoyable things with her on a regular basis.
- **Domestic Support** – Having a wife who is domestically centered and focuses on the needs of the home.

For romance to be successful, it must be a win-win proposition. On an ideal day in any marriage, both spouses should have their needs met. For this to happen, both spouses must meet needs in each other they don't have themselves.

This is where things typically go bad.

In many marriages, one or both spouses don't accept their spouse's needs as being legitimate. They see their own needs as being normal and important. But since their spouse has different needs, they judge and reject them as they also try to conform them to their needs. Hence, the old saying, "In marriage we should become one, but the question is: which one?"

The answer to that question is: in marriage we should become one by both of us accepting and honoring the differences in each other as we sensitively, faithfully, and aggressively meet each other's needs. Romance occurs when we understand and accept our spouse's needs and then pursue them in their languages—not our own.

# Communicating UNIQUE VALUE to Your Spouse

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3

Romance is for one person only. If it is something you do for someone else it doesn't mean that it isn't important, but it isn't true romance. Romantic love communicates to the object of our affection that they are special, unique, and highly valued. We call them by a pet name we don't use for anyone else. We do things for them we don't do for anyone else.

When my Uncle Charles died, my aunt, Peggy, asked me to officiate his funeral. While I was preparing his eulogy, she told me that every day for the forty years of their marriage, he wrote her a new poem and left it on the dining table before he left for work. Now that is romance! It is no accident they had a great marriage.

Women feel romanced when their husbands consistently say, and do things, they know are unique and meaningful. It happens through loving words, creative expressions of affection, gifts, planning special experiences, helping around the house, and with the children, etc.

Men feel romanced when their wives consistently demonstrate their exclusive devotion and appreciation to them through words and deeds that meet their needs and desires. A husband needs to know that his wife hasn't been stolen from him by competing relationships that distract her and sap her energies. Romance is how she demonstrates his unique value and priority in her life.

I would encourage you to think about this issue related to your marriage. What do you say and do on a consistent basis that communicates unique value to your spouse? Make a list and then concentrate on some creative ways you could expand your romantic expressions to them.

# EMPATHY

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4

Empathy means the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. It means we put ourselves in someone else's place and consider how they are feeling. We are naturally very empathetic when we are dating. We constantly put ourselves in the place of the one we are pursuing as we wonder how our words and actions are making them feel.

And that empathy creates an environment of sensitive, proactive care that fosters deep romantic love. We all feel safe in an environment where our feelings and well-being are valued, but the opposite is also true. We feel unsafe when we feel we aren't being considered or heard.

## Here are the twelve phases of romantic love:

1. Awareness
2. Interest
3. Positive exchange
4. Romantic interest
5. High emotional focus
6. Positive romantic exchange
7. Strong feelings of love and passion
8. Deepening relational bonds
9. Normalcy (routine, lack of novelty)
10. Reality (conflict, difficulty, fatigue, illness)
11. Distraction and disinterest
12. Loss of romance

Notice that number five is high emotional focus. This is the empathy that is always present when romantic love is kindled. Also notice the escalating passions that occur after high emotional focus exists. It remains until normalcy and reality cause us to lose our empathy, and romance inevitably fades.

You can and should have sizzling romantic love throughout your married lives, but you have to keep your heart in it. Empathy is how we connect hearts. It is how we ensure that our behavior is having a positive impact on our spouses.

As I stated earlier, romance is a daily need for both men and women. It is foundational for every strong and growing marriage. And it isn't complicated or difficult. If we will proactively meet needs and desires in our spouses in their languages in an empathetic and prioritized manner, our passions will never fade. Our marriages will flourish in a win-win lovefest the way God intended from the beginning.