

WANTWORDS

A tool to name what you want and desire

Many of us—especially men—were never taught to identify what we want or need. We learned to perform, provide, and push through. We became skilled at noticing what others want while losing touch with our own desires. WantWords is designed to rebuild that connection.

WHY WANTWORDS?

Naming what you want is vulnerable work. It requires admitting you don't have it yet, that you need something, that you're incomplete in some way. And yet, this naming is essential:

Moves You From Reaction to Choice: When you can name what you want, you can actually ask for it—or consciously decide not to. Without this clarity, you're at the mercy of unmet needs you can't articulate.

Builds Self Awareness & Trust: Every time you acknowledge a want—even silently to yourself—you strengthen the relationship with your own inner experience. You signal that your needs matter.

Creates Possibility for Connection: Other people cannot read your mind. When you can clearly state what you want, you give them an actual chance to meet you there.

Interrupts Resentment: Most resentment builds from wants that were never voiced. Naming your wants early—before they calcify into grievances—keeps relationships cleaner.

THE FOUR WANT CATEGORIES

Human wants exist in creative tension. We need both growth and safety. We need both connection and freedom. These aren't problems to solve—they're polarities to navigate. Scan each category and notice which words create a felt sense of 'yes' in your body.

GROWTH ← → **SAFETY**

CONNECTION ← → **FREEDOM**

1. GROWTH

The want to expand, develop, and become more capable.

Competence, accomplishment, empowerment, variety, challenge, mastery, learning, progress, achievement, stimulation, novelty, adventure, expansion, development, improvement, excellence, skill, contribution, impact, meaning, purpose, creation, expression, risk, stretch, edge.

2. SAFETY

The want to feel secure, accepted, and on solid ground.

Acceptance, certainty, security, stability, predictability, control, order, structure, grounding, protection, reassurance, reliability, consistency, trust, clarity, comfort, familiarity, routine, approval, validation, orientation, rest, recovery, ease, calm.

3. CONNECTION

The want to be close, supported, and in relationship.

Support, to feel valued, to be seen, heard, understood, known, appreciated, held, touched, accompanied, included, welcomed, witnessed, met, cherished, chosen, loved, belonging, intimacy, presence, attunement, closeness, companionship, tenderness, warmth, empathy, care.

4. FREEDOM

The want for space, autonomy, and self-direction.

Space, solitude, autonomy, independence, privacy, boundaries, self-determination, sovereignty, alone time, room to think, silence, slowness, pause, choice, agency, self-reliance, separation, distance, non-interference, breathing room, quiet, stillness, ownership, control over my own time.

DEEPENING YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Over time, you'll notice patterns in your wants. Pay attention to:

Repeated Wants: Which wants show up again and again? These may point to core needs that aren't being addressed in your life structure.

Forbidden Wants: Which wants feel shameful or unacceptable to have? These often carry the most charge and healing potential.

Wants in Tension: Notice when you feel pulled toward Growth and Safety simultaneously, or Connection and Freedom at the same time. This isn't confusion—it's the natural tension of being human. You don't have to resolve it. Name both.

Want Substitutes: Notice when you reach for something (food, phone, drink, work) whether there's an underlying want you're trying to meet. The behavior is often a proxy for an unnamed need.

USING WANTWORDS WITH OTHERS

To Communicate Wants: Use the simply format format: "I want [WantWord]."

Keep it simple. Avoid lengthy explanations. The want speaks for itself.

Critical distinction: A want is not the same as a strategy. "I want connection" is a want. "I want you to put down your phone" is a strategy. Share the want first. Negotiate the strategy together.

Listen for others Wants: Your job is not to fix, defend, or immediately provide. Your job is to listen to understand.

Reflect back: "You're wanting support right now."

Don't take it personally. A want for space isn't rejection. A want for support isn't criticism. Wants are information, not verdicts.