

MOTIVATION & EMOTION

## Psychological needs



**James Neill**  
Centre for Applied Psychology  
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2020

Image source

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## Psychological needs

Reading:  
Reeve (2015)  
Ch 6



2

### Outline – Psychological needs

- Psychological needs
- Autonomy
- Competence
- Relatedness

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 123)

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3

### Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us Dan Pink

RSA Animate (10:47 mins)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6XAPnuFJlc>



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### Psychological need

- **Inherent** desire to interact with the environment so as to advance personal growth, social development, and psychological well-being.

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 124)

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### Psychological needs

- We engage in our environment to **involve** and **satisfy** our **psychological needs**.
- When our activities:
  - **involve** our psychological needs, we feel **interest** (an emotion)
  - **satisfy** our psychological needs, we feel **joy** (another emotion).

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 124)

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### Psychological needs

- Environments that support and nurture one's **psychological needs** promote:
  - positive emotions
  - optimal experience
  - healthy development

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 124)

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### Organismic approach to motivation

- People are inherently active
  - We are always in active exchange with our environment because it offers what we need to be well, grow, and actualise our potential.
- People need supportive, rather than hostile environments
  - Need satisfaction leads → growth and adaptive functioning
  - Need frustration leads → defense and maladaptive functioning

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 124-125)

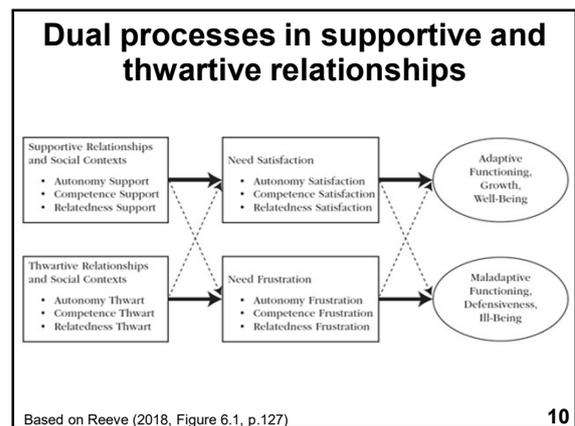
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### Need satisfaction benefits

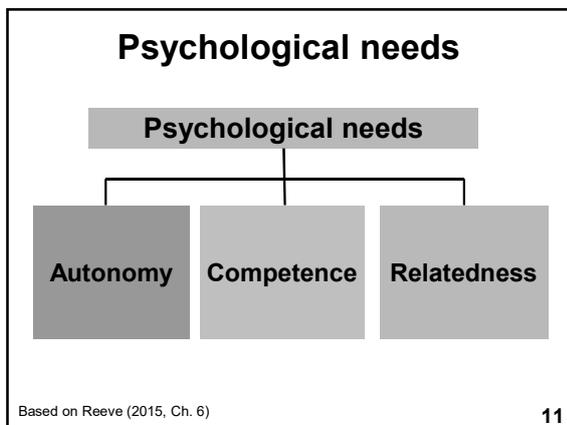
<b>Engagement</b>	↑ initiative, effort, enthusiasm, and planning
<b>Personal growth</b>	↑ personal development
<b>Intrinsic motivation</b>	↑ interest and enjoyment in tasks
<b>Internalisation</b>	↑ volitional engagement in uninteresting tasks
<b>Health</b>	↑ health-promoting lifestyle
<b>Well-being</b>	↑ positive emotion and sense of purpose

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 125-127)

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### Autonomy

Psychological need to experience self-direction and personal endorsement in the initiation and regulation of one's behaviour.

Behaviour is autonomous (or self-determined) when our interests, preferences, and wants guide our decision-making process to engage or not to engage in a particular activity → "I want to".

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 128-136)

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### Perceived autonomy

<b>Internal locus of causality</b>	<b>Volition</b>	<b>Choice over one's actions</b>
Individual's understanding of themselves as the causal source of their motivated actions.	Feeling heartfelt and unpressured willingness to engage in an activity.	Subjective experience that one may decide to pursue one course of action rather than another course of action.

Based on Reeve (2015, Figure 6.2, p. 159) **13**

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### The conundrum of choice

Not all choices promote autonomy

**“either-or” choice offerings**  
offered by others fail to tap into, and involve, the need for autonomy.

**True choice**  
reflects one's values & interests

Enhances a sense of need-satisfying autonomy.	Enhances intrinsic motivation, effort, creativity, preference for challenge, and performance.
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Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 134-135) **14**

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### Motivating styles

Contrasting interpersonal tones between an autonomy-supportive vs. a controlling motivating style

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    graph TD
      MS[Motivating Style] --> AS[Autonomy Support]
      MS --> N[Neutral]
      MS --> C[Controlling]
  
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<b>Autonomy Support</b> An interpersonal tone of <i>Understanding</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am your ally</li> <li>I am here to understand you</li> <li>I am here to support you and your strivings</li> </ul>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Controlling</b> The interpersonal tone of <i>Pressure</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am your boss</li> <li>I am here to monitor you</li> <li>I am here to change and to socialize you</li> </ul>
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Based on Reeve (2018, Figure 6.2, p.129) **15**

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### Autonomy support benefits

<b>Motivation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intrinsic and mastery motivation</li> <li>Perceived control</li> <li>Curiosity</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More positive and less negative emotion</li> <li>Better attendance and persistence</li> </ul>
<b>Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-worth</li> <li>Creativity</li> <li>Preference for optimal challenge</li> </ul>
<b>Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conceptual understanding</li> <li>Deep, active information processing</li> <li>Self-regulation strategies</li> </ul>
<b>Performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grades</li> <li>Task performance</li> <li>Standardised test scores</li> </ul>
<b>Psychological well-being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological well-being</li> <li>Vitality</li> <li>School/ life satisfaction</li> </ul>

Based on Reeve (2018, Figure 6.3, pp. 134-136) **16**

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### Ways of supporting autonomy

- Nurture inner motivational resources
- Provide explanatory rationales
- Listen empathically
- Use informational language
- Display patience
- Acknowledge & accept displays of negative affect

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 128-134) **17**

17

### Autonomy-supportive vs. controlling teaching

Autonomy-supportive	Controlling
Adopt student perspective	Adopt only teacher perspective
Vitalise inner motivational resources during instruction	Uses extrinsic motivators
Provides explanatory rationales	Neglects to provide explanatory rationales
Non-pressuring, informational language	Controlling, pressuring language
Acknowledges and accepts negative feedback	Counters and tries to change negative affect
Displays patience	Displays impatience

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 129) **18**

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### Starting points to enact an autonomy-supportive motivating style

- Adopt, value, and appreciate the other's perspective.
- Invite (solicit) and welcome the other's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours into the flow of the activity.

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 128-134) 19

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### Moment-to-moment autonomy support

What autonomy-supportive and controlling people say and do to motivate others

**Autonomy support**

- Listen carefully
- Allow others time to talk
- Provide rationale
- Encourage effort
- Praise progress, mastery
- Ask others what they want to do
- Respond to questions
- Acknowledge the other's perspective

**Controlling**

- Hog resources
- Show/tell correct answers
- Speak directives, commands
- Should, must, have to statements
- Ask controlling questions
- Seem demanding

Based on Reeve (2015, pp. 161-167) 20

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### Competence

A psychological need to be effective in interactions with the environment.

Reflects desire to exercise and to extend one's skills and capacities and, in doing so, seek out and master optimal (developmentally-appropriate) challenges. Generates a willingness to seek out those optimal challenges.

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 136) 21

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### Challenge and optimal challenge

- The essence of challenge: "Can you do it?" Can you cope successfully? Can you handle whatever the environment is asking or requiring you to do (e.g., Can you make friends? Can you dance? Can you jump over the fence? Can you run a mile without collapsing?).
- The essence of optimal challenge: "Can you do a little better than you have done in the past?" Given your developmental stage in relation to this task, can you improve? Can you do better? Can you grow and develop your skill further?

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 136-137) 22

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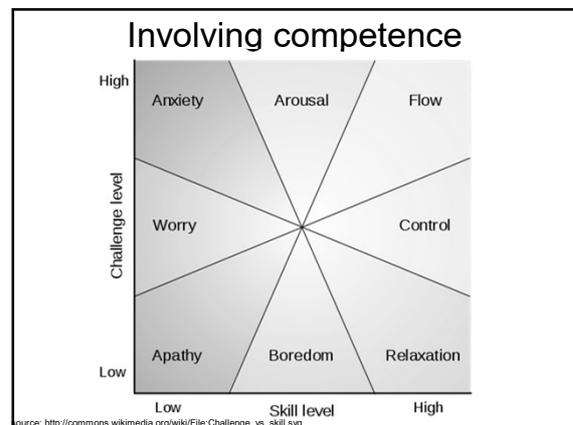
### Involving competence

**Key environmental conditions**

- **Optimal challenge and flow**
  - Flow is a state of concentration that involves holistic absorption in an activity
- **Structure**
  - Information about the pathways to desired outcomes
  - Support & guidance for pursuing these pathways
- **Feedback**
  - Setting the stage for challenge
  - Performance feedback
- **Failure tolerance**
  - Error making is essential for optimising learning.
  - Failure produces opportunities for learning.

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 136-141) 23

23



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**Structure**

- Amount and clarity of info provided about what and how to do a task (to develop desired skills and achieve desired outcomes).
- Typical steps:
  - Clear expectations: Communicate clear expectations about how to achieve high standards
  - Guidance: Model, mentor and coach the "how-to" skills, providing resources and support
  - Feedback: Facilitate reflection to build competence and develop pathways to more effective functioning

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 139) 25

25

**We learn more from failure than success**

Failure produces unique learning opportunities:

- encourages identification of causes (and ways to remedy)
- motivates updating of coping strategies
- prompts seeking of advice and guidance.

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 141) 26

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**Relatedness**

Psychological need to establish close emotional bonds and attachments with other people (caring, responsive, reciprocal, warm relationships).

The desire to be emotionally connected to and interpersonally involved in warm relationships

Based on Reeve (2015, pp. 142-146) 27

27

**Conditions that satisfy the need for relatedness**

- **Social bond**
  - The other person cares about my welfare, likes me
- **Responsiveness**
  - The other person offers understanding, validation, caring

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 144) 28

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**Nurturing relatedness**

- **Involving relatedness: Interaction with others**
  - Emotionally positive interactions and interaction partners
- **Satisfying relatedness: Perception of social bond**
  - Intimate and high-quality relationships that involve perceived caring, liking, accepting, and valuing
- **Communal relationships**
  - People care for the needs of the other, and both feel an obligation to support the other's welfare
- **Benefits of relatedness need satisfaction**
  - Engagement, developmental growth, health, and well-being

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 144) 29

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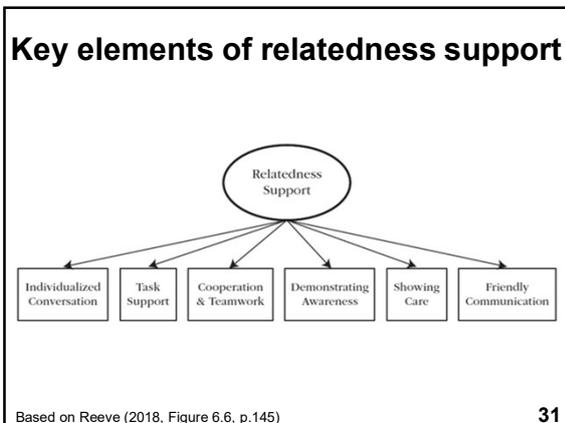
**Why relatedness is important**

- Provides social context to:
  - Support internalisation
  - Nurture vitality, engagement
  - Fuel happiness (prevents loneliness, depression)

Persistence of emotions such as sadness, depression, jealousy, and loneliness are signs of the absence of high-quality, relatedness-satisfying social bonds and relationships.

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 145-146) 30

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31

### Exchange relationships

- Acquaintance- or business-based relationship.
- Transactional. Desired outcome: Fair deal on material outcomes (time, money).
- No obligation to be concerned with the other's needs or welfare.
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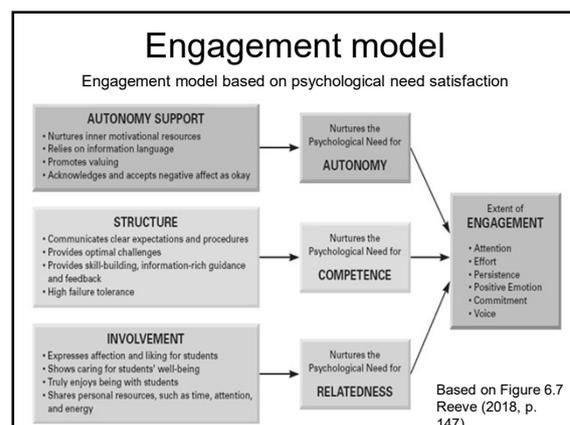
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### Communal relationships

- Relationship between people who care about the welfare and needs of the other (e.g., friendships, family, romantic partners).
- Monitor and keep track of (and actively support the) other's needs (instead of "keeping score")
- Satisfies the relatedness psychological need.

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### What makes for a good day?

Psychological nutrients for good days, positive well-being, and vitality

- Daily autonomy
- Daily competence
- Daily relatedness

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 147)

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### Summary

- Organismic approach assumes:
  - People are inherently active
  - Psychological needs provide inherent motivation to engage in the environment
  - Environments sometimes supports and sometimes frustrates meeting of these needs.
- Satisfying basic psychological needs is required for optimal growth and well-being:
  - Autonomy
  - Competence
  - Relatedness

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### Next lecture

- Implicit motives (Ch 07)
- Goal-setting (Ch 08)

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### References

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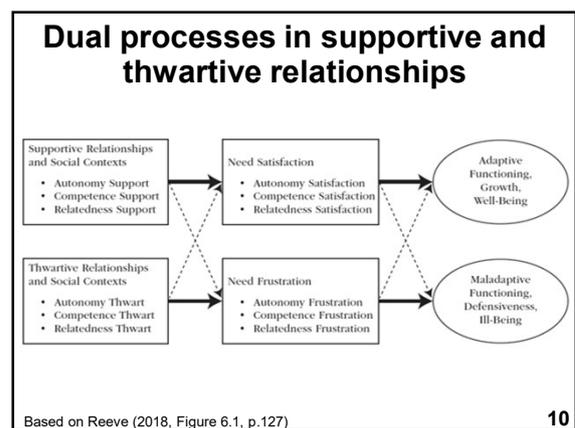
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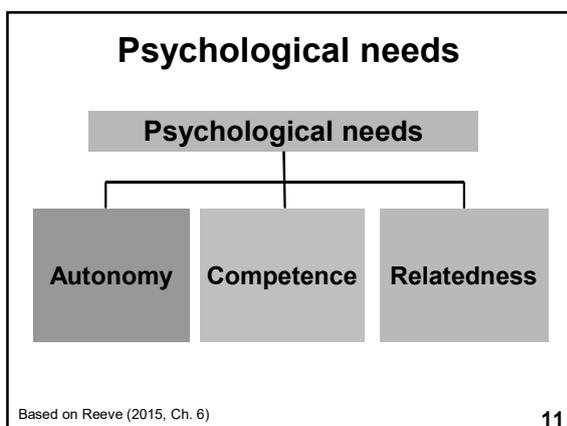
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Motivating Style

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### Ways of supporting autonomy

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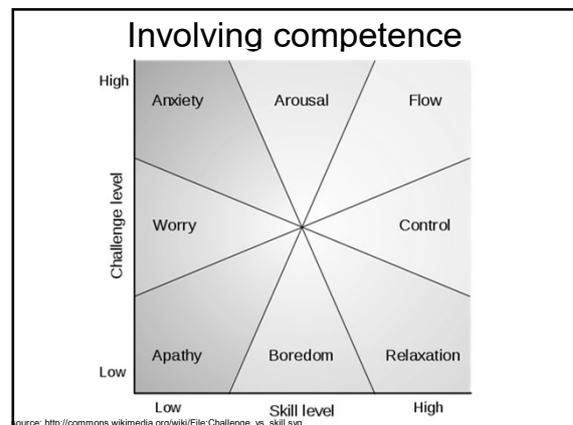
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**Nurturing relatedness**

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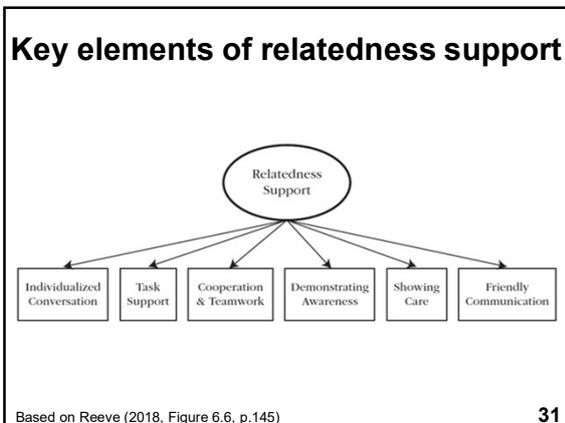
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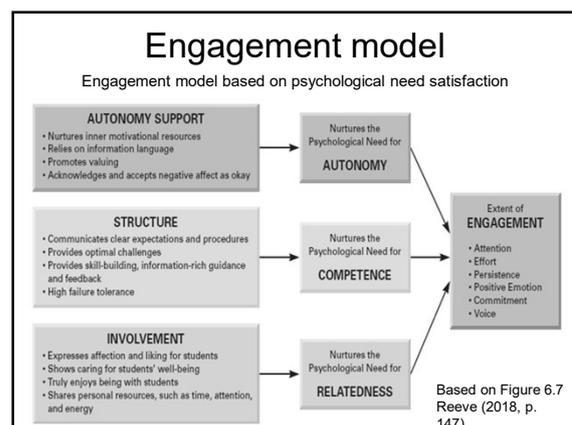
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