

## What Triggers Your Emotions?

The strengths that have helped you to succeed are also your greatest emotional triggers when you feel someone is not honoring what makes you special.

When your brain perceives that someone has taken or plans to take one of these important things away from you, then your emotions are triggered.

You react with anger or fear, then you quickly rationalize your behavior so it makes sense. You may lose trust in the person or situation. You may lose courage or react in a way that could hurt your relationships in the future.

**The key is to catch yourself reacting when your emotions are triggered.** Then you can discover if the threat is real or not.

The following list includes some of the most common emotional triggers, meaning you react when you feel as though you aren't getting or will not get one of these things that are very important to you.

acceptance	respect	being liked
being understood	being needed	being valued
being in control	being right	being treated fairly
attention	comfort	freedom
peacefulness	balance	consistency
order	variety	love
safety	predictability	included
fun	new challenges	autonomy

Some of these needs will be important to you. Others will hold no emotional charge for you.

**To start controlling your emotional triggers, choose three items from the list that most often set off your emotions when you don't get these needs met.** Be honest with yourself. Which three needs, when not met, will likely trigger a reaction in you? Identify the needs that you hold most dear.

It is critical to note that needs are not bad. The reason you have these needs is that at some point in your life, the need served you. For example, your experiences may have taught you that success in life depends on maintaining control, establishing a safe environment and having people around you who appreciate your intelligence.

However, the more you become attached to these needs, the more your brain will be on the lookout for circumstances that threaten your ability to have these needs met. Then your needs become emotional triggers.

At this point, you must judge the truth of the situation. Are you really losing this need or not? Is the person actively denying your need or are you taking the situation too personally? If it's true that someone is ignoring your need or blocking you from achieving it, can you either ask for what you need or, if it doesn't really matter, can you let the need go?

Without consciously acknowledging the need that is triggering the emotional reaction, we become enslaved to the need. On the other hand, if we honestly declare our needs—that we had expected people to treat us in a particular way and had hoped events would unfold as we had planned—then we can begin to see life more objectively. From this perspective, we are freer to choose our reactions.

## **BEING PRESENT**

As soon as you notice that you are emotionally reacting, you have to shift your emotional state in order to think through what your trigger might be. Therefore, practice the following technique to help you make the shift:

**Relax** – breath and release the tension in your body.

**Detach** – clear your mind of all thoughts.

**Center** – drop your awareness to the center of your body just below your navel. Feel yourself breathe. This helps to clear the mind.

**Focus** (and implant) – choose one keyword that represents how you want to feel or who you want to be in this moment.

Once you shift your emotional state, you are free to examine if someone is actually taking something away from you or not. You can then ask for what you need or let it go and move on. Keep breathing and thinking of your keyword and you will be able to [Outsmart Your Brain](#).

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