

Maslow's Contribution to Retention

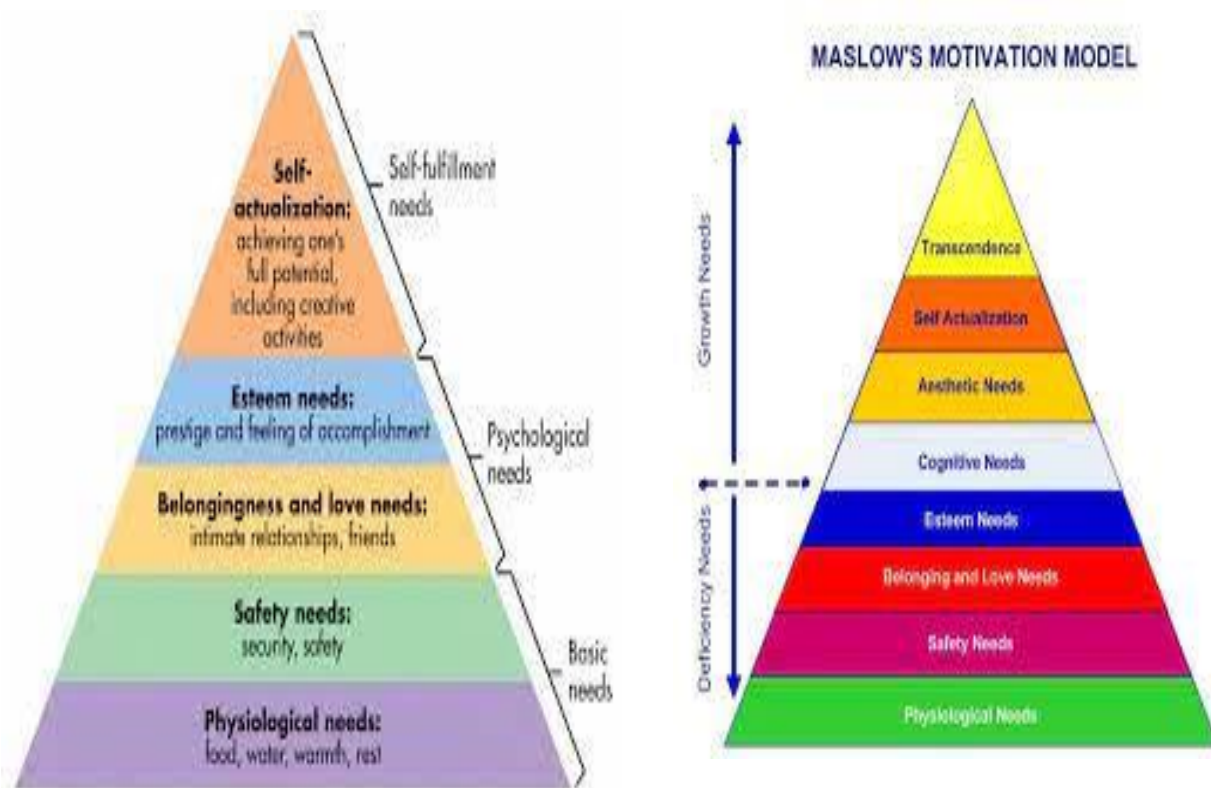
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs often gets depicted as an emotionally based motivational theory that demonstrates the basic needs of an individual. Maslow's research commonly gets used as a logical foundation for retention research since the pyramid levels directly correlate with people's needs, often matching their job satisfiers (Clegg et al., 2016). The original pyramid had five levels, each section representing a basic human need. The five areas starting at the pyramid's base are physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. The concept behind the theory is that humans must begin at the bottom of the pyramid and satisfy each level before moving to the next (Maslow, 1954).

Author Saul McLeod (2020) helps explain the five original hierarchy levels in more detail. He states that physiological needs are those needed for basic human survival. Examples include food, water, sex, shelter, clothes, and warmth (McLeod, 2020). After humans master their physiological needs, the need for safety in their life becomes more salient. Individuals desire order and control in their daily lives. They often find these needs met by members of their family and society. Examples of safety needs include the police, school, work, and medical care (Hopper, 2020; McLeod, 2020). After people feel safe, they can then seek out love and belonging. They will then desire relationships, connections with others, or group activity. Examples falling into this section are intimacy, friends, love, trust, and the act of giving and receiving affection (McLeod, 2020).

Individuals' esteem needs get met as they develop their self-worth, feel respected, and acquire a sense of accomplishment. Maslow divided esteem needs into two sections, esteem for oneself and the desire to be respected by others. The first division includes dignity, mastery, independence, representations of the second area, and prestige and status (McLeod, 2020;

Stewart et al., 2018). The last pyramid level, self-actualization, happens when individuals realize their full potential, achieve self-fulfillment, and elevate personal growth. Another way to look at this is that a person has the drive to accomplish all their goals in life and become the best version of oneself (McLeod, 2020).

McLeod (2020) explains that the five levels of the pyramid often get separated into deficiency and growth needs (McLeod, 2020). Groups one through four constitute deficiency needs (D-needs), and the pyramid's top represents growth and being (B-needs). Deficiencies commonly arise in humans, and this deprivation motivates individuals to persevere until their need gets met. The longer the needs go unsatisfied, the stronger the motivation to repair the situation (McLeod, 2020).



The New Pyramid

In 1943, Maslow claimed that each requirement must be completely satisfied before moving on to the next level of his pyramid. He later refined that statement and explained that this is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon. He altered his wording to say that it will subside or decrease when people more or less satisfy a need (McLeod, 2020). Maslow believes that once humans reach this point, actions become a habit and become more deliberate to remain satisfied; these become known as salient needs (Maslow, 1987; McLeod, 2020). However, even as deficiency needs decrease, people will still feel the urge to satisfy growth needs to achieve self-actualization.

An individual's need to grow does not manifest because the person lacks something in their life; it comes from a person's desire to grow internally. Once somebody feels somewhat satisfied with personal growth, they may say they have reached the pyramid's pinnacle, self-actualization (Kaufman, 2021; McLeod, 2020). Maslow believed that all individuals are capable of moving up the levels of the pyramid and achieving self-actualization. However, progress often gets stifled as life gets in the way. When this happens, people get discouraged and can revert backward with their progress. Many life experiences teach us how to deal with these fluctuations. When people master these actions, they will drastically improve their positive progress and decrease the episodes that push them back down the pyramid (McLeod, 2020).

Maslow continued to refine his initial theory over four decades. He published his original model in 1943 and revised the initial concept in 1962 and 1987. He felt extended research was needed to account for changing times and new human needs and desires (McLeod, 2020). His newer model allows for flexibility and external circumstances that may steer an individual's needs. Today, research might show that a person's desire for self-esteem is far more critical than

a desire for love. In Maslow's 1987 version, he explained that many behaviors develop from various motivations and that any behavior often gets influenced by many or all of the basic needs simultaneously (Maslow, 1987; McLeod, 2020).

Maslow's expanded version of his theory shows us three extra levels at levels five, six, and eight, as seen in Figure 2. The fifth new area represents someone's cognitive needs. These needs get met when a person develops an understanding or gains knowledge of a particular thing or phenomenon. Other examples include human curiosity, exploration and research, and the need for meaning (Kaufman, 2021; McLeod, 2020). The new sixth division is a person's aesthetic needs. These needs come from a human's desire to search for beauty and balance or when they can grasp a significant appreciation for something (Maslow, 1987; McLeod, 2020).

The last new area that Maslow created falls above self-actualization at level eight, which he defined as transcendence needs. He developed these areas because he felt people are motivated by values that transcend complete self-fulfillment. Examples of this would happen when individuals go through mystical experiences, experience a phenomenon of nature, aesthetic moments, complete sexual satisfaction, find religion, or find gratification in serving others (Maslow, 1987; McLeod, 2020).

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