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## maslow's hierarchy of needs

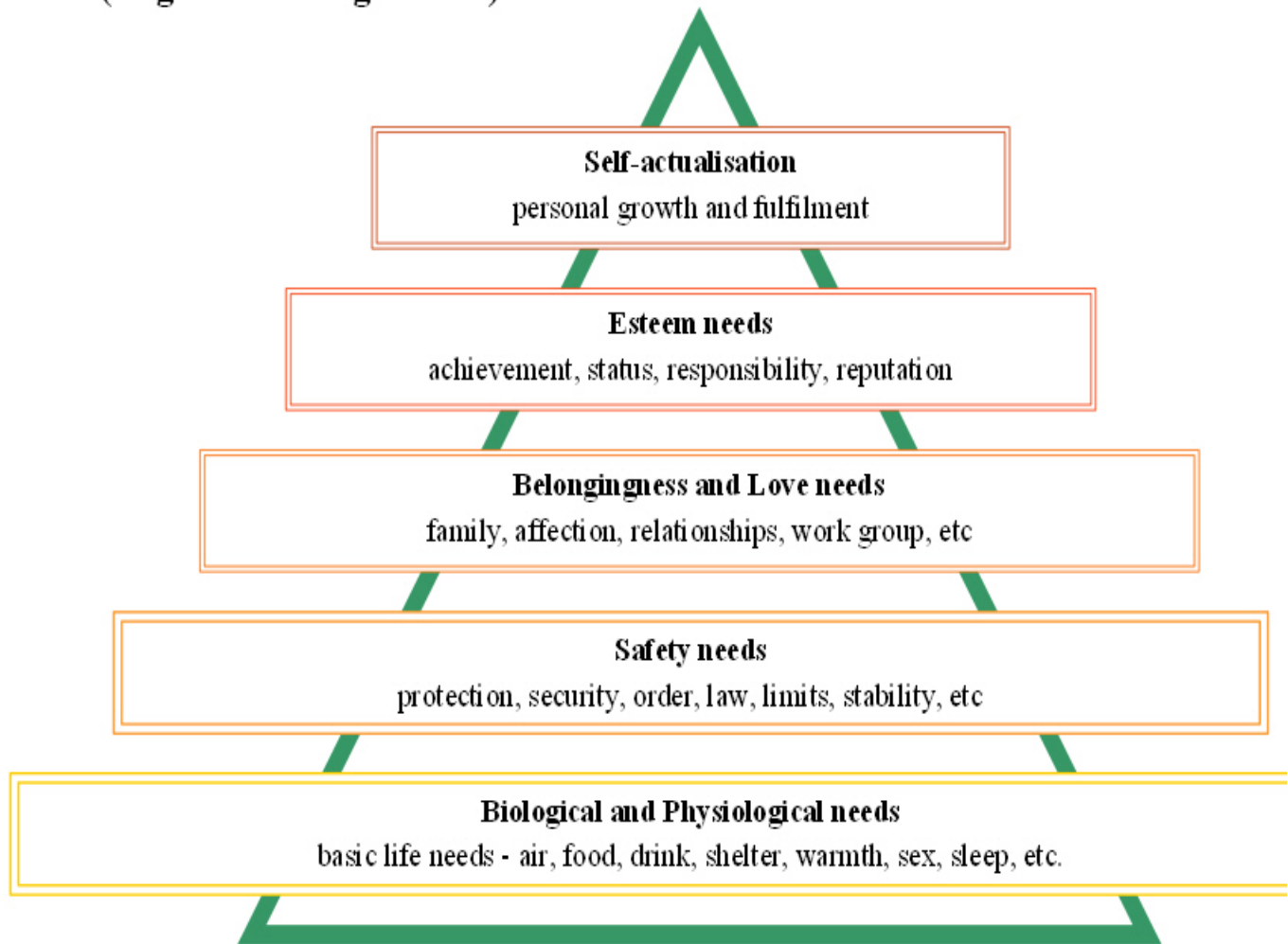
### Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs motivational model

Abraham Maslow developed the Hierarchy of Needs model in 1940-50's USA, and the Hierarchy of Needs theory remains valid today for understanding human motivation, management training, and personal development. Indeed, Maslow's ideas surrounding the Hierarchy of Needs concerning the responsibility of employers to provide a workplace environment that encourages and enables employees to fulfil their own unique potential (self-actualization) are today more relevant than ever. Abraham Maslow's book *Motivation and Personality*, published in 1954 (second edition 1970) introduced the Hierarchy of Needs, and Maslow extended his ideas in other work, notably his later book *Toward A Psychology Of Being*, a significant and relevant commentary, which has been revised in recent times by Richard Lowry, who is in his own right a leading academic in the field of motivational psychology.

Abraham Maslow was born in New York in 1908 and died in 1970, although various publications appear in Maslow's name in later years. Maslow's PhD in psychology in 1934 at the University of Wisconsin formed the basis of his motivational research, initially studying rhesus monkeys. Maslow later moved to New York's Brooklyn College. Maslow's original five-stage Hierarchy of Needs model is clearly and directly attributable to Maslow; later versions with added motivational stages are not so clearly attributable, although in his work Maslow refers to these additional aspects of motivation, but not specifically as levels in the Hierarchy. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has been extended through interpretation of Maslow's work by other people, and these augmented models and diagrams are shown as the adapted seven and eight-stage Hierarchy of Needs models below.

Free Hierarchy of Needs diagrams in pdf and MSWord formats similar to the image below are available from this page.

## Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (original five-stage model)



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(N.B. The word Actualization/Actualisation can be spelt either way. Z is preferred in American English. S is preferred in UK English. Both forms are used in this page to enable keyword searching for either spelling via search engines.)

## maslow's hierarchy of needs

Each of us is motivated by needs. Our most basic needs are inborn, having evolved over tens of thousands of years. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs helps to explain how these needs motivate us all.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs states that we must satisfy each need in turn, starting with the first, which deals with the most obvious needs for survival itself.

Only when the lower order needs of physical and emotional well-being are satisfied are we concerned with the higher order needs of influence and personal development.

Conversely, if the things that satisfy our lower order needs are swept away, we are no longer concerned about the maintenance of our higher order needs.

Maslow's original Hierarchy of Needs model was developed between 1943-1954, and first widely published in *Motivation and Personality* in 1954. At this time the Hierarchy of Needs model comprised five needs. This original version remains for most people the definitive Hierarchy of Needs.

## **maslow's hierarchy of needs - [free pdf diagram](#) and [free msword diagram](#)**

1. **Biological and Physiological needs** - air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc.
2. **Safety needs** - protection from elements, security, order, law, limits, stability, etc.
3. **Belongingness and Love needs** - work group, family, affection, relationships, etc.
4. **Esteem needs**  
- self-esteem, achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, managerial responsibility, etc.
5. **Self-Actualization needs** - realising personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences.

**This is the definitive and original Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.**

While Maslow referred to various additional aspects of motivation, he expressed the Hierarchy of Needs in these five clear stages.

Here is a [quick simple self-test based on the original Maslow's 5-level Hierarchy of Needs](#). It's not a scientific or validated instrument - merely a quick indicator, which can be used for self-awareness, discussion, etc.

## **1970's adapted hierarchy of needs model, including cognitive and aesthetic needs - [free pdf diagram](#) and [free msword diagram](#)**

1. **Biological and Physiological needs** - air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc.

2. **Safety needs** - protection from elements, security, order, law, limits, stability, etc.
3. **Belongingness and Love needs** - work group, family, affection, relationships, etc.
4. **Esteem needs**  
- self-esteem, achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, managerial responsibility, etc.
5. **Cognitive needs** - knowledge, meaning, etc.
6. **Aesthetic needs** - appreciation and search for beauty, balance, form, etc.
7. **Self-Actualization needs** - realising personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences.

N.B. Although Maslow referred to additional aspects of motivation, 'Cognitive' and 'Aesthetic', he did not include them as levels or stages within his own expression of the Hierarchy of Needs.

## **1990's adapted hierarchy of needs including transcendence needs - [free diagram](#) and [free msword diagram](#)**

1. **Biological and Physiological needs** - air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc.
2. **Safety needs** - protection from elements, security, order, law, limits, stability, etc.
3. **Belongingness and Love needs** - work group, family, affection, relationships, etc.
4. **Esteem needs**  
- self-esteem, achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, managerial responsibility, etc.
5. **Cognitive needs** - knowledge, meaning, etc.
6. **Aesthetic needs** - appreciation and search for beauty, balance, form, etc.
7. **Self-Actualization needs** - realising personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences.
8. **Transcendence needs** - helping others to achieve self actualization.

N.B. Although Maslow referred to additional aspects of motivation, 'Cognitive', 'Aesthetic', and 'Transcendence', he did not include any of these as additional stages in the Hierarchy of Needs.

Here is a [quick self-test based on the extended 8-level Hierarchy of Needs](#). Like the [5-level Hierarchy of Needs self-test](#)

it is not a scientific or validated instrument - merely a quick indicator for helping self-awareness, discussion, etc.

## what hierarchy of needs model is most valid?

Abraham Maslow created the original five level Hierarchy of Needs model, and for many this remains entirely adequate for its purpose. The seven and eight level 'hierarchy of needs' models are later adaptations by others, based on Maslow's work. Arguably, the original five-level model includes the later additional sixth, seventh and eighth ('Cognitive', 'Aesthetic', and 'Transcendence') levels within the original 'Self-Actualization' level 5, since each one of the 'new' motivators concerns an area of self-development and self-fulfilment that is rooted in self-actualization 'growth', and is distinctly different to any of the previous 1-4 level 'deficiency' motivators. For many people, self-actualizing commonly involves each and every one of the newly added drivers. As such, the original five-level Hierarchy of Needs model remains a definitive classical representation of human motivation; and the later adaptations perhaps serve best to illustrate aspects of self-actualization.

Maslow said that needs must be satisfied in the given order. Aims and drive always shift to next higher order needs. Levels 1 to 4 are deficiency motivators; level 5, and by implication 6 to 8, are growth motivators and relatively rarely found. The thwarting of needs is usually a cause of stress, and is particularly so at level 4.

Examples in use:

You can't motivate someone to achieve their sales target (level 4) when they're having problems with their marriage (level 3).

You can't expect someone to work as a team member (level 3) when they're having their house re-possessed (level 2).

## Maslow's Self-Actualizing characteristics

- keen sense of reality - aware of real situations - objective judgement, rather than subjective
- see problems in terms of challenges and situations requiring solutions, rather than see problems as personal complaints or excuses
- need for privacy and comfortable being alone
- reliant on own experiences and judgement - independent - not reliant on culture and environment to form opinions and views
- not susceptible to social pressures - non-conformist
- democratic, fair and non-discriminating - embracing and enjoying all cultures, races and individual styles
- socially compassionate - possessing humanity
- accepting others as they are and not trying to change people
- comfortable with oneself - despite any unconventional tendencies
- a few close intimate friends rather than many surface relationships
- sense of humour directed at oneself or the human condition, rather than at the expense of others
- spontaneous and natural - true to oneself, rather than being how others want

- excited and interested in everything, even ordinary things
- creative, inventive and original
- seek peak experiences that leave a lasting impression (see the [Hellespont Swim case study](#))

## Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in advertising

To help with training of Maslow's theory look for Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs motivators in advertising. This is a great basis for Maslow and motivation training exercises:

1. **Biological and Physiological needs** - wife/child-abuse help-lines, social security benefits, Samaritans, roadside recovery.
2. **Safety needs**  
- home security products (alarms, etc), house an contents insurance, life assurance, schools.
3. **Belongingness and Love needs** - dating and match-making services, chat-lines, clubs and membership societies, Macdonalds, 'family' themes like the old style Oxo stock cube ads.
4. **Esteem needs** - cosmetics, fast cars, home improvements, furniture, fashion clothes, drinks, lifestyle products and services.
5. **Self-Actualization needs** - Open University, and that's about it; little else in mainstream media because only 2% of population are self-actualizers, so they don't constitute a very big part of the mainstream market.

You can view and download **free Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs diagrams**, and two **free Hierarchy of Needs self-tests**, based on the original Maslow's five-stage model and later adapted eight-stage model, ideal for training, presentations and project work, at the [businessballs free online resources section](#).

Free diagrams include:

- Pyramid diagram based on Maslow's original five-level Hierarchy of Needs (1954).
- Adapted seven-level Hierarchy of Needs diagram (which seems to have first appeared in the 1970's - after Maslow's death).
- Adapted eight-level Hierarchy of Needs diagram (appearing later, seemingly 1990's).

## interpreting behaviour according to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is an excellent model for understanding human motivation, but it is a broad concept. If you are puzzled as to how to relate given behaviour to the Hierarchy it could be that your definition of the behaviour needs refining. For example, 'where does 'doing things for fun' fit into the model? The answer is that it can't until you define 'doing things for fun' more accurately.

You'd need to define more precisely each given situation where a person is 'doing things for fun' in order to analyse motivation according to Maslow's Hierarchy, since the 'fun' activity motive can potentially be part any of the five original Maslow needs.

Understanding whether striving to achieve a particular need or aim is 'fun' can provide a helpful basis for

identifying a Maslow driver within a given behaviour, and thereby to assess where a particular behaviour fits into the model:

- Biological - health, fitness, energising mind and body, etc.
- Safety - order and structure needs met for example by some heavily organised, structural activity
- Belongingness - team sport, club 'family' and relationships
- Esteem - competition, achievement, recognition
- Self-Actualization drivers - challenge, new experiences, love of art, nature, etc.

However in order to relate a particular 'doing it for fun' behaviour the Hierarchy of Needs we need to consider what makes it 'fun' (ie rewarding) for the person. If a behaviour is 'for fun', then consider what makes it 'fun' for the person - is the 'fun' rooted in 'belongingness', or is it from 'recognition', ie., 'esteem'. Or is the fun at a deeper level, from the sense of self-fulfilment, ie 'self-actualization'.

Apply this approach to any behaviour that doesn't immediately fit the model, and it will help you to see where it does fit.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs will be a blunt instrument if used as such. The way you use the Hierarchy of Needs determines the subtlety and sophistication of the model.

For example: the common broad-brush interpretation of Maslow's famous theory suggests that that once a need is satisfied the person moves onto the next, and to an extent this is entirely correct. However an overly rigid application of this interpretation will produce a rigid analysis, and people and motivation are more complex. So while it is broadly true that people move up (or down) the hierarchy, depending what's happening to them in their lives, it is also true that most people's motivational 'set' at any time comprises elements of all of the motivational drivers. For example, **self-actualizers** (level 5 - original model) are mainly focused on **self-actualizing** but are still motivated to **eat** (level 1) and **socialise** (level 3). Similarly, homeless folk whose main focus is **feeding themselves** (level 1) and **finding shelter** for the night (level 2) can also be, albeit to a lesser extent, still concerned with **social relationships** (level 3), how their friends perceive them (level 4), and even the **meaning of life** (level 5 - original model).

Like any simple model, Maslow's theory not a fully responsive system - it's a guide which requires some interpretation and thought, given which, it remains extremely useful and applicable for understanding, explaining and handling many human behaviour situations.

## maslow's hierarchy of needs and helping others

There are certainly some behaviours that are quite tricky to relate to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

For example:

Normally, we would consider that selflessly helping others, as a form of personal growth motivation, would be found as part of self-actualisation, or perhaps even 'transcendence' (if you subscribe to the extended hierarchy).

So how can we explain the examples of people who seem to be far short of self-actualising, and yet are still able to help others in a meaningful and unselfish sense?

Interestingly this concept seems to be used increasingly as an effective way to help people deal with depression, low self-esteem, poor life circumstances, etc., and it almost turns the essential Maslow

model on its head: that is, by helping others, a person helps themselves to improve and develop too.

The principle has also been applied quite recently to developing disaffected school-children, whom, as part of their own development, have been encouraged and enabled to 'teach' other younger children (which can arguably be interpreted as their acting at a self-actualising level - selflessly helping others). The disaffected children, theoretically striving to belong and be accepted (level 3 - belongingness) were actually remarkably good at helping other children, despite their own negative feelings and issues.

Under certain circumstances, a person striving to satisfy their needs at level 3 - belongingness, seems able to self-actualise - level 5 (and perhaps beyond, into 'transcendence') by selflessly helping others, and at the same time begins to satisfy their own needs for belongingness and self-esteem.

Such examples demonstrate the need for careful interpretation and application of the Maslow model. The Hierarchy of Needs is not a catch-all, but it does remain a wonderfully useful framework for analysing and trying to understand the subtleties - as well as the broader aspects - of human behaviour and growth.

## self-actualisation, employees and organisations

Maslow's work and ideas extend far beyond the Hierarchy of Needs.

Maslow's concept of self-actualisation relates directly to the present day challenges and opportunities for employers and organisations - to provide real meaning, purpose and true personal development for their employees. For life - not just for work.

**Maslow saw these issues fifty years ago: the fact that employees have a basic human need and a right to strive for self-actualisation, just as much as the corporate directors and owners do.**

Increasingly, the successful organisations and employers will be those who genuinely care about, understand, encourage and enable their people's personal growth towards self-actualisation - way beyond traditional work-related training and development, and of course way beyond old-style [X-Theory](#) management autocracy, which still forms the basis of much organised employment today.

The best modern employers and organisations are beginning to learn at last: that sustainable success is built on a serious and compassionate commitment to helping people identify, pursue and reach their own personal unique potential.

When people grow **as people**, they automatically become more effective and valuable as employees.

**In fact virtually all personal growth, whether in a hobby, a special talent or interest, or a new experience, produces new skills, attributes, behaviours and wisdom that is directly transferable to any sort of job role.**

The best modern employers recognise this and as such offer development support to their staff in any direction whatsoever that the person seeks to grow and become more fulfilled.

See also:

[Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Human Development](#)

[John Adair's Action-Centred Leadership](#)

[Herzberg's Motivational Theory](#)

[McGregor's X-Y Theory](#)

[Adams' Equity Theory](#)

[McClelland's Motivational Theory](#)

[Teambuilding and motivational activities](#), for example the [Hellespont Swim case study and exercise](#)

and the many [free materials, diagrams and other resources on the main businessballs website](#), if you are not already there.

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