



*Understanding the Six Basic Human Needs – Third in a Series*

## Emotion the Great Force of Life

Crystal Anzalone MS, LMHP, LPC, NCC

"I am moving at the speed of life," my contributing editor will sometimes say, "and I don't know how to slow it down!" No one moves at the "speed of life" without the "fuel of life," and nothing fuels life like emotion, "When my first child was born," he explained, "I was 26 years old and living a relatively simple life, but as I looked down on that little girl in my arms and stared into her dark gentle eyes I felt life as I knew it... was over." My contributing editor experienced a "Great Force of Life" in the revelation of his daughter's birth. His experience moved him from a "simple" life to a "transcendent" one.

I recently auscultated a TED Conference, which provided a perspective of the "invisible forces" that motivates all humans. An ancient proverb reveals, "A man's hunger is what motivates him." We will examine this "hunger" and how our needs impact our emotions and physiological responses in this third installment of *Understanding the Six Basic Human Needs*. Comprehending what happens inside our brain and body during a highly emotional reaction equips us with insight to gain mastery in handling our feelings wisely and compassionately. When our needs are not being met we experience emotional distress and when are needs are satiated we experience a positive emotion.

Once we understand the driving force of emotions through the portal of our *needs*, we can own the vital information of our own *needs* and formulate a question that can illuminate us, such as, "How does understanding my need make a difference in my emotions and beyond that, how do those emotions impact my relationships?" Humans are uniquely complex creatures and we react differently to any given stimuli. There is no panacea in which we can apply a remedy. On the other hand, there are a set of general principals that can be adopted and taught universally for application in our lives. Keep in mind that emotional mastery is not about applying these concepts to others. Rather, they are concepts that will unhook you from consciously or unconsciously being

manipulated emotionally by others; those who would try to manipulate you into meeting their needs. Some people get their needs met through aggression, abuse of power, and assaulting others by way of their demands and accusations. Such efforts are tethered to another's desire to meet their needs. Others may be able to meet their needs by sweetly soliciting what they desire by expressing love and wooing with positive bids. Why is there such a discrepancy? As we explore this perhaps some of your own internal questions and scenarios may emerge. I encourage you to jot those down and explore possible solutions with someone whom you can trust.

The basic needs in humans are all the same, with certain ones taking priority over others at any given moment or in certain situations, triggering various emotions. It is important to note, our needs are never *wrong*, they just *are*. Our feelings are never *wrong* they just *are*. The way that we satiate our need(s) is what can create our conflicts. That is the primary issue we will unpack and ponder.

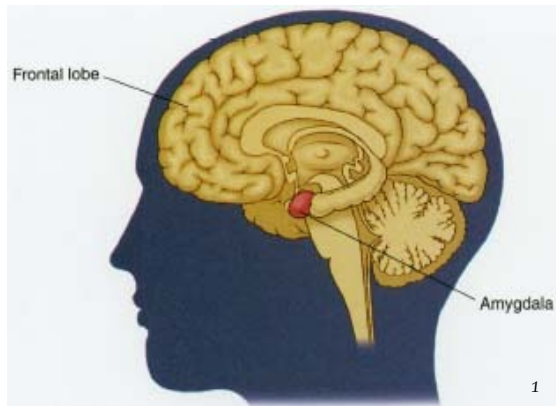
During this TED Conference Tony Robbins stated,

*Because I believe emotion is the force of life. All of us here have great minds...we all know how to think. And with our minds we can rationalize anything. We can make anything happen. [There is an] idea that people work in their self-interest. But we all know that that's bullshit at times. You don't work in your self-interest all the time, because when emotion comes into it, the wiring changes in the way it functions. And so it's wonderful for us to think intellectually about how the life of the world is, and especially those who are very smart, we can play this game in our head. But I really want to know what's driving you.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Tony Robbins discusses the invisible forces that motivate everyone's actions. TED Conference  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/tony\\_robbins\\_asks\\_why\\_we\\_do\\_what\\_we\\_do?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/tony_robbins_asks_why_we_do_what_we_do?language=en)



Robbins is illustrating how rational it would be if we really *did work* in our own self-interest. Often we work against ourselves through self-sabotage when our emotions rule us instead of our logic and will. This is because there is a physiological chain reaction that occurs in our body when we are under stress: loss of focus, increase in pulse, rapid blood pumping, and adrenaline release. Hormones begin to secrete in preparation for our bodies preservation measures. The body reacts when our emotions are triggered. An almond-size tissue inside the

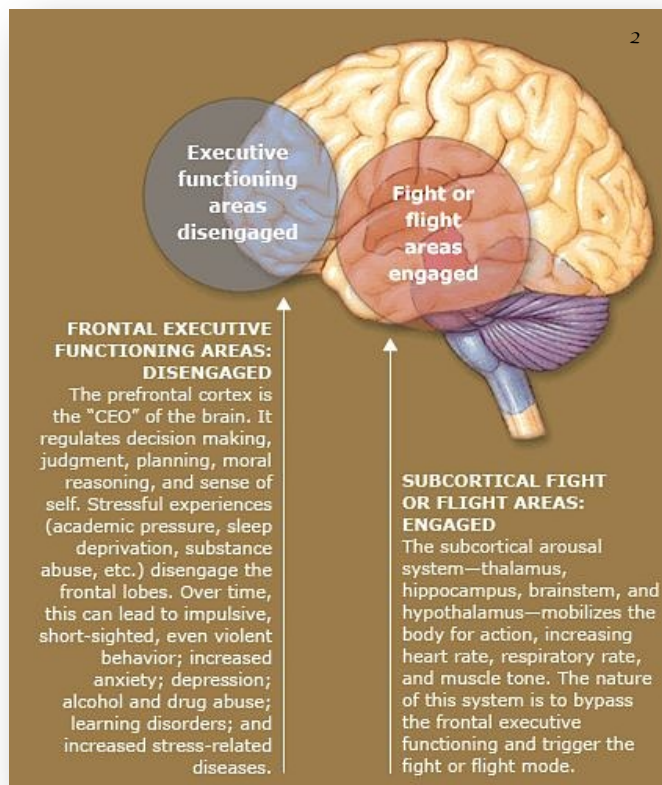


middle of our brain called the amygdala allows us swift reaction time in order to survive as a species in a moment of crisis. Unfortunately, the amygdala does not know the difference between “perceived threat” and “real threat” thus, the same physiological chain reaction happens each time we are triggered emotionally. Because we are hardwired when we are under attack, panic, or stressful situations (perceived or otherwise) we need to call upon another part of our brain called the prefrontal cortex, which is located in the frontal lobe. The prefrontal cortex is positioned right behind our forehead and is the logical, executive functioning center of our brain. When the amygdala is triggered it kicks the prefrontal cortex off-line until we calm down. Imagine how this almond-size tissue (amygdala) impacts our business relationships, personal cherished relationships, encounters with strangers, i.e. road rage. There are countless scenarios in which we are triggered by this little fleshy brain matter called the amygdala.

Gaining insight into the origin of emotional reactivity is the genesis to understanding that we do not have to be held hostage to our kinetically influential emotional infrastructure. Even though emotions are the “great force” of life, they do not have to be the “controlling force.” So like my contributing editor, I find I am also moving at the “speed of life” as I breathe life into this newsletter. In doing so, I practice the very principles I espouse; this is not mere erudition for me. As I learn to call upon my prefrontal cortex to calm my amygdala, I remain moored to the task at hand. When I encounter stressful situations, I find the concept of “Emotions being the Great Force of Life” a valid one.

## Six Basic Human Needs

- Certainty
- Uncertainty/Variety/Adventure
- Love and Connection
- Growth
- Contribution
- Significance



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Art found on:

1. <http://www.humanillnesses.com/Behavioral-Health-Br-Fe/Emotions.html>
2. <http://www.examiner.com/article/your-job-versus-your-health>

