

THE 'HUMAN GIVENS' we were all born with are our essential NEEDS and RESOURCES for emotional and physical health as depicted here by **the in8 Cards wellbeing resource**



“A brilliant way to get people talking and thinking about what really matters”

The **Orange Resource cards** in the centre represent you and your own innate skills and resources. The **Blue Needs cards** represent those things that you need to obtain (in balance) from your surrounding environment in order to live a healthy life.

Sources : in8 Cards www.in8.uk.com Human Givens Institute www.hgi.org.uk

Notes by Marion Brown, Registered Human Givens Practitioner mmarionbrown@gmail.com 01436 810787 www.hgi.org.uk

TO RECOVERING AND MAINTAINING GOOD EMOTIONAL HEALTH

As human beings we have not changed too much over many thousands of years.

Our human LIFESTYLES have however changed a great deal. In just the last 200 years we have developed electric light, motorised transport, aeroplanes, radio, TV, telephones, internet, mobile phones, superfast communications and ever smarter technology. We have changed our diets to more refined foods, generally take less exercise, and sleep less - and all these factors can influence our moods.

Sometimes our modern 24hr lives can become just too overwhelming for us such as:

- trying to hold down a full-time job (sometimes more!), pay the mortgage, and, at the same time, bringing up a young family and looking after elderly/ill/disabled relatives OR
- having no job or stable home and really battling to survive at all - bringing up a young family and looking after elderly/ill/disabled relatives ...
- a relationship breaking down, work or family 'issues', job loss, retirement, or bereavement

Many such apparently common everyday life situations can build up to become 'too much' for us resulting in us feeling anxious, panicky, depressed and unable to cope. We can think of these disabling feelings as signalling excessive 'emotional overload'. In other words, they are our normal human 'alarm' systems warning us that we 'can't go on like this' and need something to change. When we are experiencing these strong feelings and emotions (emotional arousal) it is very hard for us to make sense of what is going on and to feel able to do something about it.

One very important source of 'calming', which can lower emotional arousal, is to **talk with another human being** who has the time and patience to listen and to be with us empathically. Once we feel heard we may be able to consider what may be at the root of our overwhelming feelings.

THE HUMAN GIVENS APPROACH offers a very useful starting point for thinking about which of our essential human emotional needs may be unmet and can help us to take stock of our own resources - and consider corrective action. Just as plants need certain conditions and environment to grow well and flourish, so do living creatures. Human beings have complex brains and highly sophisticated innate human EMOTIONAL NEEDS and RESOURCES which influence our physical and mental health. **These Needs and Resources that we were all born with make up the 'Human Givens'** (as also illustrated on the **in8 cards overleaf**):

NEEDS (Human 'Givens')

(Nutrition, water, air, daylight)
(Movement – and Rest/Sleep)
Security (to feel safe and secure)
Attention (to give and receive)
Emotional Intimacy
Community (to belong)
Status (& being respected)
Competence/Achievement
Autonomy & Control
Privacy
Meaning/Stretching/Learning

RESOURCES (Human 'Givens')

(Respiration and digestion)
(our physical bodies & co-ordination)
Long term memory
Dreaming brain
Pattern matching/perception
Reasoning ability
Imagination and creativity
Observing self
Emotional guidance/instincts
Ability to build rapport/connect

No matter what we feel motivated to do, the underlying motivation is always a desire to meet one or more of the **needs** identified above. Our **resources** can be used or mis-used – and how well we are able to use them and keep them in good condition may largely determine the quality of our lives. For further information see www.hgi.org.uk and www.in8.uk.com.

WHAT CAN WE DO RIGHT AWAY?

As mentioned already, one very important source of 'calming', which can help when we feel overwhelmed and unable to cope, is to **talk with another human being** who has the time and patience to listen and to be with us empathically. Once we feel fully heard and accepted we are more likely to be able to consider what may be at the root of our overwhelming feelings, what emotional needs (our **Human Givens**) may be currently un-met, and to consider what resources may be available to us in order to begin to do something about this.

Another natural way of reducing feelings of pent-up stress and anxiety is to **take physical exercise** such as swimming, dance, cycling and so on.

Walking in daylight and fresh air – taking in the sights, sounds, smells and sensations of nature - is inexpensive, good for our general health, and a possible activity for the majority of us.

A good **wholesome diet**, of mostly naturally occurring unprocessed fresh foodstuffs, is important for our physical and emotional health – 'foods affect moods' - and plenty of fresh water to drink.

Sleep and dreaming are enormously important and we often try to manage on too little sleep – which we now know has serious health consequences. We need to take time to wind down towards bed-time and give ourselves a reasonable chance to sleep well. Around 8 hrs sleep per night is optimum to maintain emotional health (an important function of dreaming) and for necessary physical rest and restoration.

Using **calming breathing techniques** is something we can all do and has immediate effects – actively lowering emotional arousal and slowing and steadying our heart rate and, with practice and regular use, can even lower high blood pressure. In addition **relaxation and visualisation** can be very effective.

(A simple breathing-relaxation-visualisation example is shown on the next page).

Mindfulness practice, yoga, swimming and singing are just a few of the many everyday examples where we use active breathing control.

Massage and other bodywork can also be enormously beneficial, calming, soothing, healing and refreshing.

Music, dancing and rhythm can all be enjoyable and of benefit – all using our bodies and minds actively and in natural ways.

Learning something new, creating things, and contributing to something we care about are all stimulating, interactive and give a sense of involvement, purpose and meaning.

Our work can be very important to us – and may contribute to meet many of our needs.

Joining a group or club can give us a similar sense of belonging.

Our **relationships** are very important – and building and maintaining good relationships (of all sorts) depends, to a large extent, on recognising and respecting each other's needs.

Below is a really useful and beneficial exercise for anyone – it can be practised as often as you like, assists the onset of sleep, and will become easier with practice.

The parts of the exercise can be used separately or as a continuous process.

USEFUL WAY TO CALM OURSELVES ANYWHERE ... '7/11 BREATHING' – plus relaxation and visualisation.

Breathe in through the nose – deep into the diaphragm – to a count of 7

Breathe out through the nose – not too fast – to a count of 11

IMPORTANT NOTE: 'Out' breath needs to be longer than 'In' breath

Keep this going for at least 20 breaths and notice how your body begins to RELAX ...

**Keep breathing comfortably and begin to notice your body – from feet gradually up to top of head – and let tension gradually melt away...
and then imagine an 'earth' taking any remaining tension from the top of your head down your body and through your feet into the floor,
leaving your whole body feeling AS RELAXED AS YOU CAN BE ...**

**In your imagination, head out for a walk/ride somewhere
of your own choice that you can vividly visualise –
in your 'mind's eye' notice the weather, season, colours, sights, sounds, sensations, smells etc. Imagine getting to a place where you like to stop and take a rest and look around you – perhaps a nice spot or view-place? – and 'notice' what you 'see' (eg. sky, clouds, including colours, features etc.), 'hear' (eg. water, birds, wildlife, friendly company), feel (eg. breeze, warmth of sun on face etc.)
and enjoy savouring it all and relaxing deeply.**

**Let your mind wander to recall times and occasions when you felt at your very best -
competent, calm, confident ...
and imagine yourself actually doing something you want to do soon, and doing it
calmly, competently and confidently.
Know that, whatever life throws at you, you are still that same 'best person' with your own
unique personal qualities and inner resources.**

**You can revisit this 'place' in your imagination or memory whenever you want to rediscover
your best self, your balance and creativity.**