



hunger
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The “Sea of Needs”

Our cultural and media messages “tell us” what we “need” this time of year: certain experiences, certain emotions or feelings, and material possessions. We **“should”** feel this or that emotion, enjoy these kinds events, and buy these sorts of things.

Our personal current family will have its needs, including our friends, spouses, partners, or children.

Our family of origin may also have its needs. At times, those needs are presented as demands, disappointments, expectations, frustrations, or anxieties.

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When we've had trouble identifying things like appetite, satiation, hunger, craving, feelings, emotions, or personal boundaries, we've likely struggled with identifying our needs. Ways this may present include:

- We may put others needs ahead of our own.
- We may be good at “need denying” behaviors.
- We may support our friends, work mates, even people who are learning from us, to create healthy ways to meet their needs. We support them to rest when tired, stop when done, take time off when sick, eat when hungry, and so on. Yet we may find this difficult to do for ourselves.
- We may reserve our needs for “later”. Yet, the postponement often doesn't end. Until we find ourselves in behaviors we would rather not be doing anymore, such as bingeing.

Let's look at some tools for
surfing this sea of needs.



Surfing the Sea of Needs

First choose which seas to surf. Unless you have excellent skills for stormy seas, it is important that you discern which seas you can surf.

Second develop your sea legs for when you do need to surf a bigger wave.

Third commit to YOUR WELL-BEING. Tend to YOUR NEEDS. Be PRO-ACTIVE, not reactive.



*First, Choose the Seas
That You Surf.*

1. Don't Set Yourself Up for a Tsunami:

- **Lessen intrusive, unnecessary waves:** limit your exposure to the stimulus of social media doom scrolling, TV commercials, internet, even Netflix & other programs that stir up feelings such as anxiety, envy, comparison, loneliness, self-criticism, not-good-enough, make-it-perfect, etc.

Media I can limit: _____

Amount of time I can scroll, before I am in doom mode: _____

Needs I am trying to meet when scrolling: _____



2. Choose Sensibly, with your senses in mind!

- **Consider the storms:** limit your exposure to shopping circumstances that are frenzied. There are countless sensory stimuli involved in shopping, much of it beyond our control. Having sensory overwhelm leads to fatigue, cravings, and less impulse control. Tend to your nervous system:
 - Go at off hours to smaller businesses.
 - Go with a plan in mind.
 - Make your own gifts.
 - Donate to a charity in the name of your family member or friend.
 - Get creative and you may have more fun, spend less money, and save your sanity.

Small businesses I could go to: _____

Charities I could donate to: _____



3. Develop Your Social Swimming Skills

- **Surf Towards the Shore:** limit your exposure to family members who are mis-attuned, rude, hurtful, demanding, or with whom you find yourself feeling unsafe, unsteady, uncertain. Choose family members with whom you can resonate, appreciate, and communicate.

Family Members I can be genuine with: _____

- **Consult Your Inner Life Guard:** limit your exposure to holiday events that threaten your recovery. Choose your holiday events wisely.

Holiday events I feel okay about: _____

Holiday events I feel unsure about: _____



*Second, get your sea legs
for when you do feel the
emotional waves.*

This is where we bring **MINDFULNESS** into our navigations. Mindfulness isn't merely paying attention. The practice of mindfulness develops our attention, intention, interoception, self-confidence, discernment, and inner leadership. This is happening as mindfulness trains our Neocortex (the Wise Mind) and calms the Limbic and Lizard brains (the impulsive, reactive survival parts of the brain).

Sea Legs **for Mindful Surfing:**

- If you do find yourself lost in or over exposed to social media, electronic stimulation, or numbing out with TV, observe what feelings are stirring in you.
- Make periodic efforts to mindfully feel your hips on the couch, your feet on the ground, your head on the pillow, whatever it is. Give your brain a **Present Moment GPS: Get Grounded, Present and Stable.**
- Mindfully notice your breathing, or your heart rate or thirst. Check in to see if you are fatigued or need to get up and move your body. Do something about what you notice!

Mindfulness is updating your neurological pathways!! It has a positive influence on your brain, and therefore also on your bio-chemistry, mind, body, and heart. A lot of mindless eating is in reaction to our bio-chemistry, not only our emotions.

Sea Legs for Mindful Surfing:

Keep
care of
your
senses.



- If you are shopping, and you start to feel symptoms of uneasiness, fatigue, overwhelm, anxiety, cravings, and so on, connect with these sensations in your body. Pause and breathe. Let your body know that you are paying attention and that you care.
- Grant yourself permission to stop. It's okay to stop! Take a break somewhere, even if it means sitting in your car to re-group.
- If you tend to push through, override your body, or disconnect until you find yourself bingeing later, set an alarm on your phone to remind you to take a mindfulness break.

Sea Legs **for Mindful Surfing:**

- If you go to a gathering or holiday event, take your mindfulness tools with you. Be both a mindful observer and a participant. Observe your senses, your breath, and the pace of your mind. Practice slowing down your breathing when you need to feel more grounded.
- If you are engaging with someone and you get triggered, become mindful of your tangible environment, your feet on the ground, or your heart rate. These are tactical methods to engage your neocortex (your Wise Mind, your inner chaperone).
- Once you have yourself a bit more on your radar screen, decide to end a connection that you can't be safe in. You'll feel more prepared if you have an action plan for these situations ahead of time.

Ideas for what I can say to end a conversation or exchange with tact and grace:



*Third, commit to your
well-being.
Tend to your needs.*

We must include our body.

Your body has foundational needs for well-being. All of the systems of your body interact with each other and with your brain. Your moods, behaviors, and emotions are intertwined. When you nourish your best physiological state and cherish your vitality, you're more likely to balance your mind and heart too.

Doing and Not Doing:

- **Make a list of two things you could do more of to support your physiological well-being. (These should be reasonable, do-able, nourishing things that you can commit to daily. Not unrealistic things like “lose 20 pounds by Friday.” Or “starve myself until the party.”)**
 - **le. raise my heart rate 20 minutes a day**
 - **le. eat seasonal cooked vegetables**
 - **le. drink hot water with lemon**
 - **le. optimal bed time**
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- **Make a list of two things you could do less of that would support your well-being.**
 - **le. spend less time on computer, stimulated by scrolling, or connected to electronic devices**
 - **le. spend less mental energy on self-critical thoughts**
 - **le. eat less sugar**
 - **le. spend less energy overriding personal needs**
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- Now, ask yourself, about the second set of items, “What needs are getting met by these behaviors or activities.?”
- You might have to guess. When you can guess at what these needs are, you may be able to validate them and find healthier ways to meet them.

The Sea Of Needs:*

- From Non-Violent Communication author Marshall Rosenberg

Connection

Acceptance
Affection
Clarity
Communication
Confirmation
Compassion
Intimacy
Understanding Authenticity
Love

Autonomy

Choice Space
Spontaneity

Peace

Beauty
Ease
Harmony
Order
Wholeness

Interconnection

Belonging
Consideration
Community
Cooperation
Dignity
Mutuality
Support
Trust

Meaning

Contribution
Creativity
Hope
Inspiration
Purpose

Celebration

Joy
Mourning
Play

Competence

Effectiveness
Efficiency
Growth
Learning
Power

Honesty

Authenticity
Integrity

Basic Survival

Shelter
Food & Water
Rest
Safety
Security
Touch

Here are some examples:

- **BEHAVIOR:** Computer time.
- **MY NARRATIVE ABOUT THIS:** I have to get this work done (even if I get headaches or don't have time for myself)
- **POSSIBLE NEEDS BEING MET:** seems to meet my needs for productivity, effectiveness, competency, purpose.
- **WISDOM ABOUT THIS:** I know a healthy brain functions better – more effectively, competently, and efficiently.
- **BETTER WAY:** I can lessen my computer time if I work smarter when I am on the computer. I would be able to do this better if I exercise (raised heart rate), balance my blood sugar, or practice a restorative yoga pose.

Possible Outcomes!

Feel more connected with yourself. Be less exhausted. Learn to revive yourself more often. Lose less time on technology. Fewer aches and pains in the body.

Reduce food cravings, improve sleep, and make healthier choices more naturally. Reduce cortisol, improve digestion and metabolism.

- **BEHAVIOR:** Overworking into resentment.
- **MY NARRATIVE ABOUT THIS:** Teamwork is important because I don't want people to feel let down by me. My department is relying on me and while that makes me anxious, letting them down makes me more anxious.
- **POSSIBLE NEEDS BEING MET:** collaboration, community, order, contribution, mutuality.
- **WISDOM ABOUT THIS:** Teamwork doesn't mean we can't have boundaries. Setting boundaries values my energy and time and provides realistic timelines or agreements to others.
- **BETTER WAY:** I can establish a healthy start and end time to my work day. I can set a timer for taking breaks. Those breaks can include walking outdoors or stretching my body to reconnect with myself.

Possible Outcomes!

Feel more connected with yourself and with others. Be less resentful and more authentic. Increase happy mood neurotransmitters. Stay connected with your body throughout the day. Be less depleted after work!

Reduce food cravings, improve sleep, and make healthier choices more naturally. Reduce cortisol, improve digestion and metabolism.



Behavior:

Possible Needs I am trying to meet:

Other ways to meet those needs:
