

# Navigating Your Core Needs

## 10 Tips for Sustainable Energy and Satisfaction in Your Life and Work

### 1. The Top Ten and Core Needs Make the Invisible Visible

Your Top Ten and Core Needs panels provide you with insight about the nature of experiences that give you positive energies. Your list of Core Needs gives the important criteria for you to feel engaged, happy, satisfied, and productive.

### 2. Think of Them as “Gas Tanks”

Your Core Needs panel represents essential experiences you need in your work and life. They are the personal ‘gas tanks’ that power you. While few people have all of their Core Needs fulfilled 100% all the time, you must have some “gas” in each of the tanks for you to operate. One “empty tank” will negatively impact your mood and energy.

### 3. Believe in Meeting Your Core Needs

Examine your beliefs about getting your own needs met. Do you carry positive beliefs that support you in meeting your needs? Thoughts such as “I deserve it” or “I can do anything I put my mind to” lend to positive support.

Might you hold some beliefs that make getting your needs met more challenging, such as, “No one gets everything they want” or “It is selfish to think of my own needs?” These may be hidden in the background and formed long ago. Intentionally use the beliefs that work and challenge the ones that do not.

### 4. Make Decisions Based on Your Core Needs

Are you wrestling with a decision? Unable to decide about something? Use your Core Needs list as a checklist to evaluate almost every decision. Ask yourself, “If I choose this option, how well will each of the Core Needs be met?” If the answer is “Not very well” expect to be drained by that option. If you still elect that choice, have New Activities ready to “fill up your tanks.”

### 5. Core Needs Make You Distinctive, Not Needy

You may have six or seven Core Needs. Or, you may have 15 or 20. It is just your personal makeup. The combination of your Core Needs reflects the complexity of being human. Some Core Needs may seem in opposition to one another. You may think, “Gosh, I’m so needy!” Remember, “needy” is just another person’s opinion of your Core Needs. Relax, you are distinctive!

### 6. Pinpoint Why Sometimes You May Not Be Feeling So Awesome

On days where you feel anxious, upset, or just “not yourself,” turn to your Core Needs list. Ask yourself, “In this moment, which of my Core Needs are not being met.” Pinpoint the source of your feelings and then work intentionally to turn them around (hint – use New Activities).

### 7. Shift Your Energy with New Activities

You can actively keep your energy positive and flowing by using New Activities. A New Activity is anything you do, work or non-work, that replicates the same feeling you got from your Top Ten item. The activity can be something very different than the original. Your internal system does not distinguish whether an activity is from your work or non-work life. It just experiences that positive energy.

## 8. Use Inquiry to Learn and Advocate

Ask good probing questions to uncover how well your needs will be met in a situation – with your manager, your colleagues, your team, and your friends. Be a detective. Asking a great question like “What opportunities are there to use new and different approaches?” will reveal whether your needs for creativity and innovation will be welcomed or stifled. Be prepared with a list of probing questions.

## 9. Be Confident in Your Career Direction

As you approach your next career steps, determine if your Core Needs will be met in your next step on three levels: organization (or team), role and manager. You need all three – two out of three won’t work. If you are thinking about changing roles, organizations or even fields, do your due diligence. Plan questions, do informational interviews and probe for details that will honor your Core Needs. Even if a career opportunity is brand new for you, you can feel confident that it will work if it aligns on all three levels.

## 10. Keep Exploring

As time progresses, you may find that the way you met a certain Core Need does not seem to fill the bill any more. Your Core Need for freedom and independence does not go away when you start a family. You will need to find a different way to get those needs met than when you were on your own. Keep challenging and evolving your strategies to maintain your energy and excitement throughout your life.



## Sample Core Needs

**Question: “What Need or Needs Were Being Filled by the Top Ten/Why Important Item?”**

**Note: This list contains example Core Needs. It is not an exhaustive list. Use your own words.**

Acceptance  
Accomplishment  
Acknowledgement  
Adventure  
Affirmation

Balance  
Being in Nature  
Big Picture

Celebration  
Challenge  
Collaboration  
Community  
Competition  
Completion/Closure  
Connection  
Contribution  
Creativity

Demonstrated Results  
Doing Important Work  
Down Time

Effectiveness  
Efficiency  
Excitement  
Exposure

Fairness  
Feeling at Home  
Freedom  
Fulfilling My Purpose  
Fun

Giving  
Giving Value

Helping Others

Independence  
Intellectual Stimulation

Leading  
Learning and Growth

Making a Difference  
Mentoring

New Experiences

Opportunities

Part of Something Bigger  
Partnership  
Physical Challenge  
Play  
Positive Attitude  
Possibilities

Recognition  
Relax  
Responsibility  
Reward

Sense of Pride  
Shared Experiences  
Spiritual Connection  
Stretching

Tangible Outcomes  
Teamwork  
Travel

Using My Experience

Variety/Change

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