

## Icebreaker: Your Love Language

Which of these love languages do you use to demonstrate care to others?

[Tami Rudkin](#) | posted 8/12/2002

In his book, *The Five Love Languages*, Gary Chapman says we all communicate our love in certain ways. What area best describes the way you enjoy receiving love and giving it to others? Why do you think this “love language” is important to you? Give an example of a time when it brought you or someone you love a sense of joy.

- Words of affirmation
- Quality time
- Giving gifts
- Acts of service
- Physical touch

## Article: Challenges That Kill Community Part 1

How to grapple with time, avoidance, strange people, and unrealistic expectations?

[Bill Search](#) | posted 3/01/2010

Building communities within our church is hard work. It shouldn't be hard work, since God created us for community. But we live in a broken world that has altered and inhibited the relationships God created us to enjoy. For that reason, it's helpful for us to examine the different road blocks that often prevent communities from being formed and damage communities that used to be healthy. In my experience, here are four of the biggest community killers that we as church leaders have to overcome.

### The Challenge of Time

The first challenge to cultivating relationships is also the most valuable commodity in our western world today. People talk about this commodity in the U.S. like some people in the developing world talk about food or water. You know what it is, of course. It's time! We simply don't have enough time.

I was standing in the atrium of my church a year ago handing out cards about our small groups. A young couple came up to me and began to chat. They were newly married. When I asked if we could connect them with a group, they explained that they would like to do it down the road, but they were really busy right now. I almost laughed in their faces. I have three kids, a demanding job, and a home to maintain. Busy? They don't know *anything* about being busy. But it's a common song today, isn't it?

Do you know what most people are busy doing? In a typical week, people spend most of their time at work. The second biggest consumer of time is sleep. Both of those are necessary. However, do you know what the third most time-consuming activity is?

Watching television! According to the Nielsen Media service, the average American watches nearly 5 hours of TV a day. That's 35 hours a week and over 1,500 hours per year. Let me break that down another way. The average American watches 1.5 days of TV per week. That turns into 78 days per year—which is 1.6 months out of every year watching television! So, an average person who lives to be 70 will spend 5,460 days of their life watching TV. If you're not so good at math, that's 15 years. Fifteen years!

If churches and small groups are going to deal with this community killer, we must challenge people to look at what is keeping them busy. Randy Frazee addressed the craze of the busy life in [Making Room for Life](#). As developers of community, part of our mission will be to help people find the time they need to make relationships a priority.

### **The Challenge of Avoidance**

The second challenge is what I would call avoidance. This happens in a relationship when you know you need to deal with some conflict or problem, but you just can't.

My first real job is a good example of this. Right out of college I served on staff with a man named Fred. Fred was a championship talker. You could mention any subject and he'd wax on about it for minutes that felt like hours. He had an opinion about everything. Now, I'll be transparent for a minute here—I'm a talker, too. I come from a long line of talkers, ramblers, and conversation dominators. (But since I'm writing this and not Fred, I will say that Fred had my talkativeness beat hands down.) Anyway, Fred and I pretty much controlled all the words on our staff of 8 people. This went on for months. Every staff meeting or lunch was like a ping-pong match between Fred and me. Every now and then we'd take a breath and someone else would talk, but then we were back at it.

I didn't know this was a problem. (I was too busy talking). But after several months, our boss pulled me aside and asked, "Did you know that after meetings Sara goes back to her office and cries?" I couldn't understand why. Then my boss explained that Sara—who was a bright seminary graduate—couldn't get a word in edgewise thanks to Fred and me. For months our group had avoided the ugly truth that two talkers were killing the dynamic. But it took just one courageous guy to step up challenge us. I'm glad he did! Our group was dramatically better after that. If my boss had avoided the problem, our group would have continued to suffer. And I wouldn't have grown as a person and become more reflective about how I contribute in a group of people.

So this is a challenge to small-group leaders. Does a problem exist in your group that regularly damages the people, relationships, or interactions within it? If so, you've got to deal with it. Avoiding it will only make things worse.

(Next week we will continue with part 2 of "Challenges that Kill Community.")

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