

Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs

Excerpted from A Theory of Human Motivation 1943

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is predetermined in order of importance. It is often depicted as a pyramid consisting of five levels: the lowest level is associated with physiological needs, while the uppermost level is associated with self-actualization needs, particularly those related to identity and purpose. Deficiency needs must be met first. Once these are met, seeking to satisfy growth needs drives personal growth. The higher needs in this hierarchy only come into focus when the lower needs in the pyramid are met. Once an individual has moved upwards to the next level, needs in the lower level will no longer be prioritized. If a lower set of needs is no longer being met, the individual will temporarily re-prioritize those needs by focusing attention on the unfulfilled needs, but will not permanently regress to the lower level. For instance, a businessman at the esteem level who is diagnosed with cancer will spend a great deal of time concentrating on his health (physiological needs), but will continue to value his work performance (esteem needs) and will likely return to work during periods of remission.

Deficiency Needs

The lower four layers of the pyramid are what Maslow called "deficiency needs" or "D-needs": physiological, safety and security, love and belonging, and esteem. 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.

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 and sex), the human body simply cannot continue to function.

Physiological needs include: Breathing Homeostasis Water Sleep Food
Excretion Sex Clothing Shelter

Safety and Security Needs

With their physical needs relatively satisfied, the individual's safety needs take over and dominate their behavior. These needs have to do with people's yearning for a predictable, orderly world in which injustice 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, and the like.

Safety and Security needs include: Personal security Financial security Health and well-being
Safety net against accidents/illness and the adverse impacts

Social Needs – Love and Belonging

After physiological and safety needs are fulfilled, the third layer of human needs is social. This psychological aspect of Maslow's hierarchy involves emotionally-based relationships in general, such as: Friendship Intimacy Having a supportive and communicative family

Humans need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance, whether it comes from a:

- Large Social Group: clubs, office culture, religious groups, professional orgs, sports teams, gangs

- 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.

Esteem

All humans have a need to be respected, to have self-esteem, 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. It may be noted, however, that many people with low self-esteem will not be able to improve their view of themselves simply by receiving fame, respect, and glory externally, but must first accept themselves internally.

Self Actualization

Aesthetic needs

The motivation to realize one's own maximum potential and possibilities is considered to be the master motive or the only real motive, all other motives being its various forms. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the need for self-actualization is the final need that manifests when lower level needs have been satisfied.

Self-transcendence

Near the end of his life Maslow revealed that there was a level on the hierarchy that was above self-actualization: self-transcendence. "Transcenders may be said to be much more often aware of the realm of being, to be living at the level of Being... to have unitive consciousness and "plateau experience", serene and contemplative cognitions rather than climactic ones. They have or had peak experience - mystic, sacral, ecstatic - with illuminations or insights.

Qualities of Self-transcendent People: guilt for the misfortune of someone close, creativity, humility, intelligence, and divergent thinking, mainly loners, had deep relationships, and were very normal on the outside.