

Language of the Heart

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Sent: Tuesday, January 01, 2008 6:45 PM
Subject: Musings on love in action



Language of the Heart™

"Counseling and teaching for healing and feeling"



January 2008

Ever wonder how kids know that we love them? How does it get delivered?

We do so many things in the name of love, yet often miss the mark

*Love is what we do and say, but it's delivered by **how** we do and say it*

When I think of love, I often think of my younger brother's babysitter, Nana Josie. Technically, she came to the house because my mother went back to work and my youngest brother wasn't yet in school, but in essence she was *everybody's* Nana--including my mom and dad's.

If you can imagine the best Mrs. Santa Claus ever, you're probably close to envisioning Nana Josie--big flappy arms that loved to hug and a belly that jiggled when she laughed, which was often. When she laughed her eyes twinkled and almost closed because her cheeks and mouth were catapulted up by her bursting smile. She laughed often and loudly, and I can't remember a single time I ever misunderstood or thought she was laughing at something my brothers and I had done, as opposed to *enjoying* something we did.

Nana Josie lived a few blocks away from my family's comparatively enormous house with its living room, dining room, four bedrooms, two bathrooms, music room and den with large t.v. Nana lived in a one bedroom house where bedroom, kitchen and eating areas all fused together and the only decorations I truly remember were the hundreds of Christmas cards she'd hang across the ceiling every year from the many children she had babysat, and the several jars of canned goods that lined the window sills in her kitchen. It was the most beautiful house I had ever seen.

From her small space Nana Josie generated more love than General Electric's capacity for electricity.

What was Nana Josie's impact? Well, simply by telling stories, playing dress up games with my brother and putting mud on various bee stings Nana Josie communicated love, and through it self esteem, the belief that things get better, that what we as children had to say was interesting and important, that life was meant to be enjoyed and a little hard work could be fun. She packed a powerful punch!

Now, if I were to ask any parent what it is they do for their family and children they could tell me *hundreds* of things they do for their children and families. They work, make meals, do laundry, run a household, hold down jobs, help with homework and soccer, colds, flu and more. They teach, tell stories, take to church and plan for their futures. *But sometimes the message gets missed.*

Recently I asked a child how it was he knew his dad loved him. He wasn't sure. I asked how he knew his mom loved him and he said he thought it was when she bought him a new video game. I asked when he felt loved just hanging around with his parents and he couldn't think of anything. Now these are good parents

doing A LOT of things for their children, and he couldn't think of anything!!!

Luckily, these parents are creative and resourceful and wanted to learn to communicate their love in new ways. They played some games and practiced saying things to their son in different ways, experimenting with tone of voice, soft versus firm eye expressions, and the words they used until their son agreed that one or more of the examples felt loving to him. And they were open to feedback. When their son said that a certain tone of voice didn't feel loving, they listened.

Love packs a powerful punch in small acts and body language

Love has been shown to build self esteem, increase serotonin, help prevent mental and physical illness by strengthening the immune system and reduce stress and cortisol levels. Love, via serotonin, can even increase IQ and improve memory.

Try these little things to increase the power of love in your home.

1. Make a big deal of reunions. When you see your child at the end of each day, drop everything for five minutes and pretend you haven't seen him or her for a year and you want to catch up on everything. Hear the curiosity and enthusiasm in your tone of voice, make your eyes soft and sparkly, and sit down right next to that child or those children for several minutes (turn the t.v.'s and video games off!)

2. Ask your child when he or she feels the most loved. Just ask. If a child knows you really want to know and can take the feedback, he'll tell you. If they're nervous and think you might get angry or upset, it might take more time. Sometimes it take time to convince a child we really want to know something, and aren't just waiting to tell them to do their homework or get to bed on time.

3. Use your sparkly "I love you eyes." Like I said, I can't remember a single trinket or thing Nana Josie gave me, but I can remember her eyes and that feeling that all is right with the world.

Amy does offer a workshop called "Opening Your Heart" designed to strengthen the real you and increase the felt experience of love in your life. This workshop is being offered twice in January, in Hibbing and Virginia , Minnesota. For more information contact Amy at:

[Language of the Heart](#)

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