

Pathway to Freedom: Identify Your Needs

Introduction

The dictionary defines a need as a physiological or psychological requirement for the well-being of an organism. Since it is a requirement, it could be argued that the behavior of an individual at a particular moment in time is usually determined by their strongest need. Abraham Maslow, noted psychologist, has organized needs into the following hierarchy:

Self Actualization	Challenging projects, opportunities, innovation and creativity, learning
Ego/Esteem	Important projects, recognition from others, prestige and status
Social/Belonging	Acceptance, being part of a group, identification with a successful team
Safety/Security	Physical safety, economic security. Freedom from threats
Physiological	Physical survival: water, food, sleep, warmth, etc.

Most people in western society tend to have both satisfied and unsatisfied needs at each level, with greater satisfaction tending to occur at the physiological and safety levels.

Unsatisfied needs have a way of controlling your life. When we have a strong need for something, we usually look outside ourselves to find it and we'll do almost anything to get it. This is very apparent when you think about the physiological needs. Have you ever been really hungry or thirsty? It's very hard to focus on anything until you find food or water.

The effects of non-physical needs are not as obvious. To begin with, the degree of importance of the various needs is different for each of us, a factor that is heavily influenced by our individual life experiences. While everyone understands the basic physical needs, a person with a met or low-requirement need does not often recognize that the behavior of another is an attempt to satisfy a need. There is no universal understanding of the emotional, social or growth needs. For the most part, we are as unaware of our own needs as we are of others' needs.

While our compulsion to satisfy unmet social, emotional and growth needs is just as strong as our need to obtain food and water, these efforts usually happen on an unconscious level. Without understanding why, we are driven to do things, not always in our best long-term interests, to satisfy our needs.

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Unmet needs, and the actions motivated by the unconscious desire to satisfy those needs, can often impede our ability to attain our goals. For example, a salesman who identified recognition as an unmet need realized that he always showed up 10 minutes late for everything. It was a way to be "recognized", although not one that worked well or gave satisfaction! While he gained the recognition he was seeking, clients interpreted his arriving late as a sign that orders would be delivered late and were reluctant to give him business.

By identifying your unmet needs, you take the first step in achieving peace, contentment and freedom in your life. This inventory will help you identify your top four unmet needs.

Before beginning the exercise, it is important to make a distinction between needs and wants. A need is something that, when it's not met, your life is thrown off balance in some way. A want is something you'd like to have, but not having it doesn't interfere with your life. Needs are often unmet values.

Directions to Identify Needs

1. Read through the *List of Potential Needs* found on the next page. The list is grouped into major categories, but there are subtleties to each of the words. Consider EACH word as you go through this exercise.
2. The first time through, read the list quickly. If a potential need resonates with you in any way, leave it alone. If not, cross it off.
3. Go through the list again, only working with those that are not crossed out. This time, look at each group of words. Think about the distinctions for the words. If some of the words in a group feel stronger than others, keep those and cross off the others.
4. Next time through the list, think about each word and times when you didn't feel that (e.g. didn't feel accepted). What did that look and feel like? If it wasn't painful in some way, cross it off the list.
5. Transfer all your remaining words to a clean piece of paper. If there are more than 4, prioritize them in the following way:
 1. Look at the first two words. Which of these throws you more off balance? On the right of each choice, mark the stronger need as 1, the other as 2.
 2. Look at the 3rd choice and compare it to #2. Which of those throws you more off balance?
 - ◆ If #2 is stronger than the new choice, mark the new choice as #3. Jump to Step 3.
 - ◆ If the new choice is stronger, mark it as #2 and change the 'old' #2 to #3.
 3. Continue with each word remaining on your list, comparing it to each of your already-marked choices, starting with the highest choice first (e.g. compare 4th choice to #3 first, then #2, then #1). Renumber as needed as you look at each set of words.
6. By this time you will have identified your 4 strongest needs.
7. If you are working with a coach, review your needs with your coach and use that partnership to continue through the steps for designing systems to get your needs met, forever!.

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Be Accepted	Be right	To communicate	Be free	Power
Approved	Correct	Be heard	Unrestricted	Authority
Be included	Not mistaken	Gossip	Privileged	Capacity
Respected	Honest	Tell stories	Immune	Results
Permitted	Morally right	Make a point	Independent	Omnipotence
Be popular	Be deferred to	Share	Autonomous	Strength
Sanctioned	Be confirmed	Talk	Sovereign	Might
Be Cool	Be advocated	Be listened to	Not obligated	Stamina
Allowed	Be encouraged	Comment	Self-reliant	Prerogative
Tolerated	Understood	Informed	Liberated	Influence
To accomplish	Be cared for	To control	Honesty	Recognition
Achieve	Get attention	Dominate	Forthrightness	Be noticed
Fulfill	Be helped	Command	Uprightness	Be remembered
Realize	Cared about	Restrain	No lying	Be known for
Reach	Be saved	Manage	Sincerity	Regarded well
Profit	Be attended to	Correct others	Loyalty	Get credit
Attain	Be treasured	Be obeyed	Frankness	Acclaim
Yield	Tenderness	Not ignored	No withholds	Heeded
Consummate	Get gifts	Keep status quo	No perpetrations	Seen
Victory	Embraced	Restrict	Tell all	Celebrated
Be acknowledged	Certainty	Be needed	Order	Safety
	Clarity	Improve others	Perfection	Security
Feel worthy	Accuracy	Be a critical link	Symmetry	Protected
Be praised	Assurance	Be useful	Consistent	Stable
Honored	Obviousness	Be craved	Sequential	Fully informed
Flattered	Guarantees	Please others	Checklists	Deliberate
Complimented	Promises	Be nice	Unvarying	Vigilant
Be prized	Commitments	Affect others	Right-ness	Cautious
Appreciated	Exactness	Need to give	Literal-ness	Alert
Valued	Precision	Be important	Regulated	Guarded
Thanked		Be material		
	Be comfortable		Peace	
Be loved	Luxury	Duty	Quietness	Work
Liked	Opulence	Obligated	Calmness	Career
Cherished	Excess	Do the right	Unity	Performance
Esteemed	Prosperity	thing	Reconciliation	Vocation
Held fondly	Indulgence	Follow	Stillness	Press/push
Be desired	Abundance	Obey	Balance	Make it happen
Be preferred	Not work	Have a task	Agreements	Perform a task
Be relished	Taken care of	Satisfy others	Respite	Responsibility
Be adored	Served	Prove self	Steadiness	Industriousness
Be touched		Be devoted		Be busy
		Have a cause		