CHAPTER-III
SELF-ACTUALIZATION – A SOLUTION TO HUMAN SUFFERING IN WESTERN PSYCHOLOGY

Numerous researchers around the world are using the concept of Self-actualization, a term used to describe a state of fully realizing one’s potentials. Throughout history, there have been numerous writers that have contributed to the description and definition of Self-actualization, but the most famous of all is Abraham Maslow. His hierarchical theory of motivation is a ranked structure of human stimuli for satisfying various physiological and psychological needs towards Self-actualization and further to move beyond with metamotivation. Although he did not introduce the term ‘Self-actualization’, he described eight ways in which individuals self-actualize, or eight behaviors leading to self-actualization. In this chapter, we shall look into the theory and concept of Self-actualization, and therapies based on Self-actualization and to highlight the fact that Self-actualization is a solution to human suffering.

Psychologists have long been interested in what constitutes positive, healthy and adaptive psychological functioning. Starting from the 1930s, the majority of personality theories have begun to refer to positive personality development, as stated by De Carvalho¹ and Meyer, Moore & Viljoen², mostly as a reaction against the previous focus on negative and pathological behaviour. Cilliers³ described this as moving from a focus on abnormality to the inclusion of optimal psychological development, with the concept of Self-actualization as the best known.

Self-actualization originated within humanistic psychology, as used in Maslow’s hierarchical motivational theory⁴ and Rogers’ person-centered therapy⁵ and facilitation⁶.

¹ R.J., De Carvalho, A history of “third force” in Psychology, Journal of Humanistic Psychology 30(4), 1990
This concept has been used in industrial/organizational psychology and labor relations, mainly for describing the development and healthy motivation of individual employees and managers. The term ‘Self-actualization’ was first coined by Kurt Goldstein and then developed by Maslow in his work on motivational theories.

Placed at the top of Maslow’s ‘hierarchy of needs’ (1943), Self-actualization can be described as persons realizing their potential, ‘fulfilling themselves’ and “doing the best they are capable of doing”. Maslow claims that this stage in the hierarchy can only be achieved when needs lower down in the hierarchy are satisfied. His hierarchy begins, at the bottom, with physiological needs and progresses to safety needs; love needs; self-esteem needs and finally the need for Self-actualization. The implication of the fulfillment of these lower needs suggests that the self-actualizing person no longer has the ‘need’ for these motivational drives. Such an individual would subsequently possess particular characteristics that were observed and studied by Maslow. Such characteristics include more accurate perception and judgment than non-self-actualizing individuals, more self-acceptance, absence of unnecessary defense and anxiety, spontaneity, and in particular synergy or the resolution of dichotomies such as right-wrong.

As for to the self actualized individual and his or her relation with others, Maslow describes key facets to be detachment from societal influences, independence and autonomy; an individual who is not bound by the expectations and opinions of others, but rather acts upon his/her own will. Moreover, the self-actualized also approaches life with an attitude of “newness or appreciation of old experiences as if they were new”.

On the other hand, Maslow also thought that the organism has the natural, unconscious and innate capacity to seek its needs, meaning that man has an internal, natural, drive to become the best possible person he can be.

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6 C.R., Rogers, Freedom to learn for the 80’s, Columbus: Merrill, 1982.
"...he has within him a pressure toward unity of personality, toward spontaneous expressiveness, toward full individuality and identity, toward seeing the truth rather than being blind, toward being creative, toward being good, and a lot else. That is, the human being is so constructed that he presses toward what most people would call good values, toward serenity, kindness, courage, honesty, love, unselfishness, and goodness."12

Maslow believed that not only does the organism know what it needs to eat to maintain itself healthy, but also man knows intuitively what he needs to become the best possible, mentally healthy and happy "being". To become self-actualized, Maslow said that people need two things: inner exploration and action.

"An important existential problem is posed by the fact that self-actualizing persons (and all people in their peak - experiences) occasionally live out-of-time and out-of-the-world (atemporal and aspatial) even though mostly they must live in the outer world. Living in the inner psychic world (which is ruled by psychic laws and not by the laws of outer-reality), i.e., the world of experience, of emotion, of wishes and fears and hopes, of love of poetry, art and fantasy, is different from living in and adapting to the non-psychic reality which runs by laws he never made and which are not essential to his nature even though he has to live by them. (He could, after all, live in other kinds of worlds, as any science fiction fan knows.) The person who is not afraid of this inner, psychic world, can enjoy it to such an extent that it may be called Heaven by contrast with the more effortful, fatiguing, externally responsible world of "reality," of striving and coping, of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood. This is true even though the healthier person can also adapt more easily and enjoyably to the "real" world, and has better "reality testing," i.e., doesn't confuse it with his inner psychic world."13

Maslow’s works talk about the natural, human goodness: man is basically good, not evil, he has the capacity to be an efficient, happy and healthy person, but he must nurture the capacity with awareness, honesty, introspection and maintain his freedom: to freely respond to internal and external events (values), to be himself at all costs.

13 Ibid p. 213.
While in the 1960s and 1970s there was a great deal of interest in the concept of Self-actualization, it has fallen out of favor. Nowadays, there is a trend in psychology towards empirically validated treatments and brief psychotherapies. Self-actualization can be a difficult concept to concretize and study empirically as some researchers feel that the essential character of this kind of experience can be lost by attempts to control and manipulate these phenomena, Davis\textsuperscript{14} says, so its appearance in the literature has dwindled.

3.1 THEORY AND CONCEPT OF SELF-ACTUALIZATION

The first person to bring Self-actualization into discussion was Dr. Kurt Goldstein, who used this word to describe what he found in his extensive psychological research, a uniquely human need that separates humans from all other animals.

Goldstein made the critical distinction that the human is not a mere animal, to be understood in terms of its biology and behavioral reactions. He affirmed that human nature is unique, and must be understood in its own terms. If we look into the history of psychology over the last century, “the human as a basic animal” has been the dominant scientific model. The meaning behind human actions, emotions and thoughts has been shaped by observing and explaining animal behavior and then putting it into the context of adaptive evolutionary patterns.

While Goldstein introduced the concept of Self-actualization, Abraham Maslow gave the first definition of the term "Self-actualization".

"A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be at peace with himself. What a man can be, he must be. This is the need we may call Self-actualization... It refers to man's desire for fulfillment, namely to the tendency for him to become actually in what he is potentially: to become everything that one is capable of becoming..."\textsuperscript{15}

However, Self-actualization is also a process, argues Maslow, as nobody arrives at a point where one can simply say, "Now I am self actualized. I don't need to grow

\textsuperscript{15} A. H., Maslow, Motivation and Personality, op.cit
anymore." In other words, personal growth is a fundamental element of Self-
actualization.

According to Western psychology, Self-actualization is the expression of human
qualities of independence, a tendency to form deep friendships, autonomy, tendency to
resist outside pressures, a "philosophical" sense of humor and a general transcendence of
the environment, rather than a simple "coping" with it. It is not a static state, but rather an
ongoing process in which one's capacities are fully, creatively, and joyfully utilized.

"Self-actualizing man is not as an ordinary man with something added, but rather as the
ordinary man with nothing taken away. The average man is a full human being with
dampened and inhibited powers and capacities".16

Furthermore, Abraham Maslow claims that self-actualizing people see life clearly
because they are less emotional and more objective, less likely to allow hopes, fears, or
go defenses to distort their observations. Maslow found that all self-actualizing people
are dedicated to a vocation or a cause. Two requirements for growth are commitment to
something greater than oneself and success at one's chosen tasks.

3.1.1 Fifteen Characteristics of Self-actualized People

In the book "Motivation and personality"17, Maslow lists 15 characteristics of
self-actualized people.

1. First of all, he found that self-actualized people had a more efficient perception of
reality. They were more easily able to discover the fake and the dishonest in
personality. Self-actualizing people distinguish far more easily than most the
fresh, concrete, and ideographic from the generic, abstract, and rubricized. They
are more apt to be comfortable in the real world of nature than in the beliefs and
dogmas held by society. They are unlike average men in that they are more at ease
with the unfamiliar.

2. Self actualized individuals were found to have acceptance of self, others, and
nature. These individuals accept themselves without embarrassment or complaint,

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16 R. Lowry, (Ed.), Dominance, self-esteem, self-actualization: Germinal papers of A. H. Maslow,
17 A.H., Maslow, Motivation and personality, op.cit.
and with really no thought about the issue. They are also able to accept others in
the same without trying to control them or perfect them in any way. They are
comforted and accept their human nature. They can see human nature as it is, not
what they wish it to be.

3. The next characteristic Maslow found was that self-actualized people are
spontaneous, simple, and natural. In other words, this kind of person is not
concerned with being as others think they should be. They are individuals who are
able to do what feels good and natural, simply because that is how they feel. They
do not try to hurt others, but they have respect for what is good for them. They are
not afraid to express their joy, wonder, anger or other strong emotions.

4. Problem centering is the next characteristic of self-actualized individuals. The
self-actualizing person is someone who is generally strongly focused on problems
outside of themselves. They are concerned with the problems of others and the
problems of society, and are willing to work to try to alleviate those difficulties.
They consider solving societal problems as a life mission or a calling.

5. Self actualizing people are able to be alone with the emotions of being alone. The
self-actualizing person has a need to be by himself and a need for solitude. They
positively like solitude and privacy to a definitely greater degree than the average
person. Self-actualizers enjoy time for quiet reflection and do not always have a
need for people around them. They are able to be near someone and have no need
to communicate with them. Their presence is sufficient in and of itself.

6. The self-actualizing person is autonomous meaning they are capable of doing
things for themselves and making decisions on their own. They believe in who
and what they are. They are strong enough to be independent of the good opinion
of others.

7. Self-actualizing individuals have a continued freshness and appreciation for life.
They are able to appreciate repeatedly, the beauty of life and experiences. The
self-actualizing being experiences a delight in the simple and the natural. Sunsets
are forever beautiful in the eyes of the self-actualized. He can still enjoy the
sunsets in the same fashion day after day.
8. Self-actualizing people usually have experiences in which they literally sense they are transcending or what Maslow calls Peak Experiences. They feel very much in harmony or at one with the world around them, and almost feel as if they are, for a momentary period in time, part of a different reality. Peak experiences are not a matter of pure luck or grace; they are governed by definite laws. They are intentional. The best way to achieve a peak experience is by putting yourself into an active, purposive frame of mind. Maslow believed that the peak experience has a lasting effect on the person’s life. Maslow described two different types of peak experiences; one being the cosmic consciousness in which the whole of the cosmos is perceived and everything in it is seen in relationship with everything else, including the perceiver. The second aspect of peak experience is where there is a narrowing of consciousness down to the particular percept in which the rest of the world and ego is totally forgotten.

9. Self actualized individuals have feelings of *gemeinschaftsgefühl*, which is a sense of oneness with humanity. They have deep feelings of identification, sympathy, and affection in spite of the occasional anger, impatience, or disgust. Self-actualizing people have a caring feeling for all of mankind. Although they can become frustrated with people’s shortcomings, they remain sensitive and understanding.

10. Profound interpersonal relationships are another aspect of the self-actualized person. Self-actualizing people have deeper and more profound interpersonal relations than other adults. These relationships are more likely to be with others who are also self-actualized. They generally tend to have relatively few friends, but those relationships are deep and very meaningful. It is also found that self-actualizers often have followers or worshippers. The relationship is often one-sided, where the followers wish to have more than the self-actualized individual is willing to give.

11. Self-actualized people are said to be democratic. They are able to be friendly with anyone no matter what their background or beliefs are. They are humble and are able to learn from anybody. They recognize that they do not know all the answers
or have all the skills and they are willing to learn these from others. Because of
democratic attitude they are often known to become more defensive against evil
behavior.

12. Self-actualizers have discrimination between means and ends. They are able to
differentiate between right and wrong, good and evil. Self-actualizers are able to
experience joy in the means of doing something and not just in terms of the end.
They are sometimes viewed as a child would be; that is making something
mundane seem enjoyable.

13. Another aspect or characteristic of Self-actualizers are their philosophical sense of
humor. Self-actualizing people tend to take pleasure in humor. They enjoy
laughing and like to joke, but not at the expense of others. They do not appreciate
humor in putting down others. They are able to poke fun at themselves, but not in
a negative way. Their humor is used to inform, teach, and point out ambiguities. It
is often difficult to retell the joke of self-actualized person; one must be there to
grasp the implication.

14. Creativeness is another aspect that Maslow points out that every self-actualized
person possess. Maslow has said “that a first-rate cook is better than a second-rate
painter”18. Creativeness can be expressed in many ways. Maslow believed all
people are creative but that self-actualized individuals are rather kin to the naïve
and universal creativeness of unspoiled children. It is a potential given to all
beings at birth. These people, being less enculturated, are able to possess more
spontaneity, and a more child like creativity.

15. The final beneficial characteristic of Maslow’s Self-actualized individual is their
resistance to enculturation. Self-actualizing individuals live according to their
own standards and do not accept the rules of others. These people according to
Maslow (1968); are less enculturated, less flattened out, less molded.

18 A. H., Maslow, Toward a psychology of being (2nd ed.), op. cit. p. 136
3.1.2 Eight Ways in Which Individuals Self-actualize

Maslow also describes, in “The Farther Reaches of Human Nature”\textsuperscript{19}, eight ways in which individuals self-actualize, or eight behaviors leading to Self-actualization. It represents the culmination of Maslow's thinking on Self-actualization.

1. **Concentration**: First, Self-actualization means experiencing fully, vividly, selflessly, with full concentration and total absorption. Usually, people are relatively unaware of what is going on within or around them. However, we have all had moments of heightened awareness and intense involvement, moments that Maslow would call self-actualizing.

2. **Growth Choices**: If we think of life as a series of choices, then Self-actualization is the process of making each decision a choice for growth. We often have to choose between growth and safety, between progressing and regressing. Each choice has its positive and its negative aspects. To choose safety is to remain with the known and the familiar but to risk becoming stultified and stale. To choose growth is to open one-self to new and challenging experiences but to risk the unknown and possible failure.

3. **Self-awareness**: In the process of self-actualizing we become more aware of our inner nature and act in accordance with it. This means we decide for ourselves whether we like certain films, books, or ideas, regardless of others' opinions.

4. **Honesty**: Honesty and taking responsibility for one's actions are essential elements in self-actualizing. Rather than pose and give answers that are calculated to please another or to make ourselves look good, we can look within for the answers. Each time we do so, we get in touch with our inner selves.

5. **Judgment**: The first four steps help us develop the capacity for better life choices. We learn to trust our own judgment and our own inner feelings and to act accordingly. Maslow believes that following our instincts leads to more accurate judgments about what is constitutionally right for each of us-better choices in art, music, and food, as well as in major life decisions, such as marriage and a career.

6. **Self-development**: Self-actualization is also a continual process of developing one's potentialities. It means using one's abilities and intelligence and working to do well the thing that one wants to do. Great talent or intelligence is not the same as Self-actualization; many gifted people fail to use their abilities fully while others, with perhaps only average talents, accomplish a great deal. Self-actualization is not a thing that someone either has or does not have. It is a never-ending process of making real one's potential. It refers to a way of continually living, working, and relating to the world rather than to a single accomplishment.

7. **Peak Experiences**: are transient moments of Self-actualization. We are more whole, more integrated, more aware of ourselves and of the world during peak moments. At such times we think, act, and feel most clearly and accurately. We are more loving and accepting of others, have less inner conflict and anxiety, and are better able to put our energies to constructive use. Some people enjoy more peak experiences than others; particularly those Maslow called transcending self-actualizers.

8. **Lack of Ego Defenses**: A further step in Self-actualization is to recognize our ego defenses and to be able to drop them when appropriate. To do so, we must become more aware of the ways in which we distort our images of ourselves and of the external world through repression, projection, and other defenses.

Maslow studied what he called exemplary people such as Albert Einstein, Jane Addams, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Frederick Douglass rather than mentally ill or neurotic people, writing that "the study of crippled, stunted, immature, and unhealthy specimens can yield only a cripple psychology and a cripple philosophy."\(^{20}\) Maslow also studied the healthiest 1% of the college student population.

### 3.1.3 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

A diagram etched in the minds of most social science and business majors and many practitioners, "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs" has been widely accepted, even thought initially it was not empirically tested. In a “Theory of Human Motivation”\(^{21}\), A.

\(^{20}\) A. H., *Motivation and Personality*, op.cit

H. Maslow underlines the fact that only needs not yet satisfied influence human behavior and when needs are satisfied, they are no longer motivators. The hierarchy starts with physiological needs and moves upward in a pyramidal shape to safety and security, social activity (or love and belonging), to esteem (or ego), and finally to Self-actualization.

1. Physiological needs - the literal requirements for human survival. The human body simply cannot continue to function if these requirements are not met. Physiological needs include: breathing, food, and homeostasis.

2. Safety needs - these needs have to do with people's yearning for a predictable, orderly world in which injustice and inconsistency are under control, the familiar frequent and the unfamiliar rare. In the world of work, these safety needs manifest themselves in such things as a preference for job security, grievance procedures for protecting the individual from unilateral authority, savings accounts, insurance policies, and reasonable disability accommodations.

3. Love and Belonging - the third layer of human needs are social and involve feelings of belongingness. This aspect of Maslow's hierarchy involves emotionally based relationships in general, such as: friendship, intimacy, family. People need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance, whether it comes from a large social group, such as clubs, religious groups, professional organizations, office culture, sports teams, gangs, or small social connections (family members, intimate partners, mentors, close colleagues, confidants). They need to love and be loved (sexually and non-sexually) by others. In the absence of these elements, many people become susceptible to loneliness, social anxiety, and clinical depression. This need for belonging can often overcome the physiological and security needs, depending on the strength of the peer pressure.

4. Esteem - all humans have a need to be respected and to have self-esteem and self-respect. Also known as the belonging need, esteem presents the normal human desire to be accepted and valued by others. People need to engage themselves to gain recognition and have an activity or activities that give the person a sense of contribution, to feel accepted and self-valued, be it in a profession or hobby. Imbalances at this level can result in low self-esteem or an inferiority complex.
People with low self-esteem need respect from others. They may seek fame or glory, which again depends on others.

Note, however, that many people with low self-esteem will not be able to improve their view of themselves simply by receiving fame, respect, and glory externally, but must first accept themselves internally. Psychological imbalances such as depression can also prevent one from obtaining self-esteem on both levels. Most people have a need for a stable self-respect and self-esteem. Maslow noted two versions of esteem needs, a lower one and a higher one. The lower one is the need for the respect of others, the need for status, recognition, fame, prestige, and attention. The higher one is the need for self-respect, the need for strength, competence, mastery, self-confidence, independence and freedom. The latter one ranks higher because it rests more on inner competence won through experience. Deprivation of these needs can lead to an inferiority complex, weakness and helplessness. Maslow stresses the dangers associated with self-esteem based on fame and outer recognition instead of inner competence.

5. Self-actualization - “What a man can be, he must be.”\textsuperscript{22} This forms the basis of the perceived need for Self-actualization. This level of need pertains to what a person's full potential is and realizing that potential. Maslow describes this desire as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming. This is a broad definition of the need for Self-actualization, but when applied to individuals the need is specific. For example one individual may have the strong desire to become an ideal parent, in another it may be expressed athletically, and in another it may be expressed in painting, pictures, or inventions. In order to reach a clear understanding of this level of need one must first not only achieve the previous needs, physiological, safety, love, and esteem, but master these needs.

Wayne Dyer, one of Maslow’s students suggests that the creator of the hierarchy of needs taught him two ways of understanding Self-actualization\textsuperscript{23}:

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\textsuperscript{22} A. H., Maslow, Motivation and personality, op.cit, p. 91,
\textsuperscript{23} Wayne Dyer, \textit{The sky’s the limit}, Simon and Schuster, 1980.
\end{flushright}
1) to be free of the good opinion of others;

2) to do things not simply for the outcome, but because it's the reason you are here on earth.

Furthermore, based on his research and views expressed in “The Farther Reaches of Human Nature”, a more accurate term could be "selfless-actualization", which indicates human development beyond the self in Self-actualization. Maslow considers that people must move from self to other to achieve peak experience. Social justice, generativity, transformative thinking and acting are all concepts that could be associated with this orientation. The fundamental idea is that people must move to a focus and concern for other people to achieve the highest level of human nature. People who move beyond Self-actualization "are, without a single exception, involved in a cause outside of their skin: in something outside of themselves, some calling or vocation"\textsuperscript{24}.

In Maslow’s theory, people who go "beyond Self-actualization" share a pattern of behavior. They are authentic, genuine and bring the future to the present! Maslow includes other descriptors such as:

- They try to set things right, to clean up bad situations
- They are very practical and realistic, they like being effective
- They like to reward and praise others
- They respond to the challenge of the job
- They tend to be attracted to unsolved or difficult problems
- They enjoy greater efficiency, making an operation more neat, simpler, turning out a better product.
- They tend to feel that everyone should have the opportunity to develop to their highest potential, to have a fair chance

Maslow’s theory was later supported by Erik Erikson\textsuperscript{25} and Carl Rogers\textsuperscript{26}. They both claim in their research that the concept of selflessness or the ability to look outside oneself as a critical characteristic is the highest level of human development.

3.2 PRACTICE AND THERAPIES BASED ON SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Nowadays, the concept of Self-actualization, which was first defined by Maslow, or other concepts like wholeness, explained by Carl Jung, are gaining more appreciation by general public who are looking for root oriented answers to daily challenges.

Maslow’s concept of Self-actualization has contributed to many theoretical orientations. Examples include psychodynamic and cognitive behavioral therapy, which work to identify and remove the blockages that prevent people from being able to reach their fullest potential—in other words, to self-actualize. The influence of Self-actualization, however, can be seen across various fields related to Human behavior, Psychology, Business and Management.

3.2.1 Self-purification

Self-actualization is considered in a way a process of self-purification, Roja R. Rad claims.

“Purifying one's self of the heavy and harmful baggage we may carry with us throughout our lives. This baggage could be anything from negative and out of balanced emotions, irrational thoughts and feelings, repressed memories that have turned into blockages, and unattended needs. We, humans have both physical and emotional needs and are motivated by satisfying these needs in life. But many of us focus too much on desires and confuse them with needs. Our most basic needs are inborn and have evolved over many years. It is only when the lower needs of physical and emotional well-being are satisfied or compensated that we are able to take care of the higher ones.”\textsuperscript{27}

3.2.2 Eupsychian Management

Throughout time, Self-actualization has been present in many fields. Research has shown that employment allows people to become self-actualized.\(^{28}\) When businesses apply the hierarchy of needs model under conditions such as trustworthiness, responsibility and accountability, the undamaged human being naturally strives to become self actualized. Maslow’s “eupsychian management”, an enlightened management theory, identified human’s understanding: “…more and more of the world, moving toward the ultimate of mysticism, a fusion with the world, or peak experience, cosmic consciousness etc. a yearning for truth, beauty, justice, perfection and so on”.\(^{29}\)

Payne considers that Eupsychian management improves people’s well-being and health and benefits an organization’s finances, and the whole society’s success.\(^{30}\) Nevertheless, there exist several barriers to Self-actualization in the workplace, including loss of freedom, status, respect, self-esteem, being loved, belonging, love objects, safety, physiological needs, truth, beauty and value systems. According to Maslow, businesses need a “truly growth fostering, and truly better personality producing management policy to produce managers who become more philanthropic in their communities, more ready to help, more unselfish and altruistic, more indignant at injustice, more ready to fight for what they thought to be true and good”.\(^{31}\)

3.2.3 Personnel Management

Since the concept “Self-actualization” is used as a theoretical basis for employers to motivate employees in human resource management, it is extremely important to understand any cultural differences that are apparent in employees’ needs and/or motivations. This is especially so in the recent changes in labor markets through globalization with increasingly multi-cultural and multi-ethnic workforces.\(^{32}\) With individualists and collectivists working side by side in the same company, it is important

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\(^{29}\) Ibid. p. 42.


to distinguish whether the former is more driven by the Western Self-actualization needs and characteristics than the latter. If this is the case, it has profound repercussions for personnel management methods and motivational techniques.

3.2.4 Managing cultural & individual differences

The higher-order (self-esteem and Self-actualization) and lower-order (physiological, safety, and love) needs classification of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is not universal and may vary across cultures due to individual differences and availability of resources in the region or geopolitical entity/country. In one study, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of a thirteen item scale showed there were two particularly important levels of needs in the US during the peacetime of 1993 to 1994: survival (physiological and safety) and psychological (love, self-esteem, and Self-actualization).

In 1991, a retrospective peacetime measure was established and collected during the Persian Gulf War and US citizens were asked to recall the importance of needs from the previous year.33 Once again, only two levels of needs were identified; therefore, people have the ability and competence to recall and estimate the importance of needs. For citizens in the Middle East (Egypt and Saudi Arabia), three levels of needs regarding importance and satisfaction surfaced during the 1990 retrospective peacetime.34 These three levels were completely different from those of the US citizens.

Changes regarding the importance and satisfaction of needs from the retrospective peacetime to the wartime due to stress varied significantly across cultures (the US vs. the Middle East). For the US citizens, there was only one level of needs since all needs were considered equally important. With regards to satisfaction of needs during the war, in the US there were three levels: physiological needs, safety needs, and psychological needs (social, self-esteem, and Self-actualization). During the war, the satisfaction of physiological needs and safety needs were separated into two independent needs while during peacetime, they were combined as one. For the people of the Middle East, the

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satisfaction of needs changed from three levels to two during wartime. A 1981 study looked at how Maslow's hierarchy might vary across age groups. A survey asked participants of varying ages to rate a set number of statements from most important to least important. The researchers found that children had higher physical need scores than the other groups, the love need emerged from childhood to young adulthood, the esteem need was highest among the adolescent group, young adults had the highest Self-actualization level, and while old age had the highest level of security, it was needed across all levels comparably. The authors argued that this suggested Maslow's hierarchy may be limited as a theory for developmental sequence since the sequence of the love need and the self-esteem need should be reversed according to age.

3.2.5 Marketing and Consumer Behaviour

Moreover, Maslow's hierarchy and implicitly Self-actualization were used in marketing, as a basis for understanding consumers’ motives for action. In practice, if producers design products meeting consumer needs, consumers will more often choose those products over those of competitors. Whichever product better fills the void created by the need will be chosen more frequently, thus increasing sales.

3.2.6 Social Media and Corporate Strategies

Self-actualization has also been used in the corporate sector. It has been argued that the level of individual actualizing contributes to not only the success of the individual, but also to the success of the organization. In the last decade, Self-actualization is also interconnected with social media.

3.2.7 Person Centered Therapy

Carl Rogers the father of person centered therapy and one of the founders of humanistic psychology, believed the main curative force in psychotherapy is: “…man’s tendency to actualize himself, to become his potentialities…the directional trend which is evident in all organic and human life - the urge to expand, extend, develop, mature—the

tendency to express and activate all the capacities of the organism, or the self. Rogers considered as well that by offering the core therapeutic conditions of unconditional positive regard, empathy, and authenticity, a therapist helps people release their self-actualizing tendencies. In other words, client-centered therapy, also called the person-centered approach, describes Carl R. Rogers’ way of working with persons experiencing all types of personal disturbances or problems in living.

As early as 1939, Rogers developed his theory of psychotherapy with troubled children, and went on to expand his theoretical approach to include work with couples, families, and groups. His most comprehensive theoretical statement was published as a chapter in Sigmund Koch’s Psychology: A Study of a Science (Vol. 3) in 1959, and includes his theory of motivation and personality development, as well as theory of group interaction and interpersonal relationships. Rogers’ theory of motivation emerged from his observations of clients’ growth and development within the therapeutic relationship. The actualizing tendency was a theoretical construct proposed by the great holistic neurologist Kurt Goldstein. Rogers felt that this construct best described the unfolding of human potential he witnessed in his interviews with clients. This construct postulates that all living organisms are continually actualizing their potentials, even under unfavorable circumstances.

“The actualizing tendency can, of course, be thwarted or warped, but it cannot be destroyed without destroying the organism. I remember that in my boyhood, the bin in which we stored our winter’s supply of potatoes was in the basement, several feet below a small window. The conditions were unfavorable, but the potatoes would begin to sprout pale white sprouts, so unlike the healthy green shoots they sent up when planted in the soil in the spring. But these sad, spindly sprouts would grow 2 or 3 feet in length as they reached toward the distant light of the window. The sprouts were in their bizarre, futile growth, a sort of desperate expression of the directional tendency I have been describing. They would never become plants, never mature, never fulfill their real potential. But under the most adverse circumstances, they were striving to become. Life would not give

up, even if it could not flourish . . . This potent constructive tendency is an underlying basis of the person-centered approach.\textsuperscript{39}

In Rogers’ theory, the actualizing tendency functions as an axiom, to the extent that the therapist holds the hypothesis that the client possesses the capacity for self determination he or she is more likely to perceive the client’s ideas, feelings, and actions as aspects of growth instead of pathology. However, the actualizing tendency does not mean that Rogers believed that people are “good,” simply that organisms realize their potentials limited only by internal and external environmental constraints.

Over his long career, Rogers extrapolated client centered values to the education, marriage, group encounter, personal power, and conflict resolution. Nowadays, the person-centered approach is practiced in many countries around the globe: United Kingdom, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Denmark, Poland, Hungary, Australia, Japan, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa, as well as here in the United States and Canada.

In one of his classic studies Rogers\textsuperscript{40} used the Q-Sort technique. He collected data from a group of 29 clients at the Counseling Center at the University of Chicago before, during, and after receiving weekly individual therapy. At each interval, the participants were asked to sort a group of 100 self-descriptive statements into nine piles from those items most characteristic of themselves to those viewed as least characteristic of themselves. Rogers found that, as the client-centered therapeutic process unfolds, clients experience a wide variety of improvements similar to Maslow’s description of self-actualizing individuals, including understanding previously unexamined aspects of themselves and becoming more of the following:

- similar to the person they would like to be;
- integrated, more able to function effectively;
- unique and more self-expressive;

self-directing and self-confident;

able to cope with the problems of life more adequately and more comfortably.

understanding and accepting of others; and

Being a Person-Centered Therapy practitioner means to be a therapist who “acknowledges the vast diversity and unknowability of human being, and who prizes the unique needs and wants of each individual client”. Moreover, Knight considers that “this approach to problem solving is one in which the client is invited to generate and attend to multiple doors to resolution, or even to have sample doors presented by the therapist. The therapist respects and trusts the client’s inner processes, and, therefore, does not present a specific door as the ideal; the client’s journey remains his or her own”.

3.2.8 Adlerian Therapy

While Person-Centered Therapy focuses on positive unconditional regard, another therapy that deals with Self-actualization, Adlerian therapy, is more solution-oriented.

Unlike Rogers and Maslow, Alfred Adler was more interested in health, life and the future. He emphasized the influence of birth order on the client’s psyche and ahead of his time by many decades, Adler celebrated multiculturalism – or as he put it, social embeddedness – and encouraged therapists to see reality from the client’s perspective.

The Adlerian therapist sees the client as not sick but merely discouraged and will encourage the client to become superior – meaning, better than before but not necessarily better than everyone else – in the client’s chosen social, personal, and professional realms. While a Person-Centered therapist assumes that it is the client’s responsibility to come up with solutions in due course, Adler preferred to prod the client into setting goals. That way, both client and therapist can measure the client’s success and respond accordingly.

41 M., Cooper, J., McLeod, Person-centered therapy: A pluralistic perspective, Person-Centered & Experiential Psychotherapies, 10 (3), p. 221, 2011.

In Carich’s\textsuperscript{43} view, Adlerian therapy proceeds in the following stages: problem definition, goal definition, task assignment/degree of direction, delivery with rationale, and follow-up/monitoring. Even though goal-oriented therapy can give the appearance of being “overly mechanistic and ends-oriented”\textsuperscript{44}, it is entirely in keeping with the Person-Centered approach because it acknowledges the primacy of the client’s stated goals.

3.2.9 Adventure Therapy

Adventure Therapy is a professional counseling technique that uses group dynamics and adventure to promote Self-actualization of the individual. Its main characteristics are: learning is experiential; lessons come with bumps and bruises, tears and giggles; participants (clients) are guided through a process—or generalized series of conditions, events, and objects—which interact to produce the desired personal growth and healing.

People taking part in Adventure Therapy programs are provided with an experience that nurtures them through the stages of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs with the goal of eventual self-awareness and healthy integration into social arenas.

“Adventure therapy is an approach that reaches all ages and all walks of life because the adventure is universal and the group is the main, flexible logistical tool. Adventure Therapy draws from many disciplines, including counseling theory in psychology, experiential education and service learning, environmental education, group development theory, and outdoor recreation and leisure studies. Since the beginning of organized camps, children have been undergoing one form of adventure therapy or another. Adventure Therapy uses several educational tools and experiences to facilitate a growth process in the individual aimed at a “higher” stage within Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. This is termed “process” and is critical to the experience.”\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{43} M. S. Carich, \textit{Utilizing task assignments within Adlerian therapy. Individual Psychology: Journal Of Adlerian Theory, Research & Practice}, 46 (2), 1990.


People involved in the Adventure Therapy commonly find themselves backpacking, carrying all the supplies they need to survive, or learning primitive skills such as shelter, water, fire, and food. The result is that participants have an understanding of the fundamentals of survival and can relax to think about other needs. Next in the process is security, or the need to belong. Everyone needs to feel accepted, that they are a part of something.

A good Adventure Therapist will milk group dynamics for all they are worth at this time, providing team building experiences and lacing daily life with trust activities. Naturally, this guides the participant mentally and emotionally to the next stage, status or social needs.

Furthermore, the Adventure Therapist uses the group dynamic as well as activities that root the participant in a spot, teaching them a sense of place. Many Adventure Therapy programs utilize a “solo” experience, where each participant is left alone in a natural setting for at least twenty-four hours. Simply surviving this experience has tremendous effects on each participant. Also, each person in the group has special skills, and no two participants are ever alike. During the course of living, traveling, and playing together, the members of the group each begin to open up and show what they have to contribute to the group. Instinctually, participants who feel more established socially begin to take other less assertive and vocal individuals and integrate them into the group, a perfect segue way to the next stage, self-esteem/self-worth. Once a participant feels a sense of place, is content with what he or she contribute to the group, natural feelings of positive self-worth in the form of sacrifices, encouraging other group members, assisting leaders, etc begin to find expression. This stage in the process is one of many smiles and jokes, all the while participants are lifting each other up towards Self-actualization.

The goal of the Adventure Therapy is to bring each participant to an understanding of the process involved in becoming self-actualized. Everyone has a desire to become something more, to become everything that one is capable of becoming. This is what Self-actualization is. It is a state of comfort with oneself only achieved by meeting the foundational needs listed above.
3.2.10 Cognitive Therapy

Cognitive therapy is another type of therapy based on Self-actualization, which focuses on internal processes; behavior is determined by conscious internal mental processes and can be studied scientifically using experimental methods. The term “cognitive psychology” was introduced by Ulric Neisser in his book published in 1967. According to Neisser, cognitive psychology characterizes the individual internal processes as dynamic information, processing systems whose mental operations might be described in computational terms. "Cognition" refers to all the mental processes by which the sensory input is changed, reduced, elaborated, stored or recovered, and then used. Cognitive therapy is based on the use of these processes even when they operate in the absence of relevant stimulation, as in images and psychotic hallucinations. It accepts the use of the scientific method, although it ignores both and generally rejects experimental, social and cultural factors, as the unconscious mind and biological factors. It has in fact been deemed somewhat simplistic in its approach. It also considers introspection as a valid method of investigation, unlike symbol-driven Humanistic approaches of Maslow or Rogers, which have no scientific basis, and are not measurable or testable - therefore cannot be scientifically validated..

3.2.11 Gestalt Therapy

It is a form of psychotherapy that emphasizes personal responsibility, and that focuses upon the individual's experience in the present moment, the therapist-client relationship, the environmental and social contexts of a person's life, and the self-regulating adjustments people make as a result of their overall situation. In Gestalt therapy, the individual is encouraged to become aware of his or her own feelings and behaviors, and their effect upon his environment in the here and now. By focusing on self-awareness as part of present reality, new insights can be made about thoughts and behaviors and the client can engage in self-healing.

3.2.12 Existential Therapy

Existential Therapy

Existential psychotherapy is a philosophical method of therapy that operates on the belief that inner conflict within a person is due to that individual's confrontation with the givens of existence. These givens, as noted by Irvin D. Yalom\(^\text{48}\), are: the inevitability of death, freedom and its attendant responsibility, existential isolation and finally meaninglessness. These four givens, also referred to as ultimate concerns, form the body of existential psychotherapy and compose the framework in which a therapist conceptualizes a client's problem in order to develop a method of treatment.

Every person can be a self-actualized person regardless of their education, experience, and social circumstances. It’s up to each and every person to turn his or her inner potential into reality rather than subscribing to the belief that fate and luck play a part. Those who believe so are highly unlikely to achieve what they set out to do. People are not predestined to succeed or fail. It is up to the individuals to end in successes that are not determined by external factors but are decided from within them.

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