

OUR FOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

As well as the need to survive, which we share with other creatures, human beings have four key psychological needs. We are always attempting to meet these psychological needs.

Belonging (Connection)

This can mean being with our spouse or partner, being part of a family, part of a workplace or a team or a nation. Examples of how we meet this need are: social events, forming a couple or family, phone calls, voluntary work, texting, writing letters or social networking.

Power (Efficacy)

This can mean a sense of achievement, being respected, winning, feeling worthwhile and being in command of ourselves or of situations. It can also mean dominating, bullying, controlling and exploiting other people.

Freedom (Autonomy)

This can mean making our own choices, having our own space, being autonomous. It can also mean anything from walking around the block on your own to sailing around the world!

Fun (Play)

This can mean pleasure, enjoyment, laughter, playfulness.

Each of us has these four psychological needs. ***But usually one need is more important than the others.*** Which need this is can vary from person to person.

For instance, one person will be very much into ***Belonging*** and may go to great efforts to "keep the peace" or may organise lots of social events. A person mainly into ***Power*** may take on a leadership role, could be seen as bossy, or may push themselves very hard to achieve something. Someone with a very strong ***Freedom*** need may prefer to work alone, may need to spend lots of time on their own and may find close relationships quite constraining. If your primary need is for ***Fun*** you may find it hard to knuckle down to an unexciting work routine and you may enjoy learning new things (playing and learning are closely linked in children).

But remember *we all have all four needs.* While one of these needs may be stronger in you than the others, you still have all four. So although you may have, for instance, a strong Freedom need, the loss of important relationships will upset you because you also have a Belonging need. If Power is important to you but you are working sixteen hours a day to achieve, you are likely to feel frustrated because your needs for Fun, Freedom and Belonging are being frustrated.

So try to make room for meeting all four of your psychological needs - and when you're feeling very frustrated ask yourself which need is not being met. Then ask what you can do to meet it.

(Based on the work of Dr William Glasser, author of 'Choice Theory', 'Reality Therapy', and other books.)