

## Satisfying our needs

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Needs drive us, our thoughts and our behaviour. The theory of NVC (Nonviolent Communication) states that we are each responsible for satisfying our own needs. Feelings are signals that indicate whether or not a need is being met. A positive feeling means a need is being satisfied, while a negative feeling means this is not the case. By consciously linking our emotions with our needs, we take charge of satisfying those needs.

The following list of needs is neither exhaustive nor definitive.

### **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  
humour

### **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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All of these needs are important for each of us, but they cannot all be satisfied at the same time.

Our balance is dependent on our needs being satisfied.

Let's apply this to what we've seen before. Suppose we've been exposed to a lot of demands for a long time and have just crossed the stress curve: we are now on the wrong side of it. The signals start to arrive: we are probably not experiencing positive emotions. It could be a good idea to explore the link with our unmet needs and find some strategies to get those unmet needs satisfied.

Tip:

Learn to stay aware of what is alive in you, taking responsibility for your own feelings and needs. In certain situations you will experience distinct feelings. When you note these feelings, take a moment to realise what is causing them. Remember to distinguish between a stimulus, an outside event and a cause - met or unmet needs – behind the feelings.

## **EXERCISE**

1. Think of a time when your needs were unmet (= you were experiencing stress signals).
2. What needs were unmet?
3. What did you try to do to meet those needs?  
Think of three different strategies that might also have helped to meet your needs.