



ADVANCED LEVEL RITUAL: GETTING NEEDS MET AS ADULTS

Without healing the wounds from the past, many people will (unconsciously seek unhealthy relationships, finding themselves attracted to those who will help them repeat the very same patterns they're trying to avoid. To change that, it's necessary to at least partially fulfill these needs for oneself first. Then healthy friendships and partnerships built on love and support (rather than the attempt to fill a void) can blossom.

Even under the best circumstances, parents and surrogate parents can't always meet your developmental needs for a variety of reasons. When that happens, either your unmet needs will remain painful trigger points for you throughout your life or you can learn to re-parent yourself with the love, patience, wisdom, and compassion that you need to truly thrive. You know precisely what you did/didn't get—you're living with the consequences. So, you can fill those gaps better than anyone else, including your parents, surrogates, friends, and partners.

Part I: Childhood Needs

Read through the list of childhood needs on the next page. If you had any needs that aren't mentioned on the list, write them down at the bottom of the chart.

Next to each category, write the corresponding letter(s) to indicate the person in your life who filled those needs for you: list "M" for mother(s), "F" for father(s), or "S" for surrogate(s) for the met needs. If **partially met**, place a "PM" next to the box and circle the ones that were **met**.

CHILDHOOD NEEDS

Providing Basic Needs	Learning Life Skills	Meeting Emotional Needs
<p>Personal hygiene: wash body, brush teeth, comb hair, clean clothes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>	<p>Household chores: laundry, cleaning room, vacuuming, cleaning dishes, cleaning bathrooms</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>	<p>Attention: quality time, tending to your moods, listening with empathy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>
<p>Financial security: food, shelter, clothing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>	<p>Finance skills: budgeting, managing credit cards</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>	<p>Nurturing: loving-kindness, acceptance, physical affection</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>
<p>Balanced meals: consistent, balanced meals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>	<p>Meal preparation: learning how to cook healthy meals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>	<p>Boundaries: respecting boundaries with self and others</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>
<p>Safety: secure home and neighborhood</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>	<p>Homework: study skills, time management, tutoring</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>	<p>Unconditional love: loving you as you are, no need to perform</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>
<p>Medical care: regular physicals, dental appointments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>	<p>Exercise: supporting physical activity, modeling self-care</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>	<p>Being cherished: celebrating and appreciating you</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>
<p>Education: access to education</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>	<p>Social: access to family and friends for support</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>	<p>Growth: supporting and celebrating your talents</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>
<p>Transportation: rides to/from school and activities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>	<p>Spiritual: access to nature, church, synagogue or other sacred place</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>	<p>Trust and Reliability: dependability</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> PM</p>

First, take a moment to notice what needs **did** get met. Under the circumstances you experienced as a child, is there something one or more of your caregivers did well or reasonably well?

It's often (but not always) more common for families to meet the needs listed in the first two columns more so than the far-right column. Consistently meeting emotional needs listed on the right can be more challenging. It's very likely one or more of our needs from any of these columns remain unmet or partially met.

For example, you may look at the list and say, "*I needed my dad to cherish me.*" That's valid. And if he did not meet that need, you may carry an emotional wound that causes you to struggle with feelings of unworthiness, loneliness, or isolation. You may choose unhealthy partners who reinforce these feelings of not being cherished or appreciated.

Part 2: Healing Turnarounds

While you can't undo what's happened in the past, you can change how you respond to it now. To resolve any emotional void carried over from your childhood, you can turn it around and heal yourself. Healing turnarounds put the power of healing back in your control and liberate you from relying on the people who weren't able to meet those needs for you. For example, if the need you chose was "cherished" and more specifically, *I needed my dad to cherish me*, then a healing turnaround would be: *I cherish me*.

Step 1:

From the list of childhood needs, choose one unmet need from childhood that you want to work with today. Next, complete these prompts:

- My childhood need was... [*Example: I needed my dad to cherish me*]
- Healing Turnaround: What I know to be true now is... [*Example: I cherish me*]

Step 2:

Now, write your healing turnaround in your own handwriting (do not type these). That movement of the hand and seeing the words in your own handwriting helps reinforce and affirm the new belief.

Step 3:

Write an inventory of all the ways you already meet your healing turnaround for yourself:

Example: *My childhood need was that I wanted my dad to cherish me. I felt unlovable. I felt insecure. What I know to be true now is that I cherish me. How do I know that to be true? I exercise every day. I get good rest at night. I surround myself with people who love me. My dog loves me. I also tend to the things that nourish me on a weekly basis, including yoga, gardening, cooking, reading, and drawing.*

Step 4:

There's more—we need your body to get into the game now. Pull out your interoception ninja skills! Ready? Go!...

Using your healing turnaround, take some time to ground yourself. Find a comfortable chair to sit in. Close your eyes; feel your sitz bones, your feet, and your back, as you take in support from beneath and behind you.

With one hand on your heart space and one hand on your belly, inhale and exhale using long, slow, deep breaths.

Slowly speak your turnaround sentence at least fifteen times, whispering the words out loud, cascading each word and letting it land in your chest/belly, until your body feels a settling inside. You can also use your Mala beads in Step 4.

Step 5:

As always, look for changes in your mood, body sensations and your behavior and keep track of where it's beginning to show up in your life in the next two to four weeks.

Repeat this ritual for each healing turnaround until each one feels true for you (take your time; this ritual may have a long shelf life!).

Being honest with yourself about your psychological wounds can be very difficult. It's human nature to avoid things that we fear will bring us pain. It may feel easier to avoid these wounds by denying or repressing them when they become too scary or painful to face. If you ever catch yourself in moments of fear, pain, avoidance, or denial, I invite you to take a breath and ask yourself: *What am I afraid of? What keeps me from exploring*

what's underneath the fear? Is what I'm fearing just another paper tiger? Do I need support from a trusted source?

The beauty of healing childhood/psychological wounds is that you don't need anyone but yourself to do it. Doing the healing yourself means you will know precisely what to say. Trying to talk to your parents or the people who were part of your upbringing will be less satisfying and potentially (depending on the responses you receive) re-wounding.

You are the expert on you. You know what needs didn't get met, and how to phrase those needs. Therefore, one of the most fundamental keys to healing even the most painful psychological wounds—is your dear, sweet self.