

The Hierarchy of Needs??

SELF ACTUALIZATION

--- Creative potential, ability to give love (agape) and fulfill one's potential or giftedness

SELF—ESTEEM

--- Attention, respect, significance, value, achievement

LOVE AND BELONGING

--- Being wanted, cared about, listened to, accepted, understood, feeling important, receiving empathy

SAFETY

--- Security, freedom from danger, confidence that our physical needs are being met.

PHYSICAL

--- Air, water, food, shelter – the essentials for survival

This list was developed by Abraham Maslow. He says that the first four are basically taking in; they are self-centered. Before we can reach the final need, at the top, we must pass through the first four stages. Many of our needs, especially our emotional and social needs, have been affected by childhood, family and past experiences. Some people become “stuck” at one of the early stages and appear to have an insolvable need for more. They never seem to get enough and place a high priority on fulfilling that need. They cannot give, and in a relationship tend to constantly drain on the other. They look for mates that can provide these needs – and are dependent personalities. Some people enter adulthood with needs not adequately met in childhood, such as love, security and belonging. Often these unmet needs freeze into rigid behavior patterns and enter the marriage with them, often putting unrealistic demands on the relationship. Perfectionism often begins here, a tendency to demand, but never accept, what's given. Some people get caught in false needs of either being taken care of or in taking charge or control over another person – these often arise out of insecurity.

But is this a true picture of our needs???

“A sign of maturity is the ability to give to others and to meet others’ needs. But it appears that in order to do this, we must have the first four levels of needs met. As Christians, you and I have a greater opportunity to have our needs met than others. God has promised to meet all of the needs indicated on Maslow’s list. God has met our physical needs. *‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things (referring to food, clothing, shelter) shall be added unto you’* (Matt. 6:33). God has met our need to know that tomorrow our physical needs will be met. *‘Take therefore no (anxious) thought for tomorrow’* (Matt. 6:34). *‘Be anxious for nothing, but in everything... let your requests be made known to God... my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus’* (Phil. 4:6,19). God has met our need for security (love). *‘Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ... I am persuaded that... [nothing I shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus’* (Rom. 8:35,38,39). *‘God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners (at our worst, exposed for what we really are, no masks). Christ died for us’* (Rom. 5:8). God has met our need for significance (purpose). *‘For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain’* (Phil. 1:21). *‘For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them’* (Eph. 2:10). *‘[God] redeemeth thy life from destruction (squandering, wasting)’* (Ps. 103:4).

“To the degree that a Christian believes these verses, he is freed from a life of self-centered concern with whether or not his own needs are met, and he is able to move on to real self-actualization, confidently knowing (not necessarily always ‘feeling’) that his physical needs will be met according to God’s purposes and that his personal needs are now and forever perfectly met. To believe this in the face of tremendous pressure to agree with the world’s false value system of living for money, pleasure, or fame requires a strong commitment to the authority of Scripture.

“Christians never operate from a deficit but rather from fullness. Our lives should be an expression of that fullness in worship and service. I therefore refer to the motivation of an appropriately self-actualized person as Expression Motivation. Yet most of us feel a deficit and act in ways designed to fill the void. It is one thing to say that we can claim by faith that our needs are already met in God and therefore live in Stage 5 with Expression Motivation. It is quite another thing to disentangle ourselves successfully from the sticky web of deficit motivation.”

- Dr. Larry Crabb, **Effective Biblical Counselling**, pp. 83, 84.

Dealing with STRESS and CHANGE in MARRIAGE:

We need to expect change in marriage as we are two changing people and our lives are changing going through the stages of honeymoon, rearing and launching children, going through vocational changes, middle age and retirement. "We need to see marriage in new terms, as a continually growing, continually changing, interaction between a man and woman who are seeking the warmth and richness of the shared life." You both and your relationship will change, and these changes will either dominate and control you or be managed by you.

TEN POTENTIAL CAUSES OF STRESS:

1. An unresolved and uncertain relationship
2. Environment whether fast-paced or monotonous
3. Perfectionism (excessively high standards to live up to.)
4. Impatience
5. Rigidity
6. Inability to relax
7. Explosiveness and Anger
8. Lack of humor and little enthusiasm
9. Too much competition
10. Lack of self-worth

Working together, being tuned-in to one another, open communication and strong commitment and trust are important in meeting changes so that a couple may grow together rather than apart. You are one another's strength in change. Be sure and set apart regular time to communicate feelings and needs to one another. Feelings ought to be expressed and anxieties shared. Trust and love need to be worked at and built up. And most of all, pray for and with each other. Intimacy is the "*process in which two caring people share as freely as possible in the exchange of feelings, thoughts and actions...marked by a mutual sense of acceptance, commitment, tenderness and trust.*"

MAJOR CRISES:

No matter how much we hope and pray they will never come, major crises will happen. A lost job, childbirth, an accident, a death in the family, a financial crisis, the possibilities are considerable. The time to have the communication and relationship lines open is before the crisis comes or the pressure will either drive a couple apart. Sensitivity to where you are in the emotional stages which normally follow a crisis will help you cope:

THE FOUR STAGES OF COPING WITH A CRISIS OR GRIEF:

- 1) **IMPACT** - The initial period of a few hours or days is one of shock. Decision: fight or flight?
- 2) **WITHDRAWAL AND CONFUSION** - A period of emotional numbness and depression which may last for weeks. This is the time to fully and honestly express emotions and accept them as valid.
- 3) **ADJUSTMENT** - A gradual restoration of optimism - Time for insight.
- 4) **RECONSTRUCTION AND RECONCILIATION** - Time to Pick up the "pieces", and to restore relationships damaged by crisis and response.

Bringing About Change In Your Partner

A real source of tension and conflict in a marriage are the attempts of one partner to bring about change in their spouse. Whether small and irritating habits or major personality change, and even when undertaken with a sincere and commendable desire for the other's best interests, such attempts often produce resistance, anger, hostility, withdrawal and build barriers between people. There are numerous wrong ways to try to change someone: demanding it as proof of their love, bargaining for it, incessant nagging, power plays, nurturing a critical spirit, silence and withdrawing affection, creating guilt and anxiety. These all fail because they tear down the other's self-esteem and undermine the trust essential to the marriage relationship.

There are three important principles from which we must start:

1. We must accept the other as they are, without conditions attached!
2. We must examine careful our reasons for desiring change and pursue only those genuinely in other's best interests.
3. We can only ask for and encourage change, it can never be forced upon another against their will. The desire to change must come from within.

All attempts to change the other must be based upon the enhancement of the other's self-esteem, the building up of trust in the relationship, and constant positive encouragement. To begin with, we must specifically determine what it is we want and why. Then we may request or suggest those changes, presenting information as to what is desired in the most positive way. But whether to change or not is their decision and we must accept graciously when our suggestions are turned down!

1. Examine and clarify your reasons and desires for the change. Is the need for that change really the other's or my need?
2. Evaluate those requests in the light of Scripture. Are they valid? Pray that God would work within our partner and bring about growth.
3. Understand how your partner sees his or herself and what their self-esteem is founded upon. Change makes us vulnerable and involves taking risks. Resolve to build up - not tear down!
4. Present all requests for change in a way that enhances that self-esteem. Clearly and specifically communicate what is desired.
5. Consider your own willingness to change! Are you willing to stand alongside and encourage, edify and build up? Are you open to change yourself? Are your requests adaptable?
6. Reinforce, reinforce and reinforce! But not with "It's about time..." or "I can't believe it..." - be positive at all times. Unless change is reinforced, they will revert back.
7. Be both persistent and patient.

1. Define the difference between a need, an expectation and a goal?

2. How do each fit in your marriage relationship?

3. What are your spouses' needs? Have you discussed them? Do you know how specifically you can assist your partner in fulfilling them?

One way of considering needs is to look at them from the perspective of the **emotional, physical, social-intellectual, and spiritual** dimensions.

This exercise is to identify these needs. Each should fold several sheets of paper in thirds lengthwise. Then evaluate individually each of the above four areas of need.

The area of emotional needs might be the first area that each person would evaluate. List as many emotional needs as possible in the first column and then indicate specifically how your mate can meet each need in the second column. Then fold the third column over the second.

Then exchange papers, read the specific needs of the other, and then write out what you *think* you can do to meet those needs, without looking at your spouse's suggestions.

Once this is done, then unfold the original paper and compare what you thought you could do to meet your partner's needs with what your partner has actually suggested.

By doing this, most of the guesswork of need discovery and fulfillment is taken out of marriage and need satisfaction is greatly enhanced.



"There is one need so fundamental and so essential that if it is met, everything else will harmonize in a general sense of well-being. When this need is properly nourished, the whole human organism will be healthy and the person will be happy. This need is a true and deep appreciation of oneself; a genuine and joyful self-acceptance, and authentic self-esteem, which results in an interior sense of celebration: It is good to be me . . . I am very happy to be me. " **- John Powell**

The best way to experience this is to know that "Yes! Jesus loves me!"

FULFILLING NEEDS IN MARRIAGE

Every person needs to receive love and to give love. These two needs are basic for all people. We demonstrate our inner feelings of love through our behavior. Some of our behaviors are loving and some are not. The Scriptures speak directly about behaviors that we are to “put on” (loving behaviors) and behaviors that we are to “put off ” (non-loving behaviors). Look up some of the Scripture references in the list below.

“ Lay aside every weight, and . . . sin’ (Heb. 12:1,2, KJV).

Put Off	Scriptural Insights	Put On
1 Lack of love	1 John 4:7,8,20 John 15:12	Love
2. Judging	Matthew 7:1,2 John 8:9; 15:22	Self-examination
3. Bitterness	Hebrews 12:15 Colossians 3:12	Tenderhearted
4. Unforgiving spirit	Mark 11:25 Matthew 6:14	Forgiving spirit
5. Pride	Proverbs 16:18 James 4:6	Humility
6. Boasting (conceit)	1 Corinthians 4:7 Proverbs 27:2	Humility
7. Hatred	Matthew 5:21,22 1 Corinthians 13:3	Love or kindness
8. Gossip	1 Timothy 5:13 1 Peter 2:9	Speaking with praise
9. Lying	Ephesians 4:25 Zechariah 8:16	Speaking truth
10. Profanity	Psalms 109:17 1 Timothy 4:12	Edification
11. Idle words	Matthew 12:36 Proverbs 21:23	Bridle the tongue
12. Ingratitude	Romans 1:21 Ephesians 5:20	Thankfulness
13. Impatience	James 1:2—4 Hebrews 10:16	Patience
14. Murmuring	Proverbs 19:3 1 Thessalonians 5:8	Gratefulness
15. Complaining	Jude 15,16 Hebrews 13:5	Contentment
16. Irritation to others	Proverbs 25:8 Philippians 2:3,4	Preferring in love
17. Jealousy	Proverbs 27:4 1 Corinthians 13:4	Trust, preferring others
18. Strife	James 3:16 Luke 6:31	Esteem of others
19. Losing temper	Proverbs 16:32 Romans 5:3,4	Self-Control
20. Complacency	James 4:17 Colossians 3:23	Diligence