**Neediness**

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* Everyone suffers some pain in childhood; nobody’s life is perfect. Because we are so vulnerable when we are young, pains that seem relatively small in retrospect, can last. We can picture these lasting pains as “holes in our hearts”. The younger we are, or the greater the pain, the bigger/deeper the “holes” can be.
* Though we are often unaware of it, our behaviors are largely motivated by our desire to “fill the holes in our hearts”. When we are young, we try to get these “holes” filled by our primary caregivers (parents, grandparents, other family, etc.) - generally in typically immature ways (e.g. temper-tantrums, undermining siblings, under/over-achieving, being a “good child”, or “bad”, etc.).
* After a while, the ways we try to get the “holes” filled form habits - often reflected in unhealthy relationships with people and/or things (e.g. conflict with parents or others, use of intoxicants, self-injurious behavior, etc.).
* Eventually, when we become interested in romantic/sexual relationships, we are often attracted to people who “promise” to fill the “holes in our hearts”. Generally, neither we nor the people we are attracted to are aware of this “promise”. There’s just *“something”* about them that seems like just what we “*need*”. They are likely attracted to us for the same unconscious reason: something about *us* seems to “promise” to fill the “holes in *their* hearts”.
* Humans have a natural *need* for relationship (we are what anthropologists call gregarious animals, often called “herd animals”); we cannot survive without others. But, aside from the care of our primary caregivers (e.g. parents) when we are very young, we don’t *need* any particular relationship(s). Feeling attracted to someone does not necessarily reflect a *need*, but a *want*.
* When a *want* becomes excessive or feels like a *need*, *WED* calls it “*Neediness*”. This term covers common substance addiction, like to opiates, and more common compulsions, like to sugar or seemingly most ubiquitously to a person – and I’ve never known someone who has reached any significant sexual maturity who escaped that totally.
* A hard thing for most people to face is that even though we can recognize why some relationships may not be healthy, the “promise of filling the holes in our hearts” causes us to pursue and cling to these relationships.
* And even if we do find a most loving and caring person who genuinely wants to fill the “holes” – they cannot. The “holes” are of another time and place, from dissatisfactions with other relationships (usually from our early childhood, e.g. parents).
* Eventually, as our mate fails to fill the “holes,” we begin to resent them (even though what we want from them is impossible for them to give). This causes the destruction of current relationships, digging new “holes,” deepening and widening the ones that we set out to fill.
* Now, if we recognize that we have developed some unhealthy habits of seeking the fulfillment of our “*needs*,” not because they are true *needs*, but because they *feel like needs,* we can identify and face our *“Neediness.”*  We have the opportunity to take the first, critical step: distinguishing our *true needs* and *healthy wants* from our *unhealthy wants.*
* So, *then* what do we do? PRACTICE! The only reliable way to change is through practice. What do we practice? *WED* offers *The Behavioral Guidelines*.
* Practice is easier said than done. Still, we have no choice. But we need not go it alone. A “WED Educator,” by modeling healthy relationship and providing clear reflection, can help us accomplish the first step of discerning our *healthy desires* from our *Neediness*. Then, a WED Educator can help us structure our lives such that we *practice* fulfilling our healthy wants (what in Latin was called *disciplina* – our *discipline*). But how do we encourage this true focus on healthy wants? This is the function of *values*.
* In *WED*, values are viewed as a third type of desire (i.e. *needs, wants, values*). Values are sublimely and profoundly powerful in that they are, at once, consciously chosen desires, *and* a reflection of our unconsciousconditioning. They are the relative importance we place on things, and so determine the relative resources we commit to acquiring those things. Most usefully, they can be our voluntary, intentional way of guiding ourselves toward the fulfillment of our needs and healthy wants – as we understand them. In WED, values are of immense value! Because they bridge the gap between nature and nurture, values allow us to compensate for both genetic and environmental imbalances . To some degree, values let us choose who we will be*.*
* WED values are its Core Values: Following, Nonviolence, Dynamic Balance, and Faith, which are embodied in its Developmental Goals: Respect, Dignity, Responsibility, Compassion, and Perseverance, and manifest in its Behavioral Guidelines – which form the foundation for WED practice.

Please enter your email address on this site, or on other WED sites, read the book The *Art of Direction: How to Help Your Child Overcome Imbalances of All Kinds,* andcheck back here [www.aofdirection.com](http://www.aofdirection.com) or <http://www.wholeisticeducation.com>, and on our various, other sites for a deeper understanding of WED philosophy and mehodology.

*“The Tao that can be articulated is not necessarily the eternal Tao.”*