

# The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace

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## Principles of different languages of appreciation

1. There are different ways to communicate appreciation\* and encouragement\* to others.
2. An individual will value a certain language more than another.
3. The most effective communication of appreciation and encouragement occurs when the message is sent in the language of appreciation most valued by the receiver.
4. Message of appreciation and encouragement in languages not valued by the recipient will tend to miss the mark.

## The 5 Languages

**Words of Affirmation** – Using words to communicate a positive message to another person:

- Praise for accomplishments
- Affirmation of character

*How?*

- One-on-one
- In front of others / Public
- Written (email or hand written) vs. Verbal

**Quality Time** - Giving the person your focused attention.

- Quality conversation (eye contact, no distractions, listen to feelings *and* thoughts)
- Shared experiences
- Small group dialogue
- Working together on a project

*How?*

- Breakfast / Lunch / Coffee / Dinner
- Stop by office and check in
- Go for a walk
- Off-site retreat
- Attend event (sports, arts, informative, etc.)
- Phone call to check-in

**Acts of Service** - Providing assistance: “How can I help?”

Remember:

- Make sure your own stuff gets done
- Ask *before* you help
- Check your attitude
- Do it *their way*
- *Complete* what you start

**Tangible Gifts** – Giving physical items

Remember:

- Give gifts to those who appreciate it
- Gift must be something the person values
- Can be time off
- Most common is food

**Physical Touch** - Person to person contact, Not primary in the workplace.

Examples that do happen:

- Handshakes
- High fives
- Fist bumps
- Brief hugs (especially in emotional times)

## Least Valued Language: Challenges and Limitations

- ✓ We all tend to speak our own language of appreciation. The language of appreciation that is *least* valued by me will seldom be spoken.
- ✓ Mismatch of two coworkers’ languages of appreciation leads to miscommunication and relational tension.
- ✓ A person’s lowest language of appreciation really is not important to them.
- ✓ Take the initiative to talk to someone whose primary language is your least important language. Have them explain its importance to them.

## **5 Languages of Appreciation – Ideas for application**

### **Words of Affirmation**

*It would mean a lot to me if you/my colleagues would:*

- Acknowledge my effort on a project, in / but not in the presence of my teammates.
- When appropriate, I'd like to be recognized in front of others for work well done.
- Praise me in private, *not* in front of anyone else.
- Occasionally tell me "thanks" – in person – for my contribution.
- Send me an email to let me know what I am doing well.
- Recognize when I have handled a difficult situation.
- Tell others (when I am not around) about the good job I am doing.
- Give me a specific compliment about some aspect of my character or personality.
- In my review, make a list of positives regarding how I am doing.
- Give our team a group compliment when we have done well.
- Let my colleagues know when I have achieved significant goals or completed important tasks.
- A hand-written note of appreciation is particularly meaningful to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### **Quality Time**

*It would mean a lot to me if you/my colleagues would:*

- Go to coffee or lunch together to talk about work issues.
- Go to coffee or lunch together and not talk about work issues.
- Go to lunch together as a team of colleagues.
- Stop by in person to check in with me regarding how things are going.
- Call me occasionally to "check in" to see how I am doing.
- Get together for occasional after-hours team events.
- Take a walk together if feasible, rather than meet in the office.
- Take part in an out-of-the-office event / retreat for our team.
- Have a regular (e.g., weekly) "check in" meeting to catch up.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### **Acts of Service**

*It would mean a lot to me if you/my colleagues would:*

- Stay after hours to help me complete a project.
- Ask me what you could do to help me (and then follow through).
- Offer to do some routine tasks that will allow me to focus on higher priorities.
- Offer to do some task for me that I dislike doing.
- Stop by and work with me on a project I need to complete.
- Help me clean up / organize my office or desk.
- Review/edit a written document for me.
- Offer to be a backup for me when I'm on leave or out sick.
- Help me understand how to get the most out of my technology tools.
- Come in early to help me get something done.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Tangible Gifts**

*It would mean a lot to me if you/my colleagues would:*

- Take me to lunch as a gesture of appreciation.
- Give a small gift card to my favorite place, which is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Bring my favorite coffee / hot beverage / snack / \_\_\_\_\_.
- Find a book or magazine related to my interests or area of expertise, such as \_\_\_\_\_.
- Bring in cake, cookies or snacks to celebrate!
- Bring something from an interesting place you've been to.
- Give, as a token of appreciation:
  - An Agency Challenge Coin
  - A Time-Off award
  - Agency lanyards, pens or coffee mug
  - Commemorative pins / patches / posters
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Teammates:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Language(s) of Appreciation:** \_\_\_\_\_  
***Ideas for Action:*** \_\_\_\_\_

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