Love Language

It is officially love day! Okay, even though I am not big into the commercialism of Valentine's day or any holiday for that matter. I do appreciate the notion to set aside a day as a celebration of love {oh yeah, baby, love, tweet love.} I also dig the opportunity to tap into the collective love feast—a simple reminder to drop into the space of sharing goodness with one another and ourselves. It doesn't get any better than that, does it?

If you are single does the idea of Valentine's makes you cringe, or maybe make you look to start a revolution like Amy Pohler's Galentine's Day? Let's be honest, we don't think of this day as a single's holiday. It can be frustrating if you don't have a romantic partner. You might even feel like somehow you have failed in love and your singleness is proof. WRONG! Or it can bring up feelings of blah (or worse) if you aren't exactly that happy little couple. Even if you have a great relationship, sometimes all of the expectations and media around V-Day make you feel like you are doing it all wrong. I would like for you to explore and expand your idea of love. Go beyond the concept of romantic love or partnership and think bigger, WAY bigger. {share that love}

Love is so much deeper than romance, sexiness, and coupling that the media and marketing world portrays. Beyond affection, love is also defined as devotion, admiration, belovedness, the unselfish or benevolent concern for the good of another and a person's admiration of God. Kind of squashes the 50 Shades of Grey references a bit, doesn't it?

Not convinced? Let's take it one step further. Think about how our need and desire for love is hard wired into every single one of us. I don't know about you, but I know I feel good when I am fully understood, listened to and gotten by other people. But what happens when we engage in this way and experience

love within our bodies. What is love? What ways do you love? How do you know you are being loved?

Even in love we have our autonomy. Find your own love language.

Make your love list.

What makes you just melt? What drops your shoulders and allows for a belly exhale in relief? What makes you feel so appreciated? Important? Valued? Excited? Energized? Take just a few minutes and write spontaneously. Put your list somewhere you can see it regularly. Maybe on your bathroom mirror or the dashboard of your car. Love is all around you.

Learn your love language.

You might have heard someone talk about the 5 Love Languages, one way to look at how we give and receive love. Do you know what yours is? Just like communication, we all have different styles and preferences that work for us. Maybe you're a gifter, or you don't care much for presents but really love to spend good quality time with a friend. There are ways we prefer to share love, and ways we especially feel love. Like touch, kind words, or a shoulder to cry on.

When I see my friends, I want to give them a hug—this just lights me up. I also feel good way down to my soul when someone affirms who I am with words. This verbal validation and support not only feels good but feeling love, letting kind words, or someone's act of love towards us can actually create healing throughout our whole body. Let the love soak in.

Whereas my dad, for example, is not prone to showing his love through words. I can count on one hand how many times he has said the words "I love you," to me. Does that mean he doesn't care? Absolutely not. He's a doer. You know the type; he shows love by doing things for you. His way of giving love is through "acts of service" (fixing my car, helping me move,

paint, move again, lift heavy things, more moving). For him, changing a flat tire is just as good as saying, “I love you.” He also receives love differently than me. If I want to love him up, I bake him cookies, make him food, help him cross off the tasks he has on his honey-do list. I could tell him up and down how much I love him, or give him a hug, but that just doesn’t fill him up like doing things for him.

When I see people struggling in relationships, it often comes down to a love language communication error. Once we get clear on how to love each other and ourselves- confusion often evaporates.

So, on this day that is all about love, lean in. Use the day to discover what love looks like for you. Celebrate your uniqueness, your own love language. Find out how all the people you love like to receive love and then give it to them that way. Learn a new language today, the love language of your partner, friend, children, parents or maybe even your co-workers! You’ll be surprised how much love is all around you all the time.

Live love, and see what happens.