

Humanistic and positive psychology

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Class Hours: Mon 01:30-04:15 PM



outline

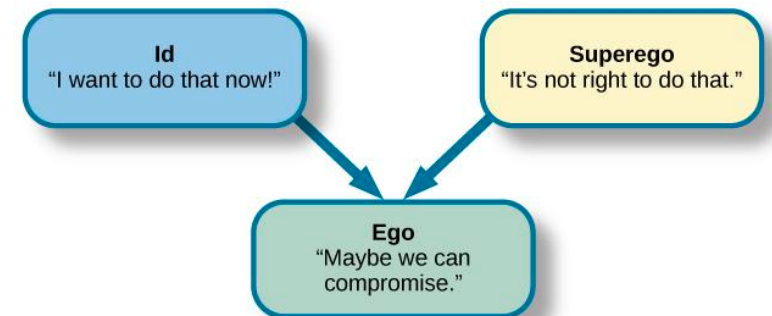
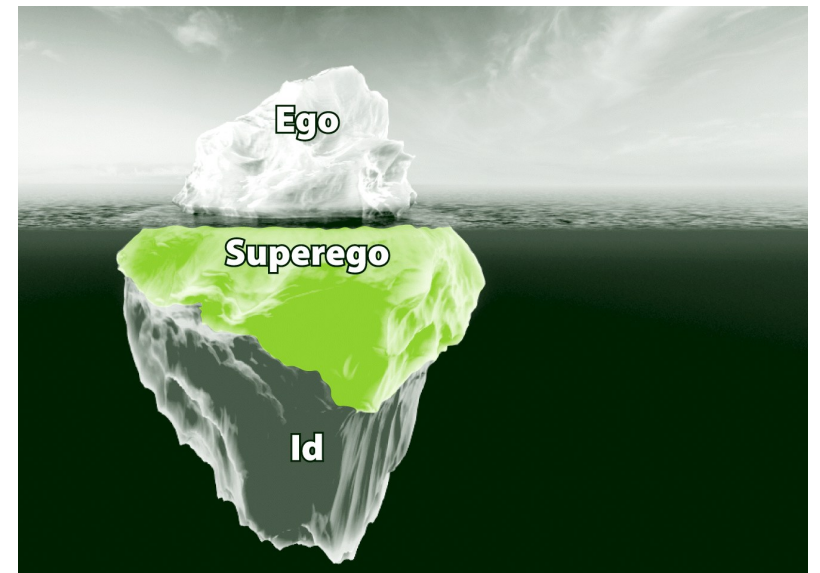
- (Brief) Summary of Psychoanalytic Approach
- Humanistic and Positive Approach
 - Phenomenology
 - Existentialism
 - Humanism
- Science of Well-Being and Happiness

Freud (1856-1939)

- Developed one of the first and most well-articulated theories of personality. Freud offered a theory of human nature.
- Ideas permeate contemporary culture
 - “Real” reasons for our behavior are often unconscious motivations
 - The influence of early childhood experiences

Psychoanalytic Theory: Basic Assumptions

- Childhood experiences determine future personality
 - The child is father to the man
- Psychological Determinism
 - Nothing about behavior is due to chance. Behavior is driven by forces that are unknown to the individual
- Psychic Conflict
 - Several elements in the mind compete with each other to manage instincts. Compromise is crucial!
- Mental Energy
 - The mind needs psychic energy to make it work. There is conservation of psychic energy.



Freud's Dark View of Human Nature

- Humans are seen as conflict ridden and driven by id impulses
- Childhood experiences determine personality
- “I have found little that is ‘good’ about human beings on the whole.” - Freud
- How solvable are questions about human nature?

Evaluating Freud's Theory

- Strengths
 - Comprehensive theory
 - Described unconscious processes
 - Compelling
 - Generates intense reactions
- Criticisms
 - Difficult to Test
 - Theory is sexist and/or heterosexist
 - Overemphasis on sexual drives
 - Overly dark view of human nature

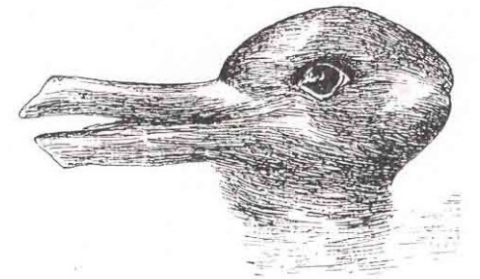
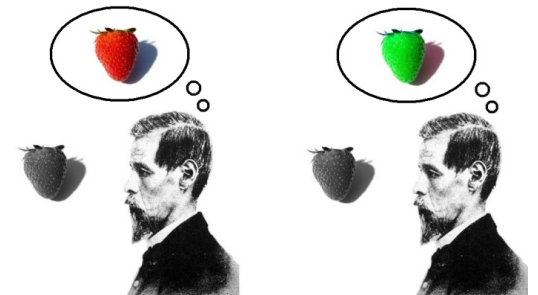
Humanistic and positive approach

Basic Assumptions

- Phenomenology
- Existentialism
- Humanism

Phenomenology

- Focus on subjective experience. Focus on the here and now. What is it like to be you?
 - Carl Rogers
 - “Experience is, for me, the highest authority. The touchstone of validity is my own experience.”
 - “I do not react to some absolute reality, but to my perception of this reality. It is this perception which for me is reality.”
 - People experience reality differently -- “We construe things differently”
 - Subjective reality is more important than objective reality for understanding personality
 - If people “define situations as real, they are real in their consequences” (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, p. 572).



Existentialism

- A broad philosophical movement that began in the mid-1800s
- A reaction against rationalism, science, and the industrial revolution
- Purpose: emphasize awareness and regain contact with the experience of being alive

Existentialism: Thrown-ness

- Thrown-ness: the time, place, and circumstances into which you happened to be born
 - An important basis of your experience
 - Being thrown into modern society is particularly difficult
 - Religion plays a small role in creating meaning and purpose
 - Modern substitutes for religion have failed to provide an alternate worldview to tell us why we are here and what we should do

Losing a guidance for finding meaning in life

- The Religion Paradox (Diener, Tay, & Myers, 2011)
 - People are rapidly leaving organized religion in economically developed nations where religious freedom is high. Why would people leave religion if it enhances their happiness?
 - Nations and states with more difficult life conditions (e.g., widespread hunger and low life expectancy) were much more likely to be highly religious.
 - In societies with more favorable circumstances, religiosity is less prevalent and religious and nonreligious individuals experience similar levels of SWB.
- A greater meaning in life among poor nations (Oishi & Diener, 2013)
 - Although life satisfaction was substantially higher in wealthy nations than in poor nations, meaning in life was higher in poor nations than in wealthy nations. In part, meaning in life was higher in poor nations because people in those nations were more religious.

Existentialism: Angst

- Angst: the unpleasant feeling caused by contemplating the meaning of life and how one should spend one's time
 - Anguish: everyone feels this because choices are never perfect
 - Forlornness: each person must make his or her own choices
 - Despair: awareness that many outcomes are beyond control

Terror Management Theory (Rosenblatt et al., 1989)

- Inevitability of mortality
- Self-esteem and cultural values as a way of overcoming this fear of death
 - People reminded of morality (morality salience) recommended higher bonds for an accused prostitute (violation of cultural values)
 - Whereas recommended higher rewards for a woman who helped police apprehend a criminal (upholding cultural values)

Existentialism

- Existentialism = Focus on existence and what humans should do
 - How does it feel to be human?
 - Why are you here? What should be doing?
 - One solution: Face the fact that you are mortal but take control over your own life
 - Be honest, insightful, and do what you can to better the human condition
 - Requires existential courage or optimistic toughness



Life has no meaning a priori ... It is up to you to give it a meaning, and value is nothing but the meaning that you choose.

(Jean-Paul Sartre)

Existentialism: Search for meaning

Viktor Frankl (1905-1997)

- Prisoner in the Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz and Dachau (1942-1945)
- Parents, brother, wife, and children died in the camps
- Logotherapy – existential approach to psychological practice
- Rejects the deterministic view of human nature (not fatalistic)



THE LAST OF HUMAN FREEDOMS

THE ABILITY TO CHOOSE ONE'S
ATTITUDE IN ANY GIVEN SET OF
CIRCUMSTANCES,

THE ABILITY TO CHOOSE ONE'S OWN WAY.

VIKTOR FRANKL

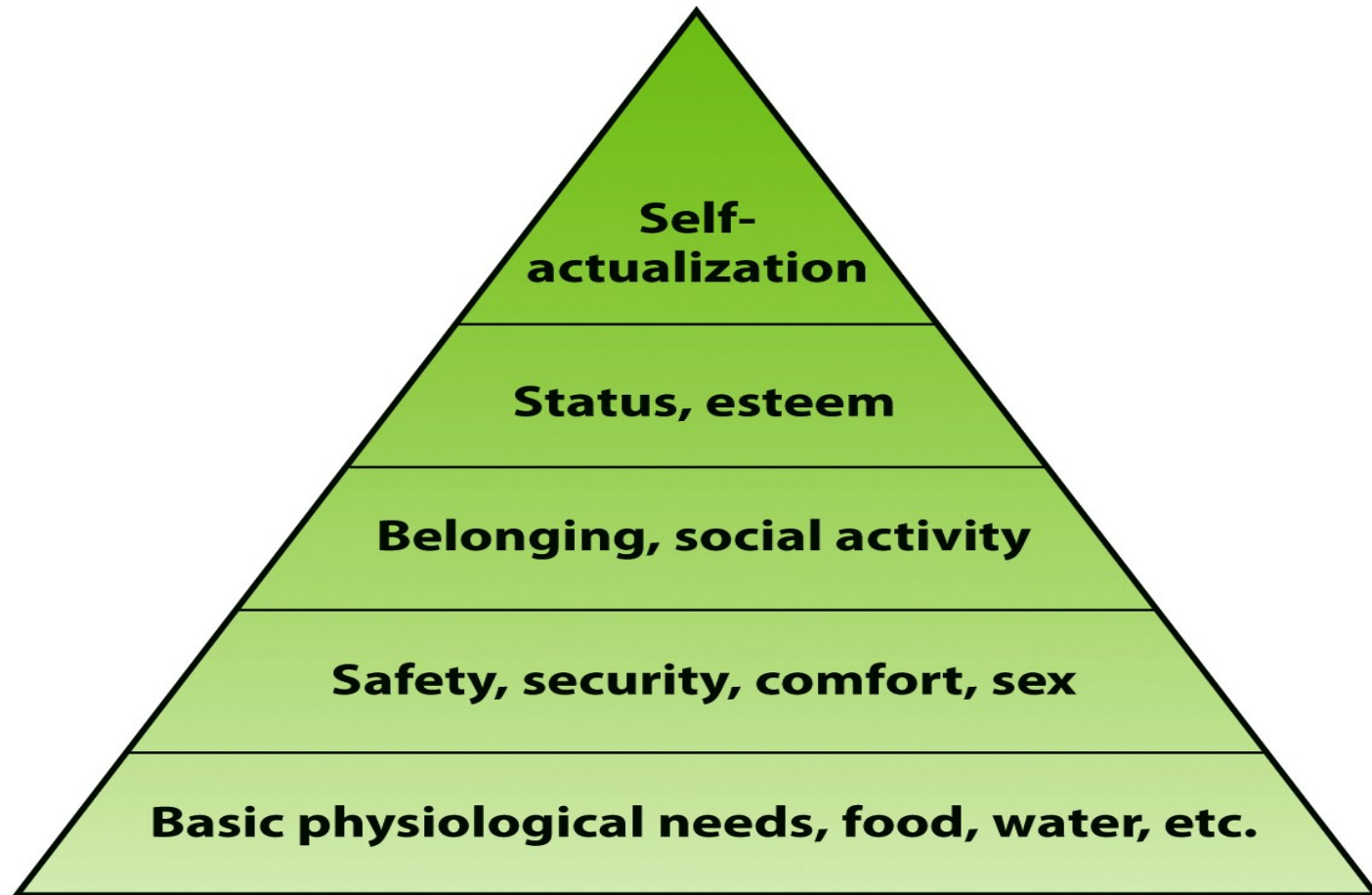
Humanism

- Humanism = Stresses human dignity and worth. Assumes people are basically good
 - Maslow
 - Rogers
 - Kelly

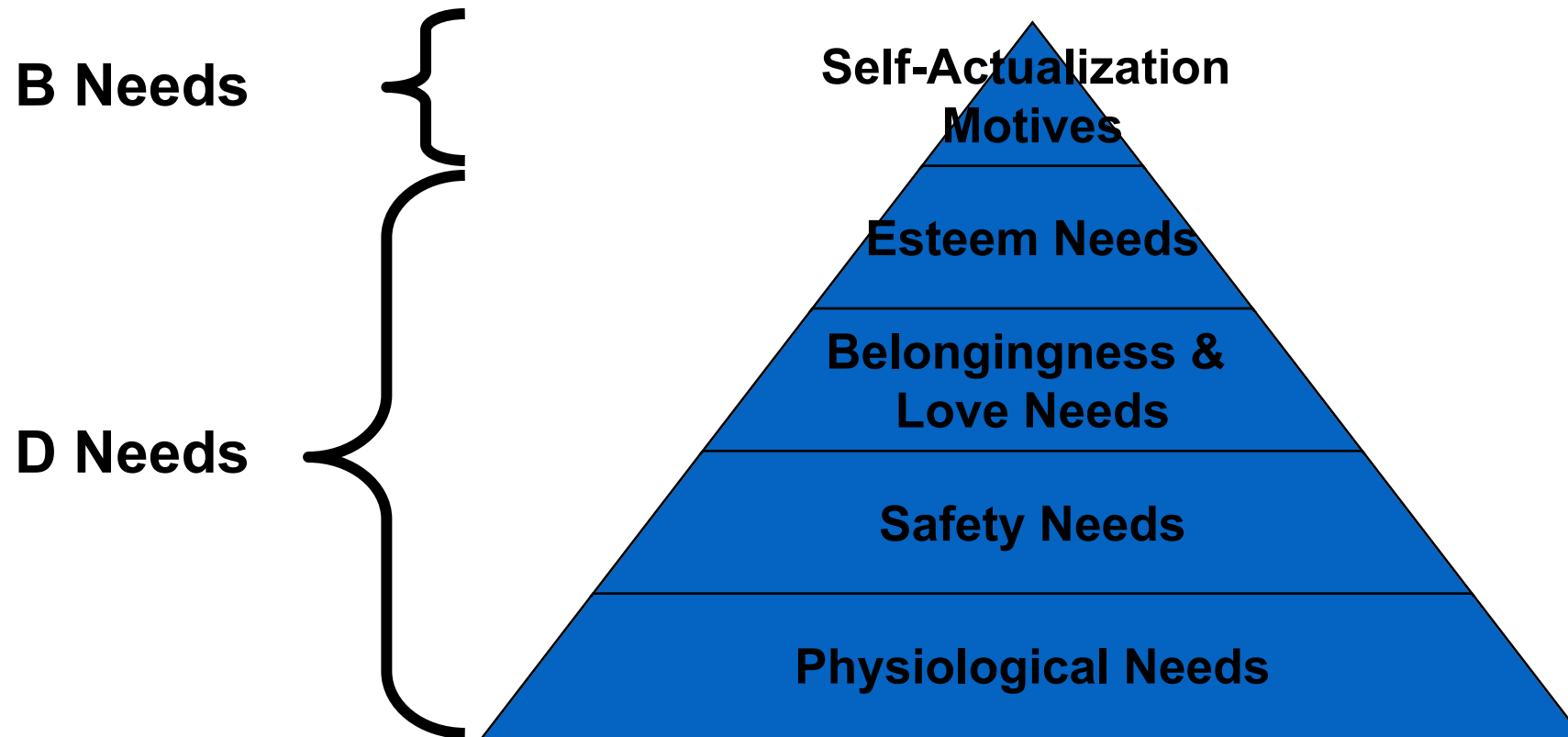
Abraham Maslow (1908-1970)

- Big Ideas
 - Hierarchy of Needs
 - Deficiency Needs (D – Needs)
 - Being Needs (B – Needs)
 - It is quite true that man lives by bread alone when there is no bread. But what happens to man's desires when there is bread and when his belly is chronically filled? - Maslow

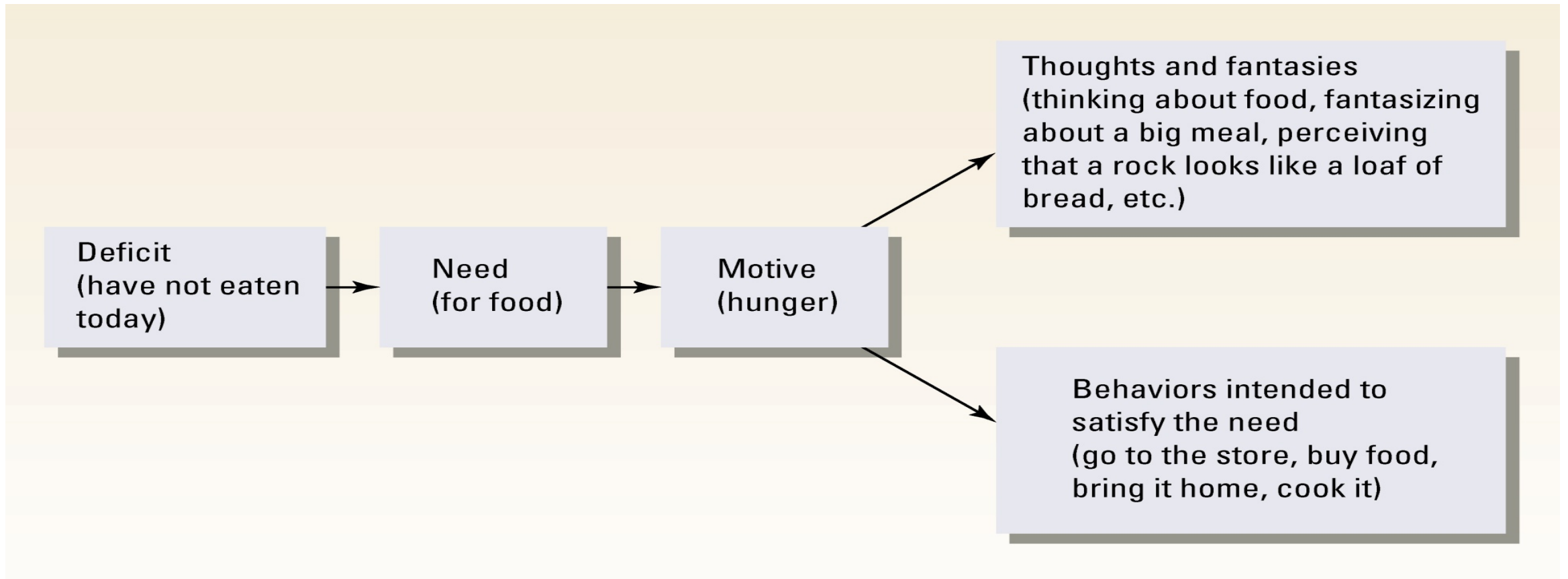
Hierarchy of needs



Hierarchy of needs

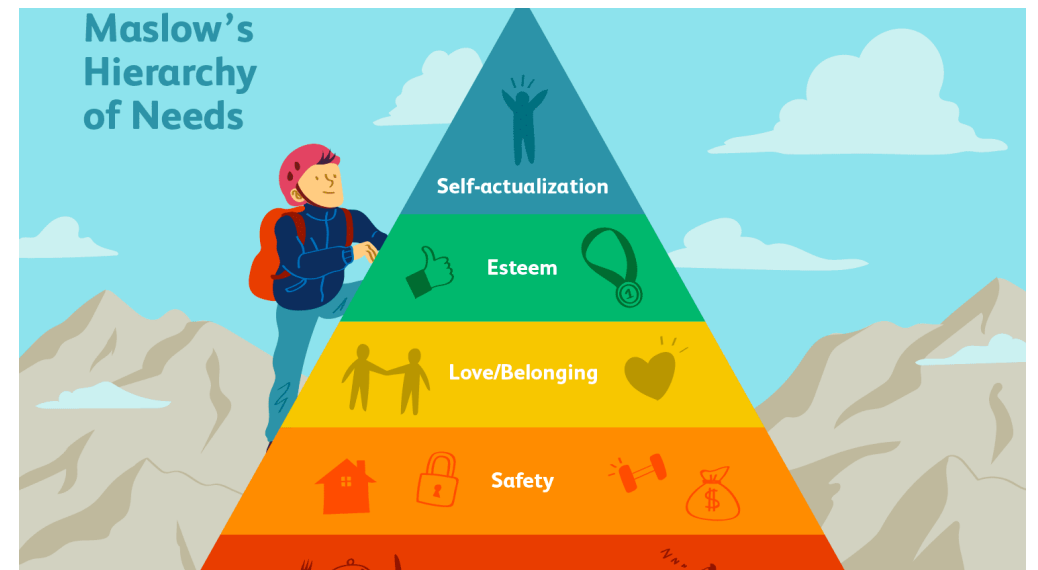


satisfaction of D needs



Self-Actualization

- Desire to become “Everything that one is capable of becoming”
 - Expressing or being able to express true human potential and becoming who you really are
- Self-Actualizing People
 - Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson
 - Albert Einstein, Martin Luther King, Jr.



Characteristics of Self-Actualizing People

- Clear perception of reality
- Acceptance of self, others, and nature
- Spontaneity, simplicity, and naturalness
- Dedication to a cause
- Independence and a need for privacy
- Freshness of appreciation
- Peak experiences
- Social interest (from Adler)
- Deep interpersonal relationships
- Tolerance
- Creative and original

Why Can't We All Be Self-Actualizing?

- Self-actualization needs are the weakest
 - Maslow: “And furthermore, these are weak, subtle and delicate, very easily drowned out by learning, by cultural expectations, by fear, by disapproval.”
- Built on other needs (to an extent)

Evaluating Maslow

- Strengths
 - Intuitive theory of motivation
 - Focus on healthy personalities
 - Focus on human agency
- Weaknesses
 - Testability
 - Subjectivity
 - Empirical Support

