

Identifying Your Personal Needs

Each person has a unique set of Personal Needs (above basic survival needs) that must be met in order to be at their best; they are critical in order to thrive. As important as Personal Needs are, few people are aware of them; as a result they generally go about meeting their needs unconsciously, often in ways that are at odds with living a fulfilling life. Once you spend time discovering your Personal Needs and how to meet them in ways that work, your life tends to work much better.

Characteristics of Personal Needs:

- they are critical for you to thrive and live a life you love
- they are neither good nor bad
- they can be met in positive or negative ways relative to your desired results

Think of Personal Needs as the underlying experience, or feeling, you are attempting to create through your actions.

Some examples of Personal Needs include:

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|-------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| • Acceptance | • Control | • Influence |
| • Accomplishment | • Creativity | • Intellectual Stimulation |
| • Acknowledgement | • Discovery | • Intensity |
| • Adventure | • Drama | • Intimacy |
| • Attention | • Excitement | • Power |
| • Autonomy | • Freedom | • Recognition |
| • Challenge | • Harmony | • Simplicity |
| • Connection | • Importance | • Safety |
| • Contribution | • Independence | |

This list is by no means exhaustive; it is intended to provide examples which will be a starting point for you and will be helpful to you in identifying similar (or different) words that accurately describe your Personal Needs. There is a large body of work available online to help you identify your Personal Needs.

3 Steps to Identify Your Personal Needs:

- 1) **Discover the Possibilities;** this step is about identifying all of the possible Personal Needs that you might have. Write down:
 - things in your life that bring you the most joy; identify the related experiences.
 - times in your life you have felt most successful; identify related experiences.
 - times in your life you have felt least successful; identify related experiences.



- patterns you repeat that do not create the results that you want; identify the experiences you generate through these patterns and how you could generate them in more positive ways.
- 2) **Refine Your List**; this process is designed to help you narrow down your list so that it includes only those Personal Needs that are most important to YOU.
- Identify the 8-10 experiences that appear most often
 - Consider which are NEEDS (i.e. must haves) vs. wants, shoulds, wishes
 - Carefully consider those that you have a strong aversion to; could they be needs that you don't like/want to take ownership of? If they are showing up as negative patterns, they might actually be important Personal Needs.
 - Select the 4 Personal Needs that you determine to be MOST important to you
- 3) **Create a Plan**; the idea here is that you want to be satisfying your Personal Needs automatically at all times, so that they are handled once and for all
- Make a list of activities/actions that will help you meet your Personal Needs in beneficial ways; include the things you do every day as well as periodic activities and new things you could do to meet your needs
 - Make a list of characteristics and behaviors that help you meet your Personal Needs
 - Write down ways that other people can help you meet your Personal Needs and include them as determined by you

Positive Ways to Meet Your Needs:

In order to thrive it is important to meet your Personal Needs in positive ways that enhance your enjoyment of life and/or the quality of your relationships. Examples of positive ways to meet your needs and some of the possible associated Personal Needs are included below. Any of these activities/outcomes may have one or several Personal Needs associated with them (including others not listed as examples).

Activity/Outcome	Possible Personal Needs
Learning A New Skill	Accomplishment, Control, Power, Acceptance, Discovery, Autonomy
Taking more "me" time	Independence, Connection, Control, Discovery
Strong Relationships	Acceptance, Acknowledgement, Creativity, Harmony, Intimacy
Work Smarter, not harder	Challenge, Excitement, Control, Freedom
Bungee Jumping	Connection, Challenge, Excitement, Freedom
Financial Security	Safety, Independence, Control

Expressing Your Feelings	Attention, Control, Freedom, Intimacy
Writing a book	Recognition, Accomplishment, Creativity
Volunteer Work	Contribution, Connection, Discovery, Power
Playing Team Sports	Challenge, Excitement, Connection, Recognition
Hiking	Adventure, Freedom, Challenge, Connection

Negative Patterns and Possible Needs Being Met:

Identifying the patterns, behaviors and outcomes that you repeat which detract from your enjoyment of life and/or the quality of your relationships can help you determine what your Personal Needs are. Examples of negative patterns and associated Personal Needs are outlined below. Any of these patterns may have one or several Personal Needs associated with them (including others not listed as examples).

Negative Pattern	Possible Personal Needs
Whining	Security, Control, Power, Acceptance, Attention
Procrastination	Safety, Independence, Excitement
Being Late	Challenge, Power, Control, Attention, Excitement
Over-Committing	Connection, Challenge, Excitement, Acceptance
Under-Achieving	Safety, Independence, Control
Yelling	Attention, Control, Independence, Power
Watching TV	Autonomy, Discovery, Recognition, Safety

Summary

Whether we are conscious of it or not, we spend much of our life attempting to meet our Personal Needs. We do everything in our lives in the quest for experiences; the experiences that are most important to us are our Personal Needs. The more you know about yourself and what is important to you, the more likely you will be to choose positive ways to meet your needs so that you get what you really want. Awareness of your Personal Needs is the first step toward meeting them in ways that are positive, which contributes greatly to the likelihood that you will thrive and live a life you love.