



Exercise: Understanding Basic Human Needs

As humans, we all have a number of core, basic needs (Rosenberg, 2004). We experience positive emotions when our basic needs are being met, and experience negative emotions when our needs are not being met. The fulfillment of your basic human needs is critical for your overall life satisfaction and can strongly impact your work performance and how you interact with others.

Review the list of needs below and think about your current life and work situation. Put a plus sign (+) next to needs you feel are currently being met to your satisfaction, and a minus sign (-) next to those that are not currently being met.

Work-Specific Needs

- A level of enjoyment while working
- A sense of belonging and community
- A sense of purpose and meaning in the work that one does
- Appreciation
- Being able to discuss the loss of workers
- Being able to modify your work environment to optimize your productivity
- Being recognized and celebrated for success and effort at work
- Ensuring that your roles and activities at work do not violate your personal integrity
- Fairness and equity in decision-making
- Having a level of choosing *how* you will do your job (not necessarily what or when)
- Physically safe and healthy work environment
- Psychologically safe and healthy work environment
- Respect
- Support

General Human Needs

Acknowledgment & Recognition

- Acknowledging losses (of dreams, health, loved ones)
- Celebrating the creation of life and dreams fulfilled

Autonomy

- Choosing your dreams, goals and values
- Choosing plans for fulfilling your dreams, goals and values

Integrity

- Authenticity
- Creativity
- Meaning
- Self-worth



Interdependence

- Acceptance
- Appreciation
- Closeness
- Community
- Consideration
- Emotional safety
- Empathy
- Honesty
- Love
- Reassurance
- Respect
- Support
- Trust
- Understanding

Physical Nurturance

- Clean environment
- Healthy food
- Movement, exercise
- Protection from life-threatening life illnesses/threats
- Rest
- Sexual expression
- Shelter
- Touch
- Water

Play

- Fun
- Laughter

Spiritual Communion

- Beauty
- Harmony
- Inspiration
- Order
- Peace



Some of the emotions/states we may experience when our needs are *fulfilled* include:

Amazed	Fulfilled	Joyous	Stimulated
Comfortable	Glad	Moved	Surprised
Confident	Hopeful	Optimistic	Thankful
Eager	Inspired	Proud	Touched
Energetic	Intrigued	Relieved	Trustful

(Rosenberg, 2004, p. 23)

Some of the emotions/states we may experience when our needs are *unfulfilled* include:

Angry	Discouraged	Hopeless	Overwhelmed
Annoyed	Distressed	Impatient	Puzzled
Concerned	Embarrassed	Irritated	Reluctant
Confused	Frustrated	Lonely	Sad
Disappointed	Helpless	Nervous	Uncomfortable

(Rosenberg, 2004, p. 23)

List up to three of your most important needs that are currently not fulfilled to your satisfaction in the workplace. Think about specific actions you can take to work toward ensuring these needs become fulfilled. An example appears in italics.

<i>Unfulfilled Need</i>	<i>Specific Actions I Can Take to Have this Need Fulfilled</i>
Support	- <i>Explain to the general manager that I could take on more important tasks if I had a part-time administrative assistant.</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	

Reference:

Rosenberg, M. B. (2004). *We Can Work It Out: Resolving Conflicts Peacefully and Powerfully*. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press.