

Strategy versus Need

*„All conflicts take place on the level of Strategy,
but they are only to be solved on the level of Needs“*

Marshall B. Rosenberg

NEEDS

All humans share the same Needs, independently from age, gender, nationality, sexual orientation or education. Therefore all humans are connected on the level of Needs.

- We know them all, the need for understanding, for acceptance, choice, closeness, dependability, love, food, shelter ...
- How important a specific Need is in a particular moment varies from person to person and responds to life style, environment, life conditions, experiences, health etc.
- Needs are not the same as *neediness*. On the contrary. The more we are aware of our Needs, the more choice and authenticity we can offer in our words and actions.
- Needs that remain unmet translate into difficult and painful emotions.

Needs are the direct expression of our aliveness. Everything we do, we do to meet our Needs. Everything, no exception. All Needs are equally important. Our own Needs are not worthier -or less worthy - than needs of others. The possibility of the fulfilment of a Need isn't linked to a specific person.

*„You can, at any time, decide how you want to
respond to the words that were said to you“*

Marshall B. Rosenberg

STRATEGIES

Strategies are the HOW WHO WHERE WHEN to meet a specific Need: we work, we go for walks, we sleep, we make phone calls, we go to the movies, we clean our house ... all these actions are Strategies.

Usually people don't make a distinction between a Need and the Strategy. We say "I need ..." but what we mean is a Strategy. Examples : „I need to go on a holiday" „I need to smoke a cigarette now.“ „I need to find a wife and have kids.“

These are all Strategies. The driving force behind the Strategies though are Needs - for freedom, movement, inspiration, belonging, safety ... and while someone finds relaxation on a walk, another enjoys gardening, watching TV, meeting a friend or napping on the sofa.

When we get into a fight it is ALWAYS about strategy

We want things to be done in a certain way, at a certain moment, the way we are used to etc. We all have our favourite strategies; it gets particularly tricky when we link a need to a specific person.

Certainly not a problem as long as everybody agrees with our choices. But what if the other says NO? If we cling to our rules, or get stuck in our expectations and taste for a specific solution, we might get angry when others aren't willing to deliver. We might raise our voice, start menacing, imploring or blaming and shaming others, feel to be offended or abandoned .. play the victim game.

Knowing what really matters - to get needs met - we can let go of our strategies and open up to new options to meet them. In the consciousness of my needs I can enter a dialog to share what matters to me, and hear what matters to the other - and maybe even say YES to other strategies than only mine.

If someone tries to put pressure on us with wanting us to 'play their game with only their rules' we too will want to back away or feel resistance.

With other people's needs though we can connect because we might know them from our own perspective. In addition we are offered the freedom to choose if, when and in which measure we can and want to contribute to the meeting of a specific need.

The tricky part is that it can take a while till people get aware of the need that underlies a chosen strategy, and maybe another while till they can express the need in a way that are heard by others - they themselves on their own path to name and meet needs of their own ...

As long as we - maybe deep down - think the other is doing it the wrong way, doesn't have the right perspective or the good mind set - that long we will go and go around the same conflict.

But, if we see and respect that with everything someone does - or doesn't - they are trying their best to meet a need... and if we are willing to see and admit which needs of ours are hindering us in this very moment to be open to for the need (and eventually strategy) of this someone... than there is a good chance we can leave the stage of arguments behind and be open for a deeper understanding. An understanding free of blame, fear, guilt or punishment - but full of heartfelt taking care and responsibility for who we are and what we need.

What is it - right now and for us- that is needed?

There is no need to sympathize or agree with other peoples strategies. We can stay open and ready though to listen to the reasons and needs behind a chosen strategy. That's why it is vital to be able to understand the difference between a strategy and a need - to reach inner and outer freedom of choice and peace of mind in our actions.