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Maslow's Hierarchy

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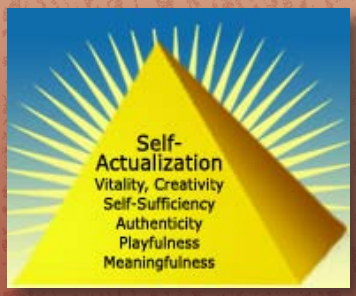

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Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Adapted from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia and other sources (see references)

Introduction

An interpretation of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, represented as a pyramid with the more basic needs at the bottom.[1]

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory in psychology, proposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper A Theory of Human Motivation.[2] Maslow subsequently extended the idea to include his observations of humans' innate curiosity.

Maslow studied what he called exemplary people such as Albert Einstein, Jane Addams, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Frederick Douglass rather than mentally ill or neurotic people, writing that "the study of crippled, stunted, immature, and unhealthy specimens can yield only a cripple psychology and a cripple philosophy."[3] Maslow also studied the healthiest 1% of the college student population.[4]

Maslow's theory was fully expressed in his 1954 book Motivation and Personality.[5]

Representations

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often portrayed in the shape of a pyramid, with the largest and lowest levels of needs at the bottom, and the need for self-actualization at the top.[1][6]

Deficiency needs

The lower four layers of the pyramid contain what Maslow called "deficiency needs" or "d-needs": esteem , friendship and love, security, and physical needs. With the exception of the lowest (physiological) needs, if these "deficiency needs" are not met, the body gives no physical indication but the individual feels anxious and tense. In other words, the hierarchy level of need moves upward as soon as the previous level of need is satisfied.

1. Self-actualization

"What a man can be, he must be."[7] This forms the basis of the perceived need for self-actualization. This level of need pertains to what a person's full potential is and realizing that potential. Maslow describes this desire as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming.[8] This is a broad definition of the need for self-actualization, but when applied to individuals the need is specific. For example one individual may have the strong desire to become an ideal parent, in another it may be expressed athletically, and in another it may be expressed in painting, pictures, or inventions.[9] As mentioned before, in order to reach a clear understanding of this level of need one must first not only achieve the previous needs, physiological, safety, love, and esteem, but master these needs. Below are Maslow's descriptions of a self-actualized person's different needs and personality traits.

2. Esteem

All humans have a need to be respected and to have self-esteem and self-respect. Also known as the belonging need, esteem presents the normal human desire to be accepted and valued by others. People need to engage themselves to gain recognition and have an activity or activities that give the person a sense of contribution, to feel accepted and self-valued, be it in a profession or hobby. Imbalances at this level can result in low self-esteem or an inferiority complex. People with low self-esteem need respect from others. They may seek fame or glory, which again depends on others. Psychological imbalances such as depression can also prevent one from obtaining self-esteem on both levels.

Most people have a need for a stable self-respect and self-esteem. Maslow noted two versions of esteem needs, a lower one and a higher one. The lower one is the need for the respect of others, the need for status, recognition, fame, prestige, and attention. The higher one is the need for self-respect, the need for strength, competence, mastery, self-confidence, independence and freedom. The latter one ranks higher because it rests more on inner competence won through experience. Deprivation of these needs can lead to an inferiority complex, weakness and helplessness.

3. Love and belonging

After physiological and safety needs are fulfilled, the third layer of human needs are social and involve feelings of belonging. This aspect of Maslow's hierarchy involves emotionally based relationships in general, such as:

- Friendship
- Intimacy
- Family

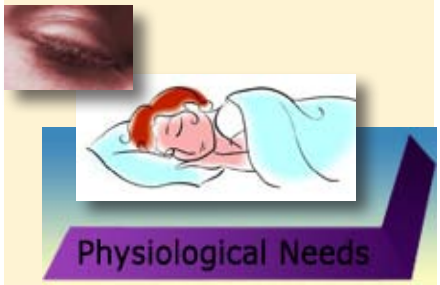
Humans need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance, whether it comes from a large social group, such as clubs, office culture, religious groups, professional organizations, sports teams, gangs, or small social connections (family members, intimate partners, mentors, close colleagues, confidants). They need to love and be loved (sexually and non-sexually) by others. In the absence of these elements, many people become susceptible to loneliness, social anxiety, and clinical depression. This need for belonging can often overcome the physiological and security needs, depending on the strength of the peer pressure; an anorexic, for example, may ignore the need to eat and the security of health for a feeling of control and belonging.

4. Safety needs

With their physical needs relatively satisfied, the individual's safety needs take precedence and dominate behavior. These needs have to do with people's yearning for a predictable orderly world in which perceived unfairness and inconsistency are under control, the familiar frequent and the unfamiliar rare. In the world of work, these safety needs manifest themselves in such things as a preference for job security, grievance procedures for protecting the individual from unilateral authority, savings accounts, insurance policies, reasonable disability accommodations, and the like.

Safety and security needs include:

- Personal security
- Financial security
- Health and well-being
- Safety net against accidents/illness and their adverse impacts



Maslow's classic hierarchy of needs

Kenrick et al. created a new pyramid in which the needs overlap one another and coexist, instead of completely replacing each other.
From: Perspectives on Psychological Science.

5. Physiological needs

For the most part, physiological needs are obvious—they are the literal requirements for human survival. If these requirements are not met (with the exception of clothing, shelter, and sexual activity), the human body simply cannot continue to function.

Physiological needs include:

- Breathing
- Food
- Water
- Homeostasis
- Sex
- Sleep

Air, water, and food are metabolic requirements for survival in all animals, including humans. Clothing and shelter provide necessary protection from the elements. The intensity of the human sexual instinct is shaped more by sexual competition than maintaining a birth rate adequate to survival of the species.

Criticisms

In their extensive review of research based on Maslow's theory, Wahba and Bridgewell found little evidence for the ranking of needs Maslow described, or even for the existence of a definite hierarchy at all.[10] Chilean economist and philosopher Manfred Max-Neef has also argued fundamental human needs are non-hierarchical, and are ontologically universal and invariant in nature—part of the condition of being human; poverty, he argues, may result from any one of these needs being frustrated, denied or unfulfilled.

The order in which the hierarchy is arranged (with self-actualization as the highest order need) has been criticized as being ethnocentric by Geert Hofstede.[11] Hofstede's criticism of Maslow's pyramid as ethnocentric may stem from the fact that Maslow's hierarchy of needs neglects to illustrate and expand upon the difference between the social and intellectual needs of those raised in individualistic societies and those raised in collectivist societies. Maslow created his hierarchy of needs from an individualistic perspective, being that he was from the United States, a highly individualistic nation. The needs and drives of those in individualistic societies tend to be more self centered than those in collectivist societies, focusing on improvement of the self, with self actualization being the apex of self improvement. Since the hierarchy was written from the perspective of an individualist, the order of needs in the hierarchy with self actualization at the top is not representative of the needs of those in collectivist cultures. In collectivist societies, the needs of acceptance and community will outweigh the needs for freedom and individuality. [12]

Maslow's hierarchy has also been criticized as being individualistic because of the position and value of sex on the pyramid. Maslow's pyramid puts sex on the bottom rung of physiological needs, along with breathing and food. It views sex from an individualistic and not collectivist perspective: i.e., as an individualistic physiological need that must be satisfied before one moves on to higher pursuits. This view of sex neglects the emotional, familial and evolutionary implications of sex within the community.[13][14]

Psychologist Douglas Kenrick of Arizona State University has several problems with Maslow's pyramid. One of them is that needs, once they are met, do not simply disappear. Rather, certain environmental cues can make them come back. Thus, Kenrick et al. created a new pyramid in which the needs overlap one another and coexist, instead of completely replacing each other. The bottom four levels of this pyramid are highly compatible with Maslow's, but their top three are mate acquisition, mate retention and parenting. Made in this way, human needs are considered from the perspective of evolutionary psychology.[15]

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http://support.redwoods.edu/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=15056

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External links

- A Theory of Human Motivation, original 1943 article by Maslow.
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Teacher's Toolbox. A video overview of Maslow's work by Geoff Petty.
- A Theory of Human Motivation: Annotated.
- Theory and biography including detailed description and examples of self-actualizers.
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Valdosta.
- Abraham Maslow by C George Boheree
- Suggestions for Application of Maslow's Theory to Education