

# WHAT IS YOUR GRATITUDE LANGUAGE?



*When is "thank you" not enough?  
Is it possible to be TOO appreciative?  
Do you always have to repay a favor?*



When we express our gratitude toward someone, or when we ourselves are thanked, it usually brings about feelings of acceptance and belonging, and a deeper connection with those around us. But what happens if your idea of gratitude is different than that of someone else? A failure to interpret gratitude has the opposite of the intended effect, leaving one or both parties feeling unappreciated, resentful, or even reluctant to show kindness in the future.

In your mind, the way you express gratitude makes perfect sense, but have you considered that, to others, you may be speaking a foreign language? Take the short quiz below to identify your personal Gratitude Language, then read on to learn how to speak the Gratitude Languages of others.

## QUIZ

**Instructions:** For each question, choose the letter that sounds the most like you.

**Q1 A family friend sends you an unexpected gift in the mail. How would you respond?**

- A** Send a message to say "thank you," or tell them in person the next time you see them.
- B** Look for an opportunity to do something for them later in the year.
- C** Post photos on social media of you using and enjoying the gift.
- D** Buy a gift of about the same value to send back in return.



**Q2 You make your partner breakfast in bed. What response would you like?**

- A** You'd like for them to say, "thank you, how thoughtful of you!"
- B** You hope they'll volunteer to help you with your to-do list this coming week.
- C** You'd like them to rave about how delicious the food is, and tell all their friends about what you did.
- D** You hope they will make you breakfast in bed sometime, too.



**Q3 Your trashcan gets blown down the street and a neighbor returns it to your property. How would you thank them?**

- A** Say thanks when you see them, and maybe offer your help with something in the future if they need it.
- B** No need to do anything special. You helped them with something a while back. It's just the neighborly thing to do.
- C** Drop off a plate of cookies or veggies from your garden at their front door.
- D** When their kids come by selling candy bars for school, buy a few extra.



**Q4 Thank You cards are:**

- A** A little too formal, but sometimes appropriate for large gifts or other grand acts of generosity.
- B** Nice, but not necessary; the joy of giving is in the giving, not in what you get in return.
- C** A must! It's a small effort to show appreciation for someone who did something thoughtful for you.
- D** Nice, but only if you include a personal message. Otherwise, it's just paper.

**Q5 You received a generous store gift card for your birthday. While shopping to redeem it, you unknowingly drop the card and leave it behind. In a random act of kindness, a stranger tracks you down and returns it to you. How are you most likely to express your gratitude to this Good Samaritan?**

- A** Thank them profusely for their efforts and honesty.
- B** Treat them to lunch.
- C** Arrange for the kind deed to be featured as a human-interest story in the local news.
- D** Offer them a cash reward for returning it to its rightful owner.



**END QUIZ**

*Reminder: This tool is designed for entertainment, and to provoke thought and conversation. It should not be regarded as a professional assessment or advice.*

# GRATITUDE LANGUAGE TYPES

**Instructions:** Next, choose the letter that matches the majority of your answers. For example, if you answered mostly "D" in the quiz, your Gratitude Language is "Value for Value."

**A**

Your Gratitude Language is:

**Sweet and Simple**

You have an appreciation for the simple things, and don't need a lot of attention or gifts to feel enriched. Too much thanking is awkward, and may seem insincere. To you, the value of a relationship is the relationship itself, not the actions of give and take.

**B**

Your Gratitude Language is:

**Inherent Goodness**

You expect people to be good to one another just as a matter of principle. You tend to assume and expect the best of your fellow human beings. Reciprocity and grand gestures of gratitude aren't needed. It's a part of your everyday life and way of relating to others.

**C**

Your Gratitude Language is:

**Grateful Out Loud**

Gratitude is a big deal to you. Every good deed deserves to be thanked and encouraged. You are action-oriented, and like to make people feel good. When you go out of your way for others, you are energized by words and gestures of recognition for your efforts.

**D**

Your Gratitude Language is:

**Value for Value**

You believe in the Golden Rule and fairness for all. If someone does something for you, you make sure they are repaid for their effort. Returning a favor is a duty that feels good to fulfill. It's an important character trait to show appreciation, and not appear ungrateful.

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Keep in mind that it's possible for a person's Gratitude Language to change, especially if they are stressed, grieving, tired, or just busy at the moment. It happens to all of us! Some life events can even give us an entirely new mindset toward expressing thanks. It's important that we manage our expectations of others, and be patient during times of change, so that misunderstandings don't deter us from living our own life of gratitude.

Now, read on to learn how you can break down Gratitude Language barriers, and ensure that those who mean the most to you always feel appreciated in a language they can understand.



# SPEAKING THE GRATITUDE LANGUAGE OF OTHERS

Gratitude has proven benefits to our interpersonal relationships, but only if we can correctly interpret the gestures of gratitude made by others. Let the people close to you know how you like to thank and be thanked, and find out the same about them. Some "translation" tips are offered below to help you understand and communicate more effectively with those who speak a different Gratitude Language.

**Using the chart:** Find your Gratitude Language in the left-most column. Identify the Gratitude Language of the other person in the top row. Read the advice in the intersecting square for suggestions on how you can express gratitude and thanks in a way they will best understand.

Expressing gratitude toward → if you are ↓	Sweet and Simple	Inherent Goodness	Grateful Out Loud	Value for Value
Sweet and Simple		They will appreciate your simple expressions of gratitude, so no worries there. Depending on the situation, they may see you as in their "circle," in which thoughtful gestures are handed back and forth freely. To make sure they feel appreciated, try to participate in this to some degree.	Say "thank you," but make sure to do it in a time and place that elevates it for the other person. Stop what you're doing, talk to them one-on-one, and really focus on the other person and what they did for you.	To give thanks, try asking what you can do for them in return. They may or may not ask for something, but they will appreciate that you understand that their good deed cost them something.
Inherent Goodness	You don't always have to do something special to show gratitude for the Sweet and Simple person. A genuine 'thank you' may mean more because it shows you understand and respect who they are.		Your kindness won't go unnoticed, but if you really want to make an impact, consider one big gesture of appreciation from time to time (e.g, write a poem, throw a party).	Your gratitude languages are similar, but the difference may be in the timing. Choose something that reflects their values and desires rather than your own, and respond without delay.

Expressing gratitude toward → if you are ↓	Sweet and Simple	Inherent Goodness	Grateful Out Loud	Value for Value
Grateful out Loud	Go big quietly. Show your appreciation by making the most of what you receive, rather than making the most of the "thank you." If you received a gift, use it. If you received a helping hand, make the most of the time or energy you gain. Gush privately to others or in a gratitude journal, if needed.	They will appreciate any expression of gratitude, but a one-time big THANKS and then silence may feel like their good deed went into a black hole. A little thoughtfulness on a regular basis, in return or paid forward, will mean more to them.		They will expect your gratitude to be in proportion with whatever they've done for you. If you go overboard, it may be uncomfortable. Start modestly, and back off if they start to protest.
Value for Value	These are similar styles -- fair and straight to the point. If you feel more thanks is warranted, remember that some "value" can't be measured out, such as encouragement or a strengthened relationship.	Keep in mind that Inherent Goodness almost sees good deeds as priceless. Forget rigid values, and make sure you let them know what their kindness meant to you on a personal level. Paying it forward may make an even bigger impact.	Grateful Out Loud likes to rave, whether they give or receive. You'll make them very happy with something they can talk about and reminisce over, like a t-shirt, certificate, party, or other tangible expression of gratitude.	

Congratulations on your efforts to improve your understanding of Gratitude Languages! Remember, these are just guidelines, and it is still necessary to consider each person in each situation rather than acting on assumptions. The key to successful communication is to understand and respect the individuality of others, just as you would expect them to do of you.

And finally, as you continue to develop your "aptitude for gratitude," don't be afraid to offer thanks to someone who may have felt under-appreciated by you in the past, perhaps because of a difference in Gratitude Languages that you did not realize at the time. All of us are learning as we go in this life, and the opportunity to improve on our past missteps for a better future is something for which we should all be grateful.

