

#4 Blind Spots

Serious problems occur when our feelings of love are based in fantasy rather than fact. Actions speak the truth. We are all susceptible to being lured by the attraction of loving feelings that we desire. Studying how a person acts can help us make realistic decisions about them.

Understanding virtues as acts of love has helped me to better comprehend a problem I often witness in relationships: "My partner does not love me the way I want." One person values certain virtues, while their partner gives priority to a different set of virtues. For instance, one person enjoys the tenderness they feel when they are treated with kindness, while the other person likes the satisfaction they experience when they are respected. There is a tendency, when we are not getting the type of love we want, to react by refusing to give our partner what they want. Certainly both kindness and respect are signs of love. But difficulties arise when people have blinders on and do not see the ways in which the other person acts out love. The solution, of course, is to acknowledge and value all of their acts of love, different as they are. This is easier said than done, but is a rich source of virtue exploration on the quest.

I love you!

I like the rich emotional connection I feel when I tell someone I love them. "I love you," has many meanings, depending on the type of relationship and the virtues expressed. Review the times when you tell someone or they tell you, "I love you."

Many years ago, I began telling my parents that I loved them. Expressing love between family members is just one of the important places to do this. Sharing feelings of love between romantic lovers is another. I also make it a practice to tell my kindred spirits that I love them. I am grateful for the opportunity to express my feelings of affection for their presence in my life. Tell your friends regularly that you love them. We can never hear "I love you" too much. I am thrilled when someone tells me that they love me.