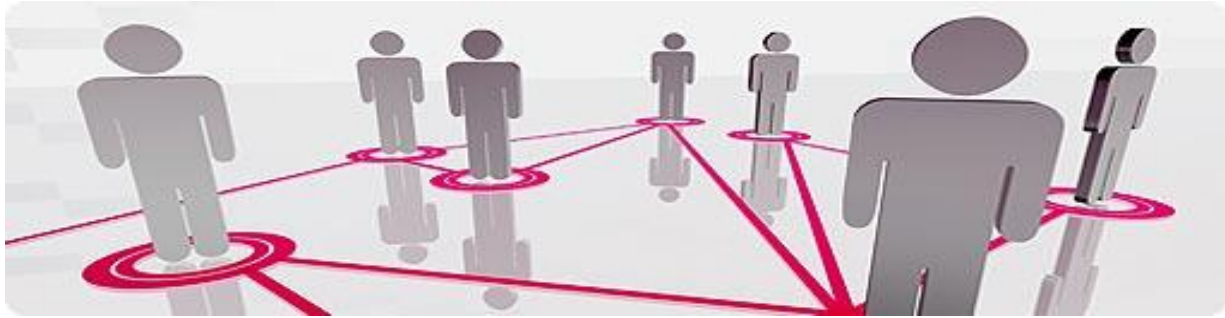


Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

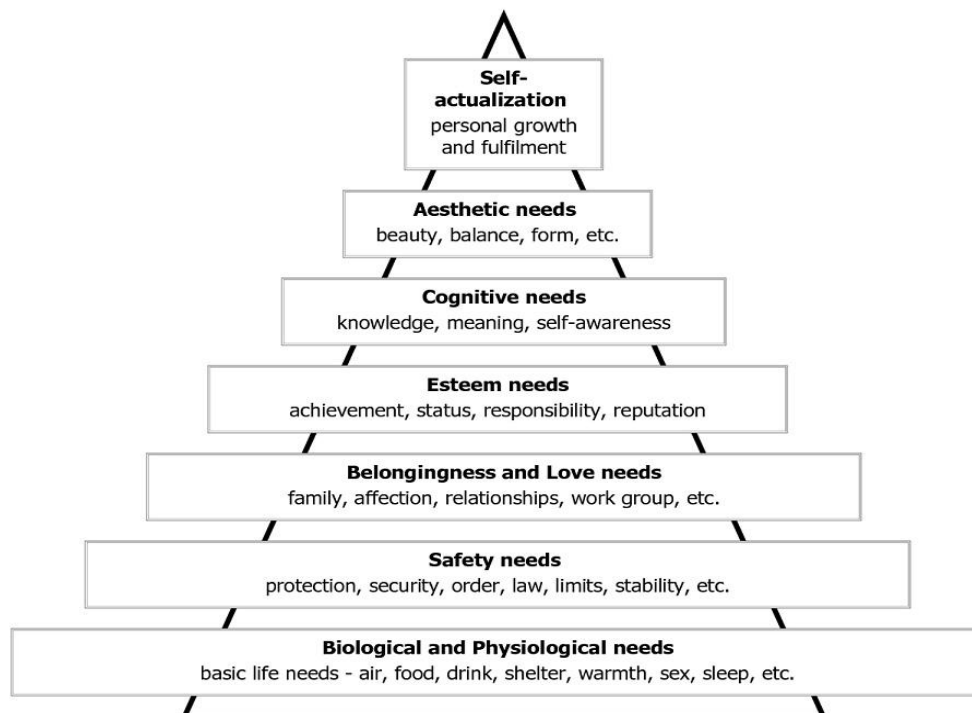
by Renny Sabisch



Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs remains a critical component in today's society when understanding human motivation and its affect on learning and growth. It was first published in 1954 (second edition 1970) and is a pyramid structure based on "Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory" (Santrock, 2008). Maslow contended that human beings are motivated to fulfill basic needs and once those needs are met, they seek to satisfy successfully higher needs in a set of progressive hierarchies.

Having been evolved over tens of thousands of years, Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has adapted seven levels to help us better understand these basic concepts.

Maslow's theory states that we must satisfy each need starting with the first: from the bottom to the top of the chart, as seen below.



Maslow believed that needs must be satisfied in the given order. Only when the lower order of needs are met, (e.g., physiological, safety, physical and emotional well-being are satisfied), do we become concerned with the higher order of needs that influence our personal developments. Equally, if the things that satisfy our lower order of needs are swept away, we no longer concern ourselves with the maintenance of the higher order of needs (e.g., aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence).

For example: Levels 1 to 4 are deficiency motivators; whereas level 5, and by certain implications 6 to 8, are growth motivators, which are relatively and rare to find.

The thwarting of needs is usually a cause of stress, and is particularly so at level 4. For instance: You would find a lack of motivate to achieve a sales target (level 4) when your having problems with their marriage (level 3).

Maslow's Self-Actualising Characteristics

Some of the characteristics of healthy growth are having a keen sense of reality, aware of real situations, and having objective judgments, rather than subjective.

Seeing problems in terms of challenges and situations requiring solutions, rather than see problems as personal complaints or excuses.

Lastly, the need for privacy and comfortable being alone.



"But behavior in the human being is sometimes a defense, a way of concealing motives and thoughts, as language can be a way of hiding your thoughts and preventing communication."

Abraham Maslow

Maslow talks about these levels in terms of homeostasis. Homeostasis is the principle by which your furnace thermostat operates: When it gets too cold, it switches the heat on; When it gets too hot, it switches the heat off. In the same way, when our bodies lack a certain substance, it develops a hunger for it; When it gets enough of it, then the hunger stops. Maslow simply extends the homeostatic principle to needs, such as safety, belonging, and esteem, that we don't ordinarily think of in such terms.

References

Speert, D. (Editor) (2014) Brain facts: A primer on the brain and nervous system. Washington, D.C.: Society for Neuroscience.