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.

http://appreciationatwork.com/

The 5 Languages:

**Words of Affirmation** - uses words to communicate a positive message to another person

- Praise for accomplishments
- Affirmation of character
- Praise for personality

*How?*
- One-on-one
- In front of others
- Written (email or hand written)
- Public

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

- Quality conversation (eye contact, no distractions, listen to feelings AND thoughts)
- Shared experiences
- Small group dialogue
- Close proximity on a project

*How?*
- Lunch
- Stop by office and check in
- Go on walk
- Off-site retreat
- Watch sporting event
- Phone call to check-in

**Acts of Service** - providing assistance, “What can I do to 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** - 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** - human to human contact

Not primary in the workplace.

*Examples that do happen:*
- Handshakes
- Touching shoulders
- Brief hugs (especially in emotional times)
- High fives
- Fist bumps

**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 it’s importance to them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges in showing appreciation</th>
<th>Solution to challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Busyness</td>
<td>Prioritize</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Not important</td>
<td>Understand the power of feeling valued</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Overwhelmed</td>
<td>Acknowledge and validate their perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Structural &amp; Logistical issues</td>
<td>Focus on one or two people, be intentional</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Personal discomfort</td>
<td>Share the data, plan structured baby steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Weirdness</td>
<td>Acknowledge it, practice (lots of new things in life are awkward.)</td>
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</tbody>
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**Limitations of “Recognition” – formal structured awards**

1. Emphasis on performance
   - Changes that affect performance:
     - Extraordinary trauma in personal life
     - Changes within an organization
2. Doesn’t speak to those who prefer Acts of Service or Quality Time
3. Top down recognition
   - Questions sincerity if it is mandated
4. Significant expense

**Volunteers: Why people start, Why they continue**

**Why people start volunteering**

- Such service has been part of their family’s values and lifestyle while growing up.
- It is a requirement for an organization of which they are a member
- To socialize with existing friends and develop new social connections
- In response to a specific need or crisis (think disaster response)
- Out of concern for a need highlighted in the community
- From religious beliefs and motives of helping those less fortunate

**Why people continue volunteering**

- Experiencing a sense of contribution to a cause greater than myself
- Being able to make a difference in one’s life or in my community
- Enjoying the social relationships developed while working together on helpful projects
- Receiving positive feedback regarding the service I provide
- Having a sense of loyalty or commitment toward the organization or cause

**Informal ways of discovering someone’s language**

1. Observe their behavior. They are doing for others what they wish others would do for them.
2. Observe what they request of others. Our requests tend to indicate our primary appreciation language.
3. Listen to their complaints. The things about which an individual complains may well reveal their primary appreciation language. The opposite of what hurts you the most is probably your appreciation language.

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