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Peer Review Article

The Map to Compassion:

A Systems-Based Model of Human Needs

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Abstract

This article introduces the Human Needs Map—a model to help orient our minds around human needs that drive and trigger us, disrupting relationships and creating conflict. Initially inspired from fieldwork of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, the Human Needs Map has developed through trial and error into a systems model that reveals the interior landscape of our protective body-mind system with needs and emotions in dynamic flux. The model provides a language to speak about the interconnectivity of needs through their synergies and tensions by introducing the idea of tribal and individual needs. Naming the interdependency between needs and emotions offers a way to understand emotions as reasonable because it provides insight into how needs, emotions and beliefs are intertwined, which perpetuate conflict. The implication lies not only at the individual level but also at the level of systems change to support the design of social and cultural structures more capable of taking needs and emotions into account. The present article traces the iterative process conceptualizing the model and discovering its internal patterns, followed by a discussion about the Needs system's adaptive qualities and its role in creating and perpetuating conflict, concluding with insights for Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding.

Keywords

human needs map, conflict, adaptive, embodiment, self-awareness, trauma, sensitivities, needs matrix

There is much to be gained . . . by opening up the black box and asking, for example, whether imperative needs are expressions of a libidinal drive, as Freud (1930/1989) thought, whether they emerge in the course of human development, as Erikson (1963) and others believed . . . it is likely to provide fuller and more accurate answers to the major question posed by John Burton and his colleagues: How can the basic needs that, unsatisfied, generate destructive social conflict be identified, described, and satisfied?

—Richard E. Rubenstein, "Basic Human Needs: The Next Steps in Theory Development"

In 1998, during a joint meeting of Israeli and Palestinian security forces near the Palestinian town of Tulkarem, the Israeli commanders justified setting up spontaneous security checkpoints along the road leading to Palestinian villages even if it meant stopping and checking a village leader. They argued that checkpoints were a legitimate and agreed upon security measure consistent with the rules and protocols of the Oslo Accords.² The Palestinian commanders objected. They complained that at one recent checkpoint, a village leader was stopped and made to stand near the street while his villagers drove by, humiliating him. I was in the room, listening and taking notes as a Ph.D. student. After the meeting, Nabil, one of the Palestinian commanders, came up to me shaking his head, holding his forehead and said: I just don't understand Israelis. Israelis think without feeling! What did Nabil perceive about security practices that his Israeli counterparts were missing?

As I finished writing this article, it was only weeks since October 7, when Hamas, the Palestinian organization elected to govern Gaza, had declared war on Israel by invading, massacring, raping, burning, and kidnapping Israelis and

¹ Tulkarem is located along the "Green Line" where a District Coordinating Office (DCO) had been established by the Oslo Agreements to manage security cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian security forces. The relationship was one of "non-mediated peacekeeping," where the enemy fighters were their own peacekeeping force without third-party mediation.

² The Israeli-Palestinian Joint Patrols were created by the Oslo Accords to "ensure free, unimpeded, and secure movement along the roads and in other areas." (Oslo II - Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Washington, D.C., September 28, 1995. p. 38).

foreigners. The scale of the tragedy rekindled Israel's traumatic memory of the Holocaust. Tragically, Israel's reaction has led to the massive suffering and killing of thousands of our Palestinian cousins in Gaza. How is it possible to "think with feeling" in matters of life or death? How might we gain the required perspective to facilitate long-term thought integrated with emotional intelligence?

The impulse to create the Human Needs Map that I describe in this article came from my peacebuilding research to help transform conflicts of any size by more deeply understanding our own reactions and those of the other. I sought to design a model that explains how human needs could support political and military strategic thinking as well as a wide range of personal and social challenges with an inclusive awareness of human needs and emotions. The result is a sensemaking tool developed through an iterative process over 28 years during my work as a mediator, university lecturer, facilitator, coach, and student of conflict and needs theories. My training and certification in Somatic Experiencing also contributed to formulating the conceptual model.³

The Scope and Structure of this Article

The debate over whether human beings are motivated by self-interest and/or higher motives is not engaged here. What I posit in this article is that conflict results from one's self-interest in getting one's own unmet needs met and that both self-interest and our beliefs about our own needs serve one goal: to ensure our survival. I refer to this part of our psyche as the *protective body-mind*, defined as an innate human system that keeps the organism safe by integrating its thoughts, images, emotions, body sensations, and movement in self-defense.

As I describe in more detail later, our survival mechanisms are dependent on a close interaction between body and mind. This system triggers our defense response when danger is perceived. The model provides a map to make conscious the often-unconscious drivers and beliefs that fuel this needs system. My aim here is twofold: to present the Human Needs Map as a systems model that integrates human needs and emotions in a circular matrix; second, to describe the internal dynamics through which this system adapts to its environment.

In part 1, I recount my journey developing this model. Part 2 offers a concise overview of the model's components. In part 3 I focus on the internal logic of the Human Needs Map, exploring the interconnectedness of its elements and its deep ties to fundamental human emotions. Part 4 draws attention to the unique role played by the survival needs—physical aliveness and safety—within the protective body-mind system. Part 5 examines the ways in which the protective body-mind system adapts to its surroundings, particularly during childhood, and

³ Somatic Experiencing is a trauma healing modality developed by Peter Levine (1997).

the potential challenges this adaptation can pose later in life. Part 6 provides an in-depth analysis of the need for identity, including the influence of narratives, values, and beliefs on the emergence and perpetuation of conflict dynamics. Part 7 summarizes the insights and findings presented.

Part 1. Brief Review of Human Needs Models: An Epistemological Journey

The Human Needs Map emerged from my doctoral research in the social anthropology of the Oslo Accords of 1995–2000, specifically Israeli-Palestinian security coordination. My movement background in dance ethnology and more specifically by the experiential and mental framework of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), strongly influenced my thinking. Movement philosopher and choreographer Rudolf von Laban (1879-1958), together with Warren Lamb and others, developed a method and language to describe human movement. They conceptualized "body, effort, shape, and space" as a system in which the human body moves in and interacts with space, whereby any one part impacts the whole. The tetrahedron formed through the ongoing dynamic interaction between bodyeffort-shape-space represents the human being's expressive movement as an adaptive response to the environment. This framework underlies how I perceive and witness human needs interacting and adapting as an interdependent dynamic system in response to the environment.

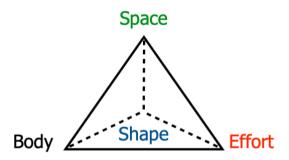


Figure 1. Laban Movement Analysis Represents Four Aspects of Human Movement (Laban/Bartinieff Institute of Movement Studies [LIMS], 1978).

With an awareness of nonverbal behavior in general and skilled training in LMA, I entered the West Bank and Gaza Strip/Palestine in 1996 to research the negotiation of relations on the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Patrols. I witnessed a fluid system reflecting the embodiment of change (Heifetz-Yahav, 2005) where military men, members of the PLO, and Israeli security forces, who had been enemy fighters, became their own nonmediated peacekeeping force. Their assignment required overcoming many challenges, including negotiating emotions and changing their expressive behavior to make peacebuilding possible.

My prior training in nonviolent communication (NVC) with Marshall Rosenberg brought another dimension to my fieldwork and subsequent activities in teaching and mediating. NVC makes explicit the relationship between emotions and human needs: namely that conflict involves emotions as a currency. One of my key findings was the crucial importance that emotions play in the negotiation of relationships, the building of trust, and the transition from fighters to peacekeepers (Heifetz-Yahav, 2002).

The next epistemological benchmark occurred in the years 2002–2005 when I was involved in Track II negotiations,⁴ teaching graduate students, and serving as an advisory member of the Israeli security forces' Crisis Management Team. Experimenting with the language of "needs" vs. "interests," I noted that explicitly using the term "needs" elicited a wide range of unexpected emotions and a deeper sense of understanding. Inquiring about needs rather than interests resulted in the other party feeling more heard and understood, thus bringing more "peace into the room" (Bowling & Hoffman, 2000). In contrast, discussions that used the term "interests" lacked the emotion-rich expression that communicates "I understand you, what is important to you, and why"—sentiments more conducive to building trust.

By 2009 the model began to take concrete form. My graduate students in the International Conflict Resolution and Mediation Program at Tel Aviv University were assigned fieldwork to map the conflict in Wadi Nisnas, a mixed Muslim, Jewish, and Christian neighborhood in Haifa. Their research results and later my own workshops in expressive movement and leadership development gave me more insight into ways of mapping human needs that could provide a coherent structure for understanding and helping to resolve human conflict interpersonally and at the societal level. To help my students make sense of the needs dynamics in the field, Abraham Maslow's hierarchy provided an entry point.

American psychologist Abraham Maslow (1908–1970), perhaps the best-known theorist of human needs, describes the movement of individual motivation toward self-actualization and well-being. Maslow's hierarchy is commonly recognized to represent needs that sequence upward toward the next level after the need at any given level is satisfied. The problem with Maslow's theory, in the context of conflict, is that we do not satisfy one need and proceed to the next because there are situations where we may give up our "lower" needs for our "higher" needs. For example, Maslow's hierarchy does not explain why people sacrifice their own life or the lives of their children (survival = lower need) for a cause (self-actualization = higher need), or why busy executives sacrifice family life (love = lower need) for success (esteem = higher need). Maslow's model is designed for human potential, not for explaining the dynamics of conflict.

⁴ Track II negotiation or diplomacy refers to mediation between nongovernmental, unofficial, and informal stakeholders, such as university professors, lawyers, and private citizens and groups.

Ample literature on conflict and conflict resolution recognizes many factors beyond scarcity of physical resources to motivate conflict. Identity-based conflict is well established in the literature on war and peace (Rothman, 1997; Sen, 2007; Smyth, 2002). Others note identity combined with emotions (Shapiro, 2010), such as pride (De Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003), and humiliation (Lindner, 2006). Human Needs Theory (Avruch, 2013; Burton, 1990, 1998; Lederer et al., 1980; Sites, 1973) brought the direct focus to human needs and the deprivation of those needs as the cause of conflict. These theorists identified various needs as the source of conflict when they are unmet. The prominent sociologist and diplomat John Burton created a list consistent with and inspired by other scholars, such as Paul Sites, a contemporary of Burton's. Another influencer in the field of human needs is the "father of peace studies," Johan Galtung (1969), who proposed four groups of basic human needs: well-being, survival, identity, and freedom.

Chilean-born economist Manfred Max-Neef (1991) created a unique systems perspective of human needs. He designed a Human Needs Matrix as a "taxonomy of human needs" that identifies nine fundamental needs and their relationship to four existential categories: being, having, doing, and interacting. Years later, Harvard negotiators and peace scholars Roger Fisher and Daniel Shapiro (2005) developed their Core Concerns Framework, which is based on five key human motivations: appreciation, affiliation, autonomy, status, and role.

HUMAN NEEDS THEORISTS

MASLOW	GALTUNG	MAX-NEEF	<u>SITES</u>	<u>BURTON</u>	ROSENBERG	FISCHER/ SHAPIRO
Self Actualisation		Understanding	Rational Stimulation	Personal Fulfillment	Spiritual Communion	Appreciation
Esteem		Creation	Recognition	Self-Esteem	Creation	Status
Love/ Belonging	Well Being Needs	Affection	Emotional Stimulation	Belonging	Love/Integrity	Affiliation
Safety/ Security		Protection	Control	Safety/ Security	Interdependence	Belonging
Physiological	Survival Needs	Subsistance	Justice	Distributive Justice	Physical Nurturance	
	Identity Needs	Identity	Meaning	Identity/ Culture	Autonomy	Autonomy
		Participation	Participation	Recognition	Play	Role
	Freedom Needs	Freedom			Freedom	
		Idleness/ Leisure				

Table 1. A Summary of the Needs Identified by Human Needs Theorists (Deborah Heifetz, 2018).

First Iteration of a Needs Map

To build my own model, I initially used specific needs identified by Maslow and Burton, according to what seemed most salient from preliminary fieldwork I had conducted. My first Human Needs Map included four interrelated human needs: three from Maslow and adding Burton's belonging/attachment. I excluded Maslow's self-actualization because I discerned that conflicts which people kill and die for do not involve that need. Thus my first Human Needs Map consisted of four needs initially defined as follows:

- 1. Safety/Security: the need for predictability, control, stability, and freedom from fear and anxiety.
- 2. Belongingness/Attachment: the need for inclusion in relationships, to be accepted by others, and to have strong personal ties with one's family, friends, and identity groups.
- 3. Self-esteem: the need to be valued by others and oneself; the need to know that one can impact one's environment.
- 4. Fairness/Justice: the need for the fair allocation of resources among all members of one's community.

Safety/Security Belonging/Attachment Self-Esteem

NEEDS MAPPING: 4 INTERRELATED ESSENTIAL HUMAN NEEDS

Aviv University 2009

Figure 2. First Iteration of the Human Needs Map (Deborah Heifetz, 2009).

Fairness

Field research soon revealed the model was incomplete. I revised the diagram to include identity and culture, to make explicit common themes present in identity-based conflict. The unmet need for identity reflects the struggle for culture, cultural values, practices, and historical narratives—for meaningmaking. That is why, in the revised model, I bundled the need for identity with Galtung's and Sites's needs for meaning. And as my students' fieldwork in Haifa also surfaced the struggle over equal voice and resources as a core theme, I added

Max-Neef's need for freedom as a sixth need. However, something was missing that I saw but could not yet name.

NEEDS MAPPING: 6 INTERRELATED ESSENTIAL HUMAN NEEDS

Safety/Security Identity/Meaning Self-Esteem Belonging/Attachment Freedom Fairness Tel Aviv University, 2009

Figure 3. Second Iteration of the Human Needs Map (Deborah Heifetz, 2012).

Adding Physical Aliveness and Creating the Hungers

From 2014–2018 I co-developed and lead a series of Embodied Leadership Training (ELT) workshops with movement expert Judy Gantz. The workshops explored the body as a resource—a discovery process which uncovered the deeper somatic meanings of what I would name as physical aliveness. Ten years earlier I had sensed this idea when co-teaching a course on gender and terrorism at the Institute for Counter-Terrorism in Herzliya, Israel. Embodiment is absent from conflict models. Yet sexual desire plays a role in suicide terrorism where "martyrs" anticipate the embodied pleasurable experience awaiting them in paradise (Berko, 2009). Indeed, sexual pleasure has played a similar motivating role since the beginning of warfare where conquered women have been considered fair bounty to rape (Alison, 2007). Our embodiment as both sensual and sexual beings driven by pleasure plays a crucial role in discussions about human needs and conflict. Thus, I included *physical aliveness* as a central driving force among all human needs and initially placed it in the middle of the Human Needs Map.

Simultaneously, influenced by nonacademic models such as the Jungianinspired shadow work, I grouped needs into energetic archetypical qualities that I named "hungers." In the process, I integrated a central concept from macrotheories of conflict—i.e., the use and exercise of power in its many forms, including group competition, control, and access to resources (Robbins & Leibowitz, 2021). Power is included as a hunger within the model that includes the need for fairness.

Figure 4. Third Iteration of the Human Needs Map (Deborah Heifetz, 2017).

Fairness, Autonomy, and the Four Hungers

Placing the needs both relative to each other and in relation to four directions completed the model. Exposing the model to numerous people of varied backgrounds elicited consistent responses regarding the position of safety/security. Aligning the map visually with Maslow's hierarchy helped people better understand the model. Further, I chose to focus on fairness over justice because the terms tend to elicit different reactions. For example, when "fairness" was used during a Track II negotiation, the conversation opened for subjective perspectives and feelings such as: "I feel angry and unfairly treated." Communicating with ideas of fairness in mind can lead to constructive, revealing, and "feelingful" inquiries that are conducive to naming the repair for the harm done. Eliciting memories of hurt and pain are core topics for restorative justice (Zehr, 2015) in contrast to legal punishment and retribution.

I then combined fairness with autonomy to form a needs pair for the power hunger, integrating the common strains between autonomy and belonging elaborated by peace scholar and negotiator, Dan Shapiro (2017). Drawing from training in trauma healing, I recognized that physical aliveness and safety create a needs pair for survival, and thus the model took its present form—a circular matrix consisting of four hungers and eight needs grouped into four needs pairs (see Figure 5) and positioned around the circle in a specific spatial configuration:

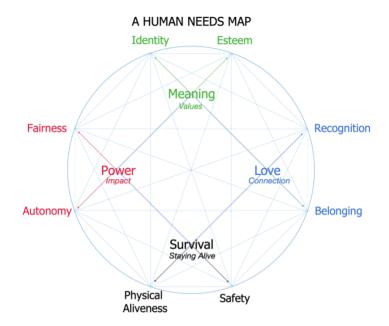


Figure 5. Fourth Iteration of the Human Needs Map (Deborah Heifetz, 2019).

Part 2. The Hungers and Their Associated Needs Pairs

This section briefly describes the four hungers and their associated needs pairs using the following working definitions of hungers and needs:

- 1. Hungers: A hunger is "an inner drive to feel a certain quality, and attain a certain state"5 of being where one finds unique variations of pleasurable sensations. The state is achieved through the satisfaction of the *hunger's* needs pair.
- 2. Needs: Needs are human requirements that call for a response. I draw from Masini's definition of needs where "Needs can be understood abstractly to refer to those human requirements calling for a response that makes human survival and development possible in a given society" (Masini, 1980, p. 227, as cited in Sites, 1990, p. 10).

⁵ Jerome Kagan, personal communication. Professor Kagan helped me formulate the definition of the hungers during a discussion of the Human Needs Map in 2019.

SURVIVAL NEEDS

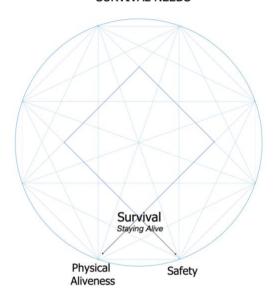


Figure 6. The Hunger for Survival with the Needs Pair (Deborah Heifetz, 2019).

The *hunger for survival* is the drive to stay alive as an individual and as a tribe (i.e., one's group or community) by seeking pleasure and avoiding harm. Survival involves actions and reactions such as searching for opportunities or guarding against or retreating from dangers in the environment. The survival needs are *physical aliveness* and *safety*. Humans expand, release, and open toward sensual, emotional, and intellectual delight, and contract, tighten, and close when facing or even anticipating pain. These foundations of our internal and external tracking response, which we are made aware of by focusing on the "felt sense" (Gendlin, 1998) for enjoyable and uncomfortable feelings, are grounded in the hedonic tones of pleasure and pain (Fogel, 2009, p. 39). The two needs permeate all other needs through the ongoing expansive drive for growth and gratification restrained by the protective responses to perceived harm and unbearable pain.

The Hunger for LOVE: Feeling Cared For and Cared About

SURVIVAL NEEDS Recognition Love Belonging Survival Physical Safety Aliveness

Figure 7. Including the Hunger for Love with Its Needs Pair (Deborah Heifetz, 2019).

The hunger for love is the drive for the warm feeling, tender touch, secure embrace, and vulnerable trust—an experience captured in German term Geborgenheit—achieved through caring personal relationships. For human beings, safety is inseparable from social engagement. Over the past decades, neuroscience has confirmed that we are wired to find security through human connection (Porgas, 2001; Siegel, 1999). The love needs are belonging and recognition. Belonging mobilizes us to find care and stability through relationships and group inclusion. Recognition provides the calming ease and reassurance when we feel seen and understood by others; when we sense that our needs and feelings matter. "Active listening" or telling one's story during conferencing sessions for restorative justice (Zehr, 2015) can generate feelings that one's "story" matters, and that being understood is a valuable use of time spent, assuaging the wounded need of the victim.

The Hunger for POWER: My Ability to Exert Impact

SURVIVAL, LOVE AND POWER NEEDS

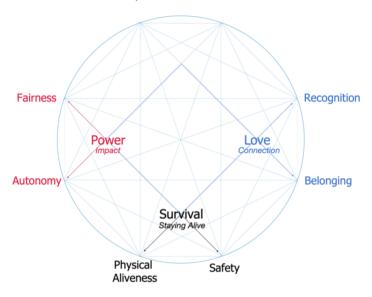


Figure 8. Including the Hunger for Power with Its Needs Pair (Deborah Heifetz, 2019).

The hunger for power is the mobilizing force to impact other people and direct our own lives. Power is an expressive energetic potency to exercise agency. It channels our determination to both express our will and ensure access to resources. Our drive for power mobilizes our needs for autonomy and fairness and gives us the inner capacity to set boundaries and stand up for ourselves when we perceive unfair treatment. There can be immense hedonic pleasure in exerting our will; the shadow side is the seductive pleasure of overpowering others (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017) or even killing others if the urge is not held in check.

The Hunger for MEANING: My Values and Value



Figure 9. Including the Hunger for Meaning with Its Needs Pair (Deborah Heifetz, 2019).

The hunger for meaning directs our passion to make sense of ourselves and the world. It mobilizes us to find direction in our lives, to know what we stand for, and clarify how to live in integrity with our values through the innate capacity for identification—i.e., internalizing our group's value system (see, e.g., Brown, 2000, on Social Identity Theory). The needs for esteem and identity satisfy our hunger for meaning. Our identity orients our path toward the "true way" and defines who we are and who we are not by our beliefs, ideals, and morals. The esteem need is the motivating force to build and preserve our personal self-worth and value, gaining both self-respect and the respect of others. Esteem often aligns with our social position within a community and family, thus making us vulnerable to insult and risk, with practical and potentially destructive consequences of losing prestige and in turn, access to resources.

Part 3. Uncovering the Map's Internal Logic

To explain the Human Needs Map as a structured system of human needs and emotions, I found an invaluable resource in my life partner, Frieder Krups.⁶ Our synergy unearthed a compelling internal logic for how and why these needs interact with each other, and how specific needs and emotions are connected.

The Axes: Tensions Between the Hungers

TENSIONS BETWEEN THE HUNGERS Identity Esteem Meaning Fairness Recognition Love Power Autonomy Belonging Survival Physical Safety Aliveness

Figure 10. Tension Patterns and the Four Hungers (Deborah Heifetz, 2020).

The model intentionally positions the *hunger* categories—love & power and survival & meaning—along horizontal and vertical axes, respectively, to represent the common stresses found in everyday life. One often sees the struggle between *love* and *power* in troubled relationships when couples negotiate between standing up for themselves and their desire for intimacy and connection. On a societal level, countries that aspire to membership in a regional group such as the European Union (EU) must find ways to compromise when

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⁶ Frieder Krups has been a creative thinking partner in developing tools relevant for coaching that deepen self-awareness. He holds an engineering degree from MIT and an MBA from Stanford. He is a former business leader, active in leadership coaching and group facilitation for more than 20 years, and extensively trained in a broad range of inner work methodologies.

their own needs and the needs of their potential EU partners do not align.

Similar strains also become apparent on the vertical axis between survival and meaning. Abandoning one's values to survive or save a business is consistent with Maslow's hierarchy; however, sacrificing one's own life or the lives of loved ones for an idea or belief subverts the priority to *survive*. On a societal level, governments have gone to war to reclaim their lost honor. Having been humiliated by the Allies after the First World War, Hitler mobilized Germany to regain Germany's national honor (esteem).

Tribal and Individual Needs

Another layer of discernment is the distinction between needs that strengthen the group—i.e., one's "tribe"—and needs that reinforce the individual in the tribe. Borrowing from Shapiro (2010), I use "tribe" to refer to a "socially and psychologically constructed [group] . . . whose members see themselves as (a) like-kinded, (b) kinlike in their relational connection, and (c) emotionally invested in their group's enhancement" (p. 638). Being part of a strong tribe is crucial to human survival; thus, there are needs that bolster the coherence of the tribe, ensure reciprocity between tribe members, and strengthen the tribe's identity. In contrast, other needs strengthen an individual's personal sense of vitality and empowerment, their feelings of connection, and their position or status as a tribe member. The natural tensions between "tribal" needs and "individual" needs creates a dynamic system in flux that is striving and adapting to ensure the survival of both the individual and the tribe.

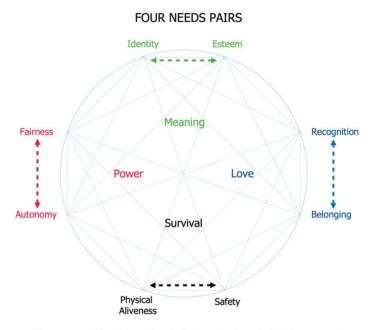


Figure 11. The Four Needs Pairs (Deborah Heifetz, 2020).

Tensions Within Needs Pairs

Belonging (Tribal Need) and Recognition (Individual Need)

Our need for *belonging* ensures that we seek relationships and membership through connection and inclusion. At the same time, our individual well-being is safeguarded when our personal yearnings and demands are acknowledged, and others consider our needs through the underlying quality of attuned connection and care (*recognition*).

Autonomy (Individual Need) and Fairness (Tribal Need)

The need for *autonomy* compels us to express our will, our voice, and point of view to others, to stand up alone and direct our own lives. The need for *fairness* generates the energy to react when someone attempts to take advantage of us. Rules of *fairness* provide moderating pressure on self-interest while structured agreements formalize reciprocity (Fehr & Gächter, 2000).

Esteem (Individual Need) and Identity (Tribal Need)

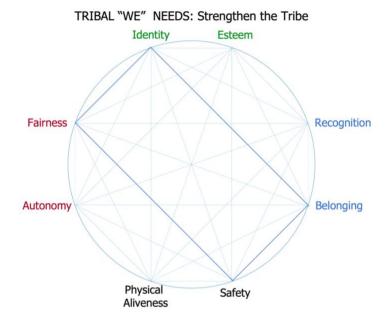
Our need for *esteem* drives us to feel valued and attain a position of stature within our group. What constitutes value, though, and what values we need to adhere to, is defined by our *identity*. It is our need for *identity* that compels us to adhere to the values and rules of our group. Were we to violate the group's values, we would lose status and respect.

Physical Aliveness (Individual Need) and Safety (Tribal Need)

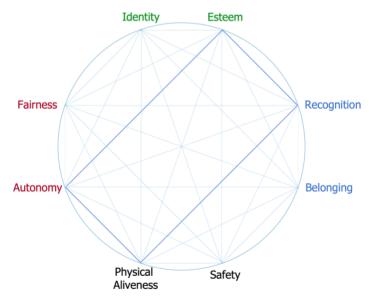
The need for physical *aliveness* is an internal expansive force that pushes us toward pleasure and away from unpleasantness in all areas of life. The need is attenuated by the restraining need for *safety*, the need to be alert and ready to react to external signs of danger that might threaten our lives or create unbearable pain or harm.

Diagonals Represent Synergies Between Individual and Tribal **Needs**

An elegant internal geometry emerges when the individual needs and the tribal needs are combined. In lieu of tensions, their interactions create synergies.



INDIVIDUAL "I" NEEDS: Strengthen the Individual in the Tribe



Figures 12 and 13. The Diagonals Group the Tribal and Individual Needs into Patterns of Synergy (Deborah Heifetz, 2020).

Tribal Needs

Tribal needs strengthen the coherence and robustness of the group. A group's sociocultural identity set the parameters for a shared inclusive experience of belonging. A strong sense of belonging bolsters the cohesion of the group, and as more people join, safety increases in an inclusive, cohesive group. Furthermore, a group's values dictate the guidelines of fairness that clarify agreements to secure reciprocity; those agreements conribute to the tribe's legitimacy and its members' trust in it. Rules of fairness create an atmosphere of security, which in turn motivates a desire to be part of the group.

Individual Needs

Individual needs strengthen the individual in the tribe. Physical aliveness is the source of vitality, mobilizing our inner will to assert our autonomy, stand up for ourselves, and exercise personal agency. When we can direct these internal energies with the force of determination, we become more capable of responding to inner and external resistance, which empowers us to excel and increase our worth and stature in areas we value and that are valued by our tribe. We gain both self-esteem and respect from those in our tribe. And when we feel self-respect and earn social respect, our voice is more likely to be heard; when that happens, we feel seen, appreciated, and considered (recognition).

Hungers and Emotions: Foundations of the Self

The claim that core emotions are aligned with human needs is consistent with arguments made by Marshall Rosenberg as well as many scholars of Human Needs Theory. As noted by Sites: "Because needs cannot be directly observed, all we can do is to conceptualize a need as existing when certain emotions are observed or reported since, as indicated, needs are tied to emotions" (1990, p. 10). Despite a robust literature on emotions and conflict (Halperin & Schwartz, 2010) and emotions in groups, whereby emotions are felt by the collective (Barbalet, 1998; De Rivera et al., 2007), no framework specifically and explicitly integrates the relationship between emotions and needs as a total system. Drawing a direct connection between hungers and core emotions may help fill this gap. Studying very young children offers a window of opportunity for insights before acculturation has socialized their expression of emotions (Lutz & White, 1986).

Emotions are recognized as universally human expressive experiences (Darwin, 2009; Ekman et al., 1969). Children communicate *fear*, *sadness*, *anger*, and *shame* in their raw uncivilized or untrained expression—four primary human emotions that are observable cross-culturally and in people who are blind (Barkow et al., 1973; Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1973). Over the first four years of life these emotions become visible; they are both exhibited in the face and expressed in body movements (Melzer et al., 2019).

I define emotions as human energy—"energies in motion"—that mobilizes the body into action and communicates both to ourselves and to others when something is right and when something is wrong (one's needs are unmet). Emotions create an expressive energy that affects the people around us and compels others to react. Emotions can be described by their internally felt "energy" intensity and, like physical aliveness, their hedonic tone of pleasure and pain (Brackett, 2019). Yet, if emotions express the status of our needs and communicate information to the people around us, is there a direct connection between specific emotions and specific needs?

My initial inspiration to investigate whether a direct connection exists came from shadow work, a personal development model based on principles of Jungian psychology. The shadow work method works with four Jungian archetypes, each of which can be accessed through a specific emotion: magician (fear); lover (sadness); warrior (anger); and sovereign (shame/joy). Because these archetypes seem to be consistent with the four hungers from the Human Needs Map, it sparked the idea that if the archetypes are aligned to emotions, perhaps the hungers are as well. Might these four core emotions serve both to create an awareness that a specific *hunger* is at risk and provide the appropriate response (McLaren, 2010) as "energies in motion" to help achieve that hunger's unique qualitative state? Consider the following:

- Fear mobilizes an alert awareness, making the body ready to meet impending dangers to a person's *survival*.
- Sadness softens personal boundaries, attracting and drawing other people's attention to care. It is a call for *love*.
- Anger fuels inner- and outward-directed energy, connecting us to our forceful determination, grit and power, enabling us to stand up for ourselves and set clear boundaries.
- Shame is an inward-directed energy that invites humbling selfreflection about whether our actions conform to our values whether our thoughts and behavior align with our *meaning*.

Although the arguments for such direct connections seem compelling, emotions are not static. They are highly dependent on culture, disposition, and learning. I found the link with early childhood development to be persuasive, which could more solidly ground these claims.

⁷ See also https://shadowwork.com/.

Hungers and Child Development

Theories of psychosocial development describe different stages of child development (see the work of Erik Erikson, John Bowlby, Jerome Kagan, Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, and Robert Kegan). As a child grows from full dependency on its caregiver to successively greater levels of independence over the first four years of life, different sets of needs seem to emerge sequentially. The stages correspond with the capacity for the child to verbally and nonverbally express core emotions.

These theoretical arguments were consistent with my own experience as an actively engaged mother and avid student of child development raising three sons. When I consulted with the renowned child development scholar Jerome Kagan and walked him through my conceptual model, he confirmed that, indeed, the emergence of the *hungers* is consistent with the developmental stages of early childhood development presented by Freud (1905/1953) and Erikson (1963).

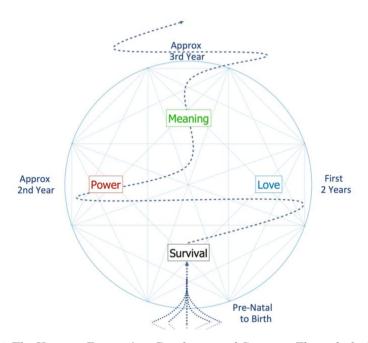


Figure 14. The Hungers Emerge in a Developmental Sequence Through the Life Force (Deborah Heifetz, 2020).

Aligning Emotions and Hungers

The four *hungers* and their related emotions emerge as milestones in early childhood because emotions express important building blocks in awareness and individuation (Izard, 2009). They help guide our perceptions and motivate us to learn and discern what and whom to trust, where to place our attention,

and what conclusions to reach about life, other people, and ourselves. The development of each emotion also goes through stages of maturation.8

The hypothesis stated here is that a synergistic connection exists between specific hungers and emotions and that the maturation of conscious awareness and individuation is consistent with each specific hunger "coming online" in child development and with the ability for children to clearly express the corresponding core emotion verbally and nonverbally.

Fear and the Hunger for Survival

Fear is an emotion already present at birth and observable in the Moro reflex, which induces heightened visual and auditory scanning to notice sensory cues of potential harm. Fear is part of the defense response—i.e., the physical reaction to perceived danger that mobilizes the body to fight, flight, freeze, or collapse. Fear triggers alertness in the eyes and ears to seek out external danger, and readiness in our extremities to defend against or run away from danger. Our body prepares physically to engage our autonomic nervous system once the threat is located. During early development, fear mobilizes the infant to locate and reach out for arms that will hold and protect it.

Sadness and the Hunger for Love

A newborn infant is fully dependent on a caretaker for survival. When a baby's physical discomfort or pain is not assuaged, the baby cries. During the first year of life, the infant begins to shed tears, consistent with its growing awareness of separation. Crying is a call for love, a call for attunement through the rhythmicity of connection and understanding. The emotion of sadness softly invites other people to notice and care. Sadness softens boundaries, making the sad person vulnerable and receptive.

Anger and the Hunger for Power

By the age of approximately two and a half, the child enters the "terrible twos" the developmental stage that captivates our blossoming urges to experience power. The two-to-three-year-old is aware of being separate and capable of exerting their own will. Awareness of separateness fuels the child's energy to experiment. The child watches and tests how people respond to their behavior,

⁸ The infant's cry can have numerous meanings, including immature expressions of sadness, anger, frustration, and pain. Even emotions that express moral conscience can be seen in babies as young as 17 months old (Barrett, 2005). However, the argument being made is that core emotions identify, and support four early stages as presented here.

discovering their own capacity to create cause and effect. We strengthen ourselves by doing things alone, discovering the boundaries of our will and its impact on relationships. When deprived of power, we get mad. During this developmental phase, we begin to master the word "no" and test whether our "no" risks losing significant connections.

Shame and the Hunger for Meaning

By roughly age three and a half, the child can clearly express shame and guilt. Decades of research have revealed that preschoolers reliably express self-conscious emotions (Thompson & Newton, 2010); even toddlers already show a range of "guilt-like" and "shame-like" behaviors (Barrett, 2005; Lagattuta & Thompson, 2007). Feeling shame ensures that the family's and community's values are kept safe, and that we behave within the bounds of these norms. Shame dares us to self-reflect in humility, to ask ourselves what we value and what we do not (Brown, 2012).

Happiness, Ease, and Emotions of Well-Being

Happiness is the core pleasurable emotion expressed when we feel secure (survival), loved (love), empowered (power), and valued (meaning) for who and how we are.

In summary, the detour into human emotions reveals that:

- 1. The relationship between emotions and needs maintains human survival because emotions can support the satisfaction of human needs.
- 2. *Hungers* arise developmentally with core human emotions that serve the specific developmental stage.
- 3. There exists a fundamental relationship between human emotions and needs before culture and memory create high variability in the expression, perception, and alignment of needs and emotions.

Part 4. The Special Role of Safety and Physical Aliveness

The survival needs, physical aliveness and safety, play a special role in the protective body-mind because they permeate all other needs. In the case of our need for safety, when our senses signal a perceived threat to any of our needs, such as feeling criticized (identity), demeaned (esteem), misunderstood (recognition), unfairly treated (fairness), forced (autonomy), excluded (belonging), or unsafe (safety), we can be triggered into self-defense. Such moments activate our physical aliveness to constrict, collapse, freeze, or explode in an exertion of force to protect ourselves as if our survival is at risk. Human resources researchers Patterson and colleagues (2011), studied thousands of organizations

and found that when people are triggered, they tend to exhibit what they call "violence or silence."

Identity Esteem Recognition **Fairness** Autonomy Belonging Physical Safety Aliveness

TRIGGERED NEEDS DEFEND US FROM HARM

Figure 15. Defending all Needs Through Triggered Physical Aliveness and Safety (Deborah Heifetz, 2020).

The challenge in reactive situations is to regulate the initial defense response that pendulates between anger (fight) and fear (flight/freeze). When overtaken by defense-induced emotions and physical reactions, our curiosity and ability to think clearly are compromised. For example, when feeling criticized, "people may have fears that self-esteem will be damaged . . . or people may become angry when self-esteem is threatened" (Sites, 1990, p. 22) rather than curious about the cause or legitimacy of the criticism.

Self-regulation restores our capacity to "think with feeling" by engaging embodied self-awareness (Fogel, 2013). To notice, pause, name the triggered experience and follow the breath, "breathing in and out" (Hanh, 1987) builds selfreguation. Witnessing oneself restores a state of presence, which mediators have described as "bringing peace into the room" (Bowling & Hoffman, 2000). Neuroscience confirms that modulating the bodily symptoms of the overwhelm can regulate the hijacked brain (Siegel, 1999; van der Kolk, 2014) and restore our minds and bodies to relaxed alertness (Eddy, 2016). With access to our conscious mind, we are better able to evaluate a situation, find the needs at risk, and allow the effective emotional energies to emerge.

Like the need for safety, the need for physical aliveness permeates all other needs. We feel pleasurable sensations whenever any of our needs are especially satisfied. Different qualities of "feeling good" arise when we win a match (autonomy) or feel fully understood (recognition). In contrast, varying unpleasant sensations stir when our projects do not move (autonomy) or when intimacy is

missing (*belonging*). When our *esteem* is influenced in these situations, such as winning a match where our self-worth is impacted, additional qualities emerge.

Regularly witnessing our body's internal landscapes builds capacity to recognize variations of pleasure and discomfort, enabling greater access to our curiosity and integrated mind. Without self-regulation and self-reflection, our emotional reactions can easily be destructive. Getting angry at our spouse for arriving home late will not bring us the intimacy or understanding we seek; expressing our sadness, our loneliness, and our wish for closeness might.

Part 5. Adapting Through Beliefs

As infants and small children, we depend on our protective body-mind system to help us survive until our conscious minds mature. Should we encounter resistance, disconnection, or inadequate responses—despite our expressive and verbal appeals—our protective body-mind reacts and adjusts. Interpreting the direct and indirect messages received, we develop strategies that help us survive. One way to adapt is by creating beliefs that impact how sensitively we perceive certain needs to be threatened, and others less so. For example, in a strong cohesive family where a little girl was critically judged as spoiled and selfish for asserting her will, she formed the following belief: "If I exert my will (autonomy), then my father will reject me as spoiled and selfish." This belief immobilized her at the time. Over the years, she develops a pattern of avoiding the high risk of losing value in her family (esteem) by suppressing her will to stand up for herself. To prevent becoming "the spoiled, selfish girl" (identity) rejected by her father (belonging), she blocks her need for autonomy. By not practicing how to effectively assert her will, she does not develop the skill to make clear and calm requests for what she really needs. As an adult, she at times finds herself unable to identify or feel her needs at all, expressed by comments such as: "I don't know what my needs are."

As grownups, we may skew the way we take in and respond to reality because our *protective body-mind* perceives similar sensory inputs recalled from a past painful situation. The result has several consquences, two of which are the following: If a need is sensitized, the event can be translated as overly threatening. In contrast, if the need is numbed, our *protective body-mind* does not sufficiently recognize the real risk of a situation. As a result, we may either overreact or neglect to react.

For example, a person with a need sensitivity for esteem may be inclined to react defensively when their opinion is challenged or criticized. Likewise, a person with a numbed need for safety who believes "there's nothing to be afraid of" might underestimate a dangerous off-piste and ski recklessly; or a numbed need for belonging who believes "I don't need anybody", might neither feel nor understand how their behavior creates feelings of neglect in their spouse.

Individuals who have numbed their needs for safety may have difficulty appreciating the fear of someone who is sensitive around risk and physical

danger. This raises another challenge of having over- or under-sensitive needs: we tend to judge those who are especially sensitive to a need that we have numbed in ourselves.

In summary, the values, beliefs, and automatic reaction patterns of our protective body-mind create sensitivities around certain needs and numb others. They provide us with important skills for tackling the challenges of childhood and youth, skills that may be the key to success as adults. At the same time, the resulting imbalances in sensitivities often become the reason for our challenges.

Part 6. Identity and Conflict

The goal of this section is twofold: to show the important role that the need for identity plays in our defensive reactions and the function it serves in shaping the emotions and narratives that perpetuate conflict over generations.

Identity is one of eight needs in a dynamic needs system and is recognized here not as a "thing" or a static entity but as a socially constructed experience of the self. Identity comprises all products of culture including our values, beliefs, practices, language, and rituals (Handelman & Lindquist, 2004; Mead, 2001; Turner, 1966). Our identity brings meaning to our lives because it clarifies where we belong, how we should behave, and what roles we should play. These may be openly defined in our stories or subtly embedded in religious beliefs, rituals, or cultural norms that classify certain things, thoughts, and acts as clean or dirty (Douglas, 2002), from the food we eat and clothes we wear, to the sexual behavior we enjoy, and ways we celebrate life and commemorate death. As such, our values not only affect the identity need but also influence the relative importance we give to each of our needs and the acceptable ways of satisfying them. Beliefs such as "you have to work hard," "education is everything," and "you should never show weakness" become part of our identity, moral standards, and culture.

Changing such values or beliefs can be extremely difficult. From the perspective of our protective body-mind, letting go of beliefs that once ensured our survival feels dangerous. Since beliefs are the basis of our identity, then shifting our belief system can be disorienting because identity determines how we make sense of the world and our place in it. This makes our beliefs resistant to change. We tend to pass down our beliefs, values and identities through our culture from generation to generation, including our sensitivities, traumatic memories, and stories that perpetuate conflict.

WOUNDED NEEDS CREATE SENSITIVITIES & BELIEFS Meaning Identity **Esteem** "We are the true native" "This is the only way to regain our honor" Fairness Recognition "It is an historic injustice" "They don't see my pain" Power Love **Autonomy** Belonging "We have no choice "We belong here too" Physical Aliveness Safety "They are out to kill us" "We must live for today" Survival

Figure 16. Beliefs That Arise from the Pain of Unmet Needs (Deborah Heifetz, 2023).

Recall the example presented at the beginning of this article during a peacebuilding encounter that I witnessed. What light can the Human Needs Map shed on the Palestinian commander's perception that "Israelis think without feeling"? How might insights into human needs, sensitivities and numbing provide a mental framework to describe the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship during the Oslo period and be helpful for designing future peacebuilding?

I resist tackling this question during the present Hamas-Israeli war in Gaza because there is so much more complexity to and suffering from the conflict than can be discussed here. It is possible, however, to examine the relative priority both sides assign to different needs based on their traumatic histories. Each side has histories in which they encountered inescapable danger to their needs and created narratives that made sense of their realities, which then became embedded in their respective identities. To illustrate this point, I draw from my experience in peace work.

The Jewish people have known slavery, diaspora, Inquisition, pogroms, Holocaust, expulsions, and racism spanning at least 2,000 years, compounded by the experience of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Many Israeli soldiers I encountered during my research expressed beliefs such as "they are out to kill us" and "if I lower my guard, I will be attacked." As an army, their needs and role

⁹ These include the 1929 Hebron massacre; wars in 1947, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982; Intifada 1; the Oslo Accords; Intifada 2, suicide terrorism; general terrorism fueled by the narrative that Israel has no right to exist as a foreign non-native colonial project, and more.

to ensure safety took priority; they aimed to control the situation through checkpoints, house raids, and various security-based measures, which continued during the Oslo period. Military control (autonomy) mobilized in service of survival compounded a sensitized need for safety. At the same time—stemming from an Israeli cultural rebellion by the early pioneers against European aristocracy—Israeli culture places a low value on formality generally perceived as a "false" etiquette (numbed esteem) (Griefat & Katriel, 1989). Politeness and saving face hold little value when measured against saving life. How could the protective body-minds of Israelis and Israeli military risk flexibility with their security procedures if Palestinians are seen as unpredictable, dangerous, and ultimately unwilling to accept Israel as a legitimate "native" state (Qleibo, 1992)?

Let us return to Nabil, the Palestinian officer, to whom the situation looked different. Peacebuilding involved shifting power dynamics to create a semblance of equivalence between Israeli and Palestinian security forces. Great value had been placed on equality (fairness), respect (esteem) and affirmation of Palestinian identity (Griefat & Katriel, 1989) among the peacekeeping soldiers. Nabil was puzzled by Israelis' fear for their security (safety), given their superior military and economic power. To him, it made no sense to make a Palestinian elder stand by the fence waiting for an Israeli soldier to finish checking a car for hidden weapons or explosives. Treating an elder without concern for the humiliation (wounding esteem) it might cause was an unwise action because it ignored the social fabric and structures that reaffirm Palestinian identity, protect Palestinian dignity (esteem), and reinforce community stability (safety) for a village to transition into stability and independence (autonomy). If it is true, as historian Amit Varshizky (2023) writes of Palestinians in Gaza, that "Hamas is in the heart," then how would "thinking with feeling" suggest a third way?

Nabil may believe that it is in Israeli's own security interest for Palestinian villages to have a strong leadership structure so that people can be held accountable, where village elders can mediate their own conflicts, and the community leader can represent hope by remaining dignified in the eyes of their constituents. These are needs that constitute the *hungers* of power, survival, and meaning. He might argue that when Palestinians feel respected and live in dignity with autonomy over daily life, being mobilized to regain lost honor would be less likely.

Nabil saw the elder's personal humiliation as rekindling collective humiliation, which for the Palestinians extends back to the Crusades, the defeat of the Moors, European colonialism, the Nakba, multiple defeats by Israel of Arab countries at war, and persistent suffering and humiliation under post-1967 occupation. The history of a postcolonial wound—of being a conquered and disrespected "other"—is a trigger point (Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 1963; Said, 1978). The felt humiliation from Jewish or Christian sovereignty over land deemed "Muslim" is a common refrain (Euben, 2015). Hamas leader Khaled Meshal counters the feeling with the intent to humiliate Israel in return, written on

signs during the October–November 2023 Free Palestine demonstrations: "Before Israel dies, it must be humiliated and degraded." ¹⁰

Taking Meshal's comment further through the Human Needs Map may provide insight. Might Meshal be calling for an equivalence of pain—revenge by equalizing the unfairness through humiliation and degradation? Feeling humiliated and publicly shamed sequences within the matrix of needs, igniting memories of the unfair use of power. In other words, destroying Israel and gaining autonomy would not be sufficient. By reclaiming the Palestinian land and humiliating and debasing Israelis in the process, they would achieve balance. The Palestinian experience of humiliation and of feeling unfairly treated has created rage. The question is, what are the available options to address Meshal's anger and frustration and the support by others for his words?

In communities, mediation and restorative justice practices reveal the restorative impact of being seen (recognition) when accountability for harm done is acknowledged. One aspect represented in the Human Needs Map is to rebuild relationships through the fairness-recognition dynamic. When harm is inflicted through a perceived power imbalance (fairness), seeing the victim's pain (recognition), whether through legal justice or community-based practices, supports bringing about resolution. In the process the victimizer is either deemed legally accountable or claims accountability. Herein lies the difficult question and the opportunity to transition into a co-creative future. Namely, in the Israeli-Palestinian dyad, both sides feel themselves victims of the other. Resolving their respective recognition needs through mutual accountability is a barrier.

"Thinking with feeling" during peacebuilding requires taking in the other side's pain. It involves acknowledging harm inflicted by each side on the other—reconstructing narratives to name the unnameable and building upon common values. It involves making the 'other" more like "us" to avoid the common conclusion that those who are not "us", are not like 'us' and therefore endanger us (Ahmed, 2014). Identifying the shared values and core sensitivities at play, and thereby gaining a deeper understanding of what motivates people to react, may help support this process.

It is neither obvious nor easy. Having compassion for the other side's sensitivity demands taking risks. Engaging directly with the sensitivity requires making peace with the past by becoming accountable, by facing oneself as both victim and victimizer. It requires slowly and stepwise taking more chances to counter one's sensitivity and false perceptions of safety and truth—the truths of our beliefs, beliefs upon which our identities are built. We may locate inspiration from the Parents Circle—Families Forum (PCFF) where bereaved Israeli and

¹⁰ This excerpt is from an address given in Damascus and aired on Al-Jazeera TV on February 3, 2006 (https://www.memri.org/tv/hamas-leader-khaled-mashal-damascus-mosque-nation-islam-will-sit-throne-world-and-west-will-be).

Palestinian families gather to share their grief, and find relief, determination, and a common narrative experience for peace. 11 Healing—peacebuilding from the inside out to restore and rebuild relationships—involves both courage and compassion to break the loop in the cycle of violence. Unless we challenge our beliefs, we risk losing our values to survive, and we risk staying alive with values not worth living for.

Summary

The conceptual framework presented here is designed to assist people in navigating conflicts with the help of a map to guide a "feelingful" understanding of human motivation. The logic of the model builds on the premise that human beings are interdependent and possess a protective body-mind equipped with a dynamic needs system comprised of "individual" and "tribal" needs. This system can adapt with ingenious resilience and balance to support survival. Emotions play a crucial role in maintaining the balance through their energetic and expressive qualities, mobilizing us into action and eliciting responses from others. Human needs are emotional, and our emotions respond to our needs.

To adapt to the specific environment we are born into, the protective bodymind adjusts the expression of emotions and relative importance of needs. This adjustment helps us live and build our strengths but often becomes the cause of challenges and conflict in adult life. The Human Needs Map is a tool for unraveling this pattern. It supports bringing awareness and compassion for our own wounds and beliefs and those that others may feel and think. This opens the possibility to heal and attend to needs, reconstruct our stories and reconfigure defensive habits that fuel cycles of violence. The Human Needs Map provides a language to recognize the triggers that tell us something is wrong—triggers that may wake us up but also risk hijacking our minds, preventing us from holding complexity.

The model has implications for a variety of lines of work, from individual coaching to conflict resolution and peacemaking. It can be used as a framework to design organizational cultures and businesses where people feel included, safe, empowered, valued and purposeful. The model also offers a language to name cultural narratives that perpetuate conflict and suffering. Lastly, in the context of war and peacebuilding, the Human Needs Map can support a new way of understanding what constitutes security by supporting systems for human security that serve relationships, well-being and community. These are the model's benefits and what makes it an apt awareness-based tool for systemic change.

¹¹ https://www.theparentscircle.org/en/pcff-home-page-en/.

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