



Longing

Unlike needs, longing (also yearning, desire) is insatiable in finite human life. It is implicitly linked to our needs. Its nature is the “more than,” the search for meaning and healing/salvation. It finds expression in our dreams of life.

It is also directed toward other people, over whom I ultimately have no control, despite contrary tendencies to manipulate them as if they were commodities.

Longing has a positive effect when it takes the form of hope: in order for this hope to be maintained, I need repeated experiences of my needs being fulfilled. Frequently frustrated longing can lead to despair.



Which dreams in life have I been able to realize?

How does my work contribute to this?

What about my family? My circle of friends?

Are there dreams I thought I had buried –
that might still be waiting for me? Now?

What is holding me back? What might support me?

Do I still feel hopeful?

What helps me stay with the empty spaces in my life –
without closing them too quickly?



Loss of Meaning

Meaning can seem questionable and unattainable in the face of finitude and illness. Limit experiences that go hand in hand with crises of meaning are called existential. Things that are meaningless in themselves cannot be transformed into meaning, e.g., material-biological causes of illness or natural disasters such as earthquakes or similar events.

On the other hand, this transformation can succeed in the case of things that appear meaningless if the person affected grapples with questions such as “Why me?”, “Why now?”, “What is the point of all this?” However, meaning cannot be constructed arbitrarily, neither by the person themselves nor by those around them.



Where do I experience a sense of meaning in my life?

Where has my life been interrupted or disrupted?

How do I find support in moments of failure, illness,
or suffering?

Which stumbling blocks in my life
have unexpectedly helped me grow?



Needs

Needs refer to what a person requires to live, both physically (e.g., food, space, sleep, safety) and intellectually (e.g., self-efficacy, understanding), emotionally and socially (e.g., affection), and spiritually (e.g., prayer, receiving a blessing, strengthening texts). Our longing for happiness goes even further than our needs.

Being able to work and to experience one's own capabilities is also one of our needs. In social institutions, hospitals, and other businesses, economic issues and measurable facts are at the forefront. Planning and processes are aimed at efficiency and outcomes. The resources provided are geared toward this.



My own needs

What personal needs – material, spiritual, existential – do I notice in myself right now?

The needs of others

What needs do I sense in others?

Do they touch something in me?

How do I respond when needs are unmet – in me or in others?

My professional situation

Does my work give me energy – or drain it?

What would help me stay nourished in it?

What can I do to support this?



Religion / Spirituality

Religion can be understood as a binding back to God (Latin: religare – to bind back) or as the attentive practice of rituals and/or beliefs within a faith tradition (Latin: relegere – to re-read, to observe). Religiosity is the personal shaping and lived expression of religion.

Spirituality (Latin: spiritus – spirit, breath) refers to the personal search for meaning and transcendence. As a broad, open concept, it includes many different ways of seeking: within institutionalized religions with varying openness to other faiths, within diverse worldviews, as humanitarian commitment, in a deep connection with nature, through practices of mindfulness, and more.

Important: a person may understand themselves as religious, spiritual, or both.



Spirituality / Religiousity

Where do I draw strength from?

What gives my life meaning?

What is my own way of staying connected to something greater than myself?

How does this shape the way I live?

How does my deeper orientation influence how I treat myself – how I care for my health?

What meaning does this hold for my work?

In what ways does my spirituality or religiousness support me in my daily professional life?

Do I wish for space – freedom – for my spiritual or religious needs at work?



Stress

Stress can overwhelm the organism and lead to illness (distress), result from insufficient stimulation (lack of challenge and development), or remain within a healthy range. In the workplace, if demands increase – such as economic and efficiency pressures, intensified working hours, and bureaucracy – then resources must grow in parallel: appreciation, fair compensation, rest time, and a supportive organizational culture. Otherwise, distress arises.



How do I experience stress in my work?

Does it energize and challenge me in a good way?

Do I sometimes feel overwhelmed? When? In what ways?

Do I feel underchallenged – or pushed in the wrong direction?

What helps me when stress becomes a burden?

Is there recognition for the demands I face?

Do stress and appreciation stay in balance?

What do I long for?



The Pause

The Pause is an interruption of activity – especially work or effort – for the purpose of rest, recovery, and renewal. In the context of Spiritual Care, it is considered a spiritual resource. The theologian Johann Baptist Metz described it as a “short formula for religion.”

What matters is not only the duration of the pause (its extensiveness), but also its depth – its intensity and the contrast it offers to the rhythm of routine. Pauses are experienced as more restorative when they are consciously shaped, either personally or together within a team.



Where do I lose touch with my natural rhythm?

Do I allow myself to pause – in my work, in my personal
life? How do I shape these pauses?

Does my team have a culture of pausing together?

What would I wish for? What could grow from that?