

Maslow's theory of personality

[Psychology](#), [Personality](#)



Maslow's served as one of the most influential theorists in his field. He proposed a more simple and appealing theory which acted against reductionism and instead proposed a more holistic approach for personality research. Maslow's theory of personality is based on a theory of motivation, characterized by a particular hierarchy of need and an end product of self-actualization which follows after all the needs have been satisfied.

The Theory of Motivation, human behavior is influenced by basic needs. These needs are ordered in a hierarchy which indicates which of these needs is the most urgent and accordingly which has to be satisfied before a higher need can be catered to. These needs are (1) physiological needs; (2) safety needs; (3) belonging needs; (4) esteem needs; and (5) self-actualization. Consequently, self-actualization, being the last of the stages is reached when all needs are fulfilled. However, achievement of this state is not fixed, it is still a process of development which is always continuous. Self-actualization signifies that the individual has reached and fulfilled all of his potentials, talents and competencies (Boeree).

In line with this, the subject for this topic would be Oprah Winfrey. Oprah Winfrey came from an extremely poor family, daughter of a housemaid and a soldier. She lived her childhood in extreme poverty and was often teased by other children due to poverty and her racial background. First, her basic physiological needs, were poorly catered to because of extreme poverty. However, her strong will and character enabled her to attain her safety, belonging and esteem needs. And her status right now as one of the most

successful women in the world is a manifestation of a successful self-actualization (A Biography).

In self-actualizing an individual, there are three character traits that together shall define a new personality type. First, perception and experience is an integral part of molding a person. His eagerness to discover new things and learn new ideas shall contribute largely to the development of his personality and potentials. Another, in self-actualization, an individual must have a spontaneous attitude in expressing their thoughts and ideas.

He must be natural and must have an attitude of general acceptance towards other people and to himself. And lastly, to fully attain self-actualization, individuals must have a sense of belongingness towards the whole society. They should be able to become friendly and empathic to other people's feelings and idea and capable of creating harmonious interpersonal relationship to people outside his intimate friends.

Oprah Winfrey, in her own way had undergone her own self-actualizing process. Her life experiences were manifestations of her successful attainment of her potentials and competencies. First, she was always open to changes, new ideas and experiences. Since her childhood, she had welcomed her potentials and worked hard to develop it. Further, she has always been liberal minded and true to her opinions and thoughts. She was one of the strongest individuals who weren't afraid to voice out their opinion. And lastly, her commitment to the community and her developed empathy towards other people equipped her to become attached to the community.

Thus, personality development is a holistic process. It takes into account physical, mental and emotional needs. And it encompasses personal growth, and goes beyond growth that is attributed with an individual's ability to reach out to the society in general.

References

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A Biography: Oprah Winfrey. Retrieved November 8, 2007 from <http://oprah.urbanhustler.com/biography/>