

Maslows hierarchy of needs philosophy essay



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Human needs are an important part of human nature. Values, beliefs, and customs differ from country to country and group to group, but all people have similar needs. As a leader you must understand these needs because they are powerful motivators.

Abraham Maslow felt that human needs were arranged in a hierarchical order (Maslow, 1954). He based his theory on healthy, creative people who used all their talents, potential, and capabilities. At the time, this methodology differed from most other psychology research studies in that they were based on observing disturbed people.

There are two major groups of human needs: basic needs and meta needs.

Basic needs are physiological, such as food, water, and sleep; and psychological, such as affection, security, and self-esteem. These basic needs are also called deficiency needs because if they are not met by an individual, then that person will strive to make up the deficiency.

The higher needs are called meta needs or being needs (growth needs). These include justice, goodness, beauty, order, unity, etc. Basic needs normally take priority over growth needs. For example, a person who lacks food or water will not normally attend to justice or beauty needs.

These needs are listed below in hierarchical order. The basic needs on the bottom of the list (1 to 4) must normally be met before the meta or being needs above them can be met. The four meta needs (5 to 8) can be pursued in any order, depending upon a person's wants or circumstances, as long as the basic needs have all been met.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

8. Self-transcendence - a transegoic (see Note below) level that emphasizes visionary intuition, altruism, and unity consciousness.
7. Self-actualization - know exactly who you are, where you are going, and what you want to accomplish. A state of well-being.
6. Aesthetic - at peace, more curious about inner workings of all.
5. Cognitive - learning for learning alone, contribute knowledge.
4. Esteem - feeling of moving up in world, recognition, few doubts about self.
3. Belongingness and love - belong to a group, close friends to confide with.
2. Safety - feel free from immediate danger.
1. Physiological - food, water, shelter, sex.

Maslow posited that people want and are forever striving to meet various goals. Because the lower level needs are more immediate and urgent, then they come into play as the source and direction of a person's goal if they are not satisfied,.

A need higher in the hierarchy will become a motive of behavior as long as the needs below it have been satisfied. Unsatisfied lower needs will dominate unsatisfied higher needs and must be satisfied before the person can climb up the hierarchy.

Knowing where a person is located on this scale aids in determining an effective motivator. For example, motivating a middle-class person (who is in <https://assignbuster.com/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-philosophy-essay/>

range 4 of the hierarchy) with a certificate will have a far greater impact than using the same motivator to effect a minimum wage person from the ghetto who is desperately struggling to meet the first couple of needs.

It should be noted that almost no one stays in one particular hierarchy for an extended period. We constantly strive to move up, while at the same time various forces outside our control try to push us down. Those on top get pushed down for short time periods, i. e., death of a loved-one or an idea that does not work, while those on the bottom get pushed up, i. e., come across a small prize. Our goal as leaders therefor is to help people obtain the skills and knowledge that will push them up the hierarchy on a more permanent basis. People who have their basic needs met become much better workers as they are able to concentrate on fulfilling the visions put forth to them, rather than consistently struggling to make ends meet.

Characteristics of self-actualizing people:

Have better perceptions of reality and are comfortable with it.

Accept themselves and their own natures.

Lack of artificiality.

They focus on problems outside themselves and are concerned with basic issues and eternal questions.

They like privacy and tend to be detached.

Rely on their own development and continued growth.

Appreciate the basic pleasures of life (e. g., do not take blessings for granted).

Have a deep feeling of kinship with others.

Are deeply democratic and are not really aware of differences.

Have strong ethical and moral standards.

Are original, inventive, less constricted and fresher than others

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Leadership

To put Maslow's theory into perspective with leadership, a short (less than 3 minutes) audio MP3 file is included: Maslow and leadership.

Transegoic

Transegoic means a higher, psychic, or spiritual state of development. The trans is related to transcendence, while the ego is based on Freud's work. We go from preEGOic levels to EGOic levels to transeGOic. The EGO in all three terms are used in the Jungian sense of consciousness as opposed to the unconscious. Ego equates with the personality.

In Maslow's model, the ultimate goal of life is self-actualization, which is almost never fully attained but rather is something to always strive towards. Peak experiences are temporary self-actualizations.

Maslow later theorized that this level does not stop, it goes on to self-transcendence, which carries us to the spiritual level, e. g.. Gandhi, Mother Theresa, Dalai Lamao, or even poets, such as Robert Frost. Maslow's self-transcendence level recognizes the human need for ethics, creativity,
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compassion and spirituality. Without this spiritual or transegoic sense, we are simply animals or machines.

In addition, just as there are peak experiences for temporary self-actualizations; there are also peak experiences for self-transcendence. These are our spiritual creative moments.

While the research of Maslow's theory has undergone limited empirical scrutiny, it still remains quite popular due to its simplicity and being the start of the movement that moved us away from a totally behaviorist/reductionistic/mechanistic approach to a more humanistic one. In addition, a lot of concerns is directed at his methodology: Pick a small number of people that he declares self-actualizing; read and talk about them; and come to the conclusion about self-actualization. However, he did completely understood this, and thought of his work as simply a method of pointing the way, rather than being the final say. In addition, he hoped that others would take up the cause and complete what he had begun.

Herzberg's Hygiene and Motivational Factors

Herzberg developed a list of factors (Herzberg, 1966) that are based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, except his version is more closely related to the working environment:

HERZBERG'S HYGIENE & MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS

Hygiene or Dissatisfies:

Working conditions

Policies and administrative practices

Salary and Benefits

Supervision

Status

Job security

Co-workers

Personal life

Motivators or Satisfiers:

Recognition

Achievement

Advancement

Growth

Responsibility

Job challenge

Hygiene factors must be present in the job before motivators can be used to stimulate that person. That is, you cannot use motivators until all the hygiene factors are met. Herzberg's needs are specifically job related and reflect some of the distinct things that people want from their work as

opposed to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs which reflect all the needs in a persons life.

Building on this model, Herzberg coined the term " job enrichment" to describe the process of redesigning work in order to build in motivators.

Theory X and Theory Y

Douglas McGregor developed a philosophical view of humankind with his Theory X and Theory Y (McGregor, 1957) , which are two opposing perceptions about how people view human behavior at work and organizational life. McGregor felt that companies followed either one or the other approach:

Theory X

People have an inherent dislike for work and will avoid it whenever possible.

People must be coerced, controlled, directed, or threatened with punishment in order to get them to achieve the organizational objectives.

People prefer to be directed, do not want responsibility, and have little or no ambition.

People seek security above all else.

Note that with Theory X assumptions, management's role is to coerce and control employees.

Theory Y

Work is as natural as play and rest.

People will exercise self-direction if they are committed to the objectives (they are NOT lazy).

Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement.

People learn to accept and seek responsibility.

Creativity, ingenuity, and imagination are widely distributed among the population. People are capable of using these abilities to solve an organizational problem.

People have potential.

Note that with Theory Y assumptions, management's role is to develop the potential in employees and help them to release that potential towards common goals.

Theory X is the view that traditional management has taken towards the workforce. Many organizations are now taking the enlightened view of theory Y. A boss can be viewed as taking the theory X approach, while a leader takes the theory Y approach.

Notice that Maslow, Herzberg, and McGreagor's theories all tie together:

Herzberg's theory is a micro version of Maslow's theory (concentrated in the work place).

McGreagor's Theory X is based on workers caught in the lower levels (1 to 3) of Maslow's theory, while his Theory Y is for workers who have gone above level 3.

McGreagor's Theory X is based on workers caught in Herzberg's Hygiene Dissatisfiers, while Theory Y is based on workers who are in the Motivators or Satisfiers section.

Existence/Relatedness/Growth (ERG)

Clayton Alderfer's Existence/Relatedness/Growth (ERG) Theory of Needs

(Alderfer, 1969) postulates that there are three groups of needs:

Existence - This group of needs is concerned with providing the basic requirements for material existence, such as physiological and safety needs. This need is satisfied by money earned in a job so that one may buy food, shelter, clothing, etc.

Relationships - This group of needs center upon the desire to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. Since a people normally spend approximately half of their waking hours on the job, this need is normally satisfied to some degree by their coworkers.

Growth - These needs are met by personal development. A person's job, career, or profession provides significant satisfaction of growth needs.

Alderfer's ERG theory states that more than one need may be influential at the same time. If the gratification of a higher-level need is frustrated, the desire to satisfy a lower-level need will increase. He identifies this phenomenon as the "frustration & shy aggression dimension." Its relevance

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on the job is that even when the upper-level needs are frustrated, the job still provides for the basic physiological needs upon which one would then be focused. If, at that point, something happens to threaten the job, the person's basic needs are significantly threatened. If there are not factors present to relieve the pressure, the person may become desperate and panicky.

Notice that Alderfer's ERG theory is built upon Maslow's, however it does differ. First he collapsing it from five needs to three. And unlike Maslow, he did not see these needs as being a hierarchy in which one climbs up, but rather being more of a continuum.

While there has not been a whole lot of research on Alderfer's theory, most contemporary theories do tend to support it.

Expectancy Theory

Vroom's Expectancy Theory states that an individual will act in a certain way based on the expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome and on the attractiveness of that outcome to the individual. This motivational model (Vroom, 1964) has been modified by several people, to include Porter and Lawler (Porter et. al., 1968). Vroom's Expectancy Theory is written as a formula:

Valence x Expectancy x Instrumentality = Motivation

Valence (Reward) = the amount of desire for a goal (What is the reward?)

Expectancy (Performance) = the strength of belief that work related effort will result in the completion of the task (How hard will I have to work to reach the goal?)

Instrumentality (Belief) = the belief that the reward will be received once the task is completed (Will they notice the effort I put forth?)

The product of valence, expectancy, and instrumentality is motivation. It can be thought of as the strength of the drive towards a goal. For example, if an employee wants to move up through the ranks, then promotion has a high valence for that employee. If the employee believes that high performance will result in good reviews, then the employee has a high expectancy.

However, if the employee believes the company will not promote from within, then the employee has low instrumentality, and the employee will not be motivated to perform better.