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## ow to Communicate Love

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Do you know someone who has a loving personality? Do you notice that some people seem easier to love than others? Are you easy to love?

If you look at people who are easy to love, you will notice they have learned how to communicate love. Love normally comes from within a person. It is expressed in many ways, including smiles, body stance, posture, walking, and voice tone and quality. We all know some people who are loving, and they are a joy to be around. Their loving ways are refreshing and make our lives better. Let's explore how you can learn to communicate love.

### Skills for Communicating Love

**Appearance:** Appearance is the first step in communicating love. Appearing joyful, kind, and smiling both inside and out denotes a spirit of love. People who communicate love have learned that their face gives their first nonverbal message. Most people we perceive as easy to love have bright, open eyes, and they usually are smiling. They appear non-threatening and open to our approach to communicate.

Learning to love yourself will help create your personal appearance of love. If you do not know how to love yourself, you will not be able to love others. Loving yourself also means that you have a loving attitude in your actions and responses toward others; that you look for opportunities to help rather than be helped; that you communicate a loving appreciation of others with "thank you" and "please" as part of your vocabulary; that you forgive others and do not hold a grudge; and that you help people in need without thought of reward or recognition.

Use these skills to become a loving person:

- Be kind to others through your actions and communication. Look for opportunities to help others.
- Express gratitude and appreciation freely and often to others.

- Use "thank you" and "please" as part of your verbal communication.
- Send thank-you notes and tell others about another person's acts of kindness toward you.
- Forgive others and yourself daily.
- Help others in need; by doing so you will fulfill a greater need in yourself.

**Our Needs:** Needs play an important part in our communication of love. We all want three things in life: inclusion, love, and control. Each of these needs is very much a part of our behavior toward ourselves and others. How we perceive these needs being met will greatly affect our ability to communicate love.

How we communicate love to others is learned; we are not born with the ability to communicate love. Developing the following skills will increase your ability to communicate love.

- Follow the axiom — love others as you love yourself.
- Be tolerant and include others, appreciating their differences.
- Use good manners and loving language.
- Be considerate of the feelings of others.
- Practice self-control. Don't threaten, hit, or hurt anyone with fist or words.
- Deal peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements.

**Inclusive:** To be included is something everyone wants. It is a basic human need. When individuals perceive they are not included, their behavior changes. Knowing how to make others feel included (like they belong to or are a part of something) is very important in the communication of love. Try these strategies to include others.

- Communicate the words "we" and "us."
- Communicate appreciation and acceptance. This includes both body language and words.

**Physical Affection:** Individual needs for affection or love are different, but all individuals need some form of affection and love, such as a smile, kiss, hug, handshake, or pat on the back. It is important to understand the human need for some form of affection and love. Affection is an emotion that can be very powerful in the communication of love. You can give a smile, a pat on the back, or a warm handshake; touch the person's hand or arm; hug the person if it's appropriate (some people are huggers, but some are not).

Touch is important in communicating love. Everyone has some need for touch. As you develop your skills of communicating love to others, remember these strategies of touch:

- Not everyone accepts touching easily. It is a learned response that develops with trust.
- Gentle hand contact is a good beginning.
- Touch communicates strong emotions of love and often is the best communication when you are at a loss for words.

### Learn to Communicate Love

Here is another secret in the communication of love. Because people want love and joy in their lives, they are attracted to positive behaviors of loving people.

Some things you can do to help you learn to communicate love:

- Keep a list of loving thoughts.
- Learn to know what makes you lovable.
- Learn to say "what's good for you today" instead of saying "what's wrong."
- Be positive and have faith to love yourself and others.
- Always see the day as an opportunity to communicate love and happiness.
- Say "this will be a day of love" and believe it when you wake each morning.
- Remember the love that came your way that day when you go to bed at night.
- Learn that love comes from within; no one makes you love — we do it ourselves.

### Strategies for Communicating Love

1. Confirm for yourself that you want to communicate love to others. Learn to know what makes you love yourself and others and begin to build on those strong foundations. Remember that love

starts within each of us. It grows as a very powerful positive force that enables us to communicate love to ourselves and others.

2. Understand the needs of people and work to meet the needs of being *included*, receiving some form of *love*, and having some *control*.
3. Surround yourself with loving thoughts and ideas. Keep a loving attitude. Learn to take the path of love, not the path of hate and discontent.
4. Learn to smile and look others in the eye. Your face is your first method of communicating love to the world. It is your opening announcement that you are a loving person.
5. Learn to treat all people equally with a loving attitude. Always remember to care for the person. You may not agree with the behavior, but love the person. Give the person the benefit of the doubt when his or her behavior is not up to your expectations.
6. Remember the good in people and forget the bad. Find something to love in everyone and build on that something. Learn to communicate love in your communication with yourself and others. Be appreciative of others and let them know. Develop your loving attitude, which clearly states "I care about you" through facial expressions, voice, touch, inclusion, and especially positive actions.
7. Remember you can't change people. You can only love them.

### Reference

McCroskey-Richmond, *Interpersonal Communication*, Burgess Publishing, Morgantown, W.Va., 1992  
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