

# Booklet of Needs



a deep dive into  
the living energy of needs

## Colophon

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2025, The Netherlands



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*If it sparks new ideas for you, or if you'd like to continue the work in a commercial context, we're open to collaboration — let's stay in touch.*

*Connection and collaboration keep this work alive,  
allowing it to breathe and grow.*

*If language were liquid,  
it would be rushing in.*

*(Suzanne Vega)*

# Contents

Introduction ..... 6

## Red: Together

1. Love / Intimacy ..... 8

2. Harmony ..... 12

3. Connection / Contact ..... 16

4. Belonging / Community ..... 20

5. Sharing / a Shared Reality .... 24

6. Tenderness / Touch ..... 28

7. Being Seen / Attention ..... 32

8. Being Heard / Attention ..... 36

9. Empathy / Compassion ..... 40

10. Acceptance ..... 44

11. Recognition ..... 48

12. Respect / Being Taken  
Seriously .....52

13. Feeling Valued / Appreciation  
.....56

14. Care for Yourself ..... 60

15. Support /  
Someone Who Helps .....64

16. Care for Others /  
Contributing .....68

17. Certainty / Predictability /  
Sustainability ..... 72

18. Safety / (Self)Protection ..... 76

19. Trust / Hope ..... 80

## Yellow: Self

20. Being Yourself / Identity /  
Authenticity ..... 84

21. Integrity ..... 88

22. Independence / Autonomy .. 92

23. Energy / Recharging /  
Refilling ..... 96

24. Strength / Effectiveness /  
Competence ..... 100

25. Free Will / Choice ..... 104

26. (Play)Space ..... 108

27. Expressing Yourself ..... 112

28. Spontaneity ..... 116

**Green: Quality & Meaning**

29. Quality  
(Life / Work / Things) ..... 120

30. A (Higher) Purpose / Meaning /  
Fulfillment ..... 124

31. A Better World ..... 128

32. Beauty ..... 132

33. Results / Progress /  
Outcomes ..... 136

34. Honesty / Truth ..... 140

35. Genuineness /  
Authenticity ..... 144

36. Oneness / Inclusion ..... 148

37. Stability ..... 152

38. Planning / Order /  
Structure ..... 156

39. Clarity ..... 160

40. Variety ..... 164

41. Adventure / Challenge ..... 168

42. Creativity / Flexibility ..... 172

**Blue: Lightness**

43. Learning /  
Personal Growth ..... 176

44. Lightness / Effortlessness . 180

45. Efficiency ..... 184

46. Joy / Happiness ..... 188

47. Fun / Play ..... 192

48. Passion / Enthusiasm ..... 196

49. Humor / Laughter ..... 200

50. Rest / Relaxation ..... 204

51. Celebration ..... 208

52. Mourning / Regret ..... 212

**Beige: Balance**

53. Balance / Fairness ..... 216

54. Inner Peace ..... 220

**Dark Green: Physical**

55. Physical Needs ..... 224

56. Health / Vitality ..... 226

# Introduction

Every life is shaped by needs. They are not shortcomings to be overcome, but quiet forces that draw us toward connection, growth, safety, and meaning. When you name and feel them, you can hear what wants to be heard. At the same time, you gain clearer insight into what is already guiding you — and tools to respond to your needs with more care and effectiveness.

The *Deck of Needs* grew from a simple wish: to find words for these forces, to make them visible, and to give them the attention they deserve. The 56 cards in this set — with more than 100 carefully chosen words — form the foundation of this booklet.

This booklet offers another way to explore what is alive in you. Through descriptions, poetry, affirmations, and imagery, we invite you to connect with the living energy of your needs. We see these pages as an invitation to explore and play — not as instructions. Read slowly. Wander through. Notice which pages call to you. Let them be mirrors or companions. Skip, return, follow your curiosity.

The journey is yours — as is the place where you begin. You can read the whole booklet at once to expand your vocabulary and understanding of needs. Yet we encourage you to use it to discover what is alive in you right now. Choose a word from the index, use the Deck of Needs, or open a random page. Give each of your needs the time it deserves — especially the ones asking for attention in this moment.

May you find in these pages a sense of recognition, permission, and possibility. May they remind you that you are not alone in your wonder — and that every need carries its own power when it is honored.

Often, listening to a single need is enough. Sometimes several speak at once. Needs frequently appear in clusters — each wanting to be seen and heard. This is why you will often encounter related need-words in our texts, even when we focus on just one. Notice if one of them touches you, and use the index to follow its message.

If you prefer a more structured approach, feel free to use our other tools. The *Flower of Needs* shows which words are closely connected and often arise together. The *Deck of Needs* lets you literally hold a need in your hand — inviting your body into the listening. It also offers simple ways to find the right words, and to discover which need might be at the root of why change still feels challenging.

Decisions and actions often arise unconsciously. Not everything we do needs words — except when we are dissatisfied with the outcome. Then

it can help to put words to what is alive in you, so you can mourn, celebrate, and... find more effective pathways forward.

We feel deep gratitude for the worldwide community of Nonviolent Communication (NVC), which has guided and inspired us for more than twenty years. Collaboration and friendship have been both mirror and compass along our journey. This circle of hearts and voices has led to countless ideas, tools — and also to this booklet.

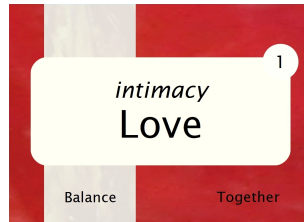
We wish you a gentle and enriching journey along your own path — wherever it may lead. And we look forward to the day our paths cross, or cross again.

With warmth and gratitude,

**Hugo & Richard**

# 1. Love / Intimacy

This card speaks to the original movement toward belonging and closeness. It represents the need to be seen in your full humanity — to give and receive warmth without having to perform or prove anything. Intimacy is not just romance; it is the trust of being truly recognized, the quiet exchange that says: *“I am here with you, and you are here with me.”*



When this need is honored, your heart softens, relationships deepen, and connection no longer feels like negotiation. Love becomes a bridge, not a transaction. You're more willing to be vulnerable — because it feels like coming home, not like taking a risk.

When this need is ignored or twisted, the same force can turn into longing, clinging, or withdrawal. You might mistake love for control — or avoid it entirely to keep yourself safe. This card doesn't judge; it simply shows where the longing for closeness is clear, and where it has become tangled.

Its power is transformative, almost alchemical.

When it is honored, it turns isolation into connection, self-doubt into mutual recognition — and mere visibility into true belonging.

*two hearts  
listening in stillness  
walls unweave  
and the space between them  
becomes sanctuary*





### **Practical strategies to bring this into daily life**

- Take a gentle look at your relationships.  
Who helps you feel loved, cared for, and valued?  
With whom can you simply be yourself — and what do these people do that creates that feeling?
- Spend unplanned, open time with someone you trust, and let the conversation sink into depth on its own.
- Practice small gestures of vulnerability — an honest sharing, a sincere compliment, a simple request for help.
- Notice affection when it's offered to you, and resist the urge to push it away immediately.

*My heart opens to deep connection,  
and I allow myself to be loved as I am.*



## When Walls Give Way to Vulnerability

She sat by the window, watching the rain slide down the glass.  
Each drop following its own path.

In her chest she felt a tightness, a pull — as if something inside  
her wanted to come out, but didn't know how.

Walls, she thought. I've built walls.

Brick by brick, year after year. Every disappointment a stone.  
Every "I don't need you" another crack she had filled with the  
mortar of independence. She had learned to be strong. To be  
alone. To be safe.

But now, in the quiet of the rain, she heard something else.  
A soft knocking, from within. Not loud. Not demanding.  
Just... there.

I want to be seen, it whispered.  
Truly seen. All of me.

She placed her hand on her heart. Warm. Alive.  
Under all that protection — life.

The next day she sat across from her friend at the kitchen table.  
They drank coffee, as always. Talked about everyday things, as  
always. But today she felt the knocking again. Stronger.

"Are you okay?" he asked.

The automatic answer was already on her tongue: "Yeah, I'm  
fine."

But then — a moment of pause. A breath.  
“No,” she heard herself say. “Not really.”

His eyes widened slightly. Not in shock. In curiosity.  
In welcome.

“I...” She searched for words. “I’m so tired of pretending.  
Pretending I don’t need anything. Pretending I...”

Her voice broke. And in that break — a door.

He didn’t say a word. He simply reached out his hand across the  
table. Not grabbing. Just... there. Open.

She looked at his hand. Then at his face. In his eyes, no pressure.  
No “Don’t be too much.” Just space.

Slowly, she placed her hand in his.

It wasn’t dramatic. No grand gesture. Just two hands touching.  
But in that moment she felt something inside her loosen.  
A stone fell from the wall. Then another.

“I’m scared,” she whispered.  
“Scared that I’m too much. Too needy. Too...”

“You are,” he interrupted gently.  
“Simply you. And that’s enough.”

Tears ran down her face. Not from sadness.  
From relief. From a deep knowing: This is it.  
This is love. Not having to be perfect. But being allowed to be.

**The living energy of love carries us not only toward others,  
but also back to ourselves — to the place where we are whole,  
to the place we call home.**

## 2. Harmony

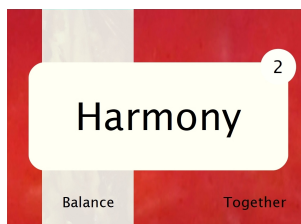
This card speaks to the movement toward alignment and balance — the need for your inner and outer world, your own needs and those of others, to come into harmony. Harmony doesn't mean erasing differences; it is the art of turning opposites into flow rather than friction.

When this need is honored, you discover solutions that feel right for everyone involved. It is not merely the absence of conflict, but a space where wishes and needs are heard and valued — and where small adjustments suddenly bring a sense of ease. Conversations soften, decisions become clearer, and you can hold your ground without hardening. Life begins to sound like music rather than noise.

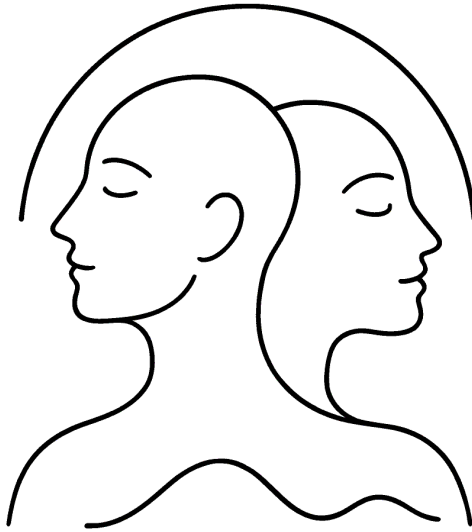
When this need is ignored or bent out of shape, you might try to keep the peace at any cost, or cling to a kind of balance built on rules and plans that no longer fit. You may smooth over truths, fall silent, or demand sameness where diversity is needed. This card does not criticize; it simply reflects where balance is alive — and where it has slipped away.

Its power is deeply connective.

When honored, it transforms tension into movement, scattered pieces into a whole, and opposites into dance.



*Inhale, exhale —  
in the sacred pause  
life reveals itself,  
free from control.*



### **Practical strategies to bring this into daily life**

- Find a need in you that is asking for attention right now. Then consider which other need might be less met as a result. Honor both — even if you don't yet know how to create more balance between them.
- Before you respond, pause for a moment and sense both your own needs and the needs you imagine in the other person. Look for a small adjustment that can support both.
- Create simple rituals that bring you into alignment with your environment — tidying a space, lighting a candle, taking a few deep breaths.
- Choose activities that naturally bring you into a shared rhythm with others — making music, walking together, practicing side by side.

*I breathe with the rhythm of life  
and find peace in the dance of opposites.*



## The Conductor and the Dance of Opposites

The conductor raised his hands. The orchestra fell silent.  
But within the silence — chaos.  
Someone cleared their throat. A chair creaked. Paper rustled.  
And in Jonas's mind: a storm of thoughts, deadlines, worries.

I can't, he thought. Too much. All of it too much.

Three performances this week. His sick mother.  
The bill he'd forgotten to pay.  
His best friend he still hadn't replied to.  
And now this concert.

Everything inside him was shouting. Different voices, different  
directions. Nothing in harmony.

The conductor looked at him. Directly.  
As if he could see what Jonas was trying to hide.

"Breathe," his lips shaped silently. "Just breathe."

Jonas closed his eyes. Breathed in. The noise inside grew louder.  
Breathed out. A little softer.

Another inhale. And in that breath — a tone.  
From the violin beside him. Gentle. Waiting.

Another exhale. And as he breathed out — his own cello  
responded. Not against it. With it.

He opened his eyes. The conductor smiled. And began.

The music started to flow. Not perfect. Not without friction.  
But every bit of friction found its place.  
Every dissonance dissolved into something larger.

Jonas played. And as he played, he felt:  
Maybe it could be like this inside him too.  
Not silencing every voice.  
Not smoothing everything out.  
But... letting it dance.

His mother was ill — yes.  
And he loved her. Both could be true.

Work was demanding — yes.  
And he was good at it. Both could exist.

He was tired — yes.  
And he was here, alive, playing. All at once.

After the concert he sat on the stage, his cello between his knees.  
The hall was empty. But inside him — a new kind of quiet.

Not the quiet of shutting down.  
The quiet of pausing. The space between two breaths.

He laid his hand on the strings. They were still vibrating.  
A soft afterglow.

So this, he thought. Harmony isn't a final state.  
It's the dance itself.

**The living energy of harmony reminds us:  
Life doesn't need to be smooth to be whole.  
The music lives in the dance of opposites.**

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***“Booklet of Needs”***  
***Created by Hugo A. Roele and Richard Schut***

We are currently working on the English edition.  
Publication is expected first half of **2026**.

All 56 needs from the Deck of Needs —  
creatively explored, vividly described,  
and crafted with care.

An invitation to connect with  
the living energy of needs  
and to feel them fully in your daily life.

Are you interested and would you like to  
stay informed about the publication date?

Send us an email: [werkstatt-empathie@gmx.de](mailto:werkstatt-empathie@gmx.de)

A special gift (soon also in English) —  
for everyone who loves  
communication, connection, and awareness.

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