Motivation and Personality

THIRD EDITION

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When do they appear? Under what conditions? Are they necessarily the troublemakers that Freud assumed them to be? Must they be in opposition to reality?

MOTIVATION OF HIGHEST HUMAN CAPACITIES

Most of what we know of human motivation comes not from psychologists but from psychotherapists treating patients. These patients are a great source of error as well as of useful data, for they obviously constitute a poor sample of the population. The motivational life of neurotic sufferers should, even in principle, be rejected as a paradigm for healthy motivation. Health is not simply the absence of disease or even the opposite of it. Any theory of motivation that is worthy of attention must deal with the highest capacities of the healthy and strong person as well as with the defensive maneuvers of crippled spirits. The most important concerns of the greatest and finest people in human history must all be encompassed and explained.

This understanding we shall never get from sick people alone. We must turn our attention to healthy men and women as well. Motivation theorists must become more positive in their orientation.

chapter 2

A Theory of Human Motivation

This chapter is an attempt to formulate a positive theory of motivation that will satisfy the theoretical demands listed in the previous chapter and at the same time conform to the known facts, clinical and observational as well as experimental. It derives most directly, however, from clinical experience. This theory is in the functionalist tradition of James and Dewey, and is fused with the holism of Wertheimer, Goldstein, and Gestalt psychology and with the dynamism of Freud, Fromm, Horney, Reich, Jung, and Adler. This integration or synthesis may be called a holistic-dynamic theory.

THE BASIC NEED HIERARCHY

The Physiological Needs

The needs that are usually taken as the starting point for motivation theory are the so-called physiological drives. Two lines of research make it necessary to revise our customary notions about these needs: first, the development of the concept of homeostasis and second, the finding that appetites (preferential choices among foods) are a fairly efficient indication of actual needs or lacks in the body.

Homeostasis refers to the body's automatic efforts to maintain a constant, normal state of the blood stream. Cannon (1932) described this process for (1) the water content of the blood, (2) salt content, (3) sugar content, (4) protein content, (5) fat content, (6) calcium content, (7) oxygen content, (8) constant hydrogen-ion level (acid-base balance), and (9) constant temperature of the blood. Obviously this list could be extended to include other minerals, the hormones, vitamins, and so on.
Young (1941, 1948) summarized the work on appetite in its relation to body needs. If the body lacks some chemical, the individual will tend (in an imperfect way) to develop a specific appetite or partial hunger for that missing food element.

Thus it seems impossible as well as useless to make any list of fundamental physiological needs, for they can come to almost any number one might wish, depending on the degree of specificity of description. We cannot identify all physiological needs as homeostatic. That sexual desire, sleepiness, sheer activity and exercise, and maternal behavior in animals are homeostatic has not yet been demonstrated. Furthermore, this list would not include the various sensory pleasures (tastes, smells, tickling, stroking), which are probably physiological and which may become the goals of motivated behavior. Nor do we know what to make of the fact that the organism has simultaneously a tendency to inertia, laziness, and least effort and also a need for activity, stimulation, and excitement.

In the previous chapter it was pointed out that these physiological drives or needs are to be considered unusual rather than typical because they are isolable and because they are localizable somatically. That is to say, they are relatively independent of each other, of other motivations, and of the organism as a whole, and, in many cases, it is possible to demonstrate a localized, underlying somatic base for the drive. This is true less generally than has been thought (exceptions are fatigue, sleepiness, maternal responses) but it is still true in the classic instances of hunger, sex, and thirst.

It should be pointed out again that any of the physiological needs and the consummatory behavior involved with them serve as channels for all sorts of other needs as well. That is to say, the person who thinks he or she is hungry may actually be seeking more for comfort, or dependence, than for vitamins or proteins. Conversely, it is possible to satisfy the hunger need in part by other activities such as drinking water or smoking cigarettes. In other words, relatively isolable as these physiological needs are, they are not completely so.

Undoubtedly these physiological needs are the most prepotent of all needs. What this means specifically is that in the human being who is missing everything in life in an extreme fashion, it is most likely that the major motivation would be the physiological needs rather than any others. A person who is lacking food, safety, love, and esteem would most probably hunger for food more strongly than for anything else.

If all the needs are unsatisfied, and the organism is then dominated by the physiological needs, all other needs may become simply nonexistent or be pushed into the background. It is then fair to characterize the whole organism by saying simply that it is hungry, for consciousness is almost completely preempted by hunger. All capacities are put into the service of hunger satisfaction, and the organization of these capacities is almost entirely determined by the one purpose of satisfying hunger. The receptors and effectors, the intelligence, memory, habits, all may now be defined simply as hunger-gratifying tools. Capacities that are not useful for this purpose lie dormant, or are pushed into the background. The urge to write poetry, the desire to acquire an automobile, the interest in American history, the desire for a new pair of shoes are, in the extreme case, forgotten or become of secondary importance. For the human who is extremely and dangerously hungry, no other interests exist but food. He or she dreams food, remembers food, thinks about food, emotes only about food, perceives only food, and wants only food. The more subtle determinants that ordinarily fuse with the physiological drives in organizing even feeding, drinking, or sexual behavior, may now be so completely overwhelmed as to allow us to speak at this time (but only at this time) of pure hunger drive and behavior, with the one unqualified aim of relief.

Another peculiar characteristic of the human organism when it is dominated by a certain need is that the whole philosophy of the future tends also to change. For our chronically and extremely hungry person, Utopia can be defined simply as a place where there is plenty of food. He or she tends to think that, if only guaranteed food for the rest of life, he or she will be perfectly happy and will never want anything more. Life itself tends to be defined in terms of eating. Anything else will be defined as unimportant. Freedom, love, community feeling, respect, philosophy, may all be waved aside as fripperies that are useless, since they fail to fill the stomach. Such a person may fairly be said to live by bread alone.

It cannot possibly be denied that such things are true, but their generality can be denied. Emergency conditions are, almost by definition, rare in the normally functioning peaceable society. That this truism can be forgotten is attributable mainly to two reasons. First, rats have few motivations other than physiological ones, and since so much of the research on motivation has been made with these animals, it is easy to carry the rat picture over to the human being. Second, it is too often not realized that culture itself is an adaptive tool, one of whose main functions is to make the physiological emergencies come less and less often. In the United States, chronic extreme hunger of the emergency type is rare, rather than common. Average American citizens are experiencing appetite rather than hunger when they say, "I am hungry." They are apt to experience sheer life-and-death hunger only by accident and then only a few times through their entire lives.

Obviously a good way to obscure the higher motivations, and to get a lopsided view of human capacities and human nature, is to make the organism extremely and chronically hungry or thirsty. Anyone who attempts to make an emergency picture into a typical one and who will measure all of humanity's goals and desires by behavior during extreme physiological deprivation is certainly being blind to many things. It is quite true that humans live by bread alone—when there is no bread. But what happens to their desires when there is plenty of bread and when their bellies are chronically filled?

Dynamics of the Need Hierarchy

At once other (and higher) needs emerge and these, rather than physiological hungers, dominate the organism. And when these in turn are satisfied, again new (and still higher) needs emerge, and so on. This is what we mean by saying that the basic human needs are organized into a hierarchy of relative prepotency.

One main implication of this phrasing is that gratification becomes an important concept as deprivation in motivation theory, for it releases the organism from the domination of a relatively more physiological need, permitting thereby
the emergence of other more social goals. The physiological needs, along with their partial goals, when chronically gratified cease to exist as active determinants or organizers of behavior. They now exist only in a potential fashion in the sense that they may emerge again to dominate the organism if they are thwarted. But a want that is satisfied is no longer a want. The organism is dominated and its behavior organized only by unsatisfied needs. If hunger is satisfied, it becomes unimportant in the current dynamics of the individual.

This statement is somewhat qualified by a hypothesis to be discussed more fully later, namely, that it is precisely those individuals in whom a certain need has always been satisfied who are best equipped to tolerate deprivation of that need in the future and that, furthermore, those who have been deprived in the past will react differently to current satisfactions from the one who has never been deprived.

The Safety Needs

If the physiological needs are relatively well gratified, there then emerges a new set of needs, which we may categorize roughly as the safety needs (security; stability; dependency; protection; freedom from fear, anxiety, and chaos; need for structure, order, law, and limits; strength in the protector; and so on). All that has been said of the physiological needs is equally true, although in less degree, of these desires. The organism may equally well be wholly dominated by them. They may serve as the almost exclusive organizers of behavior, recruiting all the capacities of the organism in their service, and we may then fairly describe the whole organism as a safety-seeking mechanism. Again we may say of the receptors, the effectors, the intellect, and the other capacities that they are primarily safety-seeking tools. Again, as in the hungry human, we find that the dominating goal is a strong determinant not only of their current world outlook and philosophy but also of their philosophy of the future and of values. Practically everything looks less important than safety and protection (even sometimes the physiological needs, which, being satisfied, are now underestimated). A person in this state, if it is extreme enough and chronic enough, may be characterized as living almost for safety alone.

However, the healthy and fortunate adults in our culture are largely satisfied in their safety needs. The peaceful, smoothly running, stable, good society ordinarily makes its members feel safe enough from wild animals, extremes of temperature, criminal assault, murder, chaos, tyranny, and so on. Therefore, in a very real sense, they no longer have any safety needs as active motivators. Just as a sated person no longer feels hungry, a safe one no longer feels endangered. If we wish to see these needs directly and clearly we must turn to neurotic or near-neurotic individuals, and to the economic and social underdogs, or else to social chaos, revolution, or breakdown of authority. In between these extremes, we can perceive the expressions of safety needs only in such phenomena as, for instance, the common preference for a job with tenure and protection, the desire for a saving account, and for insurance of various kinds (medical, dental, unemployment, disability, old age).

Other, broader aspects of the attempt to seek safety and stability in the world are seen in the very common preference for familiar rather than unfamiliar things (Maslow, 1937), or for the known rather than the unknown. The tendency to have some religion or world philosophy that organizes the universe and the people into some sort of satisfactorily coherent, meaningful whole is also in part motivated by safety seeking. Here too we may list science and philosophy in general as partially motivated by the safety needs (we shall see later that there are other motivations to scientific, philosophical, or religious endeavor).

Otherwise the need for safety is seen as an active and dominant mobilization of the organism's resources only in real emergencies, such as war, disease, natural catastrophes, crime waves, societal disorganization, neurosis, brain injury, breakdown of authority, or chronically bad situations. Some neurotic adults in our society are, in many ways, like unsafe children in their desire for safety. These reactions are often to unknown psychological dangers in a world that is perceived to be hostile, overwhelming, and threatening. Such people behave as if a great catastrophe were almost always impending—they are usually responding as if to an emergency. Their safety needs often find specific expression in a search for a protector, or a stronger person or system, on whom they may depend. It is as if their childish attitudes of fear and threat reaction to a dangerous world have gone underground and, untouched by the growing-up and learning processes, remained ready even now to be called out by any stimulus that would make a child feel endangered. Horney (1937), in particular, has written well about "basic anxiety".

The neurosis in which the search for safety takes its clearest form is in the compulsive-obsessive neurosis. Compulsive-obsessives try frantically to order and stabilize the world so that no unmanageable, unexpected, or unfamiliar danger will ever appear. They hedge themselves about with all sorts of ceremonials, rules, and formulas so that every possible contingency may be provided for and so that no new contingencies may appear. They manage to maintain their equilibrium by avoiding everything unfamiliar and strange and by ordering their restricted world in such a neat, disciplined, orderly fashion that everything in the world can be accounted on. They try to arrange the world so that anything unexpected (dangerous) cannot possibly occur. If, through no fault of their own, something unexpected does occur, they go into a panic reaction as if this unexpected occurrence constituted a grave danger. What we can see only as a none-too-strong preference for the healthy person (e.g., preference for the familiar) becomes a life-and-death necessity in abnormal cases. The healthy taste for the novel and unknown is missing or at a minimum in the average neurotic.

The safety needs can become very urgent on the social scene whenever there are real threats to law, to order, to the authority of society. The threat of chaos or of nihilism can be expected in most human beings to produce a regression from any higher needs to the more prepotent safety needs. A common, almost predictable reaction, is the easier acceptance of dictatorship or of military rule. This tends to be true for all human beings, including healthy ones, since they

1Not all neurotic individuals feel unsafe. Neurosis may have at its core a thwarting of affection and esteem needs in a person who is generally safe.
will tend to respond to danger with realistic regression to the safety need level and will prepare to defend themselves. But it seems to be most true of people who are living near the safety line. They are particularly disturbed by threats to authority, to legality, and to the representatives of the law.

The Belongingness and Love Needs

If both the physiological and the safety needs are fairly well gratified, there will emerge the love and affection and belongingness needs, and the whole cycle already described will repeat itself with this new center. The love needs involve giving and receiving affection. When they are unsatisfied, a person will feel keenly the absence of friends, mates, or children. Such a person will hunger for relations with people in general—for a place in the group or family—and will strive with great intensity to achieve this goal. Attaining such a place will matter more than anything else in the world and he or she may even forget that once, when hunger was foremost, love seemed unreal, unnecessary, and unimportant. Now the pangs of loneliness, ostracism, rejection, friendlessness, and rootlessness are preeminent.

We have very little scientific information about the belongingness need, although this is a common theme in novels, autobiographies, poems, and plays and also in the newer sociological literature. From these we know in a general way the destructive effects on children of moving too often; of disorientation; of the general overmobility that is forced by industrialization; of being without roots, or of despising one’s roots, one’s origins, one’s group; of being torn from one’s home and family, friends, and neighbors; of being a transient or a newcomer rather than a native. We still underplay the deep importance of the neighborhood, of one’s territory, of one’s clan, of one’s own “kind,” one’s class, one’s gang, one’s familiar working colleagues. And we have largely forgotten our deep animal tendencies to herd, to flock, to join, to belong.

I believe that the tremendous and rapid increase in training groups (T-groups), personal growth groups, and intentional communities may in part be motivated by this unsatisfied hunger for contact, intimacy, and belongingness. Such social phenomena may arise to overcome the widespread feelings of alienation, strangeness, and loneliness that have been worsened by increasing mobility, the breakdown of traditional groupings, the scattering of families, the generation gap, and steady urbanization. My strong impression is also that some proportion of youth rebellion groups—I don’t know how many or how much—is motivated by the profound hunger for group feelings, for contact, for real togetherness in the face of a common enemy, any enemy that can serve to form an amity group simply by posing an external threat. The same kind of thing has been observed in groups of soldiers who were pushed into an unwonted brotherliness and intimacy by their common external danger, and who may stick together throughout a lifetime as a consequence. Any good society must satisfy this need, one way or another, if it is to survive and be healthy.

In our society the thwarting of these needs is the most commonly found core in cases of maladjustment and more severe pathology. Love and affection, as well as their possible expression in sexuality, are generally looked upon with ambivalence and are customarily hedged about with many restrictions and inhibitions. Practically all theorists of psychopathology have stressed thwarting of the love needs as basic in the picture of maladjustment. Many clinical studies have therefore been made of this need, and we know more about it perhaps than any of the other needs except the physiological ones. Suttie (1935) has written an excellent analysis of our “taboo on tenderness.”

One thing that must be stressed at this point is that love is not synonymous with sex. Sex may be studied as a purely physiological need, although ordinarily human sexual behavior is multiform. That is to say, it is determined not only by sexual but also by other needs, chief among which are the love and affection needs. Also not to be overlooked is the fact that the love needs involve both giving and receiving love.

The Esteem Needs

All people in our society (with a few pathological exceptions) have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, usually high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect or self-esteem, and for the esteem of others. These needs may therefore be classified into two subsidiary sets. These are, first, the desire for strength, achievement, adequacy, mastery and competence, confidence in the face of the world, and independence and freedom. Second, we have what we may call the desire for reputation or prestige (defining it as respect or esteem from other people), status, fame and glory, dominance, recognition, attention, importance, dignity, or appreciation. These needs have been relatively stressed by Alfred Adler and his followers, and have been relatively neglected by Freud. More and more today, however, there is appearing widespread appreciation of their central importance among psychoanalysts as well as among clinical psychologists.

Satisfaction of the self-esteem need leads to feelings of self-confidence worth, strength, capability, and adequacy, of being useful and necessary in the world. But thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness and of helplessness. These feelings in turn give rise to either basic discouragement or else compensatory or neurotic trends.

From the theologians’ discussion of pride and hubris, from the Frommian theories about the self-perception of untruth to one’s own nature, from the American work with self, from essayists like Ayn Rand (1943), and from other sources as well, we have been learning more and more of the dangers of basing self-esteem on the opinions of others rather than on real capacity, competence

 noted in our society.

*Atrey’s Territorial Imperative (1966) will help to make all of this conscious. Its very rashness was good for me because it stressed what I had been only casually and forced me to think seriously about the matter. Perhaps it will do the same for other readers.

1 Whether or not this particular desire is universal we do not know. The crucial question especially important today, is: Will men who are enslaved and dominated inevitably feel dissatisfied and rebellious? We may assume on the basis of commonly known clinical data that people who have known true freedom (not paid for by giving up safety and security but rather built on the basis of adequate safety and security) will not willingly or easily allow their freedom to be taken away from them. But we do not know for sure that this is true for people born into slavery. See discussion of this problem in Fromm (1941).
and adequacy to the task. The most stable and therefore most healthy self-esteem is based on deserved respect from others rather than on external fame or celebrity and unwarranted adulation. Even here it is helpful to distinguish the actual competence and achievement that is based on sheer will power, determination, and responsibility from that which comes naturally and easily out of one's own true inner nature, one's constitution, one's biological fate or destiny, or, as Horney puts it, out of one's Real Self rather than out of the idealized pseudo-self (1950).

The Self-actualization Need

Even if all these needs are satisfied, we may still often (if not always) expect that a new discontent and restlessness will soon develop, unless the individual is doing what he or she, individually, is fitted for. Musicians must make music, artists must paint, poets must write if they are to be ultimately at peace with themselves. What humans can be, they must be. They must be true to their own nature. This need we may call self-actualization. (See Chapters 11, 12, and 13 for a fuller description.)

This term, first coined by Kurt Goldstein (1939), is being used in this book in a much more specific and limited fashion. It refers to people's desire for self-fulfillment, namely, the tendency for them to become actualized in what they are potentially. This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one idiosyncratically is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming.

The specific form that these needs will take of course vary greatly from person to person. In one individual they may take the form of the desire to be an excellent parent, in another they may be expressed athletically, and in still another they may be expressed in painting pictures or in inventing things. At this level, individual differences are greatest. However, the common feature of the needs for self-actualization is that their emergence usually rests upon some prior satisfaction of the physiological, safety, love, and esteem needs.

Preconditions of the Basic Needs

There are certain conditions that are immediate prerequisites for the basic need satisfactions. Such conditions as freedom to speak, freedom to do what one wishes so long as no harm is done to others, freedom to express oneself, freedom to investigate and seek for information, freedom to defend oneself, justice, fairness, honesty, and orderliness in the group are examples of such preconditions for basic need satisfactions. These conditions are not ends in themselves but they are almost so since they are so closely related to the basic needs, which are apparently the only ends in themselves. Danger to these freedoms is reacted to with emergency response as if there were direct danger to the basic needs themselves. These conditions are defended because without them the basic satisfactions are quite impossible, or at least severely endangered.

If we remember that the cognitive capacities (perceptual, intellectual, learning) are a set of adjunctive tools, which have among other functions that of satisfaction of our basic needs, then it is clear that any danger to them, any deprivation or blocking of their free use, must also be indirectly threatening to the basic needs themselves. Such a statement is a partial solution of the general problems of curiosity, the search for knowledge, truth, and wisdom, and the ever-persistent urge to solve the cosmic mysteries. Secrecy, censorship, dishonesty, and blocking of communication threaten all the basic needs.

THE BASIC COGNITIVE NEEDS

The Desires to Know and to Understand

The main reason we know little about the cognitive impulses, their dynamics, or their pathology is that they are not important in the clinic, and certainly not in the clinic dominated by the medical-therapeutic tradition of getting rid of disease. The florid, exciting, and mysterious symptoms found in the classical neuroses are lacking here. Cognitive psychopathology is pale, subtle, and easily overlooked or defined as normal. It does not cry for help. As a consequence we find nothing on the subject in the writings of the great inventors of psychotherapy and psychodynamics, Freud, Adler, Jung, and others.

Schilder is the only major psychoanalyst I know in whose writings curiosity and understanding are seen dynamically. So far, we have mentioned the cognitive needs only in passing. Acquiring knowledge and systematizing the universe have been considered as, in part, techniques for the achievement of basic safety in the world, or for the intelligent person, expressions of self-actualization. Also freedom of inquiry and expression have been discussed as preconditions of satisfaction of the basic needs. Useful though these formulations may be, they do not constitute definitive answers to the questions as to the motivational role of curiosity, learning, philosophizing, experimenting, and so on. They are at best no more than partial answers.

Above and beyond these negative determinants for acquiring knowledge (anxiety, fear), there are some reasonable grounds for postulating positive personal impulses to satisfy curiosity, to know, to explain, and to understand (Maslow, 1968).

1. Something like human curiosity can easily be observed in the higher animals. The monkey will pick things apart, will poke its finger into

Clearly, creative behavior is like any other behavior in having multiple determinants. It may be seen in innately creative people whether they are satisfied or not, happy or unhappy, hungry or sated. Also it is clear that creative activity may be compensatory, ameliorative, or purely economic. In any case, here too we must distinguish, in a dynamic fashion, the overt behavior itself from its various motivations or purposes.
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4. It may be found valid to extrapolate from the psychopathological. The compulsive-obsessive neurotic shows (at the clinical level of observation) a compulsive and anxious clinging to the familiar and a dread of the unfamiliar, the anarchic, the unexpected, the undomesticated. On the other hand, there are some phenomena that may turn out to nullify this possibility. Among these are forced unconventionality, a chronic rebellion against any authority whatsoever, and the desire to shock and to startle, all of which may be found in certain neurotic individuals, as well as in those in the process of deacculturation.

5. Probably there are true psychopathological effects when the cognitive needs are frustrated (Maslow, 1967, 1968c). The following clinical impressions are also pertinent: I have seen a few cases in which it seemed clear that the pathology (boredom, loss of zest in life, self-dislike, general depression of the bodily functions, steady deterioration of the intellectual life and of tastes, and so on) were produced in intelligent people leading stupid lives in stupid jobs. I had at least one case in which the appropriate cognitive therapy (resuming part-time studies, getting a position that was more intellectually demanding, insight) removed the symptoms. I have seen many women, intelligent, prosperous, and unoccupied, slowly develop these same symptoms of intellectual inanition. Those who followed the recommendation to immerse themselves in something worthy of them showed improvement or cure often enough to impress me with the reality of the cognitive needs. In those countries in which access to the news, to information, and to the facts were cut off, and in those where official theories were profoundly contradicted by obvious facts, at least some people responded with generalized cynicism, mistrust of all values, suspicion even of the obvious, a profound disruption of ordinary interpersonal relationships, hopelessness, loss of morale, and so on. Others seem to have responded in the more passive direction with dullness, submission, loss of capacity, coarctation, and loss of initiative.

6. The needs to know and to understand are seen in late infancy and childhood, perhaps even more strongly than in adulthood. Furthermore this seems to be a spontaneous product of maturation rather than of learning, however defined. Children do not have to be taught to be curious. But they may be taught, as by institutionalization, not to be curious.

7. Finally, the gratification of the cognitive impulses is subjectively satisfying and yields end-experience. Though this aspect of insight and understanding has been neglected in favor of achieved results, learning, and so on, it nevertheless remains true that insight is usually a bright, happy, emotional spot in any person's life, perhaps even a high spot in the life span. The overcoming of obstacles, the occurrence of pathology upon thwarting, the widespread occurrence (cross-species, cross-cultural), the never-dying (though weak) insistent pressure, the necessity of gratification of this need as a prerequisite for the fullest development of human potentialities, the spontaneous appearance in the early history of the individual, all these point to a basic cognitive need.

This postulation, however, is not enough. Even after we know, we are impelled to know more and more minutely and microscopically on the one hand, and on the other, more and more extensively in the direction of a world philosophy, theology, and so on. This process has been phrased by some as the search for meaning. We shall then postulate a desire to understand, to systematize, to organize, to analyze, to look for relations and meanings, to construct a system of values.

Once these desires are accepted for discussion, we see that they too form themselves into a small hierarchy in which the desire to know is prepotent over the desire to understand. All the characteristics of a hierarchy of prepotency that we have described above seem to hold for this one as well.

We must guard ourselves against the too-easy tendency to separate these desires from the basic needs we have discussed above, that is, to make a sharp dichotomy between cognitive and conative needs. The desire to know and to understand are themselves conative (i.e., having a striving character) and are as much personality needs as the basic needs we have already discussed. Furthermore, as we have seen, the two hierarchies are interrelated rather than sharply separated and, as we shall see below, they are synergetic rather than antagonistic. For further development of the ideas in this section, see Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being (1968c).

The Aesthetic Needs

We know even less about these than about the others, and yet the testimony of history, of the humanities, and of aestheticians forbids us to bypass this area. Attempts to study this phenomenon on a clinical-personological basis with selected individuals have at least shown that in some individuals there is a truly basic aesthetic need. They get sick (in special ways) from ugliness, and are cured by beautiful surroundings; they crave actively, and their cravings can be satisfied only by beauty (Maslow, 1967). It is seen almost universally in healthy children. Some evidence of such an impulse is found in every culture and in every age as far back as the cave dwellers.

Much overlapping with conative and cognitive needs makes it impossible to

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4This syndrome is very similar to what Ribot (1896) and later Myerson (1925) called anhedonia but which they ascribed to other sources.
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BASIC NEEDS

Exceptions in the Hierarchy of Needs

We have spoken so far as if this hierarchy were a fixed order, but actually it is not nearly so rigid as we may have implied. It is true that most of the people with whom we have worked have seemed to have these basic needs in about the order that has been indicated. However, there have been a number of exceptions.

1. There are some people in whom, for instance, self-esteem seems to be more important than love. This most common reversal in the hierarchy is usually due to the development of the notion that the person who is most likely to be loved is a strong or powerful person, one who inspires respect or fear and who is self-confident or aggressive. Therefore such people who lack love and seek it may try hard to put on a front of aggressive, confident behavior. But essentially they seek high self-esteem and its behavior expressions more as a means to an end than for its own sake; they seek self-assertion for the sake of love rather than for self-esteem itself.

2. There are other apparently innately creative people in whom the drive to creativeness seems to be more important than any other counterdeterminant. Their creativeness might appear not as self-actualization released by basic satisfaction, but in spite of lack of basic satisfaction.

3. In certain people the level of aspiration may be permanently deadened or lowered. That is to say, the less prepotent goals may simply be lost and may disappear forever, so people who have experienced life at a very low level (e.g., chronic unemployment) may continue to be satisfied for the rest of their lives if only they can get enough food.

4. The so-called psychopathic personality is another example of permanent loss of the love needs. One understanding of this personality dysfunction is that there are people who have been starved for love in the earliest months of their lives and have simply lost forever the desire and the ability to give and to receive affection (as animals lose sucking or pecking reflexes that are not exercised soon enough after birth).

5. Another cause of reversal of the hierarchy is that when a need has been satisfied for a long time, this need may be underevaluated. People who have never experienced chronic hunger are apt to underestimate its effects and to look upon food as a rather unimportant thing. If they are dominated by a higher need, this higher need will seem to be the most important of all. It then becomes possible, and indeed does actually happen, that they may, for the sake of this higher need, put themselves into the position of being deprived of a more basic need. We may expect that after a long-time deprivation of the more basic need there will be a tendency to reevaluate both needs so that the more prepotent need will actually become consciously prepotent for the individual who may have given it up lightly. Thus a person who has given up a job rather than lose self-respect, and who then starves for six months or so, may be willing to take the job back even at the price of losing self-respect.

6. Another partial explanation of apparent reversals is seen in the fact that we have been talking about the hierarchy of prepotency in terms of consciously felt wants or desires rather than of behavior. Looking at behavior itself may give us the wrong impression. What we have claimed is that the person will want more basic of two needs when deprived in both. There is no necessary implication here that he or she will act on these desires. Let us stress again that there are many determinants of behavior other than the needs and desires.

7. Perhaps more important than all these exceptions are the ones that involve ideals, high social standards, high values, and the like. With such values people become martyrs; they will give up everything for the sake of a particular ideal or value. These people may be understood, at least in part, by reference to one basic concept (or hypothesis), which may be called increased frustration tolerance through early gratification. People who have been satisfied in their basic needs throughout their lives, particularly in their earlier years, seem to develop exceptional power to withstand present or future thwarting of these needs simply because they have strong, healthy character structure as a result of basic satisfaction. They are the strong people who can easily weather disagreement or rejection, who can swim against the stream of public opinion, and who can stand up for the truth at great personal cost. It is just the ones who have loved and been well loved and who have had many deep friendships who can hold out against hatred, rejection, or persecution.

We say all this in spite of the fact that a certain amount of sheer habituation is also involved in any full discussion of frustration tolerance. For instance, it is likely that those persons who have been accustomed to relative starvation for a long time are partially enabled thereby to withstand food deprivation. What balance must be made between these two tendencies, habituation on the one hand and of past satisfaction breeding present frustration tolerance on the other, remains to be worked out by further research. Meanwhile we may assume that both are operative, side by side, since they do not contradict each other. To respect to this phenomenon of increased frustration tolerance, it seems probable that the most important gratifications come in the first few years of life. That is to say, people who have been made secure and strong in the earliest years tend to remain secure and strong thereafter in the face of whatever threatens.

Degrees of Satisfaction

So far, our theoretical discussion may have given the impression that these sets of needs—physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization—are somehow in such terms as the following: If one need is satisfied, then another emerges. This statement might give the false impression that a need must be satisfied 100 percent before the next need emerges. In actual fact, most members of our society who are normal are partially satisfied in all their basic ne
and partially unsatisfied in all their basic needs at the same time. A more realistic description of the hierarchy would be in terms of decreasing percentages of satisfaction as we go up the hierarchy of prepotency. For instance, to assign arbitrary figures for the sake of illustration, it is as if the average citizen is satisfied perhaps 85 percent in physiological needs, 70 percent in safety needs, 50 percent in love needs, 40 percent in self-esteem needs, and 10 percent in self-actualization needs.

As for the concept of emergence of a new need after satisfaction of the prepotent need, this emergence is not a sudden, saltatory phenomenon, but rather a gradual emergence by slow degrees from nothingness. For instance, if prepotent need A is satisfied only 10 percent, then need B may not be visible at all. However, as need A becomes satisfied 25 percent need B may emerge 5 percent, as need A becomes satisfied 75 percent need B may emerge 50 percent, and so on.

Unconscious Needs

These needs are neither necessarily conscious nor unconscious. On the whole, however, in the average person, they are more often unconscious than conscious. It is not necessary at this point to overhaul the tremendous mass of evidence that indicates the crucial importance of unconscious motivation. What we have called the basic needs are often largely unconscious although they may, with suitable techniques and with sophisticated people, become conscious.

Cultural Specificity

This classification of basic needs makes some attempts to take account of the relative unity behind the superficial differences in specific desires from one culture to another. Certainly in any particular culture an individual’s conscious motivational content will usually be extremely different from the conscious motivational content of an individual in another society. However, it is the common experience of anthropologists that people, even in different societies, are much more alike than we would think from our first contact with them, and that as we know them better we seem to find more and more of this commonness. We then recognize the most startling differences to be superficial rather than basic (e.g., differences in style of hairdress or clothes, tastes in food). Our classification of basic needs is in part an attempt to account for this unity behind the apparent diversity from culture to culture. No claim is made yet that it is ultimate or universal for all cultures. The claim is made only that it is relatively more ultimate, more universal, more basic than the superficial conscious desires, and makes a closer approach to common human characteristics. Basic needs are more common among humanity than are superficial desires or behaviors.

Multiple Motivations of Behavior

These needs must be understood not to be exclusive or single determiners of certain kinds of behavior. An example may be found in any behavior that seems to be physiologically motivated, such as eating, sexual play, or the like. The clinical psychologists have long since found that any behavior may be a channel through which flow various impulses. Or to say it in another way, most behavior is overdetermined or multimotivated. Within the sphere of motivational determinants any behavior tends to be determined by several or all of the basic needs simultaneously rather than by only one of them. The latter would be more an exception than the former. Eating may be partially for the sake of filling the stomach, and partially for the sake of comfort and amelioration of other needs. One may make love not only for pure sexual release, but also to convince oneself of one’s sexuality, to feel powerful, or to win affection. As an illustration, it would be possible (theoretically if not practically) to analyze a single act of an individual and see in it the expression of physiological needs, safety needs, love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization. This contrasts sharply with the more naive brand of trait psychology in which one trait or one motive accounts for a certain kind of act—for example, an aggressive act is traced solely to a trait of aggressiveness.

Unmotivated Behavior

There is a basic difference between expressive behavior and coping behavior (functional striving, purposive goal seeking). An expressive behavior does not try to do anything; it is simply a reflection of the personality. A stupid man behaves stupidly, not because he wants to, or tries to, or is motivated to, but simply because he is what he is. The same is true when I speak in a bass voice rather than tenor or soprano. The random movements of a healthy child, the smile on the face of a happy woman even when she is alone, the springiness of the healthy woman’s walk, and the erectness of her carriage are other examples of expressive, nonfunctional behavior. Also the style in which a person carries out almost all behavior, motivated as well as unmotivated, is most often expressive (Allport and Vernon, 1933; Wolff, 1943).

We may then ask, is all behavior expressive or reflective of the character structure? The answer is No. Rote, habitual, automatized, or conventional behavior may or may not be expressive. The same is true for most stimulus-bound behaviors.

It is finally necessary to stress that expressiveness of behavior and goal-directedness of behavior are not mutually exclusive categories. Average behavior is usually both. (See Chapter 6 for a fuller discussion.)

Animal and Human Centering

This theory starts with the human being rather than any lower and presumably simpler animal. Too many of the findings that have been made in animals have been proved to be true for animals but not for the human being. There is no reason whatsoever why we should start with animals in order to study human motivation. The logic or rather illogic behind this general fallacy of pseudosimplicity has been exposed often enough by philosophers and logicians as well as by scientists in each of the various fields. It is no more necessary to study animals before one.
can study humans than it is to study mathematics before one can study geology or psychology or biology.

Motivation and Pathology

The conscious motivational content of everyday life has, according to the foregoing, been conceived to be relatively important or unimportant accordingly as it is more or less closely related to the basic goals. A desire for ice cream might actually be an indirect expression of a desire for love. If it is, this desire for ice cream becomes extremely important motivation. If, however, the ice cream is simply something to cool the mouth with, or a casual appetitive reaction, the desire is relatively unimportant. Everyday conscious desires are to be regarded as symptoms, as surface indicators of more basic needs. If we were to take these superficial desires at their face value we would find ourselves in a state of complete confusion that could never be resolved, since we would be dealing seriously with symptoms rather than with what lay behind the symptoms.

Thwarting of unimportant desires produces no psychopathological results; thwarting of basically important needs does produce such results. Any theory of psychopathogenesis must then be based on a sound theory of motivation. A conflict or a frustration is not necessarily pathogenic. It becomes so only when it threatens or thwarts the basic needs or partial needs that are closely related to the basic needs.

Role of Gratification

It has been pointed out above several times that our needs usually emerge only when more prepotent needs have been gratified. Thus gratification has an important role in motivation theory. Apart from this, however, needs cease to play an active determining or organizing role as soon as they are gratified.

What this means is that, for example, a basically satisfied person no longer has the needs for esteem, love, safety, and so on. The only sense in which he or she might be said to have them is in the almost metaphysical sense that a sated person has hunger or a filled bottle has emptiness. If we are interested in what actually motivates us, and not in what has, will, or might motivate us, then a satisfied need is not a motivator. It must be considered for all practical purposes simply not to exist, to have disappeared. This point should be emphasized because it has been either overlooked or contradicted in every theory of motivation we know. The perfectly healthy, normal, fortunate person has no sex needs or hunger needs, or needs for safety, or for love, or for prestige, or self-esteem, except in stray moments of quickly passing threat. If we were to say otherwise, we should also have to affirm that every person had all the pathological reflexes (e.g., Binswanger), because if the nervous system were damaged, these would appear.

It is such considerations as these that suggest the bold postulation that a person who is thwarted in any of the basic needs may fairly be envisaged simply as sick or at least less than fully human. This is a fair parallel to our designation as sick of the person who lacks vitamins or minerals. Who will say that a lack of love is less important than a lack of vitamins? Since we know the pathogenic effects of love starvation, who is to say that we are invoking value questions in an unscientific or illegitimate way, any more than the physician does who diagnoses and treats pellagra or scurvy?

If we were permitted this usage, we should then say simply that healthy people are primarily motivated by their needs to develop and actualize their fullest potentialities and capacities. If a person has any other basic needs in any active chronic sense, he or she is simply unhealthy, as surely sick as if he or she had suddenly developed a strong salt hunger or calcium hunger. If we were to use the word sick in this way, we should then also have to face squarely the relations of people to their society. One clear implication of our definition would be that (1) since a person is to be called sick who is basically thwarted, and (2) since basic thwarting is made possible ultimately only by forces outside the individual, then (3) sickness in the individual must come ultimately from a sickness in the society. The good or healthy society would then be defined as one that permitted people's highest purposes to emerge by satisfying all their basic needs.

If these statements seem unusual or paradoxical, the reader may be assured that this is only one among many such paradoxes that will appear as we revise our ways of looking at deeper motivations. When we ask what humans want of life, we deal with their very essence.

Functional Autonomy

Higher basic needs may become, after long gratification, independent both of their more powerful prerequisites and of their own proper satisfactions. For instance, an adult who was love-satisfied in early years becomes more independent than average with regard to safety, belongingness, and love gratification. It is the strong, healthy, autonomous person who is most capable of withstanding loss of love and popularity. But this strength and health have been ordinarily produced in our society by early chronic gratifications of safety, love, belongingness, and esteem needs. Which is to say that these aspects of the person have become functionally autonomous, that is independent of the very gratifications that created them. We prefer to think of the character structure as the most important single instance of functional autonomy in psychology.

'Gordon Allport (1960, 1961) has expounded and generalized the principle that means to an end may become ultimate satisfactions themselves, connected only historically to their origins. They may come to be wanted for their own sake. This reminder of the tremendous importance of learning and change on the motivational life superimposes upon everything that has gone before an enormous additional complexity. There is no contradiction between these two sets of psychological principles; they complement each other. Whether or not any needs so acquired may be considered true basic needs by the criteria so far used is a question for further research.
The study to be reported in this chapter is unusual in various ways. It was not planned as an ordinary research; it was not a social venture but a private one, motivated by my own curiosity and pointed toward the solution of various personal moral, ethical, and scientific problems. I sought only to convince and to teach myself rather than to prove or to demonstrate to others. [Editor's note: Maslow's study of self-actualizing people was an informal personal inquiry that he continued throughout his life.]

Quite unexpectedly, however, these studies have proved to be so enlightening to me, and so laden with exciting implications, that it seems fair that some sort of report should be made to others in spite of its methodological shortcomings.

In addition, I consider the problem of psychological health to be so pressing that any suggestions, any bits of data, however moot, are endowed with great heuristic value. This kind of research is in principle so difficult—involving as it does a kind of lifting oneself by one's own norms—that if we were to wait for conventionally reliable data, we should have to wait forever. It seems that the necessary thing to do is not to fear mistakes, to plunge in, to do the best that one can, hoping to learn enough from blunders to correct them eventually. At present the only alternative is simply to refuse to work with the problem. Accordingly, for whatever use can be made of it, the following report is presented with due apologies to those who insist on conventional reliability, validity, sampling, and the like.
THE STUDY

Subjects and Methods

The subjects were selected from among personal acquaintances and friends, and from among public and historical figures. In addition, in a first research with young people, three thousand college students were screened, but yielded only one immediately usable subject and a dozen or two possible future subjects ("growing well").

I had to conclude that self-actualization of the sort I had found in my older subjects perhaps was not possible in our society for young, developing people.

Accordingly, in collaboration with E. Raskin and D. Freedman, a search was begun for a panel of relatively healthy college students. We arbitrarily decided to choose the healthiest 1 percent of the college population. This research, pursued over a two-year period as time permitted, had to be interrupted before completion, but it was, even so, very instructive at the clinical level.

It was also hoped that figures created by novelists or dramatists could be used for demonstration purposes, but none were found that were usable in our culture and our time (in itself a thought-provoking finding).

The first clinical definition, on the basis of which subjects were finally chosen or rejected, had a positive as well as a merely negative side. The negative criterion was an absence of neurosis, psychopathic personality, psychosis, or strong tendencies in these directions. Possibly psychosomatic illness called for closer scrutiny and screening. Wherever possible, Rorschach tests were given, but turned out to be far more useful in revealing concealed psychopathology than in selecting healthy people. The positive criterion for selection was positive evidence of self-actualization (SA), as yet a difficult syndrome to describe accurately. For the purposes of this discussion, it may be loosely described as the full use and exploitation of talents, capacities, potentialities, and the like. Such people seem to be fulfilling themselves and to be doing the best that they are capable of doing, reminding us of Nietzsche’s exhortation, “Become what thou art!” They are people who have developed or are developing to the full stature of which they are capable. These potentialities may be either idiosyncratic or species-wide.

This criterion implies also gratification, past or present, of the basic needs for safety, belongingness, love, respect, and self-respect, and of the cognitive needs for knowledge and for understanding, or in a few cases, conquest of these needs. This is to say that all subjects felt safe and unanxious, accepted, loved and loving, respect-worthy and respected, and that they had worked out their philosophical, religious, or axiological bearings. It is still an open question as to whether this basic gratification is a sufficient or only a prerequisite condition of self-actualization.

In general, the technique of selection used was that of iteration, previously used in studies of the personality syndromes of self-esteem and of security and described in Chapter 18. This consists briefly in starting with the personal or cultural nontechnical state of belief, collating the various extant usages and definitions of the syndrome, and then defining it more carefully, still in terms of actual usage (what might be called the lexicographical stage), with, however, the elimination of the logical and factual inconsistencies customarily found in folk definitions.

On the basis of the corrected folk definition, the first groups of subjects are selected, a group who are high in the quality and a group who are low in it. These people are studied as carefully as possible in the clinical style, and on the basis of this empirical study the original corrected folk definition is further changed and corrected as required by the data now in hand. This gives the first clinical definition. On the basis of this new definition, the original group of subjects is resorted, some being retained, some being dropped, and some new ones being added. This second level group of subjects is then in its turn clinically and, if possible, experimentally and statistically studied, which in turn causes modification, correction, and enrichment of the first clinical definition, with which in turn a new group of subjects is selected and so on. In this way an originally vague and unscientific folk concept can become more and more exact, more and more operational in character, and therefore more scientific.

Of course, external, theoretical, and practical considerations may intrude into this spiral-like process of self-correction. For instance, early in this study, it was found that folk usage was so unrealistically demanding that no living human being could possibly fit the definition. We had to stop excluding a possible subject on the basis of single foibles, mistakes, or foolishness; or to put it in another way, we could not use perfection as a basis for selection, since no subject was perfect.

Another such problem was presented by the fact that in all cases it was impossible to get full and satisfactory information of the kind usually demanded in clinical work. Possible subjects, when informed of the purpose of the research, became self-conscious, froze up, laughed off the whole effort, or broke off the relationship. As a result, since this early experience, all older subjects have been studied indirectly, indeed almost surreptitiously. Only younger people can be studied directly.

Since living people were studied whose names could not be divulged, two desiderata or even requirements of ordinary scientific work became impossible to achieve: namely, repeatability of the investigation and public availability of the data upon which conclusions were made. These difficulties are partly overcome by the inclusion of public and historical figures, and by the supplementary study of young people and children who could conceivably be used publicly.

The subjects have been divided into the following categories:

CASES: Seven fairly sure and two highly probable contemporaries (interviewed)
Two fairly sure historical figures (Lincoln in his last years and Thomas Jefferson)

Seven highly probable public and historical figures (Albert Einstein, Eleanor Roosevelt, Jane Addams, William James, Albert Schweitzer, Aldous Huxley, and Benedict de Spinoza)

PARTIAL CASES: Five contemporaries who fairly certainly fall short somewhat but who can yet be used for study²

Collection and Presentation of Data

Data here consist not so much in the usual gathering of specific and discrete facts as in the slow development of a global or holistic impression of the sort that we form of our friends and acquaintances. It was rarely possible to set up a situation, to ask pointed questions, or to do any testing with my older subjects (although this was possible and was done with younger subjects). Contacts were fortuitous and of the ordinary social sort. Friends and relatives were questioned where this was possible.

Because of this and also because of the small number of subjects as well as the incompleteness of the data for many subjects, any quantitative presentation is impossible: only composite impressions can be offered for whatever they may be worth.

THE OBSERVATIONS

Holistic analysis of the total impressions yields the following characteristics of self-actualizing people for further clinical and experimental study: perception of reality, acceptance, spontaneity, problem centering, solitude, autonomy, fresh appreciation, peak experiences, human kinship, humility and respect, interpersonal relationships, ethics, means and ends, humor, creativity, resistance to enculturation, imperfections, values, and resolution of dichotomies.

Perception of Reality

The first form in which this capacity was noticed was as an unusual ability to detect the spurious, the fake, and the dishonest in personality, and in general to judge people correctly and efficiently. In an informal experiment with a group of college students, a clear tendency was discerned for the more secure (the more healthy) to judge their professors more accurately than did the less secure students, that is, high scorers in the S-I test (Maslow, 1952).

As the study progressed, it slowly became apparent that this efficiency extended to many other areas of life—indeed all areas that were observed. In art and music, in things of the intellect, in scientific matters, in politics and public affairs, they seemed as a group to be able to see concealed or confused realities more swiftly and more correctly than others. Thus an informal survey indicated that their predictions of the future from whatever facts were in hand at the time seemed to be more often correct, because less based upon wish, desire, anxiety, fear, or upon generalized, character-determined optimism or pessimism.

At first this was phrased as good taste or good judgment, the implication being relative and not absolute. But for many reasons (some to be detailed below), it has become progressively more clear that this had better be called perception (not taste) of something that was absolutely there (reality, not a set of opinions). It is hoped that this conclusion—or hypothesis—can one day be put to the experimental test.

If this is so, it would be impossible to overstress its importance. Money-Kyrle (1944), an English psychoanalyst, has indicated that he believes it possible to call neurotic people not only relatively but absolutely inefficient, simply because they do not perceive the real world so accurately or so efficiently as do healthy persons. Neurotics are not emotionally sick—they are cognitively wrong! If health and neurosis are, respectively, correct and incorrect perceptions of reality, propositions of fact and propositions of value merge in this area, and, in principle, value propositions should then be empirically demonstrable rather than merely matters of taste or exhortation. For those who have wrestled with this problem it will be clear that we may have here a partial basis for a true science of values, and consequently of ethics, social relations, politics, religion, and so forth.

It is definitely possible that maladjustment or even extreme neurosis would disturb perception enough to affect acuity of perception of light or touch or odor. But it is probable that this effect can be demonstrated in spheres of perception removed from the merely physiological. It should also follow that the effects of wish, desire, or prejudice upon perception as in many recent experiments should be very much less in healthy people than in sick. A priori considerations encourage the hypothesis that this superiority in the perception of reality eventuates in a superior ability to reason, to perceive the truth, to arrive at conclusions, to be logical, and to be cognitively efficient, in general.

One particularly impressive and instructive aspect of this superior relationship with reality will be discussed at length in Chapter 13. It was found that self-actualizing people distinguished far more easily than most the fresh, concrete, and idiographic from the generic, abstract, and categorized. The consequence is that they live more in the real world of nature than in the human-made mass of concepts, abstractions, expectations, beliefs, and stereotypes that most people confuse with the world. They are therefore far more apt to perceive what is there rather than their own wishes, hopes, fears, anxieties, their own theories and beliefs, or those of their cultural group. “The innocent eye,” Herbert Read has very effectively called it.

The relationship with the unknown seems to be of exceptional promise as another bridge between academic and clinical psychology. Our healthy subjects are generally unthreatened and unfrightened by the unknown, being therein quite
different from average people. They accept it, are comfortable with it, and, often are even more attracted by it than by the known. They not only tolerate the ambiguous and unstructured (Frenkel-Brunswik, 1949); they like it. Quite characteristic is Einstein’s statement, “The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all art and science.”

These people, it is true, are the intellectuals, the researchers, and the scientists, so that perhaps the major determinant here is intellectual power. And yet we all know how many scientists with high IQ, through timidity, conventionality, anxiety, or other character defects, occupy themselves exclusively with what is known, with polishing it, arranging and rearranging it, classifying it, and otherwise puttering with it instead of discovering, as they are supposed to do.

Since for healthy people the unknown is not frightening, they do not have to spend any time laying the ghost, whistling past the cemetery, or otherwise protecting themselves against imagined dangers. They do not neglect the unknown, or deny it, or run away from it, or try to make believe it is really known, nor do they organize, dichotomize, or categorize it prematurely. They do not cling to the familiar, nor is their quest for the truth a catastrophic need for certainty, safety, definiteness, and order, such as we see in an exaggerated form in Goldstein’s brain-injured patients (1939) or in the compulsive-obsessive neurotic. They can be, when the total objective situation calls for it, comfortably disorderly, sloppy, anarchic, chaotic, vague, doubtful, uncertain, indefinite, approximate, inexact, or inaccurate (all, at certain moments in science, art, or life in general, quite desirable).

Thus it comes about that doubt, tentativeness, uncertainty, with the consequent necessity for abeyance of decision, which is for most a torture, can be for some a pleasantly stimulating challenge, a high spot in life rather than a low.

**Acceptance**

A good many personal qualities that can be perceived on the surface and that seem at first to be various and unconnected may be understood as manifestations or derivatives of a more fundamental single attitude, namely, of a relative lack of overriding guilt, of crippling shame, and of extreme or severe anxiety. This is in direct contrast with the neurotic person who in every instance may be described as crippled by guilt and/or shame and/or anxiety. Even the normal member of our culture feels unnecessarily guilty or ashamed about too many things and has anxiety in too many unnecessary situations. Our healthy individuals find it possible to accept themselves and their own nature without chagrin or complaint or, for that matter, even without thinking about the matter very much.

They can accept their own human nature in the stoic style, with all its shortcomings, with all its discrepancies from the ideal image without feeling real concern. It would convey the wrong impression to say that they are self-satisfied. What we must say rather is that they can take the frailties and sins, weaknesses, and evils of human nature in the same unquestioning spirit with which one accepts the characteristics of nature. One does not complain about water because it is wet, or about rocks because they are hard, or about trees because they are green. As children look out upon the world with wide, uncritical, undemanding, innocent eyes, simply noting and observing what is the case, without either arguing the matter or demanding that it be otherwise, so do self-actualizing people tend to look upon human nature in themselves and in others. This is of course not the same as resignation, but resignation too can be observed in our subjects, especially in the face of illness and death.

Be it observed that this amounts to saying in another form what we have already described, namely, that the self-actualized person sees reality more clearly: our subjects see human nature as it is and not as they would prefer it to be. Their eyes see what is before them without being strained through spectacles of various sorts to distort or shape or color the reality (Bergson, 1944).

The first and most obvious level of acceptance is at the so-called animal level. Those self-actualizing people tend to be good animals, hearty in their appetites and enjoying themselves without regret or shame or apology. They seem to have a uniformly good appetite for food; they seem to sleep well; they seem to enjoy their sexual lives without unnecessary inhibition and so on for all the relatively physiological impulses. They are able to accept themselves not only on these low levels, but at all levels as well; for example, love, safety, belongingness, honor, self-respect. All of these are accepted without question as worth while, simply because these people are inclined to accept the work of nature rather than to argue with it for not having constructed things to a different pattern. This shows itself in a relative lack of the disgusts and aversions seen in average people and especially in neurotics, such as food annoyances, disgust with body products, bodily odors, and body functions.

Closely related to self-acceptance and to acceptance of others is (1) their lack of defensiveness, protective coloration, or pose, and (2) their distaste for such artificialities in others. Cant, guile, hypocrisy, front, face, playing a game, trying to impress in conventional ways: these are all absent in themselves to an unusual degree. Since they can live comfortably even with their own shortcomings, these finally come to be perceived, especially in later life, as not shortcomings at all, but simply as neutral personal characteristics.

This is not an absolute lack of guilt, shame, sadness, anxiety, or defensiveness; it is a lack of unnecessary or neurotic (because unrealistic) guilt, and the like. The animal processes (e.g., sex, urination, pregnancy, menstruation, growing old, etc.) are part of reality and so must be accepted.

What healthy people do feel guilty about (or ashamed, anxious, sad, or regretful) are (1) improvable shortcomings (e.g., laziness, thoughtlessness, loss of temper, hurting others); (2) stubborn remnants of psychological ill health (e.g., prejudice, jealousy, envy); (3) habits, which, though relatively independent of character structure, may yet be very strong, or (4) shortcomings of the species or of the culture or of the group with which they have identified. The general formula seems to be that healthy people will feel bad about discrepancies between what is and what might very well be or ought to be (Adler, 1939; Fromm, 1947; Horney, 1950).
Spontaneity

Self-actualizing people can all be described as relatively spontaneous in behavior and far more spontaneous than that in their inner life, thoughts, impulses, and so on. Their behavior is marked by simplicity and naturalness, and by lack of artificiality or straining for effect. This does not necessarily mean consistently unconventional behavior. If we were to take an actual count of the number of times that self-actualizing people behaved in an unconventional manner the tally would not be high. Their unconventionality is not superficial but essential or internal. It is their impulses, thought, and consciousness that are so unusually unconventional, spontaneous, and natural. Apparently recognizing that the world of people in which they live could not understand or accept this, and since they have no wish to hurt them or to fight with them over every triviality, they will go through the ceremonies and rituals of convention with a good-humored shrug and with the best possible grace. Thus I have seen a man accept an honor he laughed at and even despised in private, rather than make an issue of it and hurt the people who thought they were pleasing him.

That this conventionality is a cloak that rests very lightly upon their shoulders and is easily cast aside can be seen from the fact that self-actualizing people infrequently allow convention to hamper them or inhibit them from doing anything that they consider very important or basic. It is at such moments that their essential lack of conventionality appears, and not as with the average Bohemian or authority-rebel, who makes great issues of trivial things and who will fight against some unimportant regulation as if it were a world issue.

This same inner attitude can also be seen in those moments when such persons become keenly absorbed in something that is close to one of their main interests. They can then be seen quite casually to drop off all sorts of rules of behavior to which at other times they conform; it is as if they have to make a conscious effort to be conventional; as if they were conventional voluntarily and by design.

Finally, this external habit of behavior can be voluntarily dropped when in the company of people who do not demand or expect routine behavior. That this relative control of behavior is felt as something of a burden is seen by our subjects' preference for such company as allows them to be more free, natural, and spontaneous, and that relieves them of what they find sometimes to be effortful conduct.

One consequence or correlate of this characteristic is that these people have codes of ethics that are relatively autonomous and individual rather than conventional. The unthinking observer might sometimes believe them to be unethical, since they can break down not only conventions but laws when the situation seems to demand it. But the very opposite is the case. They are the most ethical of people even though their ethics are not necessarily the same as those of the people around them. It is this kind of observation that leads us to understand very assuredly that the ordinary ethical behavior of the average person is largely conventional behavior rather than truly ethical behavior (e.g., behavior based on fundamentally accepted principles, which are perceived to be true).

Because of this alienation from ordinary conventions and from the ordinarily accepted hypocrisies, lies, and inconsistencies of social life, they sometimes feel like spies or aliens in a foreign land and sometimes behave so.

I should not give the impression that they try to hide what they are like. Sometimes they let themselves go deliberately, out of momentary irritation with customary rigidity or with conventional blindness. They may, for instance, be trying to teach someone or they may be trying to protect someone from hurt or injustice or they may sometimes find emotions bubbling up from within them that are so pleasant or even ecstatic that it seems almost sacrilegious to suppress them. In such instances I have observed that they are not anxious or guilty or ashamed of the impression that they make on the onlooker. It is their claim that they usually behave in a conventional fashion simply because no great issues are involved or because they know people will be hurt or embarrassed by any other kind of behavior.

Their ease of penetration to reality, their closer approach to an animalike or childlike acceptance and spontaneity imply a superior awareness of their own impulses, desires, opinions, and subjective reactions in general (Fromm, 1947; Rand, 1943; Reik, 1948). Clinical study of this capacity confirms beyond a doubt the opinion of, for example, Fromm (1941) that average, normal, well-adjusted people often have not the slightest idea of what they are, of what they want, of what their own opinions are.

It was such findings as these that led ultimately to the discovery of a most profound difference between self-actualizing people and others; namely, that the motivational life of self-actualizing people is not only quantitatively different but also qualitatively different from that of ordinary people. It seems probable that we must construct a profoundly different psychology of motivation for self-actualizing people, such as metamotivation or growth motivation, rather than deficiency motivation. Perhaps it will be useful to make a distinction between living and preparing to live. Perhaps the ordinary concept of motivation should apply only to nonself-actualizers. Our subjects no longer strive in the ordinary sense, but rather develop. They attempt to grow to perfection and to develop more and more fully in their own style. The motivation of ordinary people is a striving for the basic need gratifications that they lack. But self-actualizing people in fact lack none of these gratifications; and yet they have impulses. They work, they try, and they are ambitious, even though in an unusual sense. For them motivation is just character growth, character expression, maturation, and development; in a word self-actualization. Could these self-actualizing people be more human, more revealing of the original nature of the species, closer to the species type in the taxonomical sense? Ought a biological species to be judged by its crippled, warped, only partially developed specimens, or by examples that have been overdomesticated, caged, and trained?

Problem Centering

Our subjects are in general strongly focused on problems outside themselves. In current terminology they are problem centered rather than ego centered. They
generally are not problems for themselves and are not generally much concerned about themselves (e.g., as contrasted with the ordinary introspectiveness that one finds in insecure people). These individuals customarily have some mission in life, some task to fulfill, some problem outside themselves which enlists much of their energies (Bühler & Massarik, 1968; Frankl, 1969).

This is not necessarily a task that they would prefer or choose for themselves; it may be a task that they feel is their responsibility, duty, or obligation. This is why we use the phrase “a task that they must do” rather than the phrase “a task that they want to do.” In general these tasks are nonpersonal or unselfish, concerned rather with the good of humanity in general, or of a nation in general, or of a few individuals in the subject’s family.

With a few exceptions we can say that our objects are ordinarily concerned with basic issues and eternal questions of the type that we have learned to call philosophical or ethical. Such people live customarily in the widest possible frame of reference. They seem never to get so close to the trees that they fail to see the forest. They work within a framework of values that are broad and not petty, universal and not local, and in terms of a century rather than the moment. In a word, these people are all in one sense or another philosophers, however homely.

Of course, such an attitude carries with it dozens of implications for every area of daily living. For instance, one of the main presenting symptoms originally worked with (bigness, lack of smallness, triviality, or pettiness) can be subsumed under this more general heading. This impression of being above small things, of having a larger horizon, a wider breadth of vision, of living in the widest frame of reference, sub specie aeternitatis, is of the utmost social and interpersonal importance; it seems to impart a certain serenity and lack of worry over immediate concerns that make life easier not only for themselves but for all who are associated with them.

**Solitude**

For all my subjects it is true that they can be solitary without harm to themselves and without discomfort. Furthermore, it is true for almost all that they positively _like _solitude and privacy to a definitely greater degree than the average person.

It is often possible for them to remain above the battle, to remain unruffled, undisturbed by that which produces turmoil in others. They find it easy to be aloof, reserved, and also calm and serene; thus it becomes possible for them to take personal misfortunes without reacting violently as the ordinary person does. They seem to be able to retain their dignity even in undignified surroundings and situations. Perhaps this comes in part from their tendency to stick by their own interpretation of a situation rather than to rely upon what other people feel or think about the matter. This reserve may shade over into austerity and remoteness.

This quality of detachment may have some connection with certain other qualities as well. For one thing it is possible to call my subjects more objective (in all senses of that word) than average people. We have seen that they are more problem centered than ego centered. This is true even when the problem concerns themselves, their own wishes, motives, hopes, or aspirations. Consequently, they have the ability to concentrate to a degree not usual for ordinary people. Intense concentration produces as a by-product such phenomena as absent-mindedness, the ability to forget and to be oblivious of outer surroundings. Examples are the ability to sleep soundly, to have undisturbed appetite, and to be able to smile and laugh through a period of problems, worry, and responsibility.

In social relations with most people, detachment creates certain troubles and problems. It is easily interpreted by “normal” people as coldness, snobishness, lack of affection, unfriendliness, or even hostility. By contrast, the ordinary friendship relationship is more clinging, more demanding, more desirous of reassurance, compliment, support, warmth, and exclusiveness. It is true that self-actualizing people do not need others in the ordinary sense. But since this being needed or being missed is the usual earnest of friendship, it is evident that detachment will not easily be accepted by average people.

Another meaning of autonomy is self-decision, self-government, being an active, responsible, self-disciplined, deciding agent rather than a pawn, or helplessly “determined” by others, being strong rather than weak. My subjects make up their own minds, come to their own decisions, are self-starters, and are responsible for themselves and their own destinies. It is a subtle quality, difficult to describe in words, and yet profoundly important. They taught me to see as profoundly sick, abnormal, or weak what I had always taken for granted as humanly normal; namely, that too many people do not make up their own minds, but have their minds made up for them by salesmen, advertisers, parents, propagandists, TV, newspapers, and so on. They are pawns to be moved by others rather than self-moving, self-determining individuals. Therefore they are apt to feel helpless, weak, and totally determined; they are prey for predators, flabby whiners rather than self-determining, responsible persons. What this nonresponsibility means for self-choice politics and economics is of course obvious; it is catastrophic. Democratic self-choice society must have self-movers, self-deciders, self-choosers who make up their own minds, free agents, free-willers.

The extensive experiments by Asch (1956) and by McClelland (McClelland, 1961, 1964; McClelland & Winter, 1969) permit us to guess that self-determiners come to perhaps 5 percent to 30 percent of our population depending on the particular circumstances. Of my self-actualizing subjects, 100 percent are self-movers.

Finally I must make a statement, even though it will certainly be disturbing to many theologians, philosophers, and scientists: self-actualizing individuals have more “free will” and are less “determined” than average people are. However the words _free will _and _determinism _may come to be operationally defined, in this investigation they are empirical realities. Furthermore, they are degree concepts, varying in amount; they are not all-or-none packages.

**Autonomy**

One of the characteristics of self-actualizing people, which to a certain extent crosses much of what we have already described, is their relative independence of the physical and social environment. Since they are propelled by growth mo-
ivation rather than by deficiency motivation, self-actualizing people are not dependent for their main satisfactions on the real world, or other people or culture or means to ends or, in general, on extrinsic satisfactions. Rather they are dependent for their own development and continued growth on their own potentialities and latent resources. Just as the tree needs sunshine and water and food, so do most people need love, safety, and the other basic need gratifications that can come only from without. But once these external satisfiers are obtained, once these inner deficiencies are satiated by outside satisfiers, the true problem of individual human development begins, namely self-actualization.

This independence of environment means a relative stability in the face of hard knocks, blows, deprivations, frustrations, and the like. These people can maintain a relative serenity in the midst of circumstances that would drive other people to suicide; they have also been described as "self-contained."

Deficiency-motivated people must have other people available, since most of their main need gratifications (love, safety, respect, prestige, belongingness) can come only from other human beings. But growth-motivated people may actually be hampered by others. The determinants of satisfaction and of the good life are for them now inner-individual and not social. They have become strong enough to be independent of the good opinion of other people, or even of their affection. The honors, the status, the rewards, the popularity, the prestige, and the love they can bestow must have become less important than self-development and inner growth (Huxley, 1944; Northrop, 1947; Rand, 1943; Rogers, 1961). We must remember that the best technique we know, even though not the only one, for getting to this point of relative independence from love and respect is to have been given plenty of this very same love and respect in the past.

**Fresh Appreciation**

Self-actualizing people have the wonderful capacity to appreciate again and again, freshly and naively, the basic goods of life, with awe, pleasure, wonder, and even ecstasy, however stale these experiences may have become to others—what C. G. Wilson has called "newness" (1969). Thus, for such a person, any sunset may be as beautiful as the first one, any flower may be of breath-taking loveliness, even after a million flowers have been seen. The thousandth baby seen is just as miraculous a product as the first. A man remains as convinced of his luck in marriage 30 years after his marriage and is as surprised by his wife's beauty when she is 60 as he was 40 years before. For such people, even the casual workaday, moment-to-moment business of living can be thrilling, exciting, and ecstatic. These intense feelings do not come all the time; they come occasionally rather than usually, but at the most unexpected moments. The person may cross the river on the ferry ten times and at the eleventh crossing have a strong recurrence of the same feelings, reaction of beauty, and excitement as when riding the ferry for the first time (Eastman, 1928).

There are some differences in choice of beautiful objects. Some subjects go primarily to nature. For others it is primarily children, and for a few subjects it has been primarily great music; but it may certainly be said that they derive ecstasy, inspiration, and strength from the basic experiences of life. No one of them, for instance, will get this same sort of reaction from going to a night club or getting a lot of money or having a good time at a party.

Perhaps one special experience may be added. For several of my subjects, the sexual pleasures and particularly the orgasm provided not passing pleasure alone, but some kind of basic strengthening and reviving that some people derive from music or nature. I shall say more about this in the section on the mystic experience.

It is probable that this acute richness of subjective experience is an aspect of closeness of relationship to the concrete and fresh, per se reality discussed above. Perhaps what we call stasis in experience is a consequence of categorizing or ticketing off a rich perception into one or another category or rubric as it proves to be no longer advantageous, or useful, or threatening, or otherwise ego involved (Bergson, 1944).

I have also become convinced that getting used to our blessings is one of the most important nonevil generators of human evil, tragedy, and suffering. What we take for granted we undervalue, and we are therefore too apt to sell a valuable birthright for a mess of pottage, leaving behind regret, remorse, and a lowering of self-esteem. Wives, husbands, children, friends are unfortunately more apt to be loved and appreciated after they have died than while they are still available. Something similar is true for physical health, for political freedoms, for economic well-being; we learn their true value after we have lost them.

Herzberg's studies of "hygiene" factors in industry (1966), Wilson's observations on the St. Neot's margin (1967, 1969), and my study of "low grumbles, high grumbles, and metagrumbles" (1965b) all show that life could be vastly improved if we could count our blessings as self-actualizing people can and do, and if we could retain their constant sense of good fortune and gratitude for it.

**Peak Experiences**

Those subjective expressions that have been called the mystic experience and described so well by William James (1958) are a fairly common experience for our subjects, though not for all. The strong emotions described in the previous section sometimes get strong, chaotic, and widespread enough to be called mystical experiences. My interest and attention in this subject was first enlisted by several of my subjects who described their sexual orgasms in vaguely familiar terms, which later I remembered had been used by various writers to describe what they called the mystic experience. There were the same feelings of limitless horizons opening up to the vision, the feeling of being simultaneously more powerful and also more helpless than one ever was before, the feeling of great ecstasy and wonder and awe, the loss of placing in time and space with, finally, the conviction that something extremely important and valuable had happened, so that the subject is to some extent transformed and strengthened even in daily life by such experiences.

It is quite important to dissociate this experience from any theological or supernatural reference, even though for thousands of years they have been linked.
Because this experience is a natural experience, well within the jurisdiction of science, I call it the peak experience.

We may also learn from our subjects that such experiences can occur in a lesser degree of intensity. The theoretical literature has generally assumed an absolute, qualitative difference between the mystic experience and all others. As soon as it is divorced from supernatural reference and studied as a natural phenomenon, it becomes possible to place the mystic experience on a quantitative continuum from intense to mild. We discover then that the mild mystic experience occurs in many, perhaps even most, individuals, and that in the favored individual it occurs often, perhaps even daily.

Apparently the acute mystic or peak experience is a tremendous intensification of any of the experiences in which there is loss of self or transcendence of it, such as problem centering, intense concentration, intense sensuous experience, or self-forgetful and intense enjoyment of music or art.

I have learned through the years since this study was first begun in 1935 to lay far greater stress than I had at first on the differences between “peakers” and “nonpeakers.” Most likely this is a difference of degree or amount, but it is a very important difference. Some of its consequences are set forth in considerable detail in Maslow, 1969b. If I had to sum it up very briefly, I would say that the nonpeaking self-actualizers seem so far to tend to be practical, effective people, mesomorphs living in the world and doing very well in it. Peakers seem also to live in the realm of Being; of poetry, aesthetics; symbols; transcendence; “religion” of the mystical, personal, noninstitutional sort; and of end experiences. My prediction is that this will turn out to be one of the crucial characterological “class differences,” crucial especially for social life because it looks as though the “merely healthy” nonpeaking self-actualizers seem likely to be the social world improvers, the politicians, the workers in society, the reformers, the crusaders, whereas the transcending peakers are more apt to write the poetry, the music, the philosophies, and the religions.

Human Kinship

Self-actualizing people have a deep feeling of identification, sympathy, and affection for human beings in general. They feel kinship and connection, as if all people were members of a single family. One’s feelings toward siblings would be on the whole affectionate, even if they were foolish, weak, or even if they were sometimes nasty. They would still be more easily forgiven than strangers. Because of this, self-actualizing people have a genuine desire to help the human race.

If one’s view is not general enough and if it is not spread over a long period of time, then one may not see this feeling of identification with mankind. Self-actualizing people are after all very different from other people in thought, impulse, behavior, and emotion. When it comes down to it, in certain basic ways they are like aliens in a strange land. Very few really understand them, however much they may like them. They are often saddened, exasperated, and even enraged by the shortcomings of the average person, and while these are ordinarily no more than a nuisance, they sometimes become bitter tragedy. However far apart they are at times, they nevertheless feel a basic underlying kinship with these creatures whom they must regard with, if not condescension, at least the knowledge that they themselves can do many things better than others can, that they can solve things that others cannot see, and that the truth that is so clear to them is most people veiled and hidden.

Humility and Respect

All my subjects without exception may be said to be democratic people in the deepest possible sense. I say this on the basis of a previous analysis of authoritarian (Maslow, 1943) and democratic character structures that is too elaborate to present here; it is possible only to describe some aspects of this behavior in short space. These people have all the obvious superficial democratic characteristics. They can be and are friendly with anyone of suitable character regardless of class, education, political belief, race, or color. As a matter of fact it often seems as though they are not even aware of these differences, which are for the average person obvious and so important.

They have not only this most obvious quality but their democratic feeling goes deeper as well. For instance (they find it possible to learn from anybody who has something to teach them—no matter what other characteristics he or she may have). In such a learning relationship they do not try to maintain any outlawed dignity or to maintain status or age prestige or the like. It should even be said that my subjects share a quality that could be called humility of a certain type. They are all quite well aware of how little they know in comparison with what could be known and what is known by others. Because of this it is possible for them without pose to be honestly respectful and even humble before people who can teach them something that they do not know or who have a skill they do not possess. They give this honest respect to a carpenter who is a good carpenter, or for that matter to anybody who is a master of his tools or his own craft.

The careful distinction must be made between this democratic feeling an absence of discrimination in taste, of an undiscriminating equalization of any on human being with any other. These individuals, themselves elite, select for their friends elite, but this is an elite of character, capacity, and talent, rather than a birth, race, blood name, family, age, youth, fame, or power.

Most profound, but also most vague is the hard-to-get-at tendency to give a certain quantum of respect to any human being just because he or she is human individual; our subjects seem not to wish to go beyond a certain minimum point, even with scoundrels, of demeaning, of derogating, of robbing of dignity. And yet this goes along with their strong sense of right and wrong, of good and evil. They are more likely rather than less likely to counterattack against evil people and evil behavior. They are far less ambivalent, confused, or weak-willed about their own anger than average people are.

Interpersonal Relationships

Self-actualizing people have deeper and more profound interpersonal relations than any other adults (although not necessarily deeper than those of children). They
are capable of more fusion, greater love, more perfect identification, more obliteration of the ego boundaries than other people would consider possible. There are, however, certain special characteristics of these relationships. In the first place, it is my observation that the other members of these relationships are likely to be healthier and closer to self-actualization than the average, often much closer. There is high selectiveness here, considering the small proportion of such people in the general population.

One consequence of this phenomenon and of certain others as well is that self-actualizing people have these especially deep ties with rather few individuals. Their circle of friends is rather small. The ones that they love profoundly are few in number. Partly this is for the reason that being very close to someone in this self-actualizing style seems to require a good deal of time. Devotion is not a matter of a moment. One subject expressed it like this: “I haven’t got time for many friends. Nobody has, that is, if they are to be real friends.” This exclusiveness of devotion can and does exist side by side with a widening human warmth, benevolence, affection, and friendliness (as qualified above). These people tend to be kind or at least patient to almost everyone. They have an especially tender love for children and are easily touched by them. In a very real even though special sense, they love or rather have compassion for all humanity.

This love does not imply lack of discrimination. The fact is that they can and do speak realistically and harshly of those who deserve it, and especially of the hypocritical, the pretentious, the pompous, or the self-inflated. But the face-to-face relationships even with these people do not always show signs of realistically low evaluations. One explanatory statement was about as follows: “Most people, after all, do not amount to much but they could have. They make all sorts of foolish mistakes and wind up being miserable and not knowing how they got that way when their intentions were good. Those who are not nice are usually paying for it in deep unhappiness. They should be pitied rather than attacked.”

Perhaps the briefest possible description is to say that their hostile reactions to others are (1) deserved, and (2) for the good of the person attacked or for someone else’s good. This is to say, with Fromm, that their hostility is not character based, but is reactive or situational.

All the subjects for whom I have data show in common another characteristic that is appropriate to mention here, namely, that they attract at least some admirers, friends, or even disciples or worshippers. The relation between the individual and his or her train of admirers is apt to be rather one-sided. The admirers are apt to demand more than our individual is willing to give. And, furthermore, these deviations can be rather embarrassing, distressing, and even distasteful to the self-actualizing person, since they often go beyond ordinary bounds. The usual picture is of our subject being kind and pleasant when forced into these relationships, but ordinarily trying to avoid them as gracefully as possible.

Ethics

I have found none of my subjects to be chronically unsure about the difference between right and wrong in their actual living. Whether or not they could verbalize the matter, they rarely showed in their day-to-day living the chaos, the confusion, the inconsistency, or the conflict that are so common in the average person’s ethical dealings. This may be phrased also in the following terms; these individuals are strongly ethical, they have definite moral standards, they do right and do not do wrong. Needless to say, their notions of right and wrong and of good and evil are often not the conventional ones.)

One way of expressing the quality I am trying to describe was suggested by Dr. David Levy, who pointed out that a few centuries ago these would all have been described as men who walk in the path of God or as godly men. A few say that they believe in a God, but describe this God more as a metaphysical concept than as a personal figure. If religion is defined only in social-behavioral terms, these are all religious people, the atheists included. But if more conservatively we use the term religion to stress the supernatural element and institutional orthodoxy (certainly the more common usage) then our answer must be quite different, for then very few of them are religious.

Means and Ends

Self-actualizing people most of the time behave as though, for them, means and ends are clearly distinguishable. In general, they are fixed on ends rather than on means, and means are quite definitely subordinated to these ends. This, however, is an overly simple statement. (Our subjects make the situation more complex by often regarding as ends in themselves many experiences and activities that are, for other people, only means. Our subjects are somewhat more likely to appreciate its own sake, and in an absolute way, the doing itself; they can often enjoy for its own sake the getting to some place as well as the arriving.) It is occasionally possible for them to make out of the most trivial and routine activity an intrinsically enjoyable game or dance or play. Wertheimer pointed out that most children are so creative that they can transform hackneyed routine, mechanical, androte experiences (e.g., as in one of his experiments, transporting books from one set of shelves to another) into a structured and amusing game of a sort by doing this according to a certain system or with a certain rhythm.

Humor

One very early finding that was quite easy to make, because it was common to all my subjects, was that their sense of humor is not of the ordinary type. They do not consider funny what the average person considers to be funny. Thus they do not laugh at hostile humor (making people laugh by hurting someone) or superiority humor (laughing at someone else’s inferiority) or authority-rebellion humor (the unfunny, Oedipal, or smutty joke). Characteristically what they consider humor is more closely allied to philosophy than to anything else. It may also be called the humor of the real because it consists in large part in poking fun at human beings in general when they are foolish, or forget their place in the universe, or try to be big when they are actually small. This can take the form of poking fun at themselves, but this is not done in any masochistic or clownlike
way. Lincoln's humor can serve as a suitable example. Probably Lincoln never
made a joke that hurt anybody else; it is also likely that many or even most of
his jokes had something to say, had a function beyond just producing a laugh.
They often seemed to be education in a more palatable form, akin to parables or
fables.

On a simple quantitative basis, our subjects may be said to be humorous
less often than the average of the population. Punning, joking, witty remarks, gay
repartee, persiflage of the ordinary sort is much less often seen than the rather
thoughtful, philosophical humor that elicits a smile more usually than a laugh,
that is intrinsic to the situation rather than added to it, that is spontaneous rather
than planned, and that very often can never be repeated. It should not be surprising
that average people, accustomed as they are to joke books and belly laughs,
considers our subjects to be rather on the sober and serious side.

Such humor can be very pervasive; the human situation, human pride, seri­
ousness, busy-ness, bustle, ambition, striving and planning can all be seen as
amusing, humorous, even funny. I once understood this attitude, I thought, in a
room full of “kinetic art,” which seemed to me to be a humorous parody of human
life, with the noise, movement, turmoil, hurry and bustle, all of it going no place.
This attitude also rubs off on professional work itself, which in a certain sense
is also play, and which, though taken seriously, is somehow also taken lightly.

Creativity

This is a universal characteristic of all the people studied or observed (see Chapter
13, “Creativity in Self-actualizing People”). There is no exception. Each one
shows in one way or another a special kind of creativeness or originality or inventiveness
that has certain peculiar characteristics. These special characteristics
can be understood more fully in the light of discussion later in this chapter. For
one thing, it is different from the special-talent creativeness of the Mozart type.
We may as well face the fact that the so-called geniuses display ability that we
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is also play, and which, though taken seriously, is somehow also taken lightly.

Resistance to Enculturation

Self-actualizing people are not well adjusted (in the naive sense of approval of
and identification with the culture). They get along with the culture in various
ways, but of all of them it may be said that in a certain profound and meaningful
sense they resist enculturation and maintain a certain inner detachment from the
culture in which they are immersed. Since in the culture-and-personality literature
very little has been said about resistance to molding by the culture, and since, as
Riesman (1950) has clearly pointed out, the saving remnant is especially important
for American society, even our meager data are of some importance.

On the whole the relationship of these healthy people with their much less
healthy culture is a complex one; from it can be teased out at least the following
components.

1. All these people fall well within the limits of apparent conventionality
in choice of clothes, of language, of food, of ways of doing things in our
culture. And yet they are not really conventional, certainly not fashion­
able or smart or chic. The expressed inner attitude is usually that it
is ordinarily of no great consequence which folkways are used, that one
set of traffic rules is as good as any other set, that while they make life
smoother they do not really matter enough to make a fuss about. Here
again we see the general tendency of these people to accept most states
of affairs that they consider unimportant or unchangeable or not of pri­
mary concern to them as individuals. Since choice of shoes, or style of
haircut or politeness, or manner of behaving at a party are not of primary
concern to any of the individuals studied, they are apt to elicit as a
reaction only a shrug of the shoulders. These are not moral issues. But
since this tolerant acceptance of harmless folkways is not warm approval
with identification, their yielding to convention is apt to be rather casual
and perfunctory, with cutting of corners in favor of directness, honesty,
saving of energy, and so on. In the pinch, when yielding to conventions
is too annoying or too expensive, the apparent conventionality reveals
itself for the superficial thing that it is, and is tossed off as easily as a
cloak.

2. Hardly any of these people can be called authority rebels in the adolescent
or hot sense. They show no active impatience or moment-to-moment,
chronic, long-time discontent with the culture or preoccupation with
changing it quickly, although they often enough show bursts of indignation
with injustice. One of these subjects, who was a hot rebel in his
younger days, a union organizer in the days when this was a highly
dangerous occupation, has given up in disgust and hopelessness. As he
became resigned to the slowness of social change (in this culture and in
this era) he turned finally to education of the young. All the others show
what might be called a calm, long-time concern with culture improvement
that seems to me to imply an acceptance of slowness of change along
with the unquestioned desirability and necessity of such change. This is
by no means a lack of fight. When quick change is possible or when
resolution and courage are needed, it is available in these people. Al¬
though they are not a radical group of people in the ordinary sense, I
think they easily could be. First of all, this is primarily an intellectual
group (it must be remembered who selected them), most of whom already
have a mission and feel that they are doing something really important
to improve the world. Second, they are a realistic group and seem to be
unwilling to make great but useless sacrifices. In a more drastic situation
it seems very likely that they would be willing to drop their work in
favor of radical social action (e.g., the anti-Nazi underground in Ger¬
many or in France). My impression is that they are not against fighting
but only against ineffective fighting. Another point that came up very
commonly in discussion was the desirability of enjoying life and having
a good time. This seems to all but one to be incompatible with hot and
full-time rebelliousness. Furthermore, it seems to them that this is too
great a sacrifice to make for the small returns expected. Most of them
have had their episodes of fighting, impatience, and eagerness in youth,
and in most cases have learned that their optimism about quick change
was unwarranted. What they settled down to as a group was an accepting,
calm, good-humored everyday effort to improve the culture, usually from
within, rather than to reject it wholly and fight it from without.

3. An inner feeling of detachment from the culture is not necessarily con¬
scious but is displayed by almost all, particularly in discussions of the
American culture as a whole, in various comparisons with other cultures,
and in the fact that they very frequently seem to be able to stand off
from it as if they did not quite belong to it. The mixture of varying
proportions of affection or approval and hostility or criticism indicated
that they select from American culture what is good in it by their lights
and reject what they think bad in it. In a word they weigh it, assay it,
taste it, and then make their own decisions. This is certainly very dif¬
ferent from the ordinary sort of passive yielding to cultural shaping dis¬
played for instance by the ethnocentric subjects of the many studies of
authoritarian personalities. It is also different from the total rejection of
what after all is a relatively good culture, that is, when compared with
other cultures that actually exist, rather than fantasized heavens of per¬
fection (or as one lapel button put it, Nirvana Now!). Detachment from
the culture is probably also reflected in our self-actualizing subjects' de¬
tachment from people and their liking for privacy, which has been de¬
scribed above, as also in their less than average need for the familiar
and customary.

4. For these and other reasons they may be called autonomous, that is, ruled
by the laws of their own character rather than by the rules of society. It
is in this sense that they are not only or merely Americans, but also, to
a greater degree than others, members at large of the human species. To
say that they are above or beyond the American culture would be mis¬
leading if interpreted strictly, for after all they speak American, act
American, have American characters, and so forth. And yet if we com¬
pare them with the oversocialized, the robotized, or the ethnocentric, we
are irresistibly tempted to hypothesize that this group is not simply an¬
other subcultural group, but rather less enculturated, less flattened out,
less molded. This implies degree, and placing on a continuum that ranges
from relative acceptance of the culture to relative detachment from it. If
this turns out to be a tenable hypothesis, at least one other hypothesis
can be deduced from it: that those individuals in different cultures who
are more detached from their own culture should not only have less
national character but also should be more like each other in certain
respects than they are like the less developed members of their own
societies.

In summary the perennial question "Is it possible to be a good or healthy
man in an imperfect culture?" has been answered by the observation that it is
possible for relatively healthy people to develop in the American culture. They
manage to get along by a complex combination of inner autonomy and outer
acceptance that of course will be possible only so long as the culture remains
tolerant of this kind of detached withholding from complete cultural identifica¬
tion.

Of course this is not ideal health. Our imperfect society clearly forces in¬
hibitions and restraints upon our subjects. To the extent that they have to main¬
tain their little secrecies, to that extent is their spontaneity lessened and to that extent
are some of their potentialities not actualized. And since only few people can
attain health in our culture (or perhaps in any culture), those who do attain it are
lonely for their own kind and are therefore less spontaneous and less actualized. 3

Imperfections

The ordinary mistake that is made by novelists, poets, and essayists about good
human beings is to make them so good that they are caricatures, so that nobody

3I am indebted to Dr. Tamara Dembo for her help with this problem.
would like to be like them. The individual’s own wishes for perfection and guilt and shame about shortcomings are projected upon various kinds of people from whom average people demand much more than they themselves give. Thus teachers and ministers are sometimes conceived to be rather joyless people who have no mundane desires and who have no weaknesses. It is my belief that most of the novelists who have attempted to portray good (healthy) people did this sort of thing, making them into stuffed shirts or marionettes or unreal projections of unreal ideals, rather than into the robust, hearty, lusty individuals they really are. Our subjects show many of the lesser human failings. They too are equipped with silly, wasteful, or thoughtless habits. They can be boring, stubborn, irritating. They are by no means free from a rather superficial vanity, pride, partiality to their own productions, family, friends, and children. Temper outbursts are not rare.

Our subjects are occasionally capable of an extraordinary and unexpected ruthlessness. It must be remembered that they are very strong people. This makes it possible for them to display a surgical coldness when this is called for, beyond the power of average people. The man who found that a long-trusted acquaintance was dishonest cut himself off from this friendship sharply and abruptly and without any observable pangs whatsoever. A woman who was married to someone she did not love, when she decided on divorce, did it with such decisiveness that looked almost like ruthlessness. Some of them recover so quickly from the death of people close to them as to seem heartless.

We may mention one more example that arises primarily from the absorption of our subjects in an impersonal world. In their concentration, in their fascinated interest, in their intense concentration on some phenomenon or question, they may become absent-minded or humorless and forget their ordinary social politeness. In such circumstances, they are apt to show themselves more clearly as essentially not interested in chatting, gay conversation, party-going, or the like; they may use language or behavior that may be very distressing, shocking, insulting, or hurtful to others. Other undesirable (at least from the point of view of others) consequences of detachment have been listed above.

Even their kindness can lead them into mistakes, such as marrying out of pity, getting too closely involved with neurotics, bores, or unhappy people and then being sorry for it, allowing scoundrels to impose on them for a while, or giving more than they should so that occasionally they encourage parasites and psychopaths.

Finally, it has already been pointed out that these people are not free of guilt, anxiety, sadness, self-castigation, internal strife, and conflict. The fact that these arise out of nonneurotic sources is of little consequence to most people today (even to most psychologists) who are therefore apt to think them unhealthy for this reason.

What this has taught me I think all of us had better learn: There are no perfect human beings! Persons can be found who are good, very good indeed, in fact, great. There do in fact exist creators, seers, sages, saints, shakers, and movers. This can certainly give us hope for the future of the species even if they are uncommon and do not come by the dozen. And yet these very same people can at times be boring, irritating, petulant, selfish, angry, or depressed. To avoid disillusionment with human nature, we must first give up our illusions about it.

Values

A firm foundation for a value system is automatically furnished to self-actualizers by their philosophic acceptance of the nature of self, of human nature, of much of social life, and of nature and physical reality. These acceptance values account for a high percentage of the total of their individual value judgments from day to day. What they approve of, disapprove of, are loyal to, oppose or propose, what pleases them or displeases them can often be understood as surface derivations of this source trait of acceptance.

Not only is this foundation automatically (and universally) supplied to all self-actualizers by their intrinsic dynamics (so that in at least this respect fully developed human nature may be universal and cross-cultural); other determiners are supplied as well by these same dynamics. Among these are (1) their peculiarly comfortable relationships with reality, (2) their feelings of human kinship, (3) their basically satisfied condition from which flow, as epiphenomena, various consequences of surplus, of wealth, overflowing abundance, (4) their characteristically discriminating relations to means and ends, and so on (see above).

One most important consequence of this attitude toward the world—as well as a validation of it—is the fact that conflict and struggle, ambivalence and uncertainty over choice lessen or disappear in many areas of life. Apparently much so-called morality is largely an epiphenomenon of nonacceptance or dissatisfaction. Many problems are seen to be gratuitous and fade out of existence in the atmosphere of pagan acceptance. It is not so much that the problem is solved as that it becomes clearly seen that it never was an intrinsic problem in the first place, but only a sick-person-created one, such as card playing, dancing, wearing short dresses, exposing the head (in some churches) or not exposing the head (in others), drinking wine, or eating some meats and not others, or eating them on some days but not on others. Not only are such trivialities deflated; the process also goes on at a more important level, such as in the relations between the sexes, attitudes toward the structure of the body and toward its functioning, and toward death itself.

The pursuit of this finding to more profound levels has suggested to the writer that much else of what passes for morals, ethics, and values may be simple by-products of the pervasive psychopathology of the average. Many conflicts, frustrations, and threats (which force the kind of choice in which value is expressed) evaporate or resolve for self-actualizing people in the same way as do, let us say, conflicts over dancing. For them the seemingly irreconcilable battle of the sexes becomes no conflict at all but rather a delightful collaboration. The antagonistic interests of adults and children turn out to be not so antagonistic after all. Just as with sex and age differences, so also is it with natural differences, class and caste differences, political differences, role differences, religious differences, and the like. As we know, these are each fertile breeding grounds for anxiety, fear, hostility, aggression, defensiveness, and jealousy. But it begins to
appear that they need not be, for our subjects' reaction to differences is much less often of this undesirable type. They are more apt to enjoy differences than to fear them.

To take the teacher-student relationship as a specific paradigm, our teacher subjects behaved in a very unneurotic way simply by interpreting the whole situation differently, for example, as a pleasant collaboration rather than as a clash of wills, of authority, of dignity, and so on; the replacement of artificial dignity—which is easily and inevitably threatened—with the natural simplicity, which is not easily threatened; the giving up of the attempt to be omniscient and omnipotent; the absence of student-threatening authoritarianism; the refusal to regard the students as competing with each other or with the teacher; the refusal to assume the professor stereotype and the insistence on remaining as realistically human as, say, a plumber or a carpenter; all of these create a classroom atmosphere in which suspicion, wariness, defensiveness, hostility, and anxiety tend to disappear. So also do similar threat responses tend to disappear in marriages, in families, and in other interpersonal situations when threat itself is reduced.

The principles and the values of the desperate person and of the psychologically healthy person must be different in at least some ways. They have profoundly different perceptions (interpretations) of the physical world, the social world, and the private psychological world, whose organization and economy is in part the responsibility of the person's value system. For basically deprived people the whole world is a dangerous place, a jungle, an enemy territory populated by (1) those whom they can dominate and (2) those who can dominate them. Their value systems are of necessity, like those of any jungle denizen, dominated and organized by the lower needs, especially the creature needs and the safety needs. Basically satisfied people are a different case. They can afford out of their abundance to take these needs and their satisfaction for granted and can devote themselves to higher gratifications. This is to say that their value systems are different, in fact must be different.

The topmost portion of the value system of the self-actualized person is entirely unique and idiosyncratic-character-structure-expressive. This must be true by definition, for self-actualization is actualization of a self, and no two selves are altogether alike. There is only one Renoir, one Brahms, one Spinoza. Our subjects had very much in common, as we have seen, and yet at the same time were more completely individualized, more unmistakably themselves, less easily confounded with others than any average control group could possibly be. That is to say, they are simultaneously very much alike and very much unlike each other. They are more completely individual than any group that has ever been described, and yet are also more completely socialized, more identified with humanity than any other group yet described. They are closer to both their specieshood and to their unique individuality.

Resolution of Dichotomies

At this point we may finally allow ourselves to generalize and underscore a very important theoretical conclusion derivable from the study of self-actualizing people. At several points in this chapter—and in other chapters as well—it was concluded that what had been considered in the past to be polarities or opposites or dichotomies were so only in less healthy people. In healthy people, these dichotomies were resolved, the polarities disappeared, and many oppositions thought to be intrinsic merged and coalesced with each other to form unities. See also Chenault (1969).

For example the age-old opposition between heart and head, reason and instinct, or cognition and conation was seen to disappear in healthy people where they become synergic rather than antagonists, and where conflict between them disappears because they say the same thing and point to the same conclusion. In a word in these people, desires are in excellent accord with reason. St. Augustine's "Love God and do as you will" can easily be translated "Be healthy and then you may trust your impulses."

The dichotomy between selfishness and unselfishness disappears altogether in healthy people because in principle every act is both selfish and unselfish. Our subjects are simultaneously very spiritual and very pagan, and sensually even to the point where sexuality becomes a path to the spiritual and "religious." Duty cannot be contrasted with pleasure nor work with play when duty is pleasure, when work is play, and people doing their duty and being virtuous are simultaneously seeking their pleasure and being happy. If the most socially identified people are themselves also the most individualistic people, of what use is it to retain the polarity? If the most mature are also childlike? And if the most ethical and moral people are also the lustiest and most animal?

Similar findings have been reached for kindness-ruthlessness, concreteness-abstraction, acceptance-rebellion, self-society, adjustment-maladjustment, detachment from others-identification with others, serious-humorou.s, DionysianApollonian, introverted-extraverted, intense-casual, serious-frivolous, conventional-unconventional, mystic-realistic, active-passive, masculine-feminine, lust-love, and Eros-Agape. In these people, the id, the ego, and the superego are collaborative and synergic; they do not war with each other nor are their interests in basic disagreement as they are in neurotic people. So also do the cognitive, the impulsive, and the emotional coalesce into an organismic unity and into a non-Aristotelian interpenetration. The higher and the lower are not in opposition but in agreement, and a thousand serious philosophical dilemmas are discovered to have more than two horns or, paradoxically, no horns at all. If the war between the sexes turns out to be no war at all in matured people, but only a sign of crippling and stunting of growth, who then would wish to choose sides? Who would deliberately and knowingly choose psychopathology? Is it necessary to choose between the good woman and the bad, as if they were mutually exclusive, when we have found that the really healthy woman is both at the same time?

In this, as in other ways, healthy people are so different from average ones, not only in degree but in kind as well, that they generate two very different kinds of psychology. It becomes more and more clear that the study of crippled, stunted, immature, and unhealthy specimens can yield only a cripple psychology and a cripple philosophy. The study of self-actualizing people must be the basis for a more universal science of psychology.