

LESS FOR LENT

GIVE UP CAPITALISM FOR 40 DAYS



1. WHO ARE WE, & WHAT DO WE ACTUALLY NEED?

If you have not already done so, it's important you read the introductory blog [here](#)

If you have not registered to take part in LESS for LENT and wish to do so, you can sign up [here](#)

LESS for LENT is not a self-help program or an opportunity for personal development. Ideas of 'wellness', 'mindfulness', 'self-care' and 'minimalism' have been dismembered from contexts of community, solidarity and connection. They have been rebranded as lifestyle accessories and individualist hobbies to be simply purchased as commodities and bolted on top of our lives as they are lived under capitalism. Meditation alone has become an industry worth £billions, conceived of as an aid to corporate productivity. Once you have decluttered your home under the guidance of your Instagram mentor, it is fit to receive your purchases of tasteful minimalist paraphernalia to indicate your good taste. Your yoga class is both relaxing, and helps you to attain (but not quite) that perfect optimised yoga body (if you can't afford any of it, you should aspire to be able to one day). All of this distracts us from, and leaves intact, the system we wish to resist – and it also leaves intact the root causes of our anxiety, alienation, and sense of lack in the first place.

Rather, **LESS for LENT** is a challenging, lived consideration of our predicament – a difficult but transformative sacrifice. Really, it's not possible to '**Give Up Capitalism for 40 Days**'. The totalising logic of capitalism encompasses every aspect of our lives and labour. Uncomfortably, it meets many of our needs very well: for some of us, the idea of 'abstaining from non-essential material purchases' itself cannot be seen as a choice, but is simply a painful daily reality. This is what philosopher Amartya Sen calls 'the difference between fasting and starving': the meaning depends on whether or not we have options.

We have committed together to taking the following concrete actions together for 40 days. This constitutes the **LESS for LENT** 'rule of life':

- **ABSTAIN FROM NON-ESSENTIAL MATERIAL PURCHASES**
- **FAST FROM NON-ESSENTIAL USE OF DIGITAL DEVICES, OR A FULL DIGITAL DETOX**
- **TAKE UP A REGULAR CREATIVE PRACTICE**
- **READ, LEARN, EXPLORE, DISCUSS AND BUILD ALTERNATIVES TOGETHER**

Enough! will provide weekly learnings to accompany and support these commitments, which you are invited to engage with. Each week, we will share reflections and considerations on each theme, as well as suggested activities to do and actions to take. **LESS for LENT** is self-directed and autonomous: you are free to do as much or as little as you wish, depending on your circumstances.

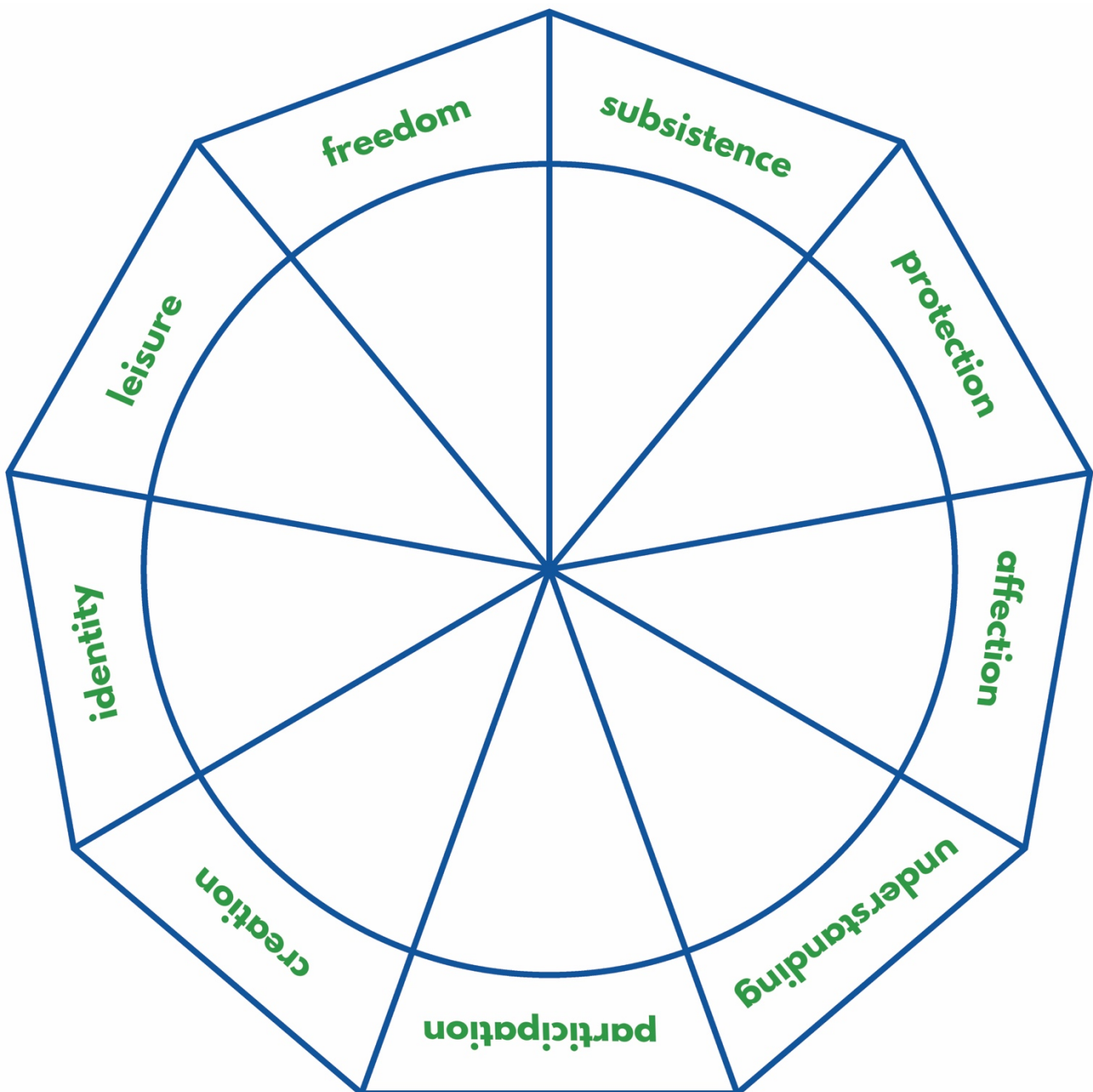
It's possible to do **LESS for LENT** on your own, but it's better if we do it together. If possible, a weekly in-person group in your area is ideal: we can discuss, share, create, support and encounter each other face-to-face. If that's not possible, we will be hosting a number of virtual chats where we can make use of technology to connect. Details of how to take part in these will be circulated to registered participants.

ACTIVITY:

DEVELOPING OUR LESS FOR LENT RULE OF LIFE

In order to carry out the concrete actions of **LESS for LENT**, it's helpful if we establish a simple set of guidelines for our daily rhythms. This provides a structure that can make establishing new habits easier, helps us to live congruently with our values and be less vulnerable to external influence. You may already have such a 'rule of life': if not, it may help you to develop one by reflecting on who we are and what we need. There are many ways to do this: feel free to find your own. If not, we offer one possible model to work with, based on the work of Chilean economist and philosopher Manfred Max-Neef (1932 – 2019).

Max-Neef proposed that human needs must be understood as a system; that is, all human needs are interrelated and interactive. **True satisfaction of human needs cannot be obtained by consuming economic goods. When this consumption is made an end in itself, rather than being seen as just one means to satisfy needs, it places life at the service of consumer goods, rather than the goods at the service of life.**



For this activity, print out or draw the ‘wheel of fundamental human needs’ above. For each fundamental need, colour in the segment from the middle outwards to indicate to what extent you are getting each need met. Also, write down how you are currently getting these needs met.

Some needs can be met by the same activity simultaneously: for example, a mother breast-feeding her baby is simultaneously satisfying the infant’s needs for subsistence, protection, affection and identity.

Once you have completed this, write down the answers to the following questions:

- **Are some needs being met better than others: is the wheel ‘balanced’?**
- **Which of these needs are currently being satisfied, or pseudo-satisfied, by consumerism?**
- **How can these needs be met in other ways?**

Some pointers can be found in the matrix of needs and satisfiers:

FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN NEEDS	BEING (qualities)	HAVING (things)	DOING (actions)	INTERACTING (settings)
subsistence	physical and mental health	food, shelter, work	feed, clothe, rest, work	living environment, social setting
protection	care, adaptability, autonomy	social security, health systems, work	co-operate, plan, take care of, help	social environment, dwelling
affection	respect, sense of humour, generosity, sensuality	friendships, family, relationships with nature	share, take care of, make love, express emotions	privacy, intimate spaces of togetherness
understanding	critical capacity, curiosity, intuition	literature, teachers, education	analyse, study, investigate, meditate	schools, families, universities, communities
participation	receptiveness, dedication, sense of humour	responsibilities, duties, work, rights	co-operate, dissent, express opinions	associations, parties, place of worship, neighbourhoods
leisure	imagination, tranquillity, spontaneity	games, parties, peace of mind	daydream, remember, relax, have fun	landscapes, intimate spaces, places to be alone
creation	imagination, boldness, inventiveness, curiosity	abilities, skills, work, techniques	invent, build, design, work, compose, interpret	spaces for expression, workshops, audiences
identity	sense of belonging, self-esteem, consistency	language, religions, work, customs, values, norms	get to know oneself, grow, commit oneself	places one belongs to, everyday settings
freedom	autonomy, passion, self-esteem, open-mindedness	equal rights, choice	dissent, choose, run risks, develop awareness	anywhere

Use what you discover from this activity to find alternative ways to get your fundamental human needs met. If you like, you can share these ways with the rest of the **LESS for LENT** community, and learn from others about what they are doing.

In order to recover from consumerism’s grip on our lives, we need to understand the ways in which we are vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation. That’s the subject of next week’s learning – **STIMULATION: BREAKING THE ADDICTION**. Until then, we offer you every encouragement and blessing for your LESS for LENT observance.

"Lent is not tidy. Days grow longer (the word "Lent" comes from "lengthen"), the ground thaws, and the next thing we know, everything is filthy. Our windows need washing, our temples need cleaning, the earth itself needs a good bath. Winter doesn't leave without blustery battles that push things over and mess things up and even break things. Lent, if we honestly face its fury, will leave the landscape littered with bits and pieces of ourselves."

Peter Mazar

Optional resources for Week One of LESS for LENT:

[Human Scale Development: Manfred Max-Neef](#)

[Marie Kondo and the Anthropocene- Mike Small](#)

[All About Me: How mindfulness became the new capitalist spirituality- Ron Purser](#)

[Sara Ahmed on Audre Lorde's self care as a radical act](#)