

# White Paper on the Road to Overcoming Overload



## Overcoming Overloaded Lives

In the process of helping clients on the problem of work and information overload we have learned that many are suffering from “**life overload**”. It is for such clients and friends that I wish to share our story.

You may ask what I mean by “**life overload**”. As we see it, **life overload happens when the demands of everyday living exceed our resources**. While material and financial resources are important, emotional and spiritual resources are much more critical. Such resources are often overlooked because we seldom quantify them or keep track of how we use it or abuse them.

Some psychologists have suggested that we each have an emotional bank account. The demands placed on us generate withdrawals from our emotional bank account. I do not know about you but I cope much better with physical and mental demands than I do with emotional stresses. I can go through a heavy day at work with no problem but one serious disappointment or argument with a friend, family member, or someone I love leaves me exhausted.

Deposits into our emotional bank account are made by those who are important to us. Those who are close to us have a unique ability to energize us and build us up. God intended for our emotional bank to be replenished by our family and friends as they communicate love to us. Regretfully, in our busy lives and fractured families, the replenishment processes are often neglected or compromised. At other times, though willing, those who are close to us have not learned the proper currency or the best way to replenish our emotional bank account. As a result, our emotional bank accounts are often in the red zone and life stresses are magnified.

### What is your currency?

In my case, misunderstanding or poor communication have often made emotional deposits ineffective. You see, unless deposits are made in the native currency of the bank account, these deposits may be less effective or may often be worthless. For example, when we were newly married I operated an emotional bank account heavily influenced by my Egyptian background and my personal communication currency. My wife tried to communicate love based on her Canadian background and the currencies with which she was raised. The result, I felt deprived of a most needed emotional resource while she felt I did not appreciate her love for me.

#### Note:

\* This whitepaper is extracted from our book *Overloaded? From overload to balanced living*. See inside the book at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

\* If this page was sent to you by a friend we invite you to subscribe to our e-letter “On The Road To Overcoming Overload.” Please go to <http://www.nomoreoverload.com/request.asp>



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**Integrity<sup>+</sup>**  
consulting<sup>g</sup>

### What is your love language?

On our twenty-fifth anniversary a new light was shed that helped us understand our problem more clearly. Before we went on our anniversary vacation friends gave us Gary Chapman's excellent book, *The Five Love Languages*<sup>1</sup>. This book helped us realize how poorly my wife and I have communicated over the previous twenty-five years. The way I understood this book, Chapman replaces the concept of emotional currency needed to replenish our emotional bank account with **the need to use the right language to make such deposits**.

The book suggests that there are **five love languages** and within each language there are differing dialects. We each have a native language that we feel most comfortable with when communicating love and support. Most often, this is the language that we best understand. This is the language we most likely will use in giving or showing love to others. It is the language that we prefer in receiving deposits into our emotional bank account.

Gary Chapman suggests that to varied degrees we each have a primary and secondary love language selected from the following five love languages:

**1. Words of affirmation:** Mark Twain said that he could live for two months on one good compliment. Most probably words of affirmation were Twain's primary love language. Sincere compliments from those who are important to us energize us and help us cope with the demands or withdrawals made on our emotional bank account. As I read this I began to realize that compliments and encouraging words were my primary love language as well. Regretfully, I lived in a dog-eat-dog business world. At home, while my wife loved me very much, she grew up in a stoic English home where compliments were considered unnecessary and may lead to "swelled head". While I starved for her complement, my complements to her were often misinterpreted or at least misunderstood.

**2. Acts of Service:** When it comes to acts of service my wife is a perfectionist. To her, little acts of kindness count for a lot. She grew up in home that believed that "actions speak louder than words." She has a keen sense of finding and responding to people's needs. She keeps a spotless house with perfect meals. She is always careful that those in her care, me included, look their best. This is her way of showing love to her family and friends. Regretfully, tidiness is not one of my strengths. In my books, cleanliness is not next to godliness. My definition of acts of service would have been limited to working hard in a competitive world to bring home the biggest paycheck I could.

From the two points above, you can see why my wife and I could have some problems. As we communicated in two differing love languages, our emotional bank account was often

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<sup>1</sup> Gary D. Chapman, *The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate* (Chicago: Northfield Publishing 1995).

challenged. While I communicated love to her in my language of compliments, she considered it flattery. And while she needed my acts of service, I considered these as unnecessary chores demanded by her perfectionist upbringing.

Fortunately, Gary Chapman suggests that most of us also have a secondary love language that we can often use. In this case our secondary love language may have provided the help we needed through our emotional crisis.

**3. Physical Touch:** My father died when I was only eighteen months old. I was the baby of the family and my mother never remarried. Members of my extended family stepped in to help and I was the recipient of an overabundance of physical affection and touching. In my adult years, you could say that physical touching is my secondary love language. While not as important as compliments in filling my emotional love bank, physical touch became a part in communicating love in our home. While not a critical part of her upbringing, my wife worked hard at learning this love language especially after discovering that this is also a language that our son has inherited from me.

**4. Gifts:** All through history the giving of gifts played an important part in expressing love and appreciation. For some people this is their primary love language. As gift giving is an appropriate way of expressing love and appreciation in our culture, my wife's gifts often exceeded my expectations. I tried to show gratitude for the gifts she gave me. Yet, her gifts often did not register as high on my bank account as she may have expected. I am sure this was disappointing to her but I did not know how to explain to her that this was not my primary or secondary love language. Through communication I began to understand that in her upbringing my wife had very little in the way of gift giving. Today this is an expression of her generous selfless spirit. Now that I also learned that this is one my daughter's love languages I am more careful to speak it in spite of my extra careful spending habits.

**5. Quality Time:** In my younger years, I was the classic high energy type "A" personality. Some may think that I still am a type a workaholic. Sitting down for a relaxed discussion was not high on my priority list. While I admired friends and family members who enjoyed a relaxed evening at home I did not see this as a way of communicating love or appreciation. Now that I am much older, I am learning to appreciate the value of quality time spent in thoughtful discourse. No, it is not necessarily a sign of old age. I believe that I am adapting to a new language of love - a language that my children learned to appreciate in long dinner times spent with their mother while I was busy in my hyper active life and business travel.

### SUMMARY:

#### The Problem

Many of us seldom identify or communicate our primary or secondary love language. While we want to communicate love to those important to us, we often express it in our own language, not the language of the recipient's preferences. As life demands increase, so are the withdrawals made upon our emotional bank accounts. Stress and disappointments set in leading to negative consequences and compromised relationships.

#### The Solution

On our twenty-fifth anniversary holiday I realized that if am **to help my wife replenish her emotional resources I need to communicate love to her, not in my primary language, but most importantly in her primary language.** I began to see house chores as a way of expressing my love to her in her language of small acts of service. Understanding my love language my wife became more creative in complimenting me in private and before others. Yes even now at this age I still feel exceedingly good about that.

This has been a learning journey for both of us. We have learned that our children have different love languages as well. We have learned that we grow in the use of our love languages and adapt to new dialects as well. I have only one regret, I wish we had read Gary Chapman's book twenty-five years earlier.

For many years we were told that business and personal lives were separate and do not intersect. Nothing could be further from the truth. In the absence of proper family deposits made into our emotional bank accounts, our ability to cope with excessive business and life demands will surely lead to overloaded lives.

#### Overloaded?

- Take time to examine your love bank account.
- Take time to understand the currency and language of your love bank and that of those important to you.
- Take time to make appropriate and resemble investments and deposits

**I assure you the returns could surprise.**

### MARRIED?

On the flowing two pages we provided **discussion tool** to help you and your spouse examine the health of your love bank. This health check is selected from the book **The Marriage Course** published by Alpha International ISBN 1-931808-481. It is designed to be answered privately and then discussed amiably by husband and wife. Should this discussion uncover serious issues, please seek appropriate help.

# Confidential Marriage Health Check

**WIFE**

**This check is to be completed by the wife.**

1. To the best of your ability and with total honesty respond to the following statements expressing how you feel
2. Once completed, write how your husband feels in the space provided and his total score.
3. Chose an appropriate time and discuss areas of differences and areas of possible improvements; then record your thoughts and planned actions on the back of this sheet.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (5=Totally Agree & 1=Totally Disagree)	I TOTALLY Agree ← ← → → Disagree					Husband's Rating
1. My husband regularly gives me his undivided attention.	5	4	3	2	1	
2. My husband understands and supports my beliefs and values.	5	4	3	2	1	
3. My husband shows me affection through demonstrative non-sexual touching.	5	4	3	2	1	
4. We are able to apologize and forgive each other when one of us hurts the other.	5	4	3	2	1	
5. My husband listens to my point of view even when we disagree.	5	4	3	2	1	
6. I am able to talk to my husband about my sexual hopes and desires.	5	4	3	2	1	
7. I am able to talk to my husband about my dreams and aspirations for the future.	5	4	3	2	1	
8. My husband is good at encouraging me in what I do.	5	4	3	2	1	
9. We make a priority of going out together at least once every 2 weeks.	5	4	3	2	1	
10. We often reflect on the good things we enjoy as a couple.	5	4	3	2	1	
11. We are able to talk about strong emotions, excitement, hope, grief, and anxiety.	5	4	3	2	1	
12. My husband is sensitive toward my sexual needs.	5	4	3	2	1	
13. My husband encourages me in my spiritual growth.	5	4	3	2	1	
14. My husband is good at meeting my emotional needs.	5	4	3	2	1	
15. We agree on our sexual practices.	5	4	3	2	1	
16. We discuss new ideas with each other.	5	4	3	2	1	
17. We support each other in the goals we have for our family.	5	4	3	2	1	
18. We have a number of joint interests that we pursue together.	5	4	3	2	1	
19. I am happy about the frequency of our lovemaking.	5	4	3	2	1	
20. My husband is good at listening to my feelings without interrupting or criticizing me.	5	4	3	2	1	

**Confidential Marriage Health Check****Husband****This check is to be completed by the husband.**

1. To the best of your ability and with total honesty respond to the following statements expressing how you feel.
2. Once completed, write how your wife feels in the space provided as well as her total score.
3. Chose an appropriate time and discuss areas of differences and any areas of possible improvements, recording your thoughts and planned actions on the back of this sheet.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (5=Totally Agree & 1=Totally Disagree)	I TOTALLY					My Wife's Rating
	Agree	←	→	Disagree		
1. My wife regularly gives me her undivided attention.	5	4	3	2	1	
2. My wife understands and supports my beliefs and values.	5	4	3	2	1	
3. My wife shows me affection through demonstrative non-sexual touching.	5	4	3	2	1	
4. We are able to apologize and forgive each other when one of us hurts the other.	5	4	3	2	1	
5. My wife listens to my point of view even when we disagree.	5	4	3	2	1	
6. I am able to talk to my wife about my sexual hopes and desires.	5	4	3	2	1	
7. I am able to talk to my wife about my dreams and aspirations for the future.	5	4	3	2	1	
8. My wife is good at encouraging me in what I do.	5	4	3	2	1	
9. We make a priority of going out together at least once every 2 weeks.	5	4	3	2	1	
10. We often reflect on the good things we enjoy as a couple.	5	4	3	2	1	
11. We are able to talk about strong emotions, excitement, hope, grief, and anxiety.	5	4	3	2	1	
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