



# Universal Human Needs Exercise

By Nancy A. Meyer, M.A.

**Purpose.** The purpose of this *WeMentor Universal Human Needs Exercise* is to expand ‘relational literacy’ and facilitate your ability to nurture resilient relationships. We always begin with a self-focus.

Asserting self-leadership positions us to increase our influence with others because we operate from a place of integrity, a knowingness about ourselves. This comes from learning how to meet your needs consistently. Knowing how to meet our needs and enjoy the feelings accompanying those met needs, like being affectionate, engaged, confident, grateful, and refreshed, incentivizes us to regularly meet those needs. And we can readily identify feelings like fear, annoyance, sadness, confusion, anger, and anxiousness that surface when needs go unmet. Knowing this empowers us to regularly assert meeting our needs because we like and trust how we feel.

Self-knowledge releases the propensity to meet our needs unconsciously or through competitive behaviors. Our emotional safety increases, and we take risks to nurture healthy relating. **Over time**, and with **practice**, expressing healthy ways of meeting our needs strengthens our connections. I emphasize ‘over time and practice’ because naming your feelings and identifying which needs are being met and which aren’t takes conscious effort and awareness.

From self-awareness and a place of integrity, others’ needs can be noticed and met. Our proficiency as a parent and leader can be expanded as we accurately encourage others to meet their needs. We become allies for one another and express ourselves with ease. We co-create a more profound connection by initiating heart/hard conversations.

A sign that change is upon us is when the equilibrium gets off-kilter. Our philosophy is to hang in there, no matter what, and stay curious about what we can learn about ourselves and each other. Not easy, but necessary in healthy relating, promoting resiliency, and living harmoniously with others. This exercise has helped Matthew (my husband), Olivia (our daughter), and I stay connected while figuring out our strong feelings, especially when our connection with each other is challenged/disrupted. Hear our two podcast conversations about this. Go to [wementor.com](http://wementor.com) and type in the search area, Olivia Foli.

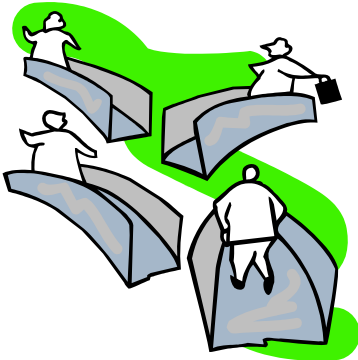
“**Relational literacy** is the ability to understand and express healthy ways of relating: as social groups, as individuals, to animals and the environment, and even to ourselves. Our errors are our teachers; they guide us toward greater proficiency and greater awareness, says psychologist, international speaker, and bestselling author of six books, Melanie Joy, Ph.D. In her book, *Getting Relationships Right: How to Build Resilience and Thrive in Life, Love, and Work*, Melanie writes, “what matters most in this process is how we relate to our mistakes. Even a slight increase in relational literacy can lead to significant improvement.” This exercise is a step in the right relational direction.

**How to complete this exercise.** Allow yourself about 20-minutes. Identify how you feel by using the WeMentor Self-Awareness Mentoring Journal on the next page. Then, complete the following three parts of this exercise. Appreciate what you learn and use what you learn to take charge of who you next become!

# WeMentor Self-Awareness Mentoring Journal

DATE:

**Directions:** Circle how you feel, as many feelings as you feel, right now. Your emotions and feelings are *not* who you are. Feelings are connected to what you are thinking about. This tool brings you into the present moment. You have permission to name and acknowledge your feelings. Express yourself.



**Emotions of Inner Peace** - Expand thoughts and increase experiences that engage and amplify these feelings:

Validated	Compassionate	Receptive
Aware	Mentally Fluid & Clear	Realistic
Empathic	Powerful	Grounded
Curious	Trust Higher Power	Optimistic
Connected	Observant	Happy
Respectful	Vigor	Kind
Generous in Spirit	Thrilled	Enthusiastic
Joyful	Emotionally Clear & Current	Open Heart/Vulnerable

**Emotions of Internal Challenge and Growth** - Opportunities to shift your perspective and attract more of what you need to strengthen who you are (learn & grow).

Confused	Discontent	Anticipatory	Mentally Unclear	Challenged
Energy Surge	Overwhelmed	Courageous	Action Oriented	Determined
Uncomfortable	Invested	Insecure	Open, or Receptive	Distracted
Over Committed	Fearful	Pressure	Contemplative	Exhausted
Striving for Clarity	Uncertain	Emotionally Cleansing	Embracing Resistance	Vulnerable

**Emotions Signaling Inner Hurt** - Healing, forgiveness, and reconnection are needed.

Angry	Resentful	Unforgiving	Humiliated	Guilt
Lonely	Disappointed	Controlling	Unresolved	Misunderstood
Sad, Tearful	Manipulated	Mistrusting	Hopeless	Disconnected
Disillusioned	Wounded	Physical Pain	Weighted Down	Inadequate

**Emotions Signaling You to Stop** - Figure out what is going on (Shame?), respond constructively.

Revengeful	Exhausted	Belligerent	Numb	Unhappy
Fixing Others	Low Energy	Discouraged	Rage	Irritable
Impatient	Impulsive	Powerless	Irresponsible	Out of Control
Malicious	Vindictive	Annoyed	Agitated	Stuck In A Rut
Overly Responsible	Irrational	Suicidal	Over Extended	Underwhelmed

What have you become aware of?

You are now grounded and ready to learn the universal human needs and feelings list.

# List of Universal Human Needs and Feelings

**Self-Leadership Focus:** understand and take charge of meeting your needs while encouraging others to do the same. We are social beings, so many of our universal human needs are met by others.

**Directions:** Highlight or circle the needs being met regularly in Table 1.

CONNECTION	PHYSICAL WELL-BEING	AUTONOMY
Acceptance	Air	Choice
Affection	Food	Freedom
Appreciation/Admiration	Movement/Exercise	Independence
Belonging	Rest/Sleep	Space
Cooperation	Sexual Fulfillment/Expression	Spontaneity
Open Communication	Safety	
Closeness	Shelter	MEANING
Community	Touch	Awareness
Companionship	Water	Celebration of Life
Compassion		Challenge
Consideration	HONESTY	Clarity
Consistency	Authenticity	Competence
Empathy	Integrity	Consciousness
Inclusion	Presence	Contribution
Intimacy/Closeness		Creativity
Love	PLAY	Discovery
Mutuality	Joy	Efficacy
Nurturing	Humor	Effectiveness
Respect/Self-Respect		Growth
Safety/Security	PEACE	Hope
	Beauty	Learning
Stability	Communion	Mourning
Support	Ease	Participation
To Know and Be Known	Equality	Purpose
To See and Be Seen	Harmony	Self-Expression
To Understand and Be Understood	Inspiration	Stimulation
Trust	Order	To Matter/Valued/Cherished
Warmth		Understanding

**Table 1.** The list of Universal Human Needs is from three sources. The Center for Nonviolent Communication. Jeanne Liedtka and Tim Ogilvie's research in *The Designing for Growth Field Book* (pp. 104-105, 2014). And Dr. Melanie Joy's book on *Getting Relationships Right: How to Build Resilience and Thrive in Life, Love, and Work* (pp.200-201, 2020).

Brené Brown discovered through her research in *Rising Strong* (2015) that people who have a strong sense of love and belonging have a deep sense of worthiness. Use this exercise to inspire a strong sense of love and belonging and cultivate a deep sense of worthiness.

# List of Universal Human Feelings: when your needs are met

**Directions:** Refer to the list on the previous page as you identify how you feel when you do and don't meet your seven universal human needs. Use Table 2 below to **highlight** or circle how you feel when your needs get met. Then, answer the questions underneath Table 2.

AFFECTIONATE	CONFIDENT	INSPIRED	PEACEFUL
Compassionate	Empowered	Amazed	Calm
Friendly	Open	Awed	Clear Headed
Loving	Proud	Wonder	Comfortable
Open Hearted	Safe		Centered
Sympathetic	Secure	<b>JOYFUL</b>	Content
Tender		Amused	Equanimous
Warm	<b>EXCITED</b>	Delighted	Fulfilled
	Amazed	Glad	Mellow
<b>ENGAGED</b>	Animated	Happy	Quiet
Absorbed	Ardent	Jubilant	Relaxed
Alert	Aroused	Pleased	Relieved
Curious	Astonished	Tickled	Satisfied
Engrossed	Dazzled		Serene
Enchanted	Eager	<b>EXHILARATED</b>	Still
Entranced	Energetic	Blissful	Tranquil
Fascinated	Enthusiastic	Ecstatic	Trusting
Interested	Giddy	Elated	
Intrigued	Invigorated	Enthralled	<b>REFRESHED</b>
Involved	Lively	Exuberant	Enlivened
Spellbound	Passionate	Radiant	Rejuvenated
Stimulated	Surprised	Rapturous	Renewed
	Vibrant	Thrilled	Rested
<b>HOPEFUL</b>			Restored
Expectant	<b>GRATEFUL</b>		Revived
Encouraged	Appreciative		
Optimistic	Moved		
	Thankful		
	Touched		

**Table 2.** The list of Universal Human Feelings is from three sources. The Center for Nonviolent Communication. Jeanne Liedtka and Tim Ogilvie's research in *The Designing for Growth Field Book* (pp. 104-105, 2014). And Dr. Melanie Joy's book on *Getting Relationships Right: How to Build Resilience and Thrive in Life, Love, and Work* (pp.200-201, 2020).

What are you discovering about your self-connection?

How does your self-connection influence how you connect with others? Does it disrupt your connections or strengthen them?

# List of Universal Human Feelings: when your needs go unmet

**Directions:** Think about how you feel when your needs go unmet regularly. Highlight or circle in Table 3 those feelings. Underneath Table 3, answer both questions.

AFRAID	AVERSION	DISQUIET	PAIN	TENSE
Apprehensive	Animosity	Agitated	Agony	Anxious
Dread	Appalled	Alarmed	Anguished	Cranky
Foreboding	Contempt	Discombobulated	Bereaved	Distressed
Frightened	Disgusted	Disconnected	Devastated	Edgy
Mistrustful	Dislike	Disturbed	Grief	Fidgety
Panicked	Hate	Perturbed	Heartbroken	Frazzled
Petrified	Horried	Rattled	Hurt	Irritable
Scared	Hostile	Restless	Lonely	Jittery
Suspicious	Repulsed	Shocked	Miserable	Nervous
Terrified		Startled	Regretful	Overwhelmed
Wary	<b>CONFUSED</b>	Surprised	Remorseful	Restless
Worried	Ambivalent	Troubled		Stressed Out
	Baffled	Turbulent	<b>SAD</b>	
<b>ANNOYED</b>	Bewildered	Turmoil	Depressed	<b>VULNERABLE</b>
Aggravated	Dazed	Uncomfortable	Dejected	*Emotionally Exposed
Dismayed	Hesitant	Uneasy	Despair	Fragile
Disgruntled	Lost	Unnerved	Despondent	Guarded
Displeased	Mystified	Unsettled	Disappointed	Helpless
Exasperated	Perplexed	Upset	Discouraged	Insecure
Frustrated	Puzzled		Disheartened	Leery
Impatient	Torn	<b>EMBARRASSED</b>	Forlorn	Reserved
Irritated		Ashamed	Gloomy	*Risk Taking
Irked	<b>DISCONNECTED</b>	Chagrined	Heavy Hearted	Sensitive
	Alienated	Flustered	Hopeless	Shaky
<b>ANGRY</b>	Aloof	Guilty	Melancholy	*Uncertainty
Enraged	Apathetic	Mortified	Unhappy	
Furious	Bored	Self-Conscious	Wretched	<b>YEARNING</b>
Incensed	Cold			Envious
Indignant	Detached	<b>FATIGUE</b>		Jealous
Irate	Distant	Beat		Longing
Livid	Distracted	Burnt Out		Nostalgic
Outraged	Indifferent	Depleted		Pining
Resentful	Numb	Exhausted		Wistful
	Removed	Lethargic		
	Uninterested	Listless		
	Withdrawn	Sleepy		
		Tired		
		Weary		
		Worn Out		

**Table 3.** The list of Universal Human Feelings is from four sources. The Center for Nonviolent Communication. Jeanne Liedtka and Tim Ogilvie's research in *The Designing for Growth Field Book* (pp. 104-105, 2014). Dr. Melanie Joy's book, *Getting Relationships Right: How to Build Resilience and Thrive in Life, Love, and Work* (pp.200-201, 2020). And, \*from Dr. Brené Brown's Story Rumble Glossary (2015).

1. What have you noticed about your overall feelings when your needs go unmet?
2. How can you integrate this knowledge into creating a home and work culture of love and belonging? Cultures where the fee to admission is to cultivate a deep sense of worthiness and healthy relating.