



Where Are You In Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs?

As a social work and psychology student, Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs was a theory in which we focused a great deal of time. According to Maslow, there are five levels of needs, ranging from physiological to self-actualization. It is difficult to move from one level to the next without first meeting your needs at the lower level. If you can identify where you are currently at in the hierarchy, it will give you a better understanding of where you are coming from and what you need to do to reach the fifth and final step, self-actualization.

The first level, at the base of the pyramid, relates to a person's physiological needs. Without sufficient food and water, and the means in which to excrete these items from your body, you would not be able to survive, making movement to the next level impossible. This level also addresses whether or not you have adequate sleep and sex. It is difficult to think about safety, relationships, and one's self-esteem unless these basic needs are met.

The second level, moving up the pyramid, deals with safety. This level deals with issues related to your personal health, the safety of your family, and safety related to employment (do you have a job or not?) and your financial situation. Do you have the resources needed to ensure safety at home and at work? If you do not feel safe and secure, and are constantly struggling to make ends meet, it is difficult to pursue and maintain relationships, and your self-esteem is probably lacking.

The third level, moving further up the pyramid, relates to love and belongingness. Do you feel loved? Do you have a supportive family or group of friends? Are you able to engage in intimate relationships? If you don't feel loved or part of a group where there is mutual love and respect, it is difficult to feel good about yourself. This could have a negative impact on your self-esteem.

The fourth level deals with your self-esteem. How would you rate your self-esteem? Do you feel self-confident? How would you describe your achievements? Do you feel respected by family members, friends, and peers? Do you respect others? If you don't feel good about yourself, you will never get to a point where you are self-actualized; where you feel confident, valued, and purposeful. You won't be able to see your achievements or accomplishments.

The fifth and final level, at the top of the pyramid, is self-actualization. At this level, all of your basic needs are met, you feel safe and secure in your life, you feel loved and have a sense of belongingness, and your self-esteem is high. As such, you are more accepting of people and events, less judgmental, a

better problem solver, more creative, and happier. You feel on top of the world. People at this level are literally on top of the pyramid.

Take some time to assess the level at which you are currently operating. Try to address those needs as best as you can. If you need assistance, seek it. Develop and follow a plan of action daily to tackle your needs, however small the steps may be. As long as you keep working on yourself and getting your needs met, there will be a day when you reach self-actualization. Celebrate your achievements along your path.

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If you want to make positive changes in your professional life, and create the job or career you desire and deserve, then working with Executive & Life Coach, Sharon L. Mikrut, is the solution. Although her specialty is in partnering with nonprofit executive directors and managers to maximize their resources in a competitive environment, she is passionate about working with all individuals committed to personal and/or professional growth. Visit her website (<http://www.createitcoaching.org>), Nonprofit Professionals blog (<http://www.createitcoaching.com>), or Empowerment blog (<http://www.createitcoaching.net>) and sign up for her free nonprofit or life coaching newsletter.