

# Jay Mitlo

## We Have Today

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### Attention

Categories : [Blog](#), [Comfort](#), [Emotional Needs](#), [Emotional Needs List](#), [openness](#), [Relationships](#)

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You know...you never hear of someone saying, "...ugh, that person is always seeking support." Likewise, "All they ever do is display appreciation seeking behavior." is not commonly heard. Yet, somehow, if you need attention you are derided and looked down upon. Nonetheless, it is an emotional/relational need just like all of the others.

I very often call it the "ugly duckling of emotional needs." I'm sorry if I've offended any gross ducks out there. That being said attention is a very real emotional/relational need. So maybe you, or someone you are close to, has a high need for attention. In general, the way to love them is the same as any other emotional need. Take a look at how they were hurt, or had that need not met, as a child and [comfort](#) them (grieve with them as they tell you about it, feel their pain). Conversely, perhaps the exact opposite was true. They had a TON of attention their whole lives and that is why they need it now. Ok, now being [open/honest/and vulnerable](#) they should let you know how you can meet that need today (on a day to day and ongoing basis). I repeat, this is the same for all emotional needs and I am referring to people in your life that you are close to and that God [will use for you to love them](#) and keep them from being alone.

However, having the need for attention is different in that people don't always want to admit that they have this need. This goes back to the negative stereotype that it has. You may end up just trying to do your best with the current day to day ways to give them attention if they don't want to admit that they have the need. If they don't admit it, you're probably not going to have them share how nobody came to their games/recitals as a child. They won't tell you about

never having their parent go to any school functions or how mommy or daddy never helped with their homework or put their report cards on the fridge.

Imagine a little girl who has just drawn, what she thinks, is a beautiful picture of a rainbow. Mom is at the dining room table paying the bills. The little girl calls for her mother to come take a look at it. Mom doesn't come. The girl calls out again and the mom says that she is busy doing adult things but that she's sure it looks nice. Now the girl, needing attention, comes to the table and shows it to her mom. The mom glances at it, tells her that it's lovely, and sets it next to the bills. "Now, go draw something else dear." the mom says, never looking at the girl. Right now, how do you feel for this little girl? What if this is your wife's story growing up? What happens to your heart for her? Don't you want to just hug her and tell her she is a great artist? Don't you want to grab that picture and tell her it's the most beautiful rainbow you've ever seen, even better than a real rainbow?

Look, I am more than well aware that more than half of you who are reading this are like me and wanting to defend the mom paying the bills. We, who are parents, have all been there. It's not about why a need wasn't met, it just wasn't met. The mom has her story, [we've all got stories](#), but this is the little girls story regardless. She needed attention, she didn't get it.

The need for attention is sneaky though. It masks itself in a variety of ways. It's just not the person who dominates every conversation, is the loudest at every party, and always one ups your story every time something happens in your life. It's the "flowers for no reason" gift. You may not be super crazy about flowers but you feel great about the...attention. It's about noticing the new outfit he's wearing. You don't have to love the color combination he's trying to pull off. He'll feel great about the...attention.

Think I'm over thinking things here? Consider this, 68 gwykillion copies of "Fifty Shades of Grey" were sold. What was the book about? "Mommy porn" you answer. Well, yes...and no. It was about a wildly powerful, rich, and handsome man paying...attention to a young fill in reporter. Her need for attention was so great that she allowed the physical nature of their relationship to go beyond normal (to say the least...or so I've heard). I am aware that I've already given that book more depth than the author ever intended. That's another story for another time that I won't ever write.

Generally and quite stereotypically speaking, a woman asks her man, "Did you notice that the house is clean and the laundry put away?" not because she thinks he is an expert on either topic. She needs to know that he notices her hard work, that he is paying... attention to her. He wants her to initiate some romantic time with him. Not because he has a high need for affection, because he needs...attention in that manner.

For those of us with kids, we know ["attention seeking behavior"](#) all too well. Far too often we are too swept up in the emotion of said behavior (the 2 year old standing on the dining room table, the 4 year old drawing on the walls-mommy was paying the bills after all, the poop sculptures...whatever) to really take notice of what is happening emotionally with our children. When we get a handle on things (aka "after they've gone to bed") we realize that they needed attention. The solution is to give them more attention, when they are not destructively seeking

it. The same is true for adults as well!

Maybe this post is a bit long for something so simple as attention. Maybe it's an obvious topic. Maybe I've made it more complicated that it needs to be. Maybe. Maybe I just need some...