

Needs and Values Worksheet

Most people cannot answer the question "what do you need?" and the reason is not evasiveness. It is that the honest answer usually arrives as a strategy rather than a need — "I need him to text me back in the morning" is a specific mechanism, and mechanisms are easy to refuse in a way that the underlying need is not.

Who this is for: You know something is missing and everything you come up with sounds either too small to mention or too much to ask.

The exercises

1. The long list

Twenty things, unfiltered, no editing.

Items 1–10, unedited:

Items 11–20 (past the stall):

Which of these did I hesitate to write down?

Which would I be embarrassed for a partner to read, and why?

2. Need or strategy?

One question applied to every line.

Three items that are clearly strategies:

For each, the need underneath it:

Which strategy have I most defended as though it were a need?

What else could meet that same need?

3. Where each one came from

A short line each, and it changes how they read.

Need one — where it came from:

Need two:

Need three:

Which of these is an old alarm rather than a current requirement?

4. The top three

Rank now, and only three.

Top three, ranked:

Would I still rank these the same in a good week?

Which of the three is currently being met?

What have I been treating as top-three that is not?

5. Turn each into an ask

One sentence each. Present tense, no history.

Ask one, in one sentence:

Ask two:

Ask three:

Which one, to whom, and when:

This worksheet is free to print, photocopy and share, including with clients. It is self-reflection material, not a diagnosis, an assessment or a substitute for professional support. If a relationship involves fear, control or coercion, or if working through this raises more than feels manageable, please speak to a doctor, a therapist or a domestic abuse service.