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13

# Fundamental Psychological Needs.



## **Thirteen Fundamental Psychological Needs**

2020

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**13**

**Fundamental  
Psychological  
Needs.**

# Preface

“Human needs specify innate psychological nutriments that are essential for ongoing psychological growth, integrity, and well-being” (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 229).

Although individuals may have different goals and wishes on the surface, deep down we all want the same things. Our fundamental needs are universal: Regardless of culture, age, and lifestyle, everyone ultimately has the same set of needs.

Needs are the basic requirements for our functioning and the nutriments for our well-being and advancement. We can only fully develop and flourish if all our basic needs are satisfied (at least to some degree), and none can be neglected without significant negative consequences. Needs are also a strong direct source of meaning and pleasure (and displeasure): events and activities that fulfil our needs are both meaningful and pleasurable.

## **Needs and design**

If one thing can be said about design, it is that its relevance to the individual and to humanity at large—its purpose, meaning, success or failure—depends on the extent to which it satisfies people’s needs. Needs are the fundament of our motivation system, and all human activity is essentially fueled by the aspiration of need fulfilment. Products, systems, buildings, technology, and all other ‘artificial’ phenomena envisioned and built by people are essentially instruments for need satisfaction.

## **13 fundamental needs**

This booklet provides a typology of 13 fundamental psychological needs developed by Desmet and Fokkinga (2020). Each page shows a need and four corresponding sub-needs. These sub-needs illustrate the range and scope of the fundamental needs. Even though they are themselves not fundamental, they still represent relatively universal and general concepts. The (sub-) needs can, in turn, take shape as and through goals and desires that are specific to particular individuals and/or situations. You can use the overview as a source of design inspiration or, if you like, as a means to explore your personal happiness.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'D' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Pieter Desmet

# Autonomy



*Being the cause of your actions and feeling that you can do things your own way. Rather than feeling that external conditions and other people determine your actions.*

## Freedom of decision



Having the freedom to determine your actions and to make your own decisions.

## Individuality



Having an independent existence and qualities that distinguish you from other people.

## Creative expression



Having the ability to imagine, create and communicate new things and ideas.

## Self-reliance



Having the ability to do things and make decisions by yourself, without needing other people to help you.

# Beauty



*Feeling that the world is a place of elegance, coherence, and harmony.  
Rather than feeling that the world is disharmonious, unappealing, or ugly.*

## Unity & Order



Feeling that the world is a place of balance and harmony.

## Elegance & Finesse



Having access to surroundings, objects, and ideas of elegance and finesse.

## Artistic experiences



Having the ability to engage in acts of artistic perception, creation, and reflection.

## Natural beauty



Having access to beautiful natural objects or environments.

# Comfort



*Having an easy, simple, relaxing life, rather than experiencing strain, difficulty or overstimulation.*

## Peace of mind



Having a mental state of calmness or tranquility.

## Convenience



Having an easy and convenient life.

## Simplicity



Feeling that the world is a place of clarity and simplicity.

## Overview & Structure



Having a sense of overview and structure in your life.

# Community



*Being part of and accepted by a social group or entity that is important to you, rather than feeling you do not belong anywhere and have no social structure to rely on.*

## Social harmony



Living in a balanced and peaceful coexistence with others.

## Affiliation & group identity



Having a sense of sameness, belonging and shared interests with a group.

## Rooting (tradition, culture)



Having a sense of family origins, community, and tradition.

## Conformity (fitting in)



Having attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that are similar to and match your social group.

# Competence



*Having control over your environment and being able to exercise your skills to master challenges, rather than feeling that you are incompetent or ineffective.*

## Knowledge & Understanding



Having and increasing your knowledge about and understanding of the world.

## Challenge



Being stimulated by challenges that require your skill and resolution.

## Environmental control



Having the ability to direct the course of events in your environment.

## Skill progression



Having the ability to develop your skills and competences.

# Fitness



*Having and using a body that is strong, healthy, and full of energy, rather than having a body that feels ill, weak, or listless.*

## Nourishment



Having access to nourishments that provide energy, and promote development.

## Health



Being in a good physical and mental condition.

## Energy & Strength



Having and using a strong body and mind that is full of energy.

## Hygiene



Maintaining yourself and your surroundings clean in order to maintain good health.

# Impact



*Seeing that your actions or ideas have an impact on the world and contribute to something, rather than seeing that you have no influence and do not contribute to anything.*

## Influence



Seeing that your actions have an effect on people, things, or situations.

## Contribution



Having the ability to make a meaningful contribution to individuals, communities, or the world in general.

## Building something



Having the ability to create and build things.

## Legacy



Feeling you are working to create and leave something for the ones who come after you.

# Morality



*Feeling that the world is a moral place and being able to act in line with your personal values, rather than feeling that the world is immoral and your actions conflict with your values.*

## Have guiding principles



Following a code of good conduct and having values that guide your behaviour.

## Acting virtuously



Being able to act righteously and in line with moral standards.

## A just society



Living in a society in which everyone is treated as equal and justice is provided to everyone.

## Fulfilling duties



Having the ability to fulfill your duties towards individuals, communities, and society.

# Purpose



*Having a clear sense of what makes your life meaningful and valuable, instead of lacking direction, significance or meaning in your life.*

## Life goals & direction



Having aspirations and ambitions that guide your accomplishments in life.

## Meaningful activities



Having the ability to engage in activities that give purpose and meaning to your life.

## Personal growth



Having the ability to develop towards reaching your full potential.

## Spirituality



Feeling connected to a transcendent or divine quality of existence in life.

# Recognition



*Getting appreciation for what you do and respect for who you are, instead of being disrespected, underappreciated or ignored.*

## Appreciation



Feeling you are valued and cherished for who we are.

## Respect



Feeling you are taken seriously, considered worthy and treated with respect.

## Status & Prestige



Having a worthy position in your social group or society.

## Popularity



Feeling you are liked and admired by others.

# Relatedness



*Having warm, mutual, trusting relationships with people who you care about, rather than feeling isolated or unable to make personal connections.*

## Love & Intimacy



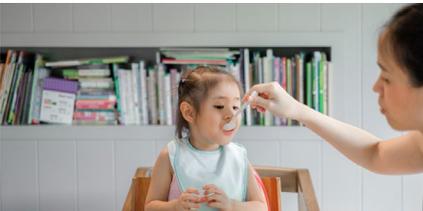
Having access to love, tenderness and intimacy.

## Camaraderie



Having close and accepting friendships.

## To nurture and care



Being able to provide nurture and care.

## Emotional support



Receiving empathy, compassion and genuine concern.

# Security



*Feeling that your conditions and environment keep you safe from harm and threats, rather than feeling that the world is dangerous, risky or a place of uncertainty.*

## Physical safety



Being safe and secure from pain, injury, or loss.

## Financial security



Having the resources to support your living standards in the present and in the future.

## Social stability



Feeling that you live in a stable world and in peace with others.

## Conservation



Having the ability to preserve and maintain yourself and what is important to you.

# Stimulation



*Being mentally and physically stimulated by novel, varied, and relevant impulses and stimuli, rather than feeling bored, indifferent or apathetic.*

## Novelty



Having new and varied experiences or impulses.

## Variation



Having the ability to enjoy variation or change.

## Play



Engaging playful and amusing activities.

## Bodily pleasure



Having satisfying bodily experiences and sensations.



# Colophon

This booklet was based on the typology of fundamental human needs that was developed by Desmet and Fokkinga (2020).

## References

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