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How To Turn A 'Need' Into Something More

Feeling like your relationship needs are not being met? See how you can change that with one simple step.

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Getting what you need isn't that big a deal, but it can be easier if you approach your needs appropriately.

There is something about the word "needy," a desperate quality that we shy away from.

Unfortunately, that desperate quality also gets attached to the word "need," so when you have a need you'd like from your spouse like, "I need more loving," it's tempting to think; "I'm being too clingy, I shouldn't need so much from him/her, I should be happy with what I've got."

More often than not, when we find ourselves thinking "I need more affection;" "I need you to be more supportive;" "I need you to be more considerate," we discount that need and push it aside while we wonder why we feel so unfulfilled.

If you look "need" up in the dictionary (Webster's New Collegiate) however, you will find a very different definition of the word. The word is defined as "a physiological or psychological requirement for the well-being of an organism." In other words, something you (the organism) require (as in "must-have") to be well (feel good, be healthy etc.).

That's it. Nothing about feeling desperate or being clingy. Just a requirement for well-being.

You wouldn't for a minute even consider neglecting your child, or pet, or plant's requirements for well-being: you appropriately water and feed and talk to and, in general, do everything you can think of to see to your child, pet or plant's well-being. It doesn't occur to you to say, "Well, my child shouldn't need to run around in the fresh air," or "My plant shouldn't need sun." No, you take your child to the park or playground, and hurry up to place your plant where it will get precisely the correct amount of sun.

Well, what about you? Are you any less deserving of well-being than your child, pet or ficus? Of course not! Yet as long as you think of your needs as something you shouldn't have, you will neglect your own well-being.

You need love, affection, consideration, caring, support and appreciation. All these items contribute to your well-being. There is nothing wrong with having these as requirements. They are basic human requirements we all share—and you deserve to have those things you require to feel good.

That's the magic word, "deserve." The first step to getting your needs met is to acknowledge your needs as something you deserve.

Make a list of your specific needs. For example: "I need more loving;" "I need more affection;" "I need more support." Then rephrase those needs into "I deserve": "I deserve the loving I want;" "I deserve the affection I want;" "I deserve more support." Repeat these statements out loud to yourself frequently. Tune in to your desire for your well-being.

Now you can approach your spouse differently with, "I would like" rather than "I need." "I would like" opens the door to a conversation, pathway to a solution or resolution. "I need" feels like a one-way demand, and tends to shut the door on discussion.

You cannot get what you do not feel you deserve. "I deserve" is the first step on the road to truly getting your relationship needs met.

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