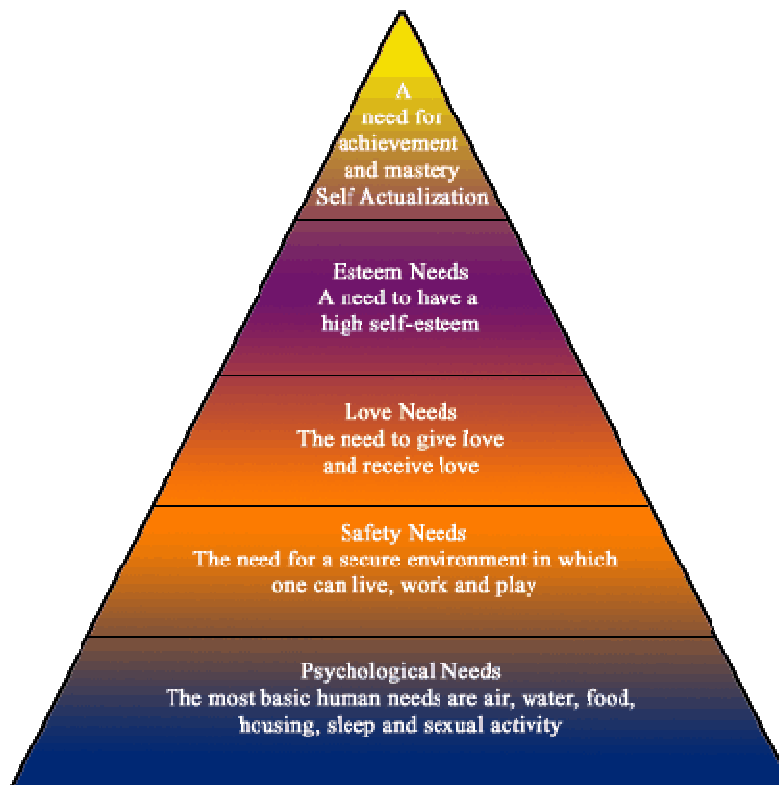


Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Written by Carol McGowan – see full attribution at the end of this document

Based on insights gained during the 1940's & 50's USA Abraham Maslow developed a hierarchical theory of human need. It was published and circulated during 1954. It is still widely referenced today and laid the foundation for a number of models that followed.

What Is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs?



Sourced from: http://www.msjc.edu/hs/www/lecture_graphics/maslohier.gif

What Does Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs Represent?

It is a model that attempts to provide understanding in relation to:

- Human motivation
- Management training
- Personal development

As a humanist psychologist Abraham Maslow did not believe people were only influenced by mechanical forces or unconscious instincts or impulses as subscribed to by other psychological theories and models prevalent at the time of Maslow's model being developed.

Maslow's focus was geared towards human potential. One of his key suppositions was that humans strive to reach the highest levels of their human capabilities. A term used to describe and explain this is 'fully functioning' or 'possessing a healthy personality'. Maslow had a different name for this which will be explained later in this document. It is called 'self actualising'.

What Do Each Of The Layers In The Hierarchy Relate To?

The pyramid representation of the information makes it easier to comprehend and understand the relationship of the respective layers. Each layer (starting from the bottom and working your way up) of the pyramid is dependent on the previous layer. It is not possible to skip over a layer it does necessitate a sequential progression. Depending on circumstances there can be a regression and in this instance it may be possible for a particular layer to be bypassed depending on the seriousness and significance of the event that has brought about the change in circumstance.

It should be noted that just because you attain a higher level does not mean you neglect or ignore the needs of lower levels. These need to be maintained as well as trying to rise up to higher levels of functioning.

In the following table a description of each layer and its significance and importance are described in order to clarify the intent of the model and how it may apply in a person's life.

Explanation of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs?

Need Category	Definition/Description	Implication
<p>Physiological (Level 1)</p>	<p>The key factor to understand about this group of needs is that they are biological. They encompass the need for such basic things as:</p> <p>Oxygen, food, water, sleep, warmth and exercise or movement etc.</p> <p>Along the way if these needs are not met they can cause sickness, irritation, discomfort, pain and if neglected too long eventually death.</p> <p>Hence this group of needs is absolutely fundamental to human existence.</p>	<p>Once these needs are met a person is in a better position to focus on other things which can include the satisfying of higher level needs.</p>

Need Category	Definition/Description	Implication
<p>Safety (Level 2)</p>	<p>These needs are considered to be psychological in nature.</p> <p>These relate to establishing stability and consistency in one's environment. These are such things as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protection from the elements ○ Security ○ Law and order ○ Stability and consistency <p>Studies have indicated that people can get stuck at this level.</p>	<p>The desire to have this need met could be as a result of a particular family dynamic or high level of dysfunction in some cases.</p> <p>Life circumstances and experiences will impact ones level of craving in order to satisfy a safety need.</p> <p>Worldwide terrorism is impacting peoples desire to have their safety needs met more so than ever before.</p>
<p>Social (Belonging) (Level 3)</p>	<p>This is where people attempt to address needs associated with escaping feelings of loneliness and alienation and working on developing a sense of belonging. This is where they are in a position to give and receive love and affection.</p>	<p>There is an innate desire in humans to be in groups of some form or another. This can be clubs, work groups, families or gangs.</p> <p>Not fulfilling these needs can make us feel emotionally vulnerable.</p> <p>Advertising has a huge reliance on tapping into this need that people have. They try to make us feel like we will fit in better if we acquire their product or service. Dating and match-making services are very obvious examples of this.</p>

Need Category	Definition/Description	Implication
<p>Esteem (Level 4)</p>	<p>This group of needs has two components.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How we feel about ourselves. Our own perception of self-worth. This comes from how we perceive our ability to master tasks. 2. The recognition and attention we receive from others. This very much builds on the social need of belonging. Wanting admiration from others taps into the need for power. <p>In summary this means people need a high level of self-respect as well as respect from others to feel satisfied, self-confident and feel they are valuable.</p>	<p>How we view ourselves influences our relationships with others.</p> <p>Having expensive and flashy items can be a way to seek out esteem from others.</p> <p>If these needs are not met then the implications are that a person could feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inferior ○ Weak ○ Helpless ○ Worthless <p>Lifestyle products are where advertisers attempt to tap into these types of needs.</p>

Need Category	Definition/Description	Implication
<p>Self-Actualisation (Level 5)</p>	<p>This group of needs is described as where humans have their 'peak' experience.</p> <p>In order to self-actualise it is an on-going process. It is not a place you reach and then stop you have to work very consciously to maintain it.</p> <p>The satisfaction of this group of needs is where people start to look outside themselves.</p> <p>A key question to ask is: what can a human being become? This is about seeking out your purpose in life and then taking tangible actions to enable you to achieve it.</p> <p>The identification of what is required to satisfy this group of needs is a lot harder to define than those in the other layers of the model.</p> <p>In summary self actualisation entails:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Realising personal potential ○ Self-fulfilment ○ Seeking personal growth ○ Seeking peak experience 	<p>Some people may find it difficult to self actualise. This is not always of their own doing it could be circumstantial. The opportunity just does not exist for self actualisation to be a possibility. eg: the education system may or may not foster personal growth in an individual which can have implications for their ability to self actualise. To do this requires that people are encouraged to find their inner nature. However often the focus is on a career as opposed to a vocation. People with the capacity and opportunity to self actualise actually are able to make their vocation their career.</p> <p>People who self actualise seek such things as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Knowledge ○ Peace ○ Insight ○ Callings ○ Learning ○ Growth <p>A lot of the self-help, personal development market is trying to provide services and products to help people self-actualise.</p>

How Can I Recognise A Self-Actualised Person?

The following characteristics are usually found in a self-actualised person:

- They have a very keen sense of reality. What this means is they are able to apply objective judgements to situations and circumstances rather than being subjective.
- When they are faced with a problem they view it as a challenge requiring a solution rather than creating excuses and complaining.
- They are very comfortable in their own company as well as themselves as individuals irrespective of their own personal idiosyncrasies.
- They have the capacity to form their own opinions and judgements without being unduly influenced by their environment and personal circumstances.
- They rarely succumb to social pressure they can hold their own view even if everyone around them has a different opinion.
- They are tolerant and non-discriminatory in their approach to others. They enjoy and embrace diversity in all its forms eg: race, gender, individual style etc.
- They are usually socially compassionate so they are willing to be involved in or take up social causes as this is because they are concerned with their outside world not just themselves.
- They have the ability to accept people as they are and not try to change them. They acknowledge and appreciate the uniqueness of each individual they encounter.
- They are more likely to have a few close and intimate friends rather than a large range of social and somewhat superficial relationships.
- Their sense of humour is directed to the foibles of humanity rather than at themselves or any other particular individual. They are not happy having fun at someone else's expense.

- They are natural and true to themselves they do not conform to what others might want them to be.
- They are usually excited and interested in most things no matter how ordinary and mundane they might appear to be.
- They are highly creative, inventive and innovative in what they do.
- They seek out peak experiences that leave a lasting impression. They want experiences not instances.
- They are authentic.
- They are more likely to find their vocation and right mate.
- They acknowledge that life is precious.
- They are good and joyous in most situations.
- They learn from their inner nature.
- They ensure their basic needs are continuously being met.
- They appreciate the beauty and good things that surround them.
- They transcend the trifling.
- They are not afraid to grapple with tough issues such as injustice, pain and suffering etc.
- They choose well.
- They are strong in their beliefs without the need to impose them on others.

Maslow's B Values?

As well as developing the hierarchy of needs Maslow developed what have been described as 'B' Values. These 'B' Values have been described as terms used to help define and describe self-actualisation. The term 'B' values have been coined because it stands for 'Being' Values.

- **Wholeness/Unity/Oneness**
- **Perfection/Just-so-ness**
- **Completion/Finality/Ending**
- **Justice/Fairness**
- **Aliveness/Full-functioning**
- **Richness/Intricacy**
- **Simplicity/Essential/Honesty**
- **Beauty/Form/Richness**
- **Goodness/Oughtness**
- **Uniqueness/Idiosyncrasy/Novelty**
- **Effortlessness/Ease/Perfect**
- **Playfulness/Joy/Humour**
- **Truth/Reality/Beauty/Pure**
- **Self-Sufficiency/Independence**

Source: <http://www.deepermind.com/zomaslow.htm>

It is said that the introduction of these values by Maslow changed psychology forever. It is thought that these concepts lifted psychology to a deeper level of study by focussing on great people as opposed to broken people.

Skills Development Exercises

Here are some exercises to help you take the information from this document and apply it to your situation in a practical manner.

Documenting your discoveries regarding your insights relative to Maslow's Hierarchy of needs in a journal or notebook could be highly valuable and provide a good baseline for developing your skills in this regard.

- Consider each level of need. Describe for yourself how these needs are being met? What priority do you feel you place on each layer of need? Are you happy with this order or is some re-alignment required? If a change is required what steps do you plan to take to affect the required change?
- Prior to reading this document what would you have considered your highest level need? After reading the document what would you consider your highest level need? If there has been a change what brought about the change? What will you do differently as a result of having this change in understanding?
- Are there any aspects of this model that you find difficult to accept? If so what beliefs and attitudes may be impacting your perspective? Has this caused you to re-consider your perspective? If so why, if not why not?
- Read through the list of characteristics associated with a self actualised person. Then mark which aspects you believe apply to you? Which ones would you like to apply to you? What might you be able to do to enable those other items to apply to you? What help might you need to make them a reality for you?
- How does the 'B' Values help you in determining your ability and/or desire to self-actualise? How many of these values are important to you? What other values would you put alongside these values that are important to you? If you have not done so already it could be helpful to prepare a values assessment for yourself? (If you are unsure what this is then an internet search will direct you to a number of assessments that you could undertake.) After completing this exercise document how you think understanding your personal values will contribute to your ability to self actualise.

Acknowledgements & Further Reading

Carol McGowan is a successful coach and counsellor, based in Sydney Australia, who specialises in retirement lifestyle planning. She has been a significant leader in the development of askacoach.com from the beginning. Carol may be contacted by e-mail at francarol@bigpond.com or by phone in Australia on 0407 410 610 or internationally 61 4 07 410 610.

The following resources have been used by Carol to create this document.

<http://www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au/comm-lead/leadership/Maslow-Diagram.htm>

<http://www.businessballs.com/maslow.htm>

<http://acidbitch.com/Maslow.html>

<http://www.deepermind.com/2omaslow.htm>

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