

What Love Means

A group of professional people posed this question to a gathering of 4- to 8-year-olds: "What does love mean?" The answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined. See for yourself:

- "When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis, too. That's love." (Rebecca, age 8)
- "When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You know that your name is safe in their mouth." (Billy, age 4)
- "Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other." (Karl, age 5)
- "Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs." (Chrissy, age 6)
- "Love is what makes you smile when you're tired." (Terri, age 4)
- "Love is when Mommy makes coffee for my Daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is okay." (Danny, age 7)
- "Love is when you kiss all the time. Then when you get tired of kissing, you still want to be together and you talk more. My Mommy and Daddy are like that." (Emily, age 8)
- "Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen." (Bobby, age 7)
- "Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt; then he wears it every day." (Noelle, age 7)
- "Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well." (Tommy, age 6)
- "During my piano recital, I was on stage and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my Daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore." (Cindy, age 8)
- "Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken." (Elaine, age 5)

(more)

- “Love is when Mommy sees Daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford.” (Chris, age 7)
- “Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day.” (Mary Ann, age 4)
- “When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you.” (Karen, age 7)
- “You really shouldn’t say, ‘I love you’ unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget.” (Jessica, age 8)

Aren’t those wonderful definitions, or observations, of love? This exercise for the children reveals at least two points: (1) They have a remarkable grasp of what love is very early in life, and (2) it is very obvious they learn from watching their parents.

--Beecher Hunter