

SO MANY WAYS TO SAY “I LOVE YOU”

No phrase in the English language has much power as the three little words “I love you”. Your response to those words may be bliss or anger, depending on who is saying them, how it is said and when it is said.

Since “I love you” evokes so many different reactions, it clearly has several different meanings. So it makes sense to check that the “I love you” you are responding to is the same “I love you” the person is saying. So here are a few different meanings of the phrase.

“I love you” # 1 means, “I think you are attractive and I would like to get to know you better”

Usually said within a few hours or days of meeting you for the first time, this “I love you” should not be taken too seriously. There may be potential there but this is not the time to start making wedding plans (or even having wedding dreams).

“I love you” #2 means, “I want a partner because all my friends have one and I don’t want to feel left out. You look as if you’d be OK to go out with for now.”

This one is about profiling rather than about love, and when “the right one” comes along you will be left behind.

“I love you” # 3 means, “I want to have sex and I know the only way you’ll agree is if I say the right words.”

This one may be used just once – leaving you wondering why you don’t see the person again. Or it can be used repeatedly until the person finds a new sexual partner

“I love you” # 4 means, “I don’t feel so good about me but I feel better when I’m around you, so please stay”

This one may feel like the genuine thing at first, but often begins to feel tiresome when the person keeps making heavy demands on your time and emotions.

“I love you” # 5 means, “You have something I want (money, car, and house) and so “I’ll link up with you to get what I want.”

This is another one that is guaranteed not to last. When someone comes along who offers him/her more (s)he is out the door.

“I love you” # 6 means, “I know I’ve done something wrong but saying but saying this will get you ignore my bad behavior and act as if everything is OK.”

This person using this one is not apologizing - (s)he is manipulating! There is no intention to change (even though (s)he may say so). All (s)he wants is for you to continue doing what makes him/her feel OK with no real attention paid to your needs.

“I love you” # 7 means, “I have come to know you well enough and care about you sufficiently that I am willing to work with you to create a good relationship.”

One of those we all want to hear but it normally takes time and maturity to be able to say this one.

“I love you” # 8 means, “Hey I’m really glad you are in my life. I enjoy being with you.”

In a solid relationship this one is said when things are rough as well as when they are going well.

With so many potentially different meanings, hearing “I love you” can be a confusing rather than a romantic experience. After all, we all want to know when it is the genuine thing.

So how do you decode the statement? There is no foolproof way but here are a few tips.

- a) **Examine the context.** When does the person say “I love you?” Is it said before (s)he really gets to know you? Or is it only said when (s)he wants something – sex, forgiveness, something material? Those “I love yous” you can definitely do without.
- b) **Scrutinize the behavior**
Words can be cheap. Does the person show by what (s)he does that (s)he really cares about your feelings? If words and actions do not match, then the actions are what you need to base your decisions on.
- c) **Don’t jump to hasty conclusions.** Anybody can speak and act impressively early in a relationship. With time more of the person’s true character emerges. So even if you are sure you are both meant for each other, it’s still wise to apply the time test. The words of a once popular song are still true – “Take time to know her (or him), love is not an overnight thing”.

If you have decoded “I love you” successfully, then it becomes much easier to decide whether to stay, wait or walk away. So next time you hear “I love you”, stop, think and take the time to figure out what the person saying it really means

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