

Straight from the heart



Homework for the month: Figure out what you love (for me, a SUP is one of 'em), and do more of that!

Last year, a friend told me about a book called *The Five Love Languages* by relationship counsellor Gary Chapman. It outlines five basic ways people tend to express their love, breaking it down into the following: Acts of service, quality time, words of affirmation, gift-giving, and physical touch. As someone who spent much of my life as a hardened cynic before seriously softening over the years (my teenage self would never have imagined I'd one day share the cheesiest statuses you'd dream up on my Instagram profile, and do so with pride), I couldn't help but still roll my eyes a little. Yet the more she told me, the more intrigued I was. There's a lot of truth to it—the way we express our love for others *can* really differ based on our personalities and circumstances, and if we aren't aware of this, it could damage a lot of relationships. In fact, lack of understanding and communication is, in my opinion, a key reason so many relationships—be they romantic, friendly or familial—break down. The way we show others we love them might not necessarily be how they would show their own

affection for us, which means those on the receiving end might not feel it. For instance, in my case, an ever-hectic schedule and natural reticence when it comes to matters of the heart means time and the weight of my words mean a lot to me. What might seem like a flash in the pan text or catch-up to someone else is a big deal for me, and while that time or those words might seem insignificant to others, it's my way of showing how important they are to me—and if the other person doesn't realise that, things can get lost in translation.

Being self-aware and compassionate is essential in deciphering these traits in ourselves and those around us, and at the risk of sounding like that Haddaway song, it means asking ourselves what *is* love? For something we seem to spend an inordinate amount of time talking about, how many of us have defined what it actually means to us personally? To you, is showing someone you love them taking out the trash and doing their laundry when they've had a busy week, so they can make it to the gym or stress less? Letting them sleep an extra hour in the morning by walking the dog, or surprising them with their favourite dinner when they come home? Is it swallowing your own feelings, so you don't add any extra pressure to their life during a tough time? Is it saving up for the dream birthday gift they've not been able to afford? Is it holding a friend's hair back while they're sick, or carrying your kids to bed and tucking them in after they've fallen asleep on the sofa? We'd love to know, so show us on social media and tag us at @womenshealthme! While caring for others is important, it's equally as important to take care of and love yourself, and there's no better way to do that than looking after your body, mind and heart, by keeping fit, building confidence and self-respect, and constantly growing as a person. We've got plenty of ways to help with that throughout these pages, so there's our Valentine's Day gift to you. Here's to a happy February full of love in all its forms—and we'll see you in March!

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TIME FOR A CHANGE

IF YOU HAVE...

10 SECONDS

Sharing a secret (but that doesn't mean gossip) can improve your health and it only takes seconds. If you feel haunted by covert info, release it without hurting anyone or yourself. "Can You Keep a Secret," p.61

5 MINUTES

Boost your confidence in an instant by picking out something extra-special from your lingerie drawer. We have the hottest picks to make you feel smokin'. "Top Drawers," p.31

10 MINUTES

No time to take a long lunch break? A woman on the go needs options that are fast, healthy and tasty—but at McD's? It *is* possible with these tweaks! "Fast (Not Fat) Food," p.75

28 MINUTES

Love Kayla Itsines as much as we do? Check out the exclusive 28-min workout, with all the of moves and reps included, that she did for WHME on our social media, @womenshealthme

30 MINUTES

Stop with the texts every now and then: An actual phone call to your pals, whether it's about men, work or life in general, can be good for you. "Your Body On: A Phone Call," p.60

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