


MOTIVATION & EMOTION

# Growth motivation & positive psychology



**Reading:**  
Reeve (2018)  
Ch 15  
(pp. 365–396)

**James Neill**  
Discipline of Psychology  
University of Canberra  
2022

Image source

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## Outline

- Humanistic psychology
- Holism
- Self-actualisation
- Actualising tendency
- Humanistic motivation
- Positive psychology
- Interventions
- Criticisms

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 365)

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# Humanistic psychology

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### Evolution of paradigms in psychology

- 1<sup>st</sup> force: Psychoanalytic
- 2<sup>nd</sup> force: Behaviourism
- 3<sup>rd</sup> force: Humanistic
- 4<sup>th</sup> force: Transpersonal

Based on Sutich (1968)

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### Evolution of paradigms in psychology

- 1<sup>st</sup> force: Psychoanalytic
- 2<sup>nd</sup> force: Behaviourism
- 3<sup>rd</sup> force: Humanistic
- Cognitive, social, neuro
- 4<sup>th</sup> force: Transpersonal
- Indigenous

Based on Sutich (1968)

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### Humanistic psychology

- If one's inner core nature is frustrated, denied, or suppressed, sickness results (Maslow, 1968)
- "If this essential core is appreciated, supported, and nurtured, health results" (Reeve, 2018, p. 366)
- Thus, it is important to follow your true nature or "inner guides"

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### Humanistic psychology

“argues that rejecting one's nature in favour of social priorities puts personal growth and psychological well-being at risk.”

Reeve (2018, p. 366)

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### Closely related psychologies

- Existential
- Gestalt
- Growth
- Humanistic
- Indigenous
- Positive
- Spiritual
- Transpersonal

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### Humanistic and positive psychology

- Humanistic psychology (1960s -)
- Positive psychology (1990s -)
- Similar, but positive psychology is distinguished by its:
  - scientific, evidence-based approach
  - seeking to enhance human psychological strengths and well-being

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 420)

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**Holism**

- Human motives are integrated wholes (rather than a sum of parts)
- Personal growth is the ultimate motivational force
- Stresses “top-down” master motives such as the self and its strivings toward fulfillment
- Focuses on discovering human potential and encouraging its development

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 368) **11**

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**Maslow on holism**

"A damaged organism isn't satisfied just to be what is is, merely damaged. It strives, presses, and pushes; it fights and struggles with itself in order to make itself into a unit again"

Maslow (1971, p. 115)

Image source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:3AWater\\_drop\\_001.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:3AWater_drop_001.jpg)

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### Self-actualisation

- Full realisation and use of one's talents, capacities, and potentialities
- Leaves behind infantile heteronomy, defensiveness, cruelty, and timidity
- Moves toward autonomy, realistic appraisals, compassion toward others, and the courage to create and to explore

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### Hierarchy of human needs

Figure 15.1 Maslow's Need Hierarchy

Nature of human needs (Maslow, 1943, 1987):

- Lower needs are stronger and more urgent
- Lower needs appear earlier in development
- Needs are fulfilled sequentially, from lowest to highest

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 369)

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## Self-actualisation

Self-actualisation is a process of:

- **Autonomy** → Moving
  - away from heteronomy
  - towards capacity for self-regulated thoughts, feelings, and behaviours
- **Openness** → To
  - information, including feelings, without repressing, ignoring, filtering, or distorting

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 369)

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## Maslow on self-actualisation

“Human beings seem to be far more autonomous and self-governed than modern psychological theory allows for.”

Maslow (1954, p. 123)

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## Maslow on self-actualisation

“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.”

Maslow (1954, p. 234)

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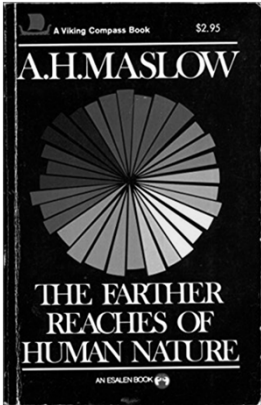
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### The farther reaches of human nature



### Maslow's final book (1971)

(he died from a heart attack whilst jogging in 1970, at the age of 62)

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### Maslow's study of self-actualised people

"My investigations on self-actualization were not planned to be research and did not start out as research. They started out as the effort of a young intellectual to try to understand two of his teachers whom he loved, adored, and admired and who were very, very wonderful people ... I could not be content to simply adore, but sought to understand why these two people were so different from the run-of-the-mill people in the world." Maslow (1971, p. 40)

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### Maslow's study of self-actualised people

- Biographical analysis of 18 people Maslow considered to be self-actualised, including some famous, some not so famous, some who were alive, and some dead
- Identified some common characteristics that set these people apart from others

Based on Maslow (1971)

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### Characteristics of self actualising people

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. <b>Acceptance</b> of self, of others, of nature                      | <b>Priority of values like truth, love, and happiness</b> |
| 2. <b>Identification</b> with the human species                         |   |
| 3. Emphasis on <b>higher level values</b>                               |   |
| 4. Perception of <b>reality</b>   | <b>Internally controlled</b>                              |
| 5. Discrimination between <b>means and ends</b> , between good and evil |   |
| 6. <b>Resolution of dichotomies</b> (conflicts) that plague most people | <b>High involvement, productivity, and happiness</b>      |
| 7. <b>Autonomy</b> and resistance to enculturation                      |   |
| 8. <b>Detachment</b> and desire for privacy                             |   |
| 9. <b>Spontaneity</b> , simplicity, naturalness                         | <b>High quality interpersonal relationships</b>           |
| 10. <b>Problem-centering</b>  |   |
| 11. <b>Creativeness</b>   |   |
| 12. <b>Freshness</b> of appreciation; rich emotions                     |   |
| 13. High frequency of <b>peak experiences</b>                           |   |
| 14. (Intimate) <b>interpersonal relations</b>                           |   |
| 15. <b>Democratic</b> character structure                               |   |
| 16. Philosophical, unhostile sense of <b>humour</b>                     |   |

Based on Maslow (1971) **22**

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### Peak experience

- A kind of transpersonal and ecstatic state, tinged with euphoria, harmonisation, and interconnectedness.
- Transient moment of self-actualisation (Maslow, 1971, p. 48).
- Everyone is capable of:
  - peak experiences
  - learning how to cultivate conducive conditions.

Based on Maslow (1971)

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### Maslow on peak experiences

YouTube  
(4:02 mins)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkqQX896WiA>



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**Self-actualisation**

According to Maslow, only

1%

self-actualise.

**Why?**

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**Behaviours that encourage self-actualisation**

- **Growth choices** (growth/progression vs. regression/fear)
- **Defensiveness** (give it up)
- **Honesty** (when in doubt)
- **Self** (let it emerge by listening to inner voices rather than external/introjected voices)
- **Openness to experience** (identify defenses and have the courage to give them up)
- **Peak experiences** (situationally position)

Based on Reeve (2018, Table 15.1, p. 371) and Maslow (1971, pp. 44–49)

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Actualising tendency

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### Actualising tendency

“The organism has one basic tendency and striving – to actualize, maintain, and enhance the experiencing self.”

Rogers (1951)

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### Actualising tendency

- Innate will to growth
- A continual presence that quietly guides the person toward genetically determined potentials
- Motivates the person to want to undertake new and challenging experiences

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 371–372)

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### Organismic valuing process

- Innate capacity for judging for oneself whether a specific experience promotes or reverses one’s growth.
- Provides interpretive information needed for deciding whether a new undertaking is growth-promoting or not.
- If OVP continues over time a person will become more closely aligned with their natural values and thereby more relaxed and at ease with their life.

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 372–373)

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## Organismic valuing process

- **Authenticity:** Getting away from defensive superficiality; being oneself.
- **Autonomy:** Moving away from what you “should” do; making your own decisions.
- **Internal locus of evaluation:** Judgement based on one’s own view, rather than seeking the approval of others.
- **Unconditional positive self-regard:** Judging & accepting yourself as valuable & worthwhile, including all thoughts & emotional reactions.
- **Process living:** Recognising that we are in a constant state of becoming and never reach a final end point.
- **Relatedness:** Seeking close and deep relationships where you can truly appreciate and understand other people.
- **Openness to inner and outer experience:** Being able to perceive and accept how others and oneself behaves and feels.

Based on ChangingMinds - [http://changingminds.org/explanations/values/organismic\\_valuing.htm](http://changingminds.org/explanations/values/organismic_valuing.htm) **31**

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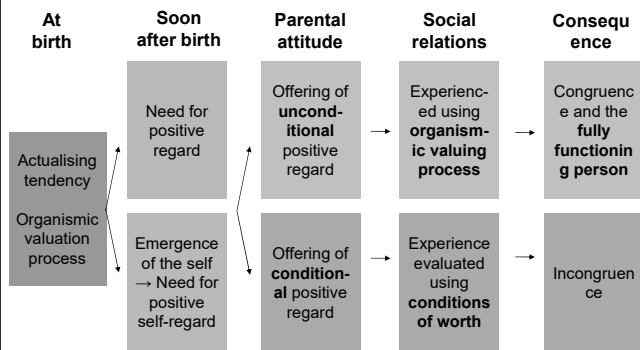
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## Process of actualisation



Rogerian model of the process of self-actualisation

Based on Reeve (2018, Figure 15.2, p. 372)

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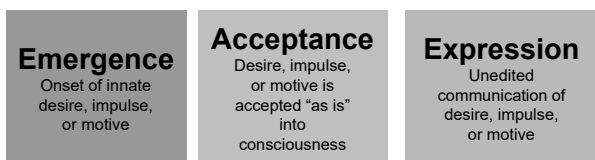
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## Fully functioning person



Fully functioning as the emergence, acceptance, and expression of a motive

Based on Reeve (2018, Figure 15.3, pp. 378–379)

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Humanistic  
motivation

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**Control causality orientation**

- Relies on external guides (e.g., social cues)
- Pays close attention to behavioural incentives and social expectations
- Relates to extrinsic regulation and introjected regulation
- Involved in pursuit of financial (salarly) and material (status) success

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 379–380)

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**Autonomy causality orientation**

- Relies on internal guides (e.g., needs, interests)
- Pays close attention to one’s own needs and feelings
- Relates to intrinsic motivation and identified regulation
- Correlates with positive functioning (e.g., self-actualisation, ego development, openness to experience etc.)

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 379–380)

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**Validation- vs. growth-seeking**

- **Validation-seeking** → Strivings for proving self-worth, competence, and likeability → Vulnerability to mental health difficulties
- **Growth-seeking** → Strivings for learning, improving, and reaching personal potential

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 380–381)

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**How relationships support the actualising tendency**

- “The extent to which individuals develop toward congruence and adjustment depends greatly on the quality of their interpersonal relationships.” (p. 436)
- Relationships can be:
  - **controlling** (conditions of worth) or
  - **autonomy-promoting** (unconditional positive regard).

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 381–382)

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**How relationships support the actualising tendency**

Qualities of supportive interpersonal relationships:

- Warmth
- Genuineness
- Empathy
- Interpersonal acceptance
- Confirmation of the other person’s capacity for self-determination

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 381–382)

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## How relationships support the actualising tendency

Ways of supporting the actualising tendency:

- Helping others
- Relating to others in authentic ways
- Promoting the freedom to learn
- Supporting other person to explore and define their self

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 381–382)

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Positive psychology

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## Positive psychology

- Seeks to build people’s strengths and competencies and to actualise their human potential
- Uses scientific methods to identify evidence-based methods
- Asks “what could be?” for mental health and quality of life

Based on Reeve (2018, p. 368)

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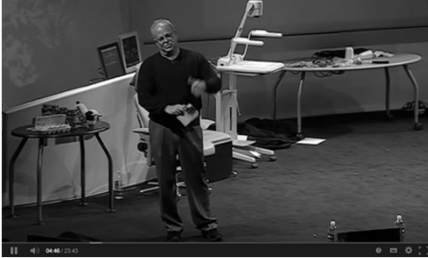
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# Seligman on the science of positive psychology

YouTube  
(20:37 mins)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FBxfd7DL3E>



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## Personal strengths

- Altruism
- Empathy
- Flow
- Forgiveness
- Goal-setting
- Hope
- Meaning
- Mindfulness
- Optimism
- Personal control
- Resilience
- Self-determination
- Self-efficacy
- Spirituality
- Wisdom

## Outcomes

Preventing sickness taking root within the personality

Personal growth and well-being

Based on Reeve (2018, Table 15.2, p. 385)

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## Subjective well-being

Subjective well-being

Presence of positive affect

Absence of negative affect

High level of satisfaction

Based on Reeve (2018, Figure 15.5, p. 385)

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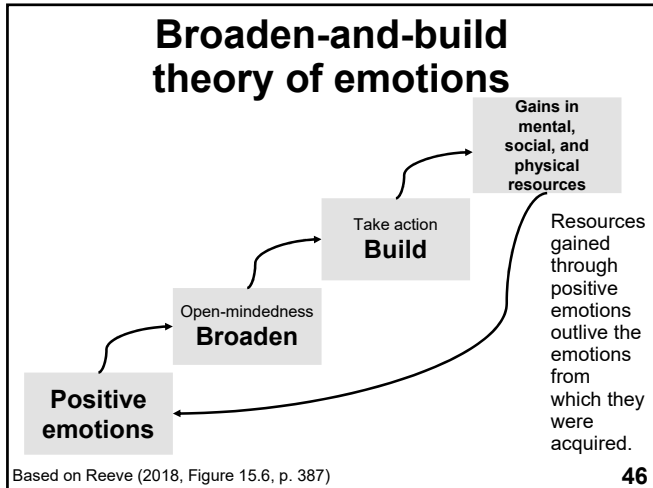
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### Example personal strength: Meaning

- A sense of purpose, internalised values, and high efficacy are the motivational ingredients for cultivating meaning in life.
- The act of creating meaning helps to prevent future sickness.

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 388–390) 47

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### Viktor Frankl (1946): Man's Search for Meaning

- **Part 1:** Experience as a Jew in Auschwitz, a World War II Nazi concentration camp. Observed that those who had hope for the future (a reason to live) were more likely to survive.  
"He who has a Why to live for can bear almost any How"  
- Nietzsche
- **Part 2:** Describes logotherapy (logos = Greek for meaning). Understands psychopathology as a function of a lack of meaning. When connected with meaning, dysfunction tends to resolve.
- Thus, life is not primarily a quest for pleasure or power, but a quest for meaning.

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# Viktor Frankl (1946): Man's Search for Meaning

YouTube  
(4:22 mins)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fD1512\\_XJEw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fD1512_XJEw)



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## Interventions

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## Happiness exercises from positive psychology therapy

1. **Gratitude visit.** Write a letter or visit and share about your gratitude to someone who has been especially kind to you but never really thanked.
2. **Three good things in life.** Each day, write down three things that go well and identify the cause of each.
3. **You at your best.** Write about a time when you functioned at your best. Reflect on the personal resources that made that functioning possible.
4. **Identify signature strengths.** Identify up to five personal signature strengths and find a way to use each in a new way.

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 391–392) 51

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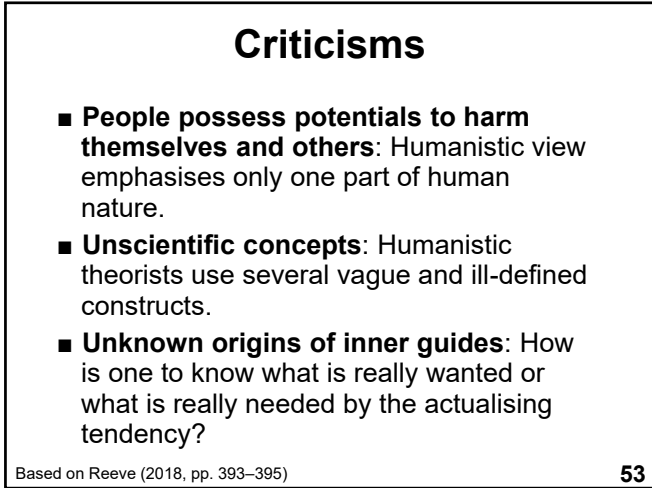
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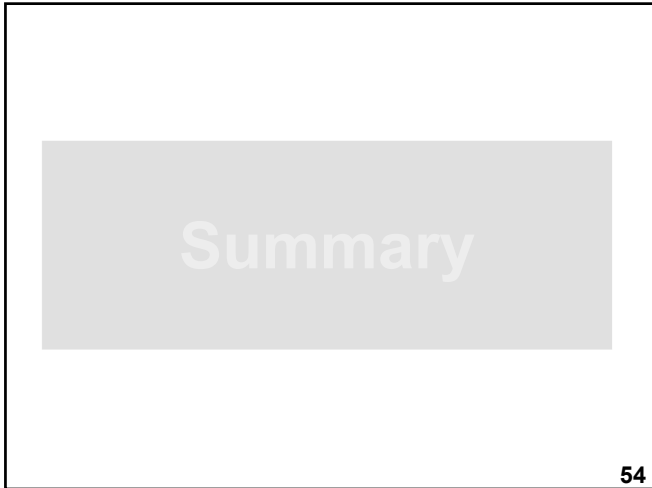
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## Summary

- Humanistic psych – follow inner self
- Holism – growth is primary motivation
- Self-actualisation – realisation of potential
- Actualising tendency – striving to actualise
- Humanistic motiv – autonomy & growth seeking
- Positive psych – build strengths scientifically
- Interventions – happiness can be cultivated
- Criticisms – one-sided, unscientific

Based on Reeve (2018, pp. 393–395)

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- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. Harper & Brothers.
- Maslow, A. H. (1971/1976). *Farther reaches of human nature*. Penguin.
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<https://doi.org/10.1177/002216786800800108>

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