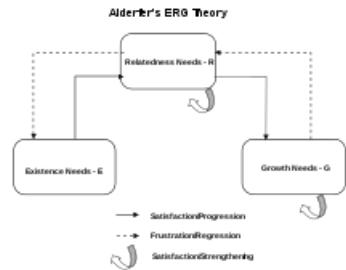


# ERG theory

**ERG theory** is a theory in psychology proposed by Clayton Alderfer.

Alderfer further developed Maslow's hierarchy of needs by categorizing the hierarchy into his **ERG theory** (Existence, Relatedness and Growth). The existence category is concerned with the need for providing the basic material existence requirements of humans. The relatedness category is concerned about the desire for maintaining important interpersonal relationships. The growth category is concerned about the desire for personal development. These include the intrinsic component from Maslow's esteem category and the characteristics included under self-actualization.

Alderfer categorized Maslow's physiological needs and Maslow's safety needs into the existence category, Maslow's social needs and Maslow's extrinsic component of self-esteem needs into the relatedness category, and Maslow's intrinsic component of self-esteem needs and Maslow's self-actualization needs into the growth category. Alderfer also proposed a progression and regression theory to go along with the ERG theory: he said that when needs in a lower category are satisfied, an individual will invest more efforts in the higher category, and when needs in a higher category are frustrated, an individual will invest more efforts in the lower category. For example if self-esteem or self-actualization is not met then an individual will invest more effort in the relatedness category in the hopes of achieving the higher need.<sup>[1]</sup>



ERG theory. When needs in a category are satisfied, an individual will invest more efforts in the higher category. When needs in a category are frustrated, an individual will invest more efforts in the lower category.

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## Publication

This theory was published originally in "Organizational Behavior and Human Performance".<sup>[2]</sup>

## See also

- [Engel's law](#), an economic model for how well basic needs are met
- [Maslow's hierarchy of needs](#)
- [Fundamental human needs](#), [Manfred Max-Neef's model](#)
- [John Curtis Gowan](#)
- [Juan Antonio Pérez López](#), spontaneous and rational motivation
- [Metamotivation](#)
- [Murray's psychogenic needs](#)
- [Need theory](#)
- [Need](#)

## References

1. Design in the Manufacturing Firm syllabus (<http://courses.washington.edu/inde495/lece.htm>) University of Washington Industrial Engineering course syllabus. Retrieved on 07-17-2011.
2. Alderfer, Clayton P. (1969). "An empirical test of a new theory of human needs". *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*. 4 (2): 142–75. doi:10.1016/0030-5073(69)90004-X ([https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073\(69\)90004-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(69)90004-X)).

## External links

- [A Theory of Human Motivation](http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm) (<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm>), original 1943 article by Maslow.

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