*Keeping Love Alive as Memories Fade: The 5 Love Languages and the Alzheimer's Journey*

(Web page content)

Across America and around the world, the five love languages have revitalized relationships and saved marriages from the brink of disaster. Can they also help individuals, couples, and families cope with a devastating diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease?

My coauthors, Dr. Gary Chapman and Dr. Ed Shaw, and I answered that question with a resounding yes!

There are many wonderful books about Alzheimer's. What's different and unique about our book is that it does not focus so much on the disease as on what the disease does to relationships. Our key message is that while Alzheimer's impairs a person's ability to initiate love and to reciprocate love— to "love you back"— it doesn't impair their ability to receive love. Emotionally, a person with Alzheimer's is very much alive, and we believe that remains true right up to the end of the journey.

But how do you keep love alive when one person is losing the ability to hold up their end of the relationship? This goes to the heart of our book. The answer is that if a love relationship is going to be sustained to the end of the journey, it's up to the care partner. And the love languages are tools for making that happen. At its heart, *Keeping Love Alive as Memories Fade* is about how love gently lifts a corner of dementia’s dark curtain to cultivate an emotional connection despite memory loss.

Our collaborative, groundbreaking book:

* Provides an overview of the love languages and of Alzheimer’s disease
* Correlates the love languages with the stages of Alzheimer's
* Addresses the challenges and stresses of the caregiver journey
* Shares real stories and case studies about maintaining emotional intimacy despite Alzheimer's

*Keeping Love Alive as Memories Fade*provides gentle, focused help for those feeling overwhelmed by the relational toll of Alzheimer’s. Its principles have already helped hundreds of families, and we believe it can help yours, too!

**Sidebar: place on Comments and Reviews page OR link from it to just one "Behind the Book" page?**

**Behind the Book**  
There's a story behind every book and the story behind this one still amazes me. It actually began in the early 1980's when I was working as Dr. Gary Chapman's part-time administrative assistant. This was long before he had reached his present rock star status as a writer and speaker. Back then, he was one of the pastors at my church, greatly beloved by the congregation, and, for a while, also my boss. When he wrote the original *5 Love Languages* book, I was one of the early manuscript readers. So the love languages were etched in my mind before the book was even published.

Fast forward to 2014 when I began a new job as coordinator of a hospital-based memory counseling clinic. This clinic, founded and directed by my boss, Ed Shaw, MD, was a unique counseling center for individuals, couples, and families dealing with Alzheimer's or another kind of dementia. After his wife was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's at age 53, Dr. Shaw, a world renowned brain tumor expert, sought an additional degree in mental health counseling in order to found this clinic. His vision for the clinic was to serve other families dealing with the devastating impact of dementia. Working in this clinic, I came to know many people with Alzheimer’s and other dementias and many family caregivers.

One day, as I was preparing Dr. Shaw's notes for patients' files, I kept noticing the same thing over and over in his notes. The significance of what I was seeing suddenly hit me: Dr. Shaw was using the 5 love languages in *dementia* counseling! I knew this was an absolutely unique use of the love languages; no one else was doing what Dr. Shaw was doing. I immediately realized that what I had stumbled across was i*mportant*, that it should be shared, and that I was looking at the ingredients for a very unique book.

I pondered the book idea for a few days. Then I called Dr. Chapman and shared with him what I had discovered. By the end of the phone call, we were talking about a book. He encouraged me to talk to Dr. Shaw about the idea. By the end of *that* conversation, a three-way partnership was born: we were going to coauthor a book.

We each brought a special expertise to the project. Gary Chapman, the originator of the 5 love languages, was the ultimate expert on the love languages. Ed Shaw, whose work inspired the book, is a medical doctor, a dementia counselor, and had been a caregiver to his wife with Alzheimer's for nearly a decade. (It's fun to look back now and remember that prior to our book collaboration, these two awesome gentlemen did not know each other.) I resigned from my job in the memory counseling clinic to become our full-time wordsmith, interview transcriber, and primary publisher liaison, working from my home office.

So that's the story behind our unlikely collaboration on *Keeping Love Alive as Memories Fade:* *The 5 Love Languages and the Alzheimer's Journey.* (I am convinced that God orchestrated the whole thing!)