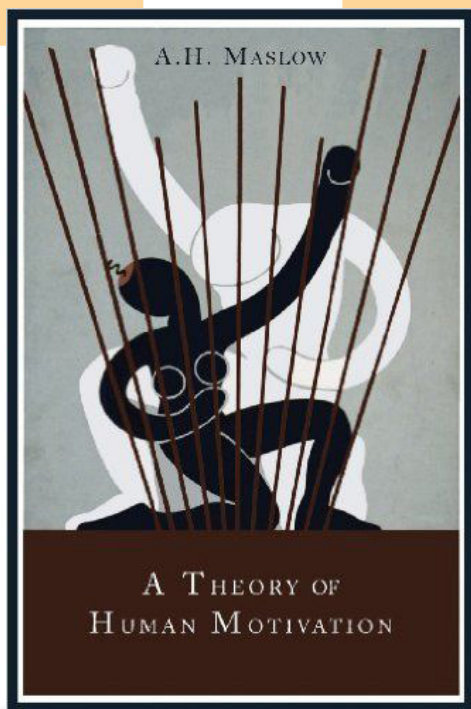




**PRESENTS**



# MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

BY A. H. MASLOW

*"A Theory of Human Motivation" was published by A. H. Maslow back in 1943. We reference Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory from this work. I was curious about the context and assumptions in Maslow's Hierarchy, so I decided to go back to the source and read the words in his original text. It's only 16 pages, so it's doable with your favorite adult beverage, or during the commercials of your preferred sporting event (or if you're a Browns fan, during the actual game). I hope you'll take the time to read the original text. Maslow's Hierarchy is as relevant today (especially during the pandemic), as it was 80 years ago when it was written. As leaders, if we don't understand our people's needs, we'll never reach our potential in coaching and mentoring them to reach their self-actualization as well as our own. If you'd like my notes to follow along with the text, I've tried to extract my favorite nuggets along with a few comments. Now go. . . Self-Actualize!*

**Rock on!**



Jonathan Slain



**AUTOBAHN**  
CONSULTANTS

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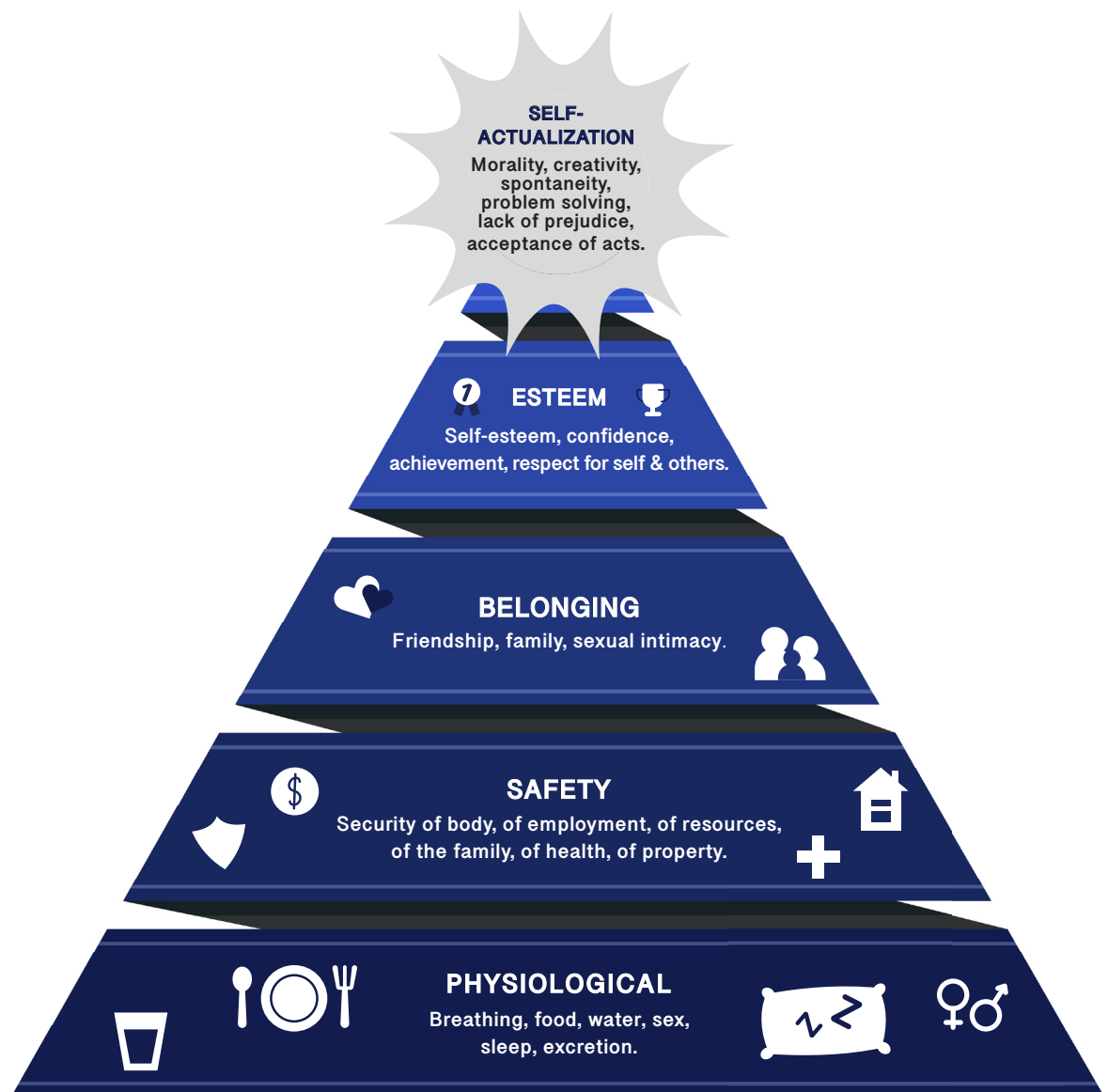
# INTRODUCTION

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“Human needs arrange themselves in hierarchies of pre-potency. That is to say, the appearance of one need usually rests on the prior satisfaction of another, more pre-potent need. Man is a perpetually wanting animal.

Motivation theory is not synonymous with behavior theory. The motivations are only one class of determinants of behavior. While behavior is almost always motivated, it is also almost always biologically, culturally and situationally determined as well.”



## II: THE BASIC NEEDS

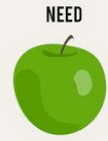
### THE "PHYSIOLOGICAL" NEEDS

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"Another peculiar characteristic of the human organism when it is dominated by a certain need is that the whole philosophy of the future tends also to change.."

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"... a want that is satisfied is no longer a want. The organism is dominated and its behavior organized only by unsatisfied needs."



### THE "SAFETY" NEEDS

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"Other broader aspects of the attempt to seek safety and stability in the world are seen in the very common preference for familiar rather than unfamiliar things, or for the known rather than the unknown.

Otherwise the need for safety is seen as an active and dominant mobilizer of the organism's resources only in emergencies, e. g., war, disease, natural catastrophes, crime waves, societal disorganization, neurosis, brain injury, chronically bad situation."



The Coronavirus Pandemic is one of those events that sends most people down at least one level on Maslow's Hierarchy. Many people are back down to safety needs near the bottom of the pyramid of needs.



### THE "LOVE" NEEDS

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"[Man] may even forget that once, when he was hungry, he sneered at love."

### THE "ESTEEM" NEEDS

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"Satisfaction of the self-esteem need leads to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world. But thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness and of helplessness."

### THE NEED FOR "SELF-ACTUALIZATION"

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"What a man can be, he must be. This need we may call self-actualization."



“The clear emergence of these [self-actualization] needs rests upon prior satisfaction of the physiological, safety, love and esteem needs. We shall call people who are satisfied in these needs, basically satisfied people, and it is from these that we may expect the fullest (and healthiest) creativeness. Since, in our society, basically satisfied people are the exception, we do not know much about self-actualization, either experimentally or clinically.”



Has this changed since 1943? Are there more basically satisfied people today than there were when Maslow wrote this brilliant essay?

### III: FURTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BASIC NEEDS

“We have spoken so far as if this hierarchy were a fixed order but actually it is not nearly as rigid as we may have implied.

There are some people in whom, for instance, self-esteem seems to be more important than love. This most common reversal in the hierarchy is usually due to the development of the notion that the person who is most likely to be loved is a strong or powerful person. . .”



The idea that the hierarchy isn't fixed is probably the most surprising to me. I am so glad I went back and read the original text because I had always assumed that you completed one level of the hierarchy and then moved to the next. Very black and white, but as you see in Maslow's words, the transitions are much more gray and fluid!

“A more realistic description of the hierarchy would be in terms of decreasing percentages of satisfaction as we go up the hierarchy of prepotency.”



We all have a percentage of completion of each level of the hierarchy and the percentages decrease the higher you go.

### SUMMARY

“There are at least five sets of goals, which we may call basic needs. These are briefly physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization.

These basic goals are related to each other, being arranged in a hierarchy of prepotency. This means that the most prepotent goal will monopolize consciousness and will tend of itself to organize the recruitment of the various capacities of the organism. The less prepotent needs are minimized, even forgotten or denied. But when a need is fairly well satisfied, the next prepotent (“higher”) need emerges, in turn to dominate the conscious life and to serve as the center of organization of behavior, since gratified needs are not active motivators.

Thus man is a perpetually wanting animal. Ordinarily the satisfaction of these wants is not altogether mutually exclusive, but only tends to be.”

JAMES  
MASLOW