

Lecture 4 – Motivation and Maslow

Let's talk about what drives people — motives, needs, goals — basically why we do what we do.

What is a Motive?

A **motive** is a psychological push or pull. It moves us toward something we want or away from something we don't. Think of it as energy aimed at a goal.

- **Need** = something essential (e.g., food, safety)
- **Motive** = a general internal drive
- **Goal** = the endpoint of that drive

These words are used interchangeably, but the concept is the same: we're driven beings.

Layers of Human Motivation

Humans operate with motives at different levels:

- **Basic:** e.g. grasping, suckling, food
- **Psychological:** e.g. competence, belonging
- **Transcendent:** e.g. self-actualization, enlightenment

We juggle all these levels at once — we're not simple.

Classic Theories of Motivation

Henry Murray

- Created a long list of psychological needs (e.g. n Achievement, n Power, n Affiliation)
- Combined psychoanalysis and literature
- Worked under MKUltra – dark history, but influential

McClelland's Big Three Motives

1. **Achievement** – Desire to be competent, to master skills
2. **Affiliation** – Need for intimacy, belonging, connection
3. **Power** – Drive to influence or shape others (can be positive or negative)

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan)

1. **Competence** – Desire to feel effective
2. **Relatedness** – Desire to feel connected
3. **Autonomy** – Desire to feel in control of one's own actions

Three Big Splits in Motivation

1. Approach vs. Avoidance

- **Approach** = chasing the cheese (dopaminergic, optimistic)
- **Avoidance** = running from the hawk (fear, adrenaline)

2. Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic

- **Intrinsic** = you do it for joy
- **Extrinsic** = you do it for a reward or punishment

Classic study: kids who loved drawing drew *less* when they were rewarded for it.

3. Explicit vs. Implicit

- **Explicit** = conscious motives
- **Implicit** = unconscious drives (Freudian, TAT tests, projective stories)

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow never drew a pyramid – that was later. But the **hierarchy** matters.

1. Physiological Needs

- Food, water, oxygen, salt balance, etc.
- Unconscious, homeostatic, like a thermostat (test-operate-test-exit)

2. Safety Needs

- Stability in one's environment (especially in childhood)
- Routine, predictability, protection from chaos

3. Love/Belonging Needs

- Friendship, intimacy, community, attachment
- Also called: Relatedness, Affiliation, Connection

4. Esteem Needs

- Desire to feel competent and respected by others
- Self-esteem rooted in real achievement (not narcissism)
- Similar to: Competence, Achievement motive

5. Self-Actualization

- "What a man can be, he must be."
- Becoming who you were meant to be – fulfilling your unique potential
- Artists paint, musicians make music, writers write – not for reward, but because they must

6. Self-Transcendence (Maslow's later addition)

- Going beyond the self
- Living as an *end* in itself, not a means
- Relating to others, nature, the cosmos
- Often shows up as **peak experiences** or **flow states**

"Man is a perpetually wanting animal." – Maslow

Flow States (Csikszentmihalyi)

- Optimal experience when challenge = skill
 - Examples: climbing, sports, music, writing
 - You lose yourself in the task
 - Growth follows the flow channel: you constantly raise the challenge to stay engaged
-

Happiness & Motivation

According to Sonja Lyubomirsky:

“Happiness = joy, contentment, or positive well-being + a sense that life is meaningful and worthwhile.”

Three Types of Happiness:

1. **Hedonia** – pleasure, satisfaction, comfort
 2. **Eudaimonia** – meaning, purpose, higher self
 3. **Richness** – deep experiences, variety, story-worthy life
-

Final Thoughts

- Motivation is complex – we juggle basic drives, social needs, higher goals, and transcendent aspirations
- Intrinsic motivation creates joy, but can be crushed by too much external reward
- Happiness is more than just feeling good – it’s about meaning and depth
- To truly transcend, sometimes we need to **stop thinking so much**, and just **live**