

# Acceptance: Love Languages

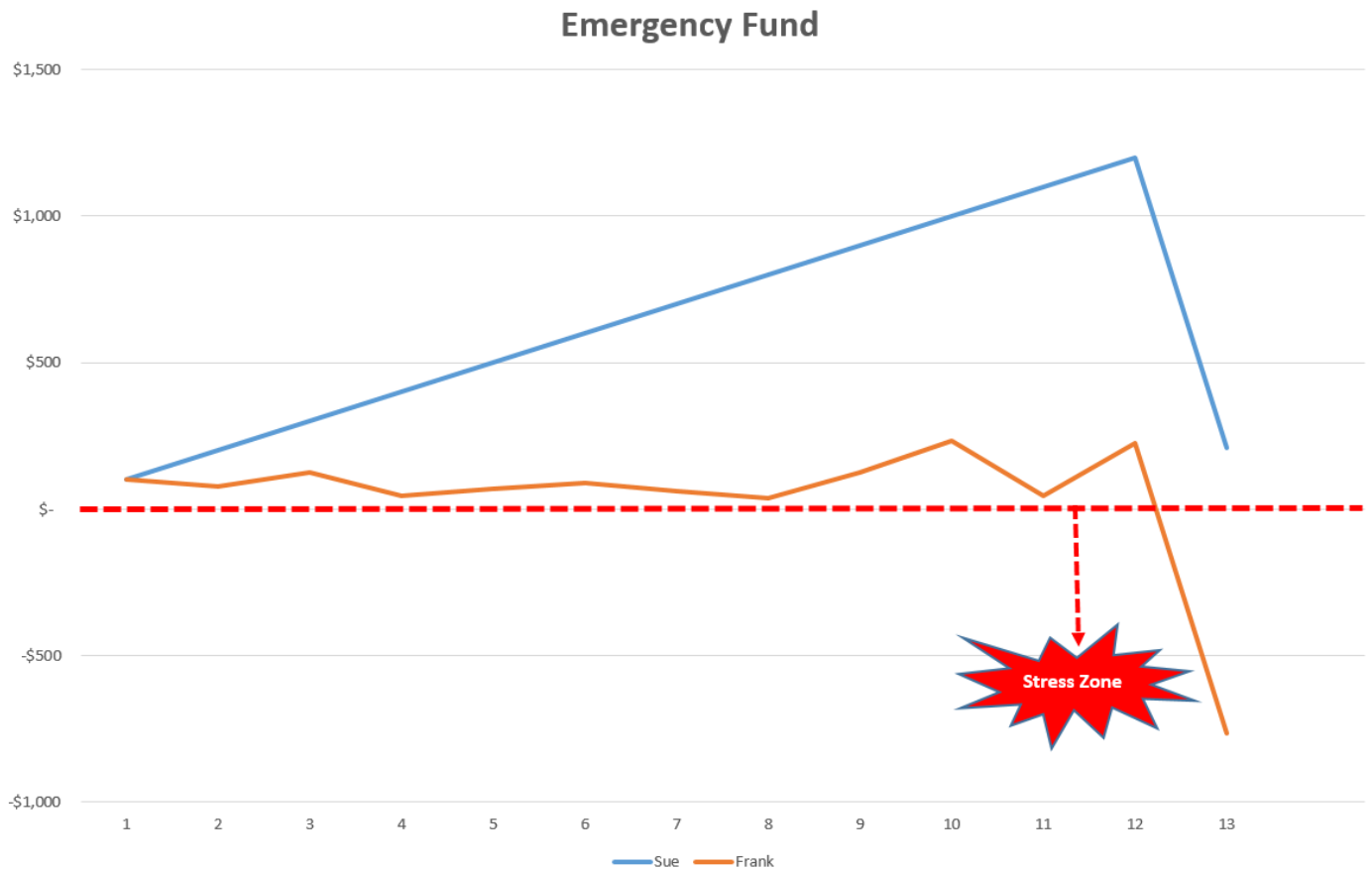
Imagine two people (let's call them Sue and Frank) both of whom earn the same amount of money and both of whom are in committed loving relationships. The only difference between Sue and Frank is that Sue regularly saves \$100 a week into an emergency fund and currently has a balance of \$1200 while Frank only ever has a few hundred dollars in his emergency fund account. (See diagram below.)

The discipline of creating an environment of **ACCEPTANCE** where those you are relating to feel welcome, safe and accepted. When people feel safe and welcome they are more likely to connect, engage, grow and achieve.

One day their partner receives a fine of \$495 in the mail for having gone through a red light<sup>3</sup>. They had been in a rush to pick up one of the kids and did not realise they had done this. And then, incredibly a few days later another fine arrives for another red light and another \$495 fine.

How would you react in this situation? Would it cause tension in your relationship? How much tension?

Obviously, neither of these couples is happy about the \$990 worth of fines but the conversation is probably much less stressful where there is a financial buffer.



This simple story illustrates a very important truth explained in Gary Chapman's brilliant [read you really need to go and buy this book] book called 'The Five Love Languages<sup>4</sup>'.

Gary Chapman explains the very simple idea that all of us have a way in which we feel valued, loved and accepted and that (and this is really pivotal to recognise) we tend to show value, love and acceptance in the way in which we like to receive it.

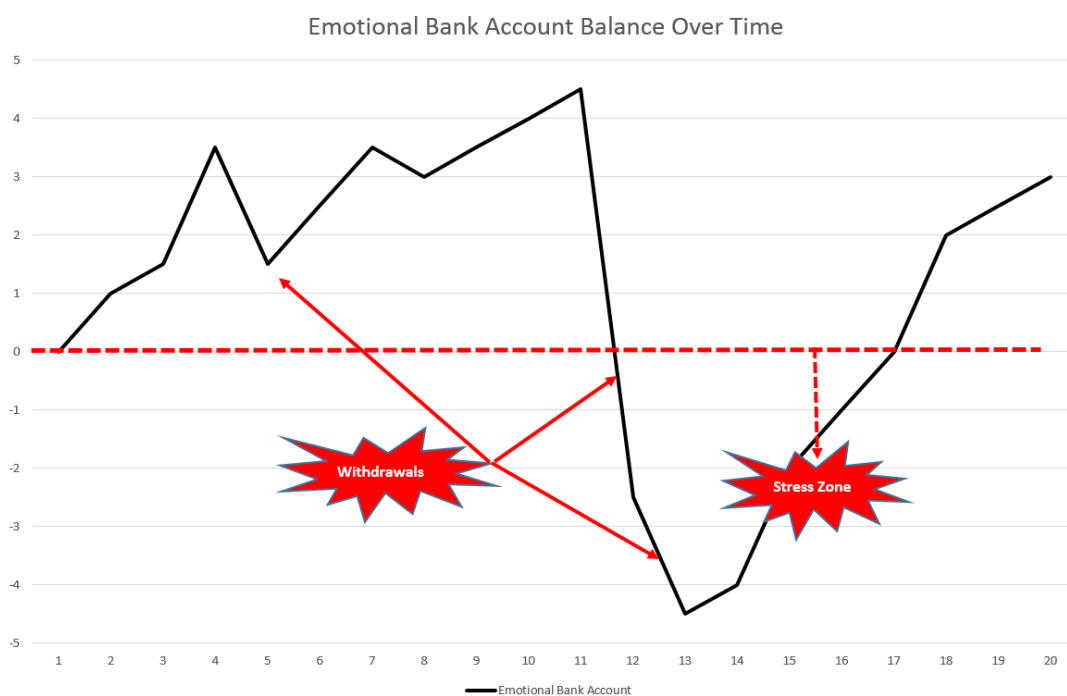
The *big* problem is this. If we tend to give like we receive *irrespective* of the needs of the other person.

When we value, love and accept another person in the style they appreciate it is like **we are investing in the emotional bank account between us**. With a high emotional bank account we have a relationship that can flourish even when we make a mistake and take a withdrawal out of that relationship.

When we value, love and accept another person in *our* style then it is possible that instead of investing in the relationship we will be taking a withdrawal. To understand this think about a time when you thought you had done something nice for another person and they responded badly, it is quite possible that you gave what you thought was a deposit but which they viewed as a withdrawal, or else you were already in overdraft and no matter what you did came from a negative emotional bank balance.

When we have a low emotional bank account with another person almost everything we do will be viewed with suspicion, if we do something wrong it will take us quickly into an even higher overdrawn state increasing the stress between us.

Consider what is happening in the relationship below. One person is investing in the relationship and in week 4 some conflict happens and some withdrawals are made but the relationship is still in the positive. Over time more deposits are made and then they hit some rocky times in week 11 and some major withdrawals are made. Because of the level of withdrawals the relationship enters a time of high stress. Over the next time period additional positive emotional deposits are made and the relationship climbs out of the stress zone and begins to flourish again. Relationships can survive occasional dips into the stress zone, but if they continue there a dysfunctional relationship with ensue.



## Exercise

Think of a pivotal relationship in your life. Suggest that the two of you complete the short and free online Love Languages Profile found at <http://www.5lovelanguages.com>

Once you have completed the online profile have a conversation about your love languages and how you can make emotional deposits into your relationship.

I would strongly encourage you to purchase the book to discover the depths of this valuable resource.