

## **Abraham Maslow**

Abraham Maslow, a humanistic theorist, is known for his hierarchy of human motives and for his views on self-actualization. Maslow proposed that needs were organized hierarchically ascending from basic needs to complex psychological needs. Maslow's hierarchy is most often displayed as a pyramid. People strive for the higher-level needs only when their lower-level needs are met. Maslow's lowest levels of needs are the physiological and safety needs (food, shelter and so on). Next are belongingness and love needs, then esteem, cognitive, and aesthetic needs, and finally, the highest order of need: self-actualization, referring to the need to realize one's fullest potential. Once the powerful needs for food, security, love, and self-esteem are satisfied, a deep desire for creative expression and self-actualization rises to the surface. According to Maslow, most people do not reach self-actualization.

Maslow studied the lives of individuals whom he felt were self-actualizers. He identified several characteristics that these people had in common. These characteristics included a nonhostile sense of humor, originality, creativity, spontaneity, and a need for some privacy. According to Maslow, self-actualized people are more likely than non-self-actualized people to have what he called peak experiences: profound and deeply moving experiences in a person's life that have important and lasting effects on the individual.

Through his “hierarchy of needs”, Maslow succeeded in combining the insights of earlier psychologists such as Freud and Skinner, who focused on the more basic human instincts.