



“Human Connection is the most vital aspect of our existence, without the sweet touch of another being we are lonely stars in an empty space waiting to shine gloriously.”

Joe Straynge

SOCIAL CONNECTION SURVIVAL NEEDS

Social needs have more to do perception than facts, and more to do with "Sense" and "Feeling." Therefore, only you really know if you are getting your social needs met. Social needs, like our need for food and vitamins, require a daily intake. Even though social needs require others, they are 100% your responsibility to be aware of and to take action (or plan for action) in order to get you needs met. It's also important to communicate your wants and needs. No one can do this for you. Use this worksheet to understand more. Try to write or type freely with a stream of consciousness... free-write without editing. See what naturally shows up for you in your answers.

Survival Need	Why do you think this is a need? What does it feel like to have this need fulfilled?	When has this been fulfilled? An era, tradition or a moment? What fulfills this need for you?	Do you feel you have enough? How can you ensure enough overall and on a daily basis?
<p>SENSE OF BELONGING</p> <p>We need to belong to something greater than ourselves, a group, family, friends, co-workers, religion, belief system, community, interest group, traditions, celebrations, or something else.</p>			
<p>SENSE OF PURPOSE</p> <p>Know your values and live in alignment with your values. Cultivate interests. Have meaning in what you do or plan to do, that contributes to your group, family, or the greater good.</p>			
<p>SENSE OF SECURITY</p> <p>Safety combined with stability. We need a partner, friends, and/or loved-ones that we know we can count on to stick with us through the ups and downs of life.</p>			

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<p>SENSE OF GRATITUDE & OPENNESS TO RECEIVING</p> <p>Receiving help, gifts, compliments, etc. is essential so others can love you. This allows for a Sense of Belonging. Daily gratitude and saying thank you is part of receiving.</p>			
<p>SENSE OF FREEDOM</p> <p>We need a balance of freedom and closeness. In family, we need belonging and a unique sense of self (boundaries). In relationship we need a balance of personal space and togetherness.</p>			
<p>FEEL INSPIRED/CONTINUITY</p> <p>Exploring, learning, new interests, goals, consistent action and mentorship enlivens us. Transcend ordinary experiences and limitations to connect with our higher power, purpose and infinite creativity.</p>			
<p>SENSE OF CONTRIBUTION</p> <p>When we give, even random acts of kindness, we increase our self-worth due to the fact that we wouldn't be able to give anything if we did not think we had something to give. If we don't give our mind believes we have nothing to offer and thus we tend to feel worthless.</p>			

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<p>FEEL APPRECIATED</p> <p>Appreciation and words of affirmation feel like love and respect. It strengthens our bonds and fills our hearts. It helps satisfy our longing for connection. If we are in a relationship, this is especially important for both parties to feel.</p>			
<p>FEEL RESPECTED</p> <p>On a deep level, respect provides security and worthiness. Respect is honest and forthright. Others may be nice to you, but do they feel safe being honest with you? Be respectable by being open to others' perspectives, truth and forthrightness.</p>			
<p>FEEL SEEN AND HEARD</p> <p>Feeling 'Seen and Heard' requires presence and Openhearted Listening. We feel 'heard' when loved-ones say, "I hear you" without rescuing, defending, correcting, or judging. Sometimes it's simply enjoying time without saying a word.</p>			
<p>FEEL VALUED</p> <p>Feeling valued and cherished leads to trust. Trust is the foundation of all relationships. It is essential in our intimate relationship.</p>			

"Self-esteem is positively associated with belongingness. Research suggests that actual belongingness creates self-esteem; those who are accepted by others experience enhanced self-esteem, whereas those who are rejected experience reduced self-esteem."

Jessica Cameron, PhD

UNMET SOCIAL CONNECTION NEEDS AS THE MAIN CAUSE OF STRESS, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

In our modern culture, we tend to have plenty of food, oxygen, shelter and water. So why aren't we feeling pure bliss and comfort? Most of our stress, anxiety and despair stem from relationship distress and unmet Social Connection Needs. When our mind detects the possibility of unmet social needs our nervous system will fire off survival stress-chemicals and emotions, like anxiety, loneliness, anger, shame, panic, and abandonment fears. Unaware of the cause, we tend to get lost in more shame and confusion. Reflect on a time when you felt lonely, alone, rejected, dumped, or like an outsider. Where and why did it happen? How did it feel?

Do you see how being 'good' (rescuing), 'right' (winning arguments), 'harmless' (blaming others, the weather, bad luck, or anything else) or 'hurt' (needing help but not communicating your needs) isn't going to meet your adult Social Connection Needs?

Do you see how chronic stress, reactivity, outbursts, anxiety disorders, depression, jumping into the drama triangle, over-use of substances and other maladaptive protective strategies are likely the result of long-term, unmet Social Connection Needs?

UNMET CONNECTION NEEDS AS THE MAIN CAUSE OF SHAME AND LOW SELF-WORTH

Our self-worth is intertwined with how well we're getting our Social Connection Needs met. If we don't have a Sense of Gratitude we aren't open to feeling loved no matter how much people love us. Over time, this can make us feel unworthy of love. If we don't feel a Sense of Contribution, we can slip into feeling like we have nothing worth contributing. In time, this results in low self-worth. From what you've learned, are there unmet Social Connection Needs that are impacting your self-worth, confidence or self-esteem?

Throughout history, humans have thrived in tribes, families, villages and communities where social connection was woven into our daily lives. From what you've learned, how can we get our Social Connection Needs met nowadays in our disconnected culture?

"Today, we turn to one person to provide what an entire village once did: a sense of SECURITY, meaning, and continuity. At the same time, we expect our committed relationships to be romantic as well as emotionally and sexually fulfilling. Is it any wonder that so many relationships crumble under the weight of it all?"

Ester Perel, PhD

Social anxiety is a normal human emotion. Our nervous system activates when we're around others outside of our family, friends or community. Where do you feel the most social anxiety? Also, describe a specific memory where you experienced social anxiety.

From what you've discovered in the pages above, what Social Connection Needs do you want to prioritize and plan to fulfill?

Do you fully accept 100% responsibility for understanding and meeting your Social Connection Needs? Which need(s) do you want to start with? What creative solutions do you have for planning for and fulfilling this Social Connection Need?

ATTACHMENT/CONNECTION DISTRESS REACTIONS AND MALADAPTIVE PROTECTIVE STRATEGIES

We form maladaptive protective strategies to temporarily 'protect' ourselves (suppress) painful feelings, anxiety and emptiness associated with lack of connection. Yet, our needs remain unfulfilled. We can make matters worse by shaming and criticizing ourselves for our unmet connection hunger pains - and even form false beliefs like "I'm not likable." "I'm unlovable." "I'm a failure." We wouldn't feel full and calm living off bread crumbs. Why do we expect to be fulfilled and calm with bread crumbs of connection?

FIGHT - FLIGHT - FREEZE - FAWN

There are four main maladaptive strategies that deal with attachment/connection distress: Fight (poking/expressing), Flight (running/distracting), Freeze (hiding/avoiding) or Fawn (submitting/pleasing). We also tend to criticize ourselves during social distress. What's your guess on which of the four you tend to default to?

Learn about attachment/connection distress types (save before clicking the link): <https://www.creatingyourbalance.com/stresstypes>