

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, we'll discuss basic human needs and how understanding them can, in turn, help us understand what is at the root of certain conflicts. In particular, we'll look at:

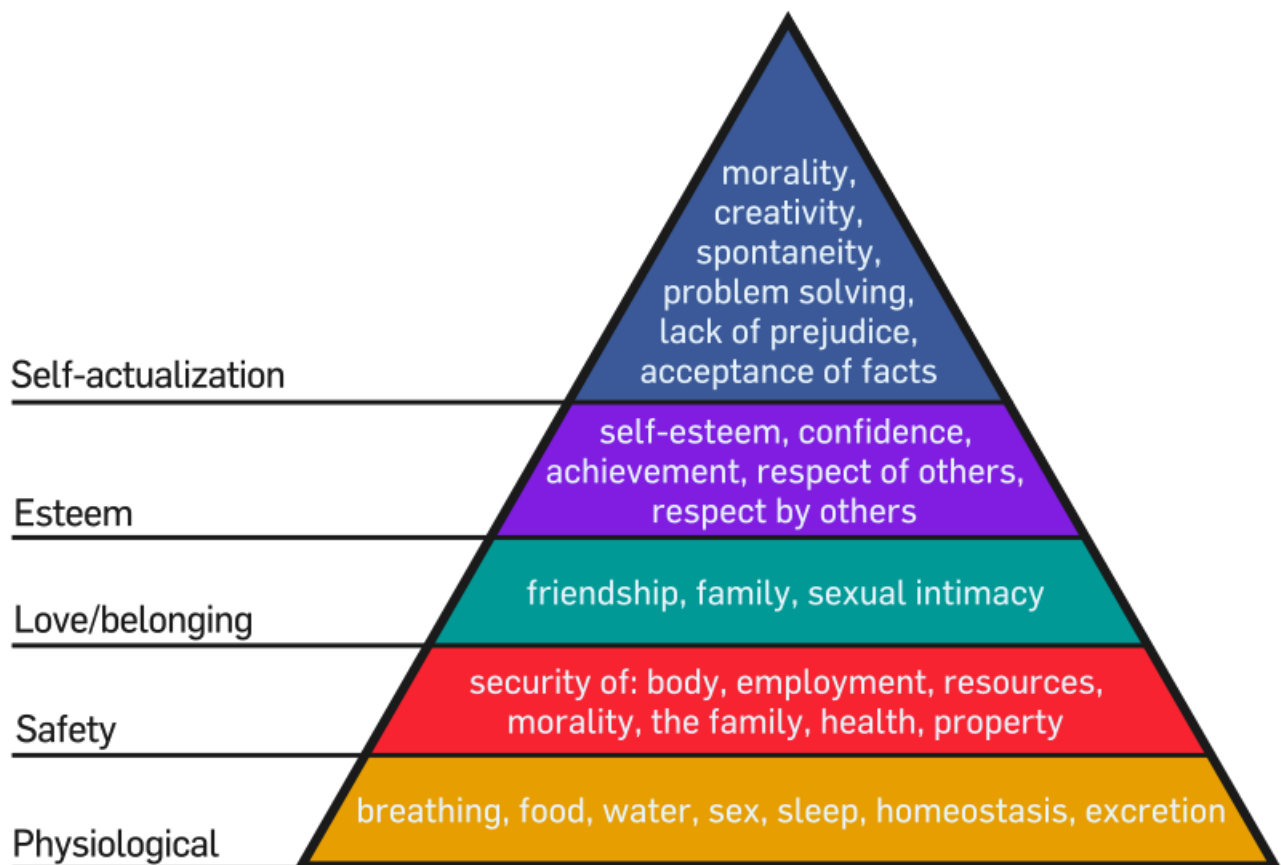
1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
 - a. Physiological
 - b. Safety
 - c. Love/Belonging
 - d. Esteem
 - e. Self-Actualization
2. Movement on the Hierarchy

1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a model of universal categories of human needs developed by Abraham Maslow, a psychologist who lived during the 20th century. He was born in 1908 and studied people who were mentally healthy in addition to people who had severe psychological issues.

He wanted to focus on mentally healthy people in order to find out what made them tick. As a result of these studies, he came up with the Hierarchy of Needs.

He felt that all people need to fulfill basic human needs in a particular hierarchical order. He also came to believe that as human beings, we aren't here just to blindly react to situations. Rather, all of us are capable of accomplishing greater things.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is thus designed to demonstrate the positive potential of human beings. From bottom to top, the needs in this hierarchy are:

- Physiological
- Safety
- Love/belonging
- Esteem
- Self-actualization



TERM TO KNOW

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

A model of universal categories of human needs, developed by Abraham Maslow.

1a. Physiological Needs

At the physiological level, the needs are things like:

- Food
- Water
- Sleep
- Air

These are basic needs that we all must have. If we don't have these needs, we're not going to be able to focus on anything else until they are satisfied.

2b. Safety

Once we have those basic physiological needs satisfied, we can move to safety, which has to do with:

- Security
- Stability
- Shelter

At this level, we have jobs and homes. These are resources that keep us feeling secure and keep our families safe.

2c. Love/Belonging

Following safety is love and belonging, which includes things like:

- Friends
- Family
- Affection
- Approval

We all have needs that involve being affiliated with others. Whether we join groups at our jobs, within our families, or in our communities, we all want the affection and approval that these relationships provide.

2d. Esteem

Once we've satisfied needs at that level, we move to esteem, which involves:

- Respect
- Recognition
- Achievement

We all have a need for people to recognize us for what we can and do accomplish.

2e. Self-Actualization

The highest level on the hierarchy is self-actualization, which focuses on human potential:

- *What are our capabilities?*
- *Can we give greater meaning to what we're doing?*

When we focus on these self-actualization needs, we already have the other needs satisfied. We're not going to be able to focus very strongly on self-actualization if we're trying to take care of needs at the safety level.

2. Movement on the Hierarchy

Furthermore, we can move up and down this hierarchy of needs, depending on what is happening to us at any particular time in our lives.

➦ **EXAMPLE** We may have a good job, a good income, and a nice home. Then we learn that we might

lose our job because the company is having layoffs. Perhaps we even find ourselves in conflict with others at our workplace— people that we were never in conflict with before—because we're all competing for fewer jobs.

This conflict occurs because the basic needs of security and stability in our lives are being threatened. We are focusing on the safety level of needs, so we probably aren't thinking about higher levels. Right now, we just want the security that comes with keeping our job.

🔗 **EXAMPLE** If there is a natural disaster, we might find ourselves stranded without a home, perhaps without access to food or water. We would then once again need to focus on the lower levels of needs.

Around the world, there are also reports of people fighting over food or water because of scarcity due to natural disasters, warfare, and persecution. In these instances, people are prioritizing their survival and become in conflict with others who need these items for the same reasons. In different circumstances where there isn't scarcity or an emergency, they wouldn't feel the need to fight for these items.

When we move back and forth along this hierarchy of needs, what we're all looking for is to meet our potential at the higher levels. We all want love and belonging, and esteem; we want to feel like we're part of a group, and be recognized.

When those needs are met, we then look for an even greater sense of our full potential and the meaning and purpose in our lives.



BIG IDEA

Maslow believed that this hierarchy reflects the needs that all humans have. We are constantly moving up and down the hierarchy, depending on what's happening in our lives and what our current needs are in any particular situation.

By better understanding these needs, we can better understand what might be fueling a particular conflict.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs** was developed by Abraham Maslow and is a model of universal human needs. From bottom to top, these needs are physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. You now understand that we must satisfy the lower-level needs before we can focus on those at the higher level. We **move up and down this hierarchy** as we go through different situations in our lives, and understanding this can help us get to the root of whatever conflicts we might experience. Good luck!

Source: Adapted from Sophia tutorial by Marlene Johnson.



ATTRIBUTIONS

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TERMS TO KNOW

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A model of universal categories of human needs, developed by Abraham Maslow.