



Universal Human Needs Exercise

by Nancy Meyer, M.A.

Purpose

The *WeMentor Universal Human Needs Exercise* is designed to strengthen your ability to recognize, name, and communicate your needs; a foundational skill for resilience.

When we communicate and meet our needs, we build resilience not in isolation, but in relationship. As social beings, we grow stronger by practicing healthy ways of relating, what psychologist Melanie Joy, Ph.D., calls relational literacy.

Because our needs are universal, learning to identify your own helps you care for yourself and others. It deepens understanding, expands empathy, and increases your capacity to recognize and respond to the needs of others.

All meaningful change begins with self-awareness. Your brain constantly sends signals to help you manage energy and stay alive. Learning to respond to those signals—rather than ignoring them—is an act of self-leadership. And self-leadership grows through awareness.

Awareness grows through practice. Practice means noticing your feelings, communicating them clearly, and intentionally meeting your needs every day. This is how we sustain ourselves. This is how we stay alive.

How to Complete This Exercise

Set aside about 20 minutes. Begin by completing the *WeMentor Self-Awareness Journal* on the next page. Then move through the three parts of this exercise.

Approach the process with curiosity and appreciation. Notice what you learn. Use that knowledge to practice managing your body's energy budget with care and intention.

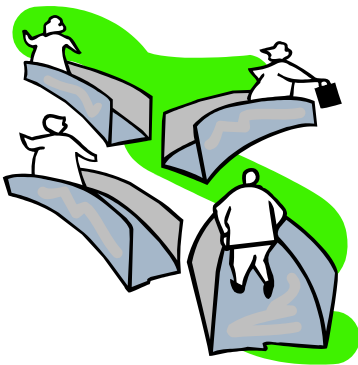
You'll be glad you did.



WeMentor Self-Awareness Journal

DATE: _____

Directions: This journal is designed to support the development of a calm, clear, and stable mind, enabling us to recognize our thoughts, emotions, and impulses. Understanding the storyline, sensations, and feeling tone of our feelings helps us maintain inner balance, allowing us to focus at work and be fully present in relationships. You have permission to feel deeply and think, act, and lead more clearly and effectively—circle how you feel, as many feelings as you are experiencing right now. Remember, thoughts and feelings are **not** who we are. Feelings are constructed in our brains. They give signals to help us meet our needs and stay alive.



Emotions of Inner Peace – expand thoughts and continue meeting your needs regularly. Increase experiences that engage and amplify these feelings.

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

Emotions of Internal Challenges and Growth – These feelings offer opportunities to shift our perspective and focus on our next step. Take risks to evolve, build courage and connection, and learn from our experiences.

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 – focus on healing, forgiveness, and reconnection with self and others.

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 – Find out what is happening within you (shame?), and 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?

What feelings do you feel most often?

You are now grounded and ready to complete the exercise of universal human needs and feelings.

List of Universal Human Needs and Feelings

Self-Leadership Focus: Identify what you feel and determine how best to meet your needs. We are social beings; many of our universal human needs are met by or with others. Use this tool to strengthen your connections and infuse more play and creativity into each day.

Directions: For Table 1: **Highlight** or circle the needs below each category you meet on a regular basis.

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
Stability	Beauty	Learning
Support	Communion	Mourning
To Know and Be Known	Ease	Participation
To See and Be Seen	Equality	Purpose
To Understand and Be Understood	Harmony	Self-Expression
Trust	Inspiration	Stimulation
Warmth	Order	To Matter/Valued/Cherished
		Understanding

Table 1

Note: Notice feelings of love and belonging to help you nurture a sense of worthiness. As you continue, you might find yourself not only cultivating big and little ideas but also embracing a beautiful transformation within yourself.

List of Universal Human Feelings: When your needs are met

Directions: Refer to the needs list on the previous page. 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 in this category are met. Circle as many feelings as you feel. Then answer the questions in Table 2 below.

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

Table 2

1. What category of feelings do you feel most often?
2. What are some engaging ways to boost your skills in how your body manages energy to keep you healthy and thriving?
3. In what ways, can you integrate this knowledge to create a home and work culture of love and belonging? A culture where the admission fee is to cultivate a deep sense of worthiness by practicing healthy ways of relating?

List of Universal Human Feelings: When your needs go unmet

Directions: Think about how you feel when your needs go unmet for long periods. Use Table 3 to **Highlight** or circle 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	CONFUSED	Surprised	Remorseful	Restless
Worried	Ambivalent	Troubled		Stressed Out
	Baffled	Turbulent	SAD	
ANNOYED	Bewildered	Turmoil	Depressed	VULNERABLE
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	EMBARRASSED	Forlorn	Reserved
Irritated		Ashamed	Gloomy	*Risk Taking
Irked	DISCONNECTED	Chagrined	Heavy Hearted	Sensitive
	Alienated	Flustered	Hopeless	Shaky
ANGRY	Aloof	Guilty	Melancholy	*Uncertainty
Enraged	Apathetic	Mortified	Unhappy	
Furious	Bored	Self-Conscious	Wretched	YEARNING
Incensed	Cold			Envious
Indignant	Detached	FATIGUE		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

1. Have you ever stopped to think about how you might be draining your body budget? What patterns have you noticed in the way you struggle to meet your own needs?
2. How can you do better and meet your universal human needs regularly?

Table References

Table 1

1. Jane Connor, Robert Wentworth, “Training in Collaboration in an Organizational Context,” The Center for Nonviolent Communication, 2012, <https://cnvc.org/learn/research/training-communication-in-organizational-context>.
2. Jeanne Liedtka, Tim Ogilvie, *The Designing for Growth Field Book* (New York: Columbia Business School Publishing, 2014), 104-105.
3. Melanie Joy, *Getting Relationships Right: How to Build Resilience and Thrive in Life, Love, and Work* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2020), 200-201.

Table 2

1. Jane Connor, Robert Wentworth, “Training in Collaboration in an Organizational Context,” The Center for Nonviolent Communication, 2012, <https://cnvc.org/learn/research/training-communication-in-organizational-context>.
2. Jeanne Liedtka, Tim Ogilvie, *The Designing for Growth Field Book* (New York: Columbia Business School Publishing, 2014), 104-105.
3. Melanie Joy, *Getting Relationships Right: How to Build Resilience and Thrive in Life, Love, and Work* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2020), 200-201.

Table 3

1. Jane Connor, Robert Wentworth, “Training in Collaboration in an Organizational Context,” The Center for Nonviolent Communication, 2012, <https://cnvc.org/learn/research/training-communication-in-organizational-context>.
2. Jeanne Liedtka, Tim Ogilvie, *The Designing for Growth Field Book* (New York: Columbia Business School Publishing, 2014), 104-105.
3. Melanie Joy, *Getting Relationships Right: How to Build Resilience and Thrive in Life, Love, and Work* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2020), 200-201.