

TOOL

Core Human Needs



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When our needs are met, we thrive.

Welcome. Coaching is people work. And at the heart of being human are core needs—belonging, autonomy, competence, self-esteem, trust, and purpose. When these needs are met, we thrive. When they're not, we struggle. This resource is your first step in noticing and naming those needs so you can open up conversations that help your clients get what they truly need to flourish.

How to use this resource:

1) Start with yourself

- Recall a time when you were thriving at work. Which needs were met?
- Recall a time you were struggling. Which needs were unmet?

2) Expand to your client

- Think of a client who's struggling. Which needs might be unmet? What evidence do you see?
- Introduce this tool and your observations: "Everyone has the same core human needs. When one or more are unmet, we struggle. I wonder if part of what's happening is a need for..."

3) Practice and apply

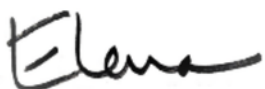
- Draft a few ways you might introduce this framework and try them out loud.
- Bring it into your next conversation and notice how your client responds.

4) Reflect

- What went well? What was challenging? What do you want to try again or differently?

If you want detailed guidance on exactly what to do in your coaching conversations, you'll find that in my [Coach Learning Library](#).

Let's begin.



Core Human Needs







Core Human Need	Description
 Belonging	Connectedness, relatedness, interpersonal relationships, being part of a group, friendship, intimacy, trust, acceptance, giving and receiving affection, and love
 Autonomy	Having a sense of control in your life, being able to make choices, and having agency
 Competence	Self-fulfillment, personal growth, and feeling masterful at something
 Self-Esteem	Having a sense of genuine self-worth that's not dependent on achievement, attainment, acquisition, or valuation by others
 Trust	Believing you have the personal and social resources needed to sustain yourself through life (trust in yourself)
 Purpose	Knowing yourself as part of something larger—spiritual, humanistic, or as part of nature; living a life of meaning; and experiencing transcendence

Table 0.1. © Elena Aguilar, *Arise: The Art of Transformational Coaching*. Jossey-Bass, 2024

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