

## Sad? Confused? Angry? Anxious? Afraid?

You can use this template for “Self-Connection.” In other words, this template is a tool to help you get more connected to what’s going on for you, and what might be going on for the other person who’s involved in your situation...perhaps the person you’re having a conflict or disagreement with.

Use one template for yourself, and the feelings/needs part of a second template for the other person. (Sometimes your situation will be purely internal so you can use just one Heart-Circle template, or you can fill out a separate template for each competing “voice in the head”).

Please follow the questions/guidelines below, or follow your own process.

1. Pause. Breathe.
2. Add your answers to the following questions to the related portion of the Heart-Circle template.
  - a. OBSERVATION What’s the key, central observation – what did I see or hear that triggered the emotions that led to me using the Heart-Circle Template right now? (If you can’t decide on one just start with some other portion of the template – thoughts, feelings, or needs....)
  - b. THOUGHTS What are my thoughts (e.g. opinions, judgments, beliefs, ideas etc.)
  - c. FEELINGS What am I feeling? (And how does that feel inside?)
  - d. NEEDS What do I want - fundamentally? (And what would that give me that I value.....?)
3. I strongly recommend that you use feelings and needs lists when entering words in the circle or the heart.
4. You may come up with statements that include “I feel...” or “I need/want,” but do not use a feeling or need from the lists. I recommend that these statements get written outside the circle in the “thoughts” area. Then look on the lists for feelings and needs words that are connected to the initial statement.
5. Once you’ve made a note of a few thoughts, feelings and needs, attempt to connect them.
  - a. For example: If you have the thought “*She’s manipulative*” you might notice that associated with this thought you can say “*When I believe she’s manipulative I’m feeling **suspicious**, and that’s connected to my unmet need for **TRUST** in what she’s saying*” or perhaps “*I’m feeling **annoyed** because I really want my need for **CHOICE** to be met in our relationship, and somehow it seems like her actions don’t support me in meeting that need.*” Etc.

If the situation you’re working on involves another person you’re in conflict with in some way, proceed with the next parts...

6. Add your answers to these questions to **YOUR** template
  - a. THOUGHTS What thoughts come up when I think about guessing their feelings and needs?

- b. FEELINGS How do I feel when I think about guessing their feelings and needs?
- c. NEEDS What needs will not be met for me, or am I afraid will not be met for me, if I start to guess their feelings and need?
- 7. **ONLY IF YOU'RE WILLING... (IF NOT CONTINUE WITH THE PREVIOUS STEPS):** Ask yourself the following questions and add your feelings and needs guesses to the template you're using for the OTHER person. **RETURN TO THE PREVIOUS SELF-EMPATHY STEPS IF YOU START TO GET AGITATED...OR WHEN YOU RUN OUT OF GUESSES/IDEAS ABOUT THE OTHER PERSON.**
  - a. FEELINGS What do I guess are the feelings of the other person? (And how does that feel "on the inside" for them?)
  - b. NEEDS What do I guess they want – fundamentally? (And what would that give them that they value?)
  - c. REQUESTS (and OFFERS) Can I offer or request anything different which might also help to meet the other person's needs, as well as my own?

When no new thoughts, feelings or needs are arising, take a look at your needs in the heart and underline or ring the needs that are most important to you at this moment in your life. These are the needs that keep on coming up most frequently or strongly for you.

Choose a particularly important need and do the following:

- i. CELEBRATIONS – Bring to mind recent thing that happened in your life that actually did meet this need for you. It might be something you did for yourself or someone else.
- ii. MOURNING – If you really can't find examples of this need being met recently in your life, then slow down and actually feel the sadness and mourning connected with that need going unmet. A lot of internal struggle and external conflict results from not being willing to meet this mourning and feel it. It can often help to talk with someone else about this sadness, someone who you trust to really listen to you with empathy.
- iii. REQUESTS (and OFFERS) Answer the question - What can I offer or request (of myself or someone else) in order to meet this need. The actions coming to mind might not even be connected with the original situation or person you've been thinking about.

Perhaps you have no requests or offers yet...not ideas of how to meet the need. You may need to just sit quietly with your key needs in mind. This can be like a meditation. Maybe you'll even sleep on it for days or weeks. You might come up with some strategies to meet these key needs that have nothing to do with the original observation, or the other person you're in conflict with e.g. meeting the need for **care** or **empathy** through some third person.

If you've been working on a situation involving another person, it's my hope that if you speak with them again the process you've done here will help you

- 1. to empathize with them and look for solutions that take their needs into account
- 2. to honor and include your own needs.