

Schulz: History of Modern Psychology
Short essay week 12/13

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What did Abraham Maslow mean by self-actualization?

Self-actualization is defined as the full development of one's abilities and realization of one's potential. Abraham Maslow expressed the great extent of an individual's needs. It requires the functional use of our entire attributes and capacities to achieve the development of our potential. Maslow has designed a Hierarchy of Needs and begins to describe the first level as the psychological needs, which involve the human need for food, water, and sexual activity. The second level is the safety needs, which involve security, order, and stability. The third level is reported as the need of belongingness and love. The fourth level is the esteem needs from self and others. The fifth level is the need for self-actualization. This is the order in which Maslow presented the needs of the human being. The author stated, "To become self-actualizing, we must first satisfy the needs that stand lower in an innate hierarchy. Each need must be satisfied in turn before the next need can motivate us." (Shultz 344). Maslow's investigation desired to establish the characteristics of individuals who satisfied the self-actualization need and be considered psychologically healthy. By his interpretation, the individuals are free from mental conditions not created by diseases. In addition, Maslow stated that prerequisites for self-actualization are abundant love experienced in childhood and the fulfillment of the psychological and safety needs in the first two years of life. When children are sheltered or protected and self-assured, they will continue to feel the same when they become adults. In the absence of satisfactory parental love, security, and esteem in childhood, it will be hard for adults to achieve self-actualization.

References

Schulz, Duane P. & Schulz Sydney Ellen. 2015. *History of Modern Psychology 11th Edition*. ISBN-13:978-1-111-82932-2.
Pp 344.