

Meeting Your Six Human Needs: The Key to Attaining a Healthy, Happy Life

by John Maguire

Abstract: This article is based on the teachings of Tony Robbins, and is discussed on his Power Talk cassette tape series Volume 26. There are six emotional needs which we can meet through our relationships, work, lifestyle and beliefs. The degree to which you are meeting your needs determines your level of fulfillment in life. In this paper I will discuss these needs and the importance of being balanced in fulfilling all of these needs in order to be truly happy. You will discover ways to meet each of your needs. I will then show you how to better fulfill these needs by changing your perception or by changing your approach. This can dramatically improve the quality of your life. The first human need is the need for certainty. It is our need for comfort, our need to avoid pain and gain pleasure, our need for survival. This is our most fundamental need in life.

We All Have the Same Needs, The Only Difference Is the Vehicles We Use to Fulfill Them. The ways in which you meet your needs can be considered your vehicles. A vehicle can be a relationship, activity, job or belief. Some vehicles are neutral - they meet your needs, but they don't do anything to improve your life. Some vehicles are destructive and can mess up your life. Some are positive and make your life and the lives of others better.

Vehicles We Use to Comfort Us

Consider what gives you comfort when you are under stress. Common things people do to feel more certainty and comfort is eat, organize their desk or their closet, or try to control other people. In order to feel certain, some people create a negative belief or identity for themselves. For example, the person who believes "I'm a procrastinator" is certain about the way he is, and it gives him comfort when he is confronted with his lack of promptness.

Some people create a positive identity and apply faith. They believe that no matter what

happens they are certain they will be able to meet the challenge.

Most people use an artificial vehicle to gain certainty, such as money or material objects. This can be a source of security, but the danger is if they become attached to it and use it as their primary means to gain certainty. This can result in living in fear of losing their money or possessions. If they do lose it, they feel totally insecure. Remember stories of people who lost all their money in the stock market crash and then jumped out of buildings having lost all sense of security.

The same problem can occur if you try to get all of your security needs met through a relationship. When the relationship starts having problems, you lose your sense of certainty and become insecure.

Having many vehicles to get your security needs met is a much more reliable approach.

What Are Your Vehicles or Ways You Meet Your Need for Certainty? Which relationships give you comfort and security? What work activities provide a feeling of certainty? What sports, hobbies or other activities do you feel certain will give you pleasure and comfort? What beliefs give you a feeling of certainty? Does your faith in God, in yourself or in universal intelligence provide a sense of certainty?

List both the positive and negative vehicles you use to fulfill this need.

Uncertainty Motivates Action & Change

If you have too much certainty you can become bored. Think about what happens in a relationship when you are certain about everything the person will say or do; or a job which becomes totally routine and predictable. You get bored and need to experience the *Second Human Need: The need for uncertainty and variety*. Surprise, diversity, challenge and difference: these experiences comprise our second human psychological need.

Certainty gives us a sense of comfort and peace, where uncertainty gives us a sense of excitement and adventure. These needs are inherently in conflict, yet they are the yin and yang of each other: we need both to be in balance and to be truly healthy. If you have too much uncertainty and not enough certainty you become anxious or afraid.

Vehicles of Adventure & Excitement

Positive vehicles for fulfilling this need include going to sporting events and movies, as well as playing sports, games, dancing and traveling. Negative vehicles include taking drugs or alcohol, and doing criminal acts. Criminals get a tremendous sense of excitement and challenge planning and pulling off a burglary or robbery.

How do you get this sense of variety in your life? Which relationships, activities and areas

of your work do you find stimulating? What are some of the good vehicles, what are some of the not so good vehicles:

There may be relationships and activities which fulfill both your need for certainty and uncertainty. Something you do well, such as, doing a kinesiology balance may give you lots of certainty and comfort, as well as variety and challenge.

What do you do when you are in a relationship where you are not getting your variety needs met? Some people find that variety and challenge in their work. Others find another person to provide them with excitement. They may even cheat on their partner even if it is against their morals. People will violate their values to meet their needs. A positive approach would be to take on the challenge with your partner to create excitement and passion in your relationship.

Some people get a new job, a new relationship or a new place to live to get variety. The problem with these are they often don't last. You can get variety by having a stimulating conversation, or by taking on a brand new challenge which will make you grow. You can learn something new.

You can change your focus and start to notice the little things that make something or someone exciting and different. There is variety in your job, your living space and your relationship. You just have to look for it.

Experience Significance

The Third Human Need is to experience significance. This is the sense of being needed and feeling important. This is an emotional need which drives you.

A law in nature is: Everything must serve a purpose. This law results in the need to have meaning in our life and a sense of purpose. It is also the feeling of being unique and standing

out from the crowd, being recognized as a leader or one who makes a valuable contribution.

A negative way to meet this need is to tear everybody else down. By putting others down, people with low self esteem feel better about themselves. Violence is another way some people resort to fulfilling this need. Others meet their need for significance through adopting a negative identity, acquiring a disease or a psychological disorder such as being manic depressive or obsessive compulsive. Some people get ill to gain a sense of significance. No one was paying attention to them and no one made them feel important or needed. Once they are ill, everyone comes to spend time with them. Suddenly they become important.

Some positive ways to gain significance are learning a skill or acquiring knowledge. Getting a degree and having letters after your name can provide a sense of significance. Having children can give you a feeling of importance. They fulfill a need to be needed. By achieving something important, you feel a sense of purpose, a sense of significance. You can get a sense of uniqueness by your style, by the way you dress or speak or the way you do things.

What are the things you do to make yourself feel significant or unique or needed? In what relationships do you feel needed and important? What have you achieved that makes you stand out?

We Need to Feel Connected to Others

If you are so busy being unique, it separates you from other people. When you are totally significant you are totally different, which violates the *Fourth Human Need: The need to feel connection and love*. Feeling part of a group, family or team and really connecting with people can fulfill this need.

We can feel this sense of connection through our relationships with friends, family, children and lovers. Sexuality is a tremendous experience of total connection. Spirituality, the sense of connection with our creator, is one of the ultimate connections of love. Being in nature and feeling totally connected to your surroundings, to God or to yourself can fulfill this need.

Being connected to and loving yourself is very important for meeting this need. Pets can provide love and connection. Studies have shown that elderly people improved in health when they got a pet. Being a member of a team, club or association can give you a sense of connection.

How do you get this need met? Include relationships, activities and beliefs:

If you have too much love and connection and not enough uniqueness and significance, you can lose your own identity. Just like certainty and uncertainty, fulfilling your needs for significance and connection should be in balance to achieve greatest health and happiness.

Meet All Four Needs Simultaneously

These first four needs are the fundamental needs. Some activities can help you meet all four simultaneously, such as joining a club, organization, church, or community. A relationship can also meet all four needs. If you meet your first four needs through destructive means it will not allow you to meet the last two human needs, which are primary and essential to become totally fulfilled.

The Need to Grow

Our Fifth Human Need is: growth. It drives you to expand yourself, your awareness and to learn and develop new skills, distinctions and positive attitudes.

We are not happy unless we are growing as people. Ideally our relationships provide growth. Reading, going to seminars, listening to cassette tapes or watching educational videos or TV can fulfill this need. Have a high standard for yourself and keep raising the bar to go to greater heights.

List the things in your life that keep you growing and expanding:

We Need to Contribute to Life

Contribution is the Sixth Human Need: to strive to make a difference for others. This involves doing something, not because you will gain from it, but because it is right. It is selfless service. Many people meet this need by doing volunteer work. Being in a helping relationship can fulfill this need if you are focused on giving to others without concern for what you will get back.

List ways you fulfill this need.

Evaluate Your Needs and Actions

Whatever human beings do, they have a reason. They believe at some level their behavior will meet one of their needs. Subconsciously, our brain learns many ways to meet our needs. Some are destructive, some are neutral and some are very positive. Look back over your list and circle the positive ones which you want to spend more time focusing on. Put an X in front of destructive or neutral ones you wish to eliminate.

Think of each of your needs on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 is total fulfillment. Rate each vehicle on the scale and put its score next to it. If you have a vehicle, such as smoking which feels good but is not good for you and you want to quit, find another healthy vehicle which will give you at least that level of fulfillment, otherwise you are going to go back to the old habit.

I noticed that I was wasting a lot of time watching TV. When I did the above assessment it scored low on meeting my needs. I decided to cancel my cable service and started reading instead of watching TV. That simple change made a dramatic difference in the quality of my life. When I wanted to watch the NBA basketball championship games I went to the gym and watched the games while I ran on the treadmill. This way I got to enjoy the excitement of the games, meeting the second human need. Since I ran for over two hours during each game, I gained more certainty (the first human need) that I would do well in the upcoming NY Marathon. I also felt connection (the fourth human need) with other people I met at the gym and growth (the fifth human need) as I experienced greater aerobic fitness and health.

Now look over your list and see which human needs are not being met to the level you would like. You have the ability within yourself to feel completely fulfilled in all six categories in any situation or relationship, regardless of how others respond to you. You just have to ask yourself these questions:

“What do I need to believe/perceive or appreciate about this situation in order to feel more fulfilled in this category right now?”

“What do I need to do in order to feel more fulfilled in this category right now?”

Thus by changing your perception or by changing your approach you can experience more fulfillment of each of your needs.

Give What You Wish to Receive

One way to change your approach and more completely fulfill your needs is to give that which you wish to receive. If you make someone else feel needed, important, and special they will usually make you feel needed, important and special. If you make someone

else feel tremendous love and connection, more than likely you will get that back.

Now look for an activity which you absolutely love to do. Write down on the 0 - 10 scale to what level it meets your human needs:

Activity	Certainty	Uncertainty
Significance	Connection	Growth
Contribution		

Now write down an activity which you do not like to do but you have to and rate it on the same 0 - 10 scale.

Activity	Certainty	Uncertainty
Significance	Connection	Growth
Contribution		

You will probably notice that the scores on the first activity are all close to 10, while the activity you'd prefer to avoid gets very low scores.

Now think of ways you can change how you perceive this activity or ways you can do this activity differently.

I noticed that walking my dogs was becoming routine and boring. I had to do it, but I was not enjoying it as much as I used to. My perception had become: "I am too busy for this and it is taking me from important things I need to do." I changed my perception to "Great, now I get a break from my work to have fun being with my good buddies."

I changed my procedure as well. I varied where I walked them, sometimes going to the beach and other times going to the park where in both places I get to notice the beauty of nature. To experience more variety, sometimes I play my harmonica while walking with them and other times I listen to educational tapes on my walkman. This helped me grow by learning more and becoming more practiced on my instrument. When I came across other people, I started spending more time connecting with

them. I have made many friends in the course of my dog walks. I have also had more fun playing with my dogs and really feel closer to them.

Take a situation or relationship in which you wish to experience greater fulfillment of your six human needs and look at how you can change you perception and/or your approach:
Old perception:

New perception:

New approach:

Demand Excellence in Your Performance

Whenever someone is at peak performance and peak health, it is because their *Six Human Needs are being met: they are driven to excel and be their best*. Take on the challenge to create a life which meets all six of your needs and live a life of abundant health and happiness.

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