



The 12 Essential Human Life-Needs

(12 Pathways to Human Thriving)

- 1) **PHYSICAL SAFETY & PHYSICAL SUSTENANCE/NURTURANCE:** Freedom from frequent threats to physical existence from animals, nature, or other people (e.g., being eaten by an animal, drowned by a hurricane, or hit or shot by another person). A beautiful, supportive physical environment, including (nonpoisoned) air, (nonpoisoned) water, and (nonpoisoned), good-tasting food; abundant restorative sleep; comfortable body temperature (beautiful, comfortable shelter and, in some climates, beautiful, comfortable clothing). Room to move and physical movement (moderate physical exercise). Caring touch.
- 2) **CONNECTION WITH OTHERS / BELONGING:** being a part of, being included, being wanted; being seen, being understood, being "Gotten"; being celebrated. (NOTE: These things are often what we mean by "being loved.")
- 3) **COMPASSION & RESPECT (especially by SELF):** having one's fundamental, equal value acknowledged (respect), mattering, being intentionally nurtured. Room to Be all that we are; acceptance. (NOTE: These things are often what we mean by "unconditional" love -- love that cannot be earned or lost.)
- 4) **CONNECTION WITH SELF:** self-awareness; self-understanding -- including understanding our own uniquely preferred ways of meeting our Life-Needs. Awareness of the ways our own individual Life-Needs have been chronically or traumatically unmet (our "wounds" or "baggage"). Awareness of what our defensive patterns are, when our unmet Life-Needs are stimulated. A capacity to maintain our connection with ourselves even in challenging situations (including when our defensive patterns have been activated).
- 5) **FREEDOM:** autonomy, self-governance, choice
- 6) **UNDERSTANDING:** clarity, comprehending how things work; connection with both a personal Reality and a shared Reality; predictability
- 7) **Variety & Creation:** discovery, newness, invention, including creativity (bringing-into-being) that expresses our authentic Self
- 8) **Play:** time and activities whose sole (conscious) purpose* is our own lighthearted delight. Play includes:
 - a shift in perspective to a different kind of mental or emotional "space" (mutually recognized or agreed-upon by everyone participating) that includes a sense of freedom, ease, and joy
 - the temporary lifting of many social, intellectual, emotional, and/or physical constraints, rules, or expectations
 - temporary or "pretend" outcomes or consequences
 - opportunities for exploration, discovery, and invention
 - open-ended possibilities
 - uncertainty and unpredictability
 - humor

* Play has an essential purpose and role in the development and regulation of the nervous system in mammals (and possibly other animals).
- 9) **Leisure/Idleness:** rest, relaxation, rejuvenation, restoration
- 10) **Contribution/Growth:** making a difference/making life more wonderful for self and/or others
- 11) **Flow/Connection with Life:** an experience of connection with something greater than ourselves, when our everyday sense of time and of self (or identity) dissolve into an expanded consciousness, space, or field
- 12) **Emotional Safety/Security:** confidence that our (other) Life-Needs will be met.

NOTE: Emotional safety / security is not really a Life-Need, but it is included here because it's so commonly believed to be one. However, most often when we say we "need" emotional safety we're experiencing needs for consideration, mattering, or being valued ("respect"), or for freedom (without a loss of connection), predictability, ease, or relaxation. It's also important to notice that when we feel safe, **we are relaxed physically, mentally, and emotionally.** In effect, our emotional alarm system turns off; it has nothing to do in the moment. When does our emotional alarm system turn off? When our needs are met and we're experiencing *well-being: that is, when we're increasing our thriving.* (continued on next page)

12) Emotional Safety/Security (continued):

Any time we say we feel (emotionally) unsafe or insecure, what we usually mean (often without realizing it) **is that one or more of our other Life-Needs haven't been met, or that we're imagine that they won't be met in the future.** The most common examples are our need to be valued and to matter ("respect").

When we feel emotionally unsafe, we need to ask ourselves, "which specific (other) Life-Need(s) of mine am I not experiencing right now, or am I worried I won't experience later?" Once we've identified those specific Life-needs, we need to mindfully consider: ***whose responsibility is it, to ensure that those Life-needs of ours are met?*** (Hint: We often ask others to care more about, and take more responsibility for, our own Life-needs than we do, ourselves. This is one of the most common sources of upset and conflict in our relationships.).

For More Information

Got questions? Comments? Don't hesitate to connect with us, our compassionate, empowered learning community welcomes you!

Looking to find ways to more effectively handle your own and others' upsets? Longing for more happiness in your life? At our Rose City NVC website (www.rosecitynvc.org) we offer **many free resources** as well as both local Portland, Oregon and online classes, workshops, practice groups, and private one-on-one and couples sessions to support you.

Let us know how we can help!

Blessings,

Vika



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FEELINGS When Your Needs Are Met

AFFECTIONATE

compassionate
friendly
loving
open hearted
sympathetic
tender
warm

CONFIDENT

empowered
open
proud
safe
secure

ENGAGED

absorbed
alert
curious
engrossed
enchanted
entranced
fascinated
interested
intrigued
involved
spellbound
stimulated

INSPIRED

amazed
awed
wonder

EXCITED

amazed
animated
ardent
aroused
astonished
dazzled
eager
energetic
enthusiastic
giddy
invigorated
lively
passionate
surprised
vibrant

EXHILARATED

blissful
ecstatic
elated
enthralled
exuberant
radiant
rapturous
thrilled

GRATEFUL

appreciative
moved
thankful
touched

HOPEFUL

expectant
encouraged
optimistic

JOYFUL

amused
delighted
glad
happy
jubilant
pleased
tickled

PEACEFUL

calm
clear headed
comfortable
centered
content
equanimous
fulfilled
mellow
quiet
relaxed
relieved
satisfied
serene
still
tranquil
trusting

REFRESHED

enlivened
rejuvenated
renewed
rested
restored
revived

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818-957-9393.

NOTE: The CAPITALIZED headings are offered as JUST ONE way to help you more easily find the feelings that best describe what you're experiencing.

FEELINGS When Your Needs Are NOT Met

AFRAID
apprehensive
dread
foreboding
frightened
panicked
petrified
scared
suspicious
terrified
wary
worried
anxious
tense

ANNOYED
aggravated
dismayed
disgruntled
displeased
exasperated
frustrated
impatient
irritated
cranky

ANGRY
enraged
furious
incensed
indignant
irate
livid
outraged
resentful

CONFUSED
ambivalent
baffled
bewildered
dazed
hesitant
lost
mystified
perplexed
puzzled
torn

EMBARRASSED
ashamed
flustered
mortified
self-conscious

AVERSION
animosity
appalled
contempt
disgusted
dislike
hate
horrified
hostile
repulsed

YEARNING
envious
jealous
longing
nostalgic
pining
wistful

DISQUIET
agitated
alarmed
discombobulated
disconcerted
disturbed
distressed
perturbed
rattled
edgy
restless
shocked
startled
surprised
troubled
uncomfortable
uneasy
unsettled
upset

FATIGUE
beat
burnt out
depleted
exhausted
lethargic
listless
sleepy
tired
weary
worn out

PAIN
agony
anguished
bereaved
devastated
grief
heartbroken
hurt
lonely
miserable
regret

SAD
hopeless
depressed
dejected
despair
despondent
disappointed
discouraged
disheartened
forlorn
gloomy
heavy hearted
hopeless
unhappy

VULNERABLE
fragile
guarded
helpless
insecure
leery
reserved
sensitive
shaky

DISCONNECTED
alienated
aloof
apathetic
bored
cold
detached
distant
distracted
indifferent
numb
removed
uninterested
withdrawn

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LIFE-NEEDS

The following partial list of human Life-Needs is neither complete nor definitive. It is meant as a starting place to support anyone who wishes to engage in a process of deepening self-discovery and to facilitate greater understanding and connection between people.

CONNECTION

acceptance
affection
appreciation
belonging
cooperation
communication
closeness
community
companionship
compassion
consideration
consistency
empathy
inclusion
intimacy
love
mutuality
nurturing
respect/self-respect
safety
security
stability
support
to know and be known
to see and be seen
to understand and be understood
trust
warmth

HONESTY

authenticity
integrity
presence

PLAY

joy
humor

PEACE

beauty
communion
ease
equality
harmony
inspiration
order

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

air
food
movement/exercise
rest/sleep
sexual expression
safety
shelter
touch
water

MEANING

awareness
celebration of life
challenge
clarity
competence
consciousness
contribution
creativity
discovery
efficacy
effectiveness
growth
hope
learning
mourning
participation
purpose
self-expression
stimulation
to matter
understanding

AUTONOMY

choice
freedom
independence
space
spontaneity

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