

Love Languages in Labor

by Jennifer VanderLaan

Few women go into labor realizing that the strongest comfort measure is the love and encouragement of those supporting her. Lets face it, childbirth classes are filled with charts of the baby descending and lessons on the proper way to rub a back. While these bits of information are good, they are no substitute for truly loving the laboring mom. But how do you learn how to "love" her?

Dr. Gary Chapman has given us a wonderful tool to understand each other with his Five Love Languages. If you have never read his books, the basic idea is that everyone has a way in which they give and receive love most powerfully, their love language. Knowing your spouses love language allows you to focus your efforts at showing love into those areas, which communicate love to him or her most effectively. This principle holds true even through the rigors of labor.

Love Languages

Quality Time:

Some women feel loved when their companions CHOOSE to be with them rather than participating in another activity. For these women, the simple act of shutting off the television so you can talk with them speaks volumes about how valuable she is to you. To love this woman in labor, you must prevent yourself from becoming distracted and preoccupied by work, telephones, hospital procedures or other concerns during the labor.

Words of Affirmation:

Every woman needs to be told how great she is doing, but for a woman whose love language is Words of Affirmation, your silence during labor tells her she's alone in this. To love this woman in labor, you must remind her after every contraction how much you love her, how strong she is, how great she is handling labor, or how much you appreciate what she is doing.





Gifts:

For some women, the fact that someone took the time to make or purchase something for them fills their heart with joy. Although you cannot run out to purchase gifts during the labor, you can prepare ahead of time. Putting together a small photo album, or a collection of poems even a tape with favorite songs lets this woman feel how important the labor is to you.

Acts of Service:

When a laboring woman has the Acts of Service love language, every thing you do to help her shows just how much you care. To love her in labor you cannot allow yourself to sit at her side while the nurses do everything. You must offer her sips of water or ice, retrieve cool or warm cloths for her face, neck and back, and be her shoulder to lean on when contractions overwhelm her.

Physical Touch:

Although most women find massage of some sort comforting in labor, some women need to be touched. For these women, it isn't just a back rub, its an expression of your love and devotion. If she gets to the point that touching her body is no longer comfortable, just hold her hand.

In labor, a variety of comfort measures and pain coping techniques may need to be tried. Understanding your love language allows those with you in labor to focus their efforts on the techniques that not only keep you comfortable, but also demonstrate their love to you.



Jennifer Vanderlaan is a childbirth educator, doula, wife and mother in upstate New York. To read more of Jennifer's articles on Christian childbirth, please go to www.birthingnaturally.net.