

# 12

Chapter

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## **CHAPTER 12**

MASLOW'S SELF-  
ACTUALIZATION POSITION

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## Chapter

# Humanistic Biology and Self-Actualization

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- **Self-actualization:** process whereby the healthy development of people's abilities enables them to fulfill their own true natures
- **Humanistic biology:** the basic nature of human beings is potentially good and capable of pushing people in the direction of self-realization if the right social conditions prevail

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## Chapter

## Hierarchy of Human Needs

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- Humans have two basic sets of needs that are rooted in their biology:
  - **Deficiency needs** (basic needs): lower needs that must be gratified before it becomes possible to move into the growth area
  - **Growth needs** (meta needs): higher needs that may emerge once the basic needs have been satisfied

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## Chapter

# The Hierarchy of Human Needs

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- Basic needs:
  - **Physiological:** needs for food, water, sex, air, sleep
  - **Safety:** needs for feeling safe, protection, structure, freedom within limits
  - **Belongingness and love:** needs to feel that we have a place and that we are loved
    - **D-love:** selfish love in which the individual is more concerned with receiving love and gratifying his or her needs than with giving love to another; also known as deficiency-love
    - **B-love:** mature form of love in which the person is more concerned with giving love to benefit others than in receiving love from others to gratify his or her needs; also known as being-love

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## Chapter

### The Hierarchy of Human Needs (cont'd.)

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- Basic needs (cont'd.):
  - **Esteem:** needs for respect and recognition
    - **Self-esteem:** respect based on our own competence, independence, and achievements
    - **Esteem from others:** respect and recognition accorded us by others

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## Chapter

### The Hierarchy of Human Needs (cont'd.)

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- Meta needs:
  - Once the basic needs have been sufficiently gratified, the needs for self-actualization and cognitive understanding become salient
    - **Jonah complex:** fear that exercising our abilities to the maximum will bring with it responsibilities and duties that we will be unable to handle; an unwillingness to sacrifice current safety and security for the unknown
    - **Desacralizing attitude:** tendency to be disrespectful, cynical, and mistrustful; it causes the perceiver to overlook the virtues and strengths of the perceived

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## Chapter

### The Hierarchy of Human Needs (cont'd.)

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- Meta needs (cont'd.):
  - **Authoritative parenting:** disciplinary style in which children are consulted by parents in the establishment of disciplinary rules
  - **Permissive parenting:** disciplinary style in which parents make few demands on their children and use little punishment; “dopey parents”
  - **Authoritarian parenting:** disciplinary style in which parents discourage verbal give-and-take with their children and instead, expect unquestioning obedience to their judgments

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## Chapter

### B-Cognition and Actualization

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- **B-cognition:** state of experiencing that is nonjudgmental and self-validating
- **D-cognition:** state of experiencing that involves judgments of approval and disapproval
- **Peak experience:** intense, mystical experience in which an individual exists in a temporary state of joy and wonderment

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## Chapter

# Characteristics of Self-Actualizing People

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- **Self-actualizers:** individuals who have gratified their basic needs and developed their potentialities to the point that they can be considered healthy, more fully functioning human beings
  - Characteristics of self-actualizers:
    - Problem-centered
    - Democratic character
    - Not prejudiced
    - Cosmopolitan in outlook
    - Socially responsible
    - Resist enculturation, where appropriate
    - Capable of unselfish love
    - Fresh appreciation of events

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## Chapter

## Personality Development

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- Stage-emergent theory of development in which the person must satisfy the lower needs before higher ones can become operative
  - As the higher needs emerge, people become less dependent on the environment and on rewards or approval from others

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## Assessment Techniques

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- **Personal Orientation Inventory (POI):** measure of self-actualization

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### Theory's Implications for Therapy

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- Neurotics are those who have been unable to satisfy their basic needs and thus have been precluded from moving toward the ultimate goal of self-actualization
  - Therapy must be interpersonal in nature

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## Chapter

## Evaluative Comments

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- **Comprehensiveness:** not quite as comprehensive as it first appears
- **Precision and testability:** not very precise and somewhat difficult to test adequately
- **Parsimony:** fails to meet the parsimony criterion; too simplistic
- **Empirical validity:** empirical support is not consistent
- **Heuristic value:** theory has been very stimulating to researchers in a large number of disciplines; strong heuristic value
- **Applied value:** strong applied value in pastoral and educational counseling and in the business world