

# The Five Basic Needs



## The Five Basic Needs

According to Choice Theory, there are five **Basic Needs**:

- **Survival**
- **Love & Belonging**
- **Power**
- **Freedom**
- **Fun**

Everybody has needs that fall into these five areas, but to differing degrees.

The relative strength of each need is **inherent to your unique personality and temperament** and your ability to meet them can change depending upon your life's circumstances.



## Survival

The first need is **Survival**. Everyone seeks to meet this need by making sure they have food to eat and a place to stay. Other ways to meet the need for Survival involve things such as health and reproductive sex for survival of the species.

The need for Survival also includes seeking to **feel safe and secure**.

At first you may not think you have much of a need for Survival since you probably have food to eat, a place to live and are in fairly good health.

But, how likely are you to **take risks** – either with your physical or emotional safety or with your finances?



## Survival

If you have a high Survival need, you don't take many risks. You tend to think about how what you're doing now will affect your future self.

Your **motivation** for exercising and saving money would be so that you could **enjoy your later years**.

If you have a low need for Survival, you generally **live in the moment**. You tend to be more of a spender than a saver and become **energized** when you **take risks**.



## Love & Belonging

The second need is **Love & Belonging**. Everyone, to some degree, has a need for **intimacy** and to be **connected** with other people.

There is also the need to feel like you **belong**, which is why people join various organizations.

If you have a high need for Love & Belonging, you'll seek out **friendships** because you enjoy doing things with other people.

You may also have a strong desire to **settle down** with a life partner. You would also tend to be **uncomfortable with conflict**.



## Love & Belonging

You might think having a strong need for Love & Belonging has no down side. But, how likely are you to bring up an issue that is bothering you with a family member?

**Conflict can feel dangerous** in a relationship to those with a high need in this category.

If you have a low need for Love & Belonging, you **still have a need for people** in your life, but you may prefer to stay home and read a good book rather than going out with friends.

You would feel relatively comfortable asking others to do things for you and not require as much **emotional reassurance** in your relationships.



## Power

The third need is **Power**. Everyone to a degree has a need to feel competent, successful and significant.

Some have a strong need to feel **recognized for achievement** or a desire to “win.” For others, there is a drive to **make an impact** or have influence over others.

There are healthy and unhealthy ways to meet this need for Power. Choice Theory is helpful in identifying ways of **satisfying this need without controlling**, intimidating or manipulating others.



## Power

If you have a high need for Power, some characteristics are that you like to be right, to be **competent**, to be **respected** and to have **influence**.

If you have a low need for Power, you may not care too much for recognition and are generally **content working** as a team member or **behind the scenes** rather than leading an effort.

Choice Theory teaches you to **refrain** from getting any of your Basic Needs met **at the expense of others**. This is especially important in the case of your need for Power.





## Power

There may have been times when you filled the need for Power by exerting **power over** others.

Other options to satisfy this need would be to find things to do **with others** or **within yourself** that will work just as well, if not better.

Remember those relationship habits you learned in the last section?

How could you **utilize the Connecting Habits** to convert your need for Power *over* others into something that would be **beneficial for everyone**?



## Freedom

The fourth need is **Freedom**. Everyone has a basic need to make their own choices and **direct the course** of their own lives. A need for Freedom is one of the main reasons we **push back** against external control by others.

Those with a strong need for Freedom like to do things **their own way**, question the status quo and dream up **innovations** and **possibilities** that others may find hard to understand or accept.

A strong Freedom need can also be expressed by a desire to spend time away from others or behave in **unconventional** ways. People with a high need can come across as disruptive or self-centered because they seem to **pursue their own vision** rather than that of others.



## Freedom

People with a low need for Freedom are comfortable with the **reliability** of existing systems and standards.

They don't have much of a desire to forge new rules or innovations. They are happy with the way things are and **resist change**.

Think about your need for Freedom. Do you feel the urge to do things in a way that is satisfying to you, even if your choices might be unconventional?



## Fun

The fifth need is **Fun**. Everyone finds their own way to get this need filled. There are many ways to have fun and **people play all their lives**. Fun is often accompanied by **laughter**. The things you do to get this need met will vary depending upon your personality and the strength of your other needs.

Many people think about getting their need for Fun met by enjoying their **favorite activities**, going to **parties** and engaging in **group activities** or **sports**.

Other preferences may include **quiet fun**. Simply **reading a book, working a puzzle, fishing** or just sitting around **talking with friends and family** may meet the need for fun.



## Fun

Dr. Glasser identified learning as another way to meet your need for Fun. He considered fun as the **reward for learning**. He also considered that when couples learn about each other, they are meeting their need for Fun.

Considering the various ways to have fun, someone with a high need for Fun would often be laughing, engaging in quiet leisure activities or a voracious learner.

How strong do you consider your need is for Fun? Expand beyond the conventional definition that fun means engaging in activities with others. Do you enjoy learning or spending time doing quiet activities?



Every person has the **task of satisfying all five personal Basic Needs**. While the strength of your personal needs remains **consistent** throughout your life, your **ability to meet them may vary** with your circumstances. You may find different needs seem more or less important at different stages of your life.

Understanding which of the Basic Needs are most important to you, gives you a **place to begin** in finding something that will help you get through stressful times.

Staying aware of how well these needs are met will take you well on the road to living a **satisfying life**.

Complete the exercise on the next few pages to determine the relative strengths of your Basic Needs.

# Exercise 3: Basic Needs Assessment



## Exercise 3: Basic Needs Assessment

On the following pages, rate each statement with your first thought about how much it resembles you. Circle the appropriate number with one being least like you and five being most like you. Then, add up the circled numbers to get your total score for each of the Basic Needs.





Survival	Rating Scale					Score
I always wear a seat belt when provided.	1	2	3	4	5	
I save rather than spend.	1	2	3	4	5	
I take very few risks.	1	2	3	4	5	
I am wary of new things, ideas and people.	1	2	3	4	5	
Exercise is important in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	
I dislike change of any sort.	1	2	3	4	5	
I eat well for good health.	1	2	3	4	5	
I must feel safe at all times.	1	2	3	4	5	
Maintaining my health is a priority for me.	1	2	3	4	5	
Having money to pay bills is a concern for me.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Total Score					



Love & Belonging	Rating Scale					Score
I enjoy time spent with other people.	1	2	3	4	5	
I participate in various groups.	1	2	3	4	5	
I dislike conflict.	1	2	3	4	5	
Relationships are important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	
I am mostly comfortable around people whom I know.	1	2	3	4	5	
I am happy when working with others as part of a team.	1	2	3	4	5	
I love romance and being intimate with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	
It is important for me to show others I care for them.	1	2	3	4	5	
Being accepted by others is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	
I often turn to others for support.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Total Score					



Power	Rating Scale					Score
I have numerous skills and abilities.	1	2	3	4	5	
I often seek to do my best in what I do.	1	2	3	4	5	
I am competitive.	1	2	3	4	5	
I like being recognized for my accomplishments.	1	2	3	4	5	
I demand respect from those around me.	1	2	3	4	5	
Leaving a legacy is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	
I need to be right most of the times.	1	2	3	4	5	
I like being in control.	1	2	3	4	5	
Being the center of attention feels wonderful.	1	2	3	4	5	
I feel important and powerful when I have expensive things.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Total Score					



Freedom	Rating Scale					Score
I frequently question the rules.	1	2	3	4	5	
I become frustrated when I believe I don't have choices.	1	2	3	4	5	
I dislike being told what to do.	1	2	3	4	5	
I enjoy a lot of time to myself.	1	2	3	4	5	
I must do things my own way.	1	2	3	4	5	
I am creative.	1	2	3	4	5	
I like doing things on a moment's notice.	1	2	3	4	5	
Being independent is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	
I enjoy change.	1	2	3	4	5	
I get frustrated when I feel restricted.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Total Score					



Fun	Rating Scale					Score
I laugh often.	1	2	3	4	5	
There are many hobbies I enjoy.	1	2	3	4	5	
Learning something new is enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5	
Even when times are serious, I try to do fun things.	1	2	3	4	5	
I can turn drudgery into fun.	1	2	3	4	5	
Making other people laugh is my mission in life.	1	2	3	4	5	
I can make fun out of anything.	1	2	3	4	5	
I am playful.	1	2	3	4	5	
I am able to laugh at myself.	1	2	3	4	5	
Enjoying things and people are important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Total Score					



Add up the numbers you circled for each of the Basic Needs. In which of the needs did you score the highest? Were there any surprises?

Note that this assessment has not been scientifically validated. It merely gives you an idea of potential characteristics for people with high needs in each of these areas.

People act out on these needs in various ways and the items listed here include just some of those possibilities. What this means is that the actions you normally take or your general thoughts may not have been included in this assessment. As a result, that specific need may be stronger than what was reported here.

The Basic Needs overlap and there are many different ways to get them met. The important thing to note is what activities/thoughts help give you a feeling of comfort and reduced tension, no matter in which category they fall.