

Thoughts on Requirements, Needs and Wants

- A. Frequently Asked Questions about Requirements
- B. A Philosophy of Requirements,
- C. Operationalizing Requirements

Frequently Asked Questions about Requirements,

Requirements are probably the most important, controversial, and confusing, concept of the Partners in Life Coaching program.

Requirements usually have the following characteristics:

- A. They are non-negotiable; the relationship would not work if it were missing.
- B. They tend to be black or white, met or not met, usually not much room for gray.
- C. While black or white, they also tend to be subjective; what matters is if the requirement is met or not from YOUR standards.
- D. They tend to have much power; if you have to think about it, chances are it's not a requirement.
- E. They are behavioral events in the relationship, NOT traits of your partner.

QUESTION #1: What about love, attraction, chemistry, etc?,

By focusing so much importance on Requirements we are not discounting the importance and role of chemistry. As we see it, the problem is that our feelings and unconscious forces that attract us to a partner interfere with our objectivity and take us away from our true and authentic self and we end up in role-playing or engaged with surface issues.

It's important to use your requirements to balance your heart with your head and make sure your requirements are met no matter how attracted or "in love: you are if the relationship is to become a fulfilling Life Partnership.

QUESTION #2: What do you mean behavioral events? My list seems to have mostly traits or concepts.

I like to say that you can make a list of 100 traits and find a partner that meets all 100 and still be miserable! Let's examine some examples. If you have a requirement such as spiritual, what is the experience of spirituality you are looking for in your relationship? Your partner does not need to be a certain way spiritually, what matters is that you have the relationship and life that you want. How about Romantic? If that is your requirement, what is the experience of Romance in the relationship you are seeking? Your partner, does not necessarily have to be Mr. Romantic for you to have the relationship that you want, and if you focus on it coming from your partner you will probably be disappointed.,

QUESTION #3: Don't you believe we must essentially rely on ourselves to meet our needs? Are you suggesting we expect our partner to meet our requirements and needs?

Of course we believe in taking personal responsibility for getting what you need in your life and relationship. We advocate the need to make a good choice of partner, because having your needs met is a combination of who your partner is and your efforts with your partner. Once you make a partner choice, you can't change who your partner is, so you want to choose your life's mate carefully. From this one decision will come ninety percent of your happiness or misery. (H. Jackson Brown, Jr. from Life's Little Instruction Book),

We need to find someone that lines up with all our requirements, meaning we can get them all met in the relationship, not that our partner delivers them all on a silver platter. The work in a relationship is working with your partner to get your needs met, not expecting them to just happen. The key though is that your partner is capable of meeting your needs given who they are. You can't just choose anyone and then figure that you can make your requirements and needs happen from your end - again, you will be disappointed.

B. A Philosophy of Requirements

By Deki Fox, RCI Coach,

Relationship Coaching includes the interplay of our IDEA about our life and relationships and the EXPERIENCE of living our life and relationships.

We are not separate from our 'stuff.' Our 'stuff' is the 'stuff of requirements.

Requirements are the conditions we bring to life because of who we uniquely ARE; they also define how we have grown and developed up until this present moment.

Requirements protect our vulnerable selves from harm; they can also optimize the expression of our unique contribution to life.

Requirements clarify the way my experience of life has shaped me. They say 'Here, I Am.' with profound implications.

It is easy to be seen in our physical shape because we have the boundary of our skin. Requirements make it possible to define our emotional, mental and spiritual skin so that we can better understand where the boundaries of these subtle bodies ends and where touching one another's heart and soul begins.

Requirements say, 'I like being touched by life THIS way.' Unfortunately, we all have some life experience that has touched us in ways we did not like, and this experience defines us to some extent. As we can OWN this definition/boundary and protect our vulnerability by

clearly stating the requirements, we are more alive and secure and capable of touching and being touched by others.

Life experience generates requirements. Owning and naming what we require optimizes awareness and puts us fully into life's flow.

Each requirement is like having another paddle in the water as we move our relationship along the river of this lifetime.

If you wonder if you have 'too many' paddles in the water, try sorting your requirements according to 'protect my vulnerability' vs. 'fulfill my life purpose and see what happens.,

C. Operationalizing Requirements

It is very important that we OPERATIONALIZE requirements. Otherwise, we have will have nothing more useful than the list that most people make of what they want in a partner.,

What does Operationalize mean? It means that requirements must be REAL EVENTS in a relationship, not intangibles such as feelings, judgments, or, traits.

Now, there is overlap, because 'What's inside shows up on the outside,' and a trait gets expressed into action. For example, 'honesty' can be a value, a concept, just a vague item on a list. To be a REQUIREMENT honesty must be operationalized. Questions for doing this might be:

1. What does honesty mean to you?
2. What must happen for your relationship to be honest?

We need to go from intellectualizing honesty or focusing on how honest our partner must be, to what honesty means to you and how it MUST SHOW UP in your life and relationship related to possible EVENTS, which are measurable and real.

For example, let's say you operationalize honesty to mean 'we tell the whole truth to each other and don't hold anything back,' and let's say it passes the requirements test - you couldn't live with a relationship in which the whole truth wasn't being told regularly and would have to leave the relationship no matter how much you loved each other and wanted to be together. You now have an operationalized requirement for honesty -- 'we tell the whole truth to each other and don't hold anything back.' This qualifies as a measurable relationship event, not a trait, feeling, or judgment.

My Requirements, Needs, and Wants,

The basic criteria necessary to fulfill your Vision are your Requirements. The test for a Requirement is that the relationship will not work for you if it is missing. Requirements tend to be non-negotiable, and the absence of a single one often results in a failed relationship.

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- They are non-negotiable; the relationship would not work for you if it were missing.
- They tend to be black or white, met or not met, usually not much room for gray.
- While black or white, they also tend to be subjective; what matters is if the requirement is met or not met to your standards.
- They tend to have much power; if you have to think about it, chances are it's a need.
- They are behavioral events in the relationship, not traits of your partner.

A Need is easily identified when unmet, because of the resulting Issue that is experienced. An Issue is an unmet need. All relationships experience Issues. If Issues are addressed successfully, needs will be met and the relationship will be successful. The primary reason for relationship conflict is a lack of effective methods for resolving Issues. While Requirements are non-negotiable, and tend to be either met or not, Needs can be negotiated with many possible alternatives. We need to be concerned with Functional Needs and Emotional Needs. Functional Needs are the routine events that must occur for your life to work in a manner that fits your Vision. Emotional Needs are the events that must happen in your relationship for you to feel loved.

Wants provide pleasure and enjoyment, are changeable and become satiated. A Want can be substituted for another Want, which is not the case with Needs. While Wants are important for our quality of life, it is a mistake to base a relationship on them and neglect our Requirements. Missing a Want is solvable. Missing a Requirement is unsolvable, most likely resulting in a failed relationship.