What Do I Need Right Now?

I started this list one day after I had been sitting in my living room, feeling a little "off" or anxious, and wondering "what to do." It struck me to ask myself what I needed in that moment… Until I wrote it all down, I didn't realize how many options I really had! The choices are endless and are unique to the individual; something that works great for me may fall short for you (or could even make things worse). Feel free to create your own personalized version of this list, and keep adding to it as more ideas arrive.

From, Lexi

Getting Started

1. I recommend doing a quick check or scan of how you are feeling in mind, body, and spirit. Asking, "What am I feeling right now?" could help tell you if there is an unmet need.
2. Similar questions to ask may be, "What do I *want* right now?" "What *could* I do right now?" "What *feels best* to me right now?" "What *makes sense* for me to do right now?"
3. Taking care of basic needs first (breathe, eat, drink, rest, comfort) helps provide a more stable jumping-off point for other actions.
4. Notice how many of these areas overlap. For example, replenishing myself might include meeting bodily needs, connecting with others, or being creative. Crying is a form of expression, and it might serve as a spiritual experience. Helping others could increase my learning or could involve play. Comforting myself might be asking for a hug (touch) or having a warm cup of coffee (drink). Taking time to think could lead into completing a task (accomplish). Although they're not on the list, these ideas could also contribute to a feeling of fulfillment and purpose.
5. As stated above, what these words represent will depend on the individual, so please disregard any examples that you don't like or agree with. "Hey Lexi, I don't listen to music to connect, but I do listen to it to replenish…" Great, keep doing that! "Now Lexi, I don't believe in religion…" No problem, scratch that one off the list!
6. Ideas for deciding what to do:
    a. Choose a word(s) that matches what you're needing, wanting, and/or feeling.
    b. Scan for keywords that catch your attention or "resonate" with you (feel powerful).
    c. Do them in "ABC" (or reverse ABC) order, or choose a certain first letter.
    d. Pick one at random (ex: do the fifth one, do the first one that starts with a vowel).
    e. Select one that goes with one of your 5 senses: Taste, touch, smell, sight, or hearing.

ACCOMPLISH	**CONNECT**	**EAT**	**LEARN**	**REST**
BREATHE	**CREATE**	**EXPRESS**	**MOVE**	**SPIRIT**
CLEANSE	**CRY**	**HELP**	**PLAY**	**THINK**
COMFORT	**DRINK**	**LAUGH**	**REPLENISH**	**TOUCH**

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ACCOMPLISH ("Get something done." This could refer to things that truly need to be done and that require timely attention, such as our daily/weekly household, financial, and personal tasks... It could also refer to things we've been wanting to do for fun, personal or home improvement, education, enlightenment, etc.)

BREATHE (Notice if you are holding your breath or have a "tight chest," take three slow deep breaths, try a long exhale first if that's easier, use a paced or counting method such as "4-6 breathing")

CLEANSE (Clean yourself or something else. Bathe or shower, wash your hands, dishes, clothes, car, or a pet… Clean around the house. This could also refer to a spiritual or religious cleansing ritual)

COMFORT (What might help me feel more physically or emotionally safe right now? You might try a blanket or hoodie, hug a security object, crawl under the covers, ask someone to hold or reassure you… whatever creates a protective, soothing "cocoon" feeling)

CONNECT (Reach out to a loved one, co-worker, acquaintance, teacher, spiritual/religious guide, etc. Video chat, talk, text, email, mail, etc. Commune with nature, play or listen to music)

CREATE (Invent, make something new… Arts and crafts, baking, photography, video, music, writing, scrapbooking, web design, choreography, "create a new look" for yourself or your home, etc.)

CRY (Allow happy or sad tears… Use something to gently encourage feelings, such as a song, book, story, movie, quote, memory, or sentimental object)

DRINK (Hydrate, take in liquids, especially water)

EAT (Have a snack, meal, treat… eat for nutrition or enjoyment)

EXPRESS (Get thoughts and feelings out by externalizing them… Write in a journal, [1] write a letter that you don't have to send, talk out loud to self or others, scream/yell, cry, draw, paint, sculpt, act, etc.)

HELP (Ask for help with a task or with coping… or offer to help someone)

LAUGH (Think of a funny memory, quote, joke, meme, movie scene, comic, article, etc. Look at old photos, watch a silly video or comedian, try saying a tongue twister, read a joke book)

LEARN (Seek out knowledge on something that makes you curious, excites you, interests you, etc. Read a book, look up information online, take a class, listen to a podcast or documentary, read a manual)

MOVE (Choose a form of exercise or sport, take a walk, do arm circles or gentle stretches, march in place, dance, do yoga… Make sure any physical activity is physician-approved, of course)

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PLAY (Fit this to your personal preferences for having fun and releasing yourself from adult pressures… play a card, video, or board game, frolic with a child or pet, paint or color, get some play doh or Legos, be silly and carefree!)

REPLENISH (This one is unique to each person. It may help to ask: What things help me rebuild physical energy and positive feelings? What "fills my cup" or helps me recharge, rejuvenate, renew, or restore?)

REST (This includes nightly sleep plus breaks throughout the day… Close your eyes, lean, sit, lie down, doze, take a full nap or short "cat nap," go to bed early, sleep in)

SPIRIT (This was the only word that I couldn't figure out how to put into verb form! In other words, be spiritual… Engage in a spiritual, religious, or sacred practice that fits your belief system, if you have one)

THINK (Let your mind wander, ponder, self-reflect, daydream… You could also make plans or solve a problem... However, this does not mean to sit there in anxiety and worry or to otherwise dwell on bad things. Gently redirect any negative thoughts 🖤)

TOUCH (Hug, hold hands, cuddle, or kiss a loved one or pet… Touch a material, surface, texture, or object that you find pleasurable)

Remember, whenever possible, allow yourself (even for just a minute!) to do a quick check for needs, wants, and preferences before choosing "what's next."

I hope this helps you lovingly prioritize yourself as you move intentionally throughout each day.

[1] See my handout on Journaling Ideas at fromlexi.com/free

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