

## **NEEDS VS. WANTS:**

### ***Our Personal Best's Greatest Thieves: Greed and Temptation***

When we examine the times in our lives when we have been on track toward the attainment of our personal best, one thing becomes clear – our needs and wants were not at war, and we were able to keep “temptation” under control. Temptation is the enticement, attraction, and invitation to move away from what we really need in order to concentrate on what we want. Often, the gulf between what we need and what we want could not be wider.

We often hear jokes that start with the following structure: what do blank, blank, and blank have in common? Remaining within this framework, let's ask this: what do addiction, infidelity, and poor financial management have in common? They all require a person to believe that his or her wants and needs are identical and cannot be separated. Although this is the farthest thing from the truth, it is what individuals believe in the moment. One might question what is it that holds a person's needs and wants in such close proximity. The glue that bridges them is composed of temptation and greed. What is the fuel for temptation and greed? The fuel is a challenging life event that misaligns our thoughts, words, and actions. Such events “throw us for a loop,” and we lack the concepts and language to break out of the loop.

We need air to breathe, food to sustain our bodies, and blood to support our organs. If we were to lose access to these basic resources, we would experience immediate or imminent demise. In contrast, if we no longer had things that we want, such as clothing, a car, privilege, or even companionship, we would not cease to exist. With great frequency, we get our needs and wants confused, and this confusion causes us great angst as we attempt to navigate our lives.

We must find a way to break out of the loop and move toward the mature, rational, and constructive realization that there is a wide gulf between our needs and wants. Our biggest mistake is seeing our needs and wants as equals. Our needs are paramount. Meeting our wants is a privilege. Challenging life events attack our 5Rs, which are respect, responsibility, resiliency, recognition, and renewal. In the wake of these events, we lose our ability to respect ourselves and others and to be responsible for our own thoughts, actions, and words. These events also attack our ability to develop resiliency. We tend to fall down and then get right back up and do the same thing, all the while expecting a different outcome. Our ability to recognize reality is negatively impacted by these events; we tend to believe that attaining our personal best will be easy. Finally, our effort to renew ourselves is placed in jeopardy because we see our status quo as acceptable and perceive no reason to change and/or improve.

We should take pride in the ability to recognize the distance between our needs and wants. It is a blessing to have our needs met and a miracle to experience the fulfillment of our wants. We should be humbled by being granted the ability to address our needs, and we should endeavor to make sure others' needs are met before we contemplate the satisfaction of our wants.



**“OUR BIGGEST MISTAKE IS SEEING OUR NEEDS AND WANTS AS EQUALS INSTEAD OF SEEING NEEDS AS PARAMOUNT TO EXISTENCE AND WANTS AS A PRIVILEGE.”**