



The Five Basic Needs

We are driven to satisfy five basic human needs. These are general drives which we seek to fulfill by every human behavior. Behavior attempts to meet specific pictures of things that people want most which satisfy their needs. In practice, the most important need is connection, as closeness and connectedness with the people we care about is a requisite for satisfying all of the needs.

All humans have the same five essential physiological and psychological needs. Although all people share these same needs, they vary remarkably in their ability to fulfill them. If the ability to fulfill our needs were as much a part of humanity as are the needs themselves, there would be much less problems! This ability must be learned and is not always an easy task.

Responsibility is the ability to fulfill one's needs in a way that does not deprive others of the ability to fulfill their needs. When a people are unsuccessful in fulfilling their needs, individuals share a common characteristic: They deny the reality of the world around them. Recognizing that reality exists and people must fulfill their needs within its framework is critical. The capacity to choose wisely between the many choices of behaviors is important and so is the ability to appraise the long-term future consequences of immediate actions.

When a person finds himself in an uncomfortable or miserable condition, he will try to solve his predicament through a variety of behaviors. His behavior is always his best known attempt to get what he wants to more successfully meet his needs. No matter how irrational or inadequate his behavior may seem, it has meaning and validity to him.

From time to time in everyone's life the world and our situation changes, requiring us to learn and relearn to meet our needs under different conditions and stressors. Although we are given unchanging needs from birth to death, we are not naturally endowed with the ability to fulfill them.

Variation in the Strength of our Needs

As you can see, we vary greatly in the ability to satisfy our needs. In addition, there is great variety in the strength of our needs.

A person's perfect vision of how she wants her life to be is composed of perceptions representing what they have most enjoyed in life and believe will be enjoyable in the future. These perceptions become the standard for behavioral choices. Unlike the basic survival needs, the perceptions in each person's perfect vision are very specific and completely individual. People choose to behave in different ways to fulfill their needs because, at least in part, their visions are different. To be in effective control of one's life means integrating this knowledge into the way one deals with others.

The five basic needs we are all born with are survival, connection, significance, freedom and enjoyment. Let's look at each one separately.

Survival

This need is comprised of the basic biological drives such as satisfying hunger, thirst and sexual desire (for survival of the species) as well as safety, security, shelter, clothing, health and rest.

We meet these needs through eating, drinking, making babies, protecting, planning, saving, minimizing risks, gaining self-sufficiency, exercise, structure and sleep.

Connection

This need is about the drive to love, share and cooperate with others. This ranges from family love to friendship to romantic love. Connection, caring, sharing, cooperating, accepting, joining, intimacy, affection, nurturing are all components of the connection need. This need drives us to continuous activity in search of satisfaction. To either love or be loved is not enough; people must do both.

People can meet this need through intimate relationships, sexual connection, family relationships, friendships, connections with co-workers or team members, a sense of connection to one's community, belonging to various groups or one's spiritual affiliation. Sometimes with people who have a low need for connection, a connection with books or a pet can suffice.

Significance

People are born with a drive toward making a difference, having an impact and developing importance or significance.

There are two basic ways for people to meet their need for significance—they can become significant in a way that contributes to humanity or they can become significant in a way that's

destructive to humanity. We are born needing to be important—how we accomplish that is something we learn. A bully on the playground, a boss that takes credit for someone else's work and a leader of a gang are all examples of people who are getting their need for significance met through destructive means.

On the other hand, a person who amasses great wealth and does charitable things, someone who does public speaking to empower others and an Olympic athlete are examples of people who are meeting their need for significance through contributing to humanity. If people have constructive ways to get their need for significance met and are successful at doing so, you will not see them choosing a path of destructive significance.

We are all born with unique talents, skills and abilities. We all have a purpose for being here that serves the common good. Many spend the majority of their lives seeking to develop their uniqueness. Some never recognize what's special about themselves. And some find their purpose and spend their lives dedicated to serving others in their unique way.

Part of being a great InsideOut Coach is helping clients identify the strength of each of their needs and assist them in creating and realizing their perfect vision of what life could be like if they were going things that met their needs to their desired levels.

People can meet their need for significance through achieving, accomplishing, being recognized, respected, achievement, competency, self-control, mastery, importance, significance, competition, and leadership. Significance also includes contribution, strength, assertiveness, aggression, awards, recognition, accomplishments, and things people are good at and proud of.

Freedom

People with a high need for freedom like to do what they want, when they want to without restriction. People often look for freedom to do certain things they want and they also seek freedom from things they don't. Having and making choices in our lives is a part of the freedom need. The ability to move, choose, be flexible, spontaneous, creative, have privacy and be open all contribute to feeling free..

People can meet this need through developing independence, alone time, creative pursuits, making choices and dreaming. People can meet this need through travel, variety, being free, thinking freely, setting limits, having and making choices, taking time and independence.

Enjoyment

There are basically two kinds of enjoyment. There is the loud, energetic kind of enjoyment people might get from joking, physical activity, and parties. There is the quiet, relaxing kind of fun that might be enjoyed by fishing, lying in a hammock on a warm summer's day, or reading for pleasure. Both are equally valid ways to get the enjoyment need met.

People can meet this need by relaxing, laughing and playing. Humor, joy, pleasure, excitement, enthusiasm, adventure, discovery, hiking, singing, dancing, reading, partying, biking, sports,

shopping, travelling and creating are just some examples of how people can meet their need for enjoyment.

Summary

1. These needs are written into our genetic instructions.
2. You can't make one more important to you than the others. The strength of each need is determined through our genetic wiring. For example, you can't decide you don't like the fact your connection need is the highest and somehow work to make it less important. Your need strengths are what they are.
3. Sometimes when one is frustrated, you will perceive it as the most important but this is just until its satisfied. Then it goes back to the genetically-programmed level.
4. You feel best when you are getting the precise amount of each need that you want. Not getting enough leaves you feeling deprived and getting too much can leave you feeling over-saturated.
5. You never go out to directly "meet your needs." You have a picture in your head, in your perfect vision, that you believe will feel good. You go after this vision and when you accomplish a part of it, it feels good and consequently meets at least one or more of your needs.
6. The only time it's really important to understand what need or needs a person is trying to meet is when they can't have the thing they want. Their perfect vision is not available to them, it's not available now, or the consequences are too great. When this happens, you want to uncover the largest unmet need so you can help your client get more of what they need when they can't have what they truly want. The Rolling Stones sang it best . . .
"You can't always get what you want but if you try sometime, you just might find, you get what you need."

Please answer the questions below and email your responses to assignments@academyofchoice.com.

1. What are the five basic needs?
2. Do all people share these needs?
3. If the needs are universal, what is the difference in need strengths?
4. How do clients attempt to meet their needs?
5. Can clients learn new ways to meet their needs? If so, how?
6. Clients vary in the strengths of their needs. Why is this important to keep in mind when coaching?
7. How would you assess the strength of your clients' needs?
8. Explain how a needs assessment tool could serve your clients.
9. How would you incorporate a client needs profile in order to build a need-satisfying relationship?
10. What is your personal needs profile?
11. What are you doing to meet your needs?
12. How could you create a coaching business that is as need satisfying as possible for you?