Abraham Maslow: An American Humanistic Psychologist

A presentation by
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What was Abraham Maslow's background like?

- Maslow was born April 1, 1908 in Brooklyn, New York.
- Maslow was the first of seven children born to the Jewish couple who immigrated from Russia.
- Abraham went to college to study law in order to please his parents. He then went on to marry Bertha Goodman against his parents wishes. Bertha and Abraham had two daughters.
- The couple moved to Wisconsin so that Maslow could study at the University of Wisconsin. It is there that he studied under the famous eye of Harry Harlow and become fascinated by psychology.
What was Abraham Maslow’s background like?

--Part II--

Maslow obtained his Bachelor’s degree in Psychology in 1930, he then went through higher education and obtained his PhD in 4 short years.

After he received his PhD, Maslow went on to teach at Brooklyn College.

While Maslow taught at Brooklyn, he was appointed the chair of the Psychology department. While there, Maslow met Kurt Goldstein. Goldstein was the first to expose Maslow to Humanistic Psychology.

Maslow then went on to develop his Hierarchy of Needs in 1954, which he then revised in 1970 to produce the current hierarchy.

Maslow died June 8, 1970 of a heart attack at his home in California.
Maslow’s 1970 Hierarchy of Needs

- **Physiological Needs**
  - Food, Water, Sleep, Breathing

- **Safety Needs**
  - Security of: Employment, Morality, Family, Health

- **Love/Belonging Needs**
  - Friendship, Family, Sexual Intimacy

- **Esteem Needs**
  - Self-esteem, Confidence, Respect of Others

- **Self-Actualization Needs**
  - Morality, Creativity

Thesis (Individual)

Antithesis (Relationships)

Synthesis (Justification)
Key Terms

**Psychological** - The need to be satisfied first; before everything else.
- Lester shows this need by thinking about himself before he thinks about his wife or Jane.

**Safety** - The desire to feel safe no matter what you are doing or where you are.
- Lester exhibits this need by quitting his old job and getting a new one at a fast food restaurant, where job security is much higher.

**Love/Belonging** - The desire to feel loved and accepted by the people around you.
- Jane exhibits this when she starts a relationship with Ricky. She is not concerned about her body-image as much as she was in the beginning.

**Esteem** - The need to have high self-esteem and for people around you to respect you.
- Ricky is a good example for he does not care what people around him think.

**Self-Actualization** - The desire to use your abilities to “be the best you can be.”
- Lester’s desire to get into shape can be applied to this need.
How Does Maslow Believe Personality Develops?

Maslow, a humanistic psychologist, believed that humans strive to reach the highest levels of consciousness and wisdom that they can. As people work their way up Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, their personality develops, until they reach the self actualization stage, in which they have reached their potential. When people are in the self-actualization stage, they may be labeled as a “fully functioning person” with a “healthy personality.” Maslow explained people’s personality through his hierarchy of needs.
According to Maslow’s theory, for a person to have a healthy personality they must fulfill all (or most) of the levels of the hierarchy of needs starting with the physiological needs up to the esteem needs. If your lower needs have not been met, you are not yet ready to fulfill your true potential. At the top of the hierarchy is self-actualization. But it is not easy to reach this point due to our stressful lives and demands. According to Maslow, only about 1-2% of the world is actually self-actualizing. Maslow researched many famous people including Albert Einstein, Abraham Lincoln, and Thomas Jefferson, who he believed to have reached self-actualization. He then researched them thoroughly and composed a list of qualities that they shared that include:

- Being reality-centered (being able to tell the difference between what is dishonest and what is genuine)
- Enjoy solitude and were content being alone
- Enjoy meaningful personal relations with only a few close friends rather than superficial relationships with many people
- Non-hostile sense of humor (rather than poking fun of other people they made jokes at their expense or more general jokes about people in general)
- Acceptance of self and others
- Humility and respect
- Strong ethics
- Creative and original thoughts
According to Maslow, What is considered an Unhealthy Personality?

Maslow believed that all of the needs are instinctual and that every person strives to fulfill them. An unhealthy person is someone who has not fulfilled their basic needs. He believed that sometimes society and cultural norms can stifle our growth. He also believed that low self-esteem and inferiority complexes were the root of many psychological problems. Maslow also believed that people need a set of metaneeds in their lives in order to be happy (the opposites of these needs would lead to an unhealthy personality). They include:

- Truth, not dishonesty
- Uniqueness not than uniformity
- Justice and order not injustice and lawlessness
- Self-sufficiency not dependency
- Meaningfulness not senselessness
- Simplicity not unnecessary complexity
- Unity not forced choices
Personality Analysis: Angela

Angela Hayes is a perfect example of an unhealthy personality. She appears to be superficial and promiscuous when in reality she has created her idealized image of herself to convince others that she isn’t ordinary. According to Maslow’s theory, Angela has not fulfilled all of her needs and is still trying to fulfill her safety needs, as well as many others.

- Angela needs stability and protection as well as a structure and order. She also needs limits.
- She doesn’t have strong authoritative parents who set down rules for her and she is therefore without guidance.
- She is unable to move to her other needs and is stuck on this level.
- Angela needs love and a sense of belonging.
- Even though Angela has friends, she cannot really connect to anyone (the exception of this is her paternal relationship with Lester at the end of the movie where Lester acts as a “father figure” to her).
- For the majority of the movie she is lonely and has a fear that others will think of her as being “ordinary”.
- Angela needs self-esteem (higher and lower).
  - Lower self-esteem is the respect of others, the need for a reputation, and recognition. She has an inferiority complex and creates an idealized image of herself in order for people to notice her and think of her as unique.
  - Higher self-esteem is self-respect, confidence and independence. She does not love herself and is not really sure who she is because she has been playing a role her entire life.
  - She does not have confidence in herself and is very insecure.
The End
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