

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Panksepp's 7 Emotional Systems Map

Comparison of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs and Jaak Panksepp's primary-process affective emotional systems of the brain

Maslow's hierarchy of needs	Jaak Panksepp's 7 primary-process affective systems of the brain
Complexity increases as we move from bottom to the top	Play
Self-actualization	Panic
Esteem	Care
Belonging and love	Lust
Safety	Fear
Physiological	Rage

By looking at these two classifications side-by-side, you can see a possible correlation between the emotions we experience and the needs we satisfy. For example, self-actualization could encompass play and panic. And there are psychological studies that support the fact that we discover fulfillment through the process of play. Panic, on the other hand, could be seen in the process of pain and suffering in humans, which typically leads to growth, which leads to fulfillment.

Both systems increase in complexity as we progress from bottom to top, however, Panksepp's emotional systems continuously interact top-down and bottom-up with scientific evidence of the causation. This means, that, as these emotional systems interact with one another, they cause one another.

We could hypothesize that Maslow's needs also interact to an extent, however, we can only move to the next need as we satisfy a lower-level one. It does not work in a reverse-order.

I'm a geek at heart, and I love the process of discovery and connecting the dots. As you are embarking on your journey of agile transformation, learning about neuroscience, psychology, and leadership, I invite you to start exploring different systems and start building your own maps by connecting theory and practice. Even by putting something next to each other on a piece of paper can open an entirely new angle as you work through problems and look for solutions.

It has been extremely helpful in my career and it might be something that you'd find useful as you develop your own process.