I consider myself cautious when it comes to sharing my emotions with others, and no emotion is more personal and sensitive than "love." Basically, I only say it when I mean it. The problem is that "I love you" means very different things in different contexts. The ancient Greeks had four words for love: *Storge*, *Philia*, *Eros*, and *Agape*. I think it's a good place to start.

- *Storge* is natural empathetic affection, as in the comfortable reverence for a country, club, or even family.
- *Philia* refers to friendship and mutual respect between equals.
- *Eros* conveys sexual love and attraction, but not necessarily solely in the form of lust. Plato famously used Eros when describing his philosophic pursuits.
- *Agape* (my favorite) is unconditional, unchanging adoration. In my view, this is the purest and highest form of love; it reflects God's love for man, and what God desires in return.

We don't have these four specific words for "love" in the English language; at least, not in colloquial form. I won't argue whether or not that's a good thing, though I will mention that it can sometimes be difficult to decipher what someone intends by the phrase, "I love you." Many of us have been in difficult situations -- particularly in romantic relationships -- in which each party is on-edge until the word "love" is uttered. And what then?

As previously mentioned, I am very cautious and deliberate about expressing my emotions. I don't expect others to be as careful, but it sometimes bothers me when people say "I love you" frequently and without reservation. Sometimes it makes me question the speaker's sincerity. Obviously, he/she could certainly be genuine, but I find that love is expressed more in action than in declarations and affirmations of speech.