

NOURISHING ASSOCIATION

THE WHEEL OF NEEDS

Much can be said about needs. For us it is important to take note of two considerations:

1) Real needs are always legitimate and thus need to be taken care of.

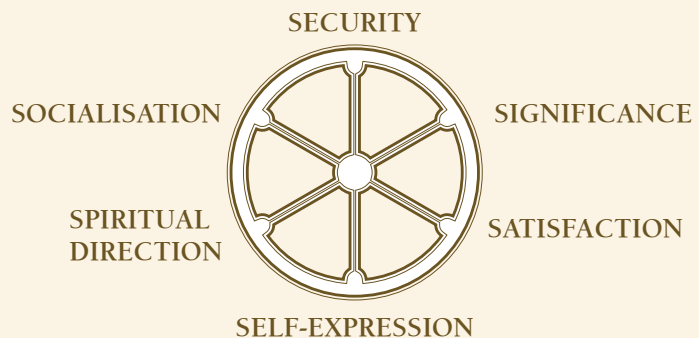
If our needs are not taken care of, serious obstacles can arise in our lives. When you counsel people you need to help them identify their legitimate needs and assist them to find working strategies to fulfill them.

2) Most people confuse needs with strategies and become frustrated by never getting to the heart of their issues.

For example: A man (person A) has a real need to spend quality time with his friend (person B) (The need for socialisation). So he calls him and suggests various ways to associate like going on a bicycle tour, swimming in the ocean or other sport related projects. His friend, (person B), not understanding the other's need answers back by saying that he has knee problems and cannot go cycling or swimming. Person A is frustrated. His need is not fulfilled. If person A would have clearly identified his need, person B would have been able to answer that need by suggesting an alternative which would work out for both of them. He should have said for example: Why don't we spend some time together tomorrow over dinner to touch base and talk about our experiences in life! This clear identification of needs, which are not attached to any strategies to fulfill them, would surely have strengthened their friendship!



Here is the wheel of needs. The circular approach allows you to engage a person in any of the areas as they turn up. Just like the spokes and the parts of the wheel turn and constantly change positions, some needs sometimes turn up and others become less visible.



Security

Everyone needs to know that he/she is safe - that he/she is out of harm's way - both physically and psychologically.

Out of this need grows the need for air, food, rest, movement, shelter, but also the more subtle needs of sanity, inner well-being and so on.

Significance

Similarly, each one of us needs to know and feel that we are appreciated and have our place and purpose. In today's impersonal and technocratic world people often become instruments of impersonal structures - parts of the machinery of life - and lose their personal significance.

Included in this need is the need for acceptance and appreciation but also self-worth and human dignity.

Satisfaction

We all need to feel physically, emotionally and socially satisfied. Often people take to the wrong strategies whereby they confuse gratification of the senses with deep spiritual satisfaction which arises out of the heart to heart connection with the Lord.

Self-expression

Each individual needs to find his/her unique talents and purpose for which he/she was created and to express that in life. Someone who has not yet found and expressed his/her *dharma* is ill at ease in whatever situation he/she lives.

People need encouragement to be creative and to act upon what they feel. Especially in this area, guidance is often required.



Spiritual Direction

Everyone needs to see that they are going somewhere in their spiritual life. Without some ultimate spiritual direction and goal, life becomes reduced to a shallow struggle for existence. Spiritual growth is as important to the human being as growth is to a tree. Otherwise he/she becomes stunted in his/her development.

Socialisation

By their nature people need to be in relationships with the world and each other. A sense of belonging, and at times co-operation is as important to each one of us as the air around us which we need to survive.



Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura recognized these physical and mental needs in his books *Caitanya Siksamrita*:

„Rules regarding the self are of two types: those for body and those for mind. Those rules to keep the body properly nourished so that one can remain healthy are bodily rules. Such things are regulated drinking, eating, sleeping, exercise, and for sickness, prescriptions of cure. If a person does not follow these rules he cannot pass through life smoothly.*

If a person does not follow the mental rules, his power of realization, concentration, imagination, contemplation and judgment will be weak and will not properly function. there will be no advancement in arts and sciences, and moreover one will not be able to take the mind from material thoughts and direct it to thoughts of God. As a result, the mind will be dominated by sinful thoughts and atheistic attitude; finally man will become no better than beast. Therefore these bodily and mental rules are very necessary for success in human life.“ (Ch.2, part 1).

¹ (For more on 'mental rules' read the next Amrta Vani Newsletter)

Remain mindful of this circle of needs both in your own life as well as in the lives of others. If you can help a person identify and fulfill their legitimate needs in a spiritual way, people will seek your association and note: This person has spiritual solutions for material problems.