


MOTIVATION & EMOTION

Growth motivation & positive psychology



James Neill
Centre for Applied Psychology
University of Canberra
2018

Image source

1

Humanistic psychology argues that rejecting one's nature in favour of social priorities puts personal growth and psychological well-being at risk. It is important to follow your true nature or "inner guides".

Reading: Reeve (2015) Ch 15 (pp. 431-465)

"If this essential core (inner nature) of the person is frustrated, denied, or suppressed, sickness results" - Maslow (1968)

Growth motivation & positive psychology

2

Outline – Growth motivation & positive psychology

- Holism & positive psychology
 - Holism
 - Positive psychology
- Self-actualisation
 - Hierarchy of human needs
 - Encouraging growth
- Actualising tendency
 - Organismic Valuing Process
 - Emergence of the self
 - Conditions of worth
 - Conditional regard
 - Fully functioning individual
- Humanistic motivation
 - Causality orientation
 - Growth- vs. validation seeking
 - Relationships
 - Freedom to learn
 - Self- & social definition
 - The problem of evil
- Positive psych & growth
 - Happiness & well-being
 - Eudaimonic well-being
 - Optimism
 - Meaning
 - Positivity
- Interventions
- Criticisms

Based on Reeve (2015, pp. 431-432)

3

Evolution of paradigms in psychology

- 1st force: Psychoanalytic
- 2nd force: Behaviourism
- 3rd force: Humanistic
- 4th force: Transpersonal

4

Related terms

- Humanistic
- Positive
- Gestalt
- Spiritual
- Existential
- Transpersonal

5

Holism & positive psychology

6

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 (2015, p. 434) **7**

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:33Water_drop_001.jpg

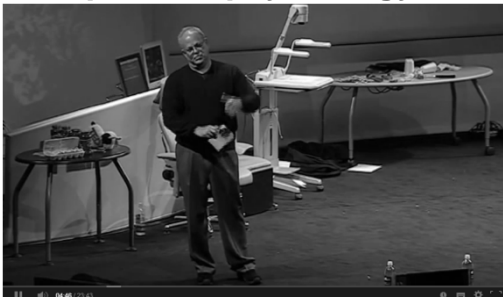
8

Positive psychology

- Focuses on proactively building personal strengths and competencies
- Seeks to make people stronger and more productive, and to actualise the human potential in all of us
- Uses scientific methods to identify evidence-based methods

Based on Reeve (2015, pp. 434-435) **9**

Seligman on the science of positive psychology



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FBxfd7DL3E> (23:43 mins)

10

Self-actualisation

11

Self-actualisation

Self-actualisation is the desire:

- for self-fulfillment, to actualise one's potential
- to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming.

Motivation and personality (Maslow, 1954)

Directions that characterise self-actualisation as a process:

- **Autonomy** →
 - Greater mindfulness
 - Courage to create
 - Realistic appraisals
- **Openness** →
 - Self-realisation

Based on Reeve (2015, p. 435)

12

Maslow on self-actualisation

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

Motivation and personality
(1954), p. 123

13

Maslow on self-actualisation

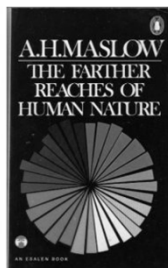
“The study of crippled, stunted, immature, and unhealthy specimens can yield only a cripple psychology and a cripple philosophy. The study of self-actualizing people must be the basis for a more universal science of psychology.”

Motivation and personality
(1954), p. 234

14

The farther reaches of human nature (Maslow, 1971)

Maslow's final book – (he died from a heart attack whilst jogging in 1970, at the age of 62)



15

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."

Farther reaches of human nature (1971), p. 40

16

Maslow's study of self-actualised people

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

Based on Maslow (1971)

17

Characteristics of self actualising people

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

Based on Maslow (1971) 18

Peak experiences

“Peak experience is a kind of transpersonal and ecstatic state, particularly one tinged with themes of euphoria, harmonization and interconnectedness. Participants characterize these experiences, and the revelations imparted therein, as possessing an ineffably mystical and spiritual (or overtly religious) quality or essence.” (Wikipedia, 2013)

19

Peak experiences

- “Peak experiences are transient moments of self-actualization.” (Maslow, 1971, p. 48)
- The highest peaks include “feelings of limitless horizons opening up ..., the feeling of being simultaneously more powerful and also more helpless than ... ever ... before, the feeling of great ecstasy and wonder and awe, and the loss of placing in time and space” (p. 164)
- All people are capable of peak experiences and learning how to cultivate conducive conditions.

20

Maslow on peak experiences



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkqQX896WiA> (4:02 mins)

21

Self-actualisation

According to
Maslow,
only

1%

self-actualise.

Why?

22

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 (2015, pp. 435-436)

Behaviours that encourage self-actualisation

- Make **growth choices** (progression vs. regression or growth vs. fear)
- **Be honest** (when in doubt)
- Situationally position yourself for **peak experiences**
- Give up **defensiveness**
- **Let the self emerge** (listen to impulse voices rather than introjected voices)
- **Be open to experience** (identify defenses and have the courage to give them up)

Based on Reeve (2015, Table 15.1, p. 438) and Maslow (1971, pp. 44-49) 24

Actualising tendency

25

Actualising tendency

- “The organism has one basic tendency and striving – to actualize, maintain, and enhance the experiencing self.” (Rogers, 1951)
- Innate, a continual presence that quietly guides the individual toward genetically determined potentials
- Motivates the individual to want to undertake new and challenging experiences

Based on Reeve (2015, p. 439)

26

Organismic valuing process

- Innate capability for judging whether a specific experience promotes or reverses growth.
- Provides the interpretive information needed for deciding whether a new undertaking is growth-promoting or not.
- If continued over time then a person will become more closely aligned with their natural values. In doing so, they will become more relaxed and at ease with their life.

Based on Reeve (2015, pp. 439-440)

27

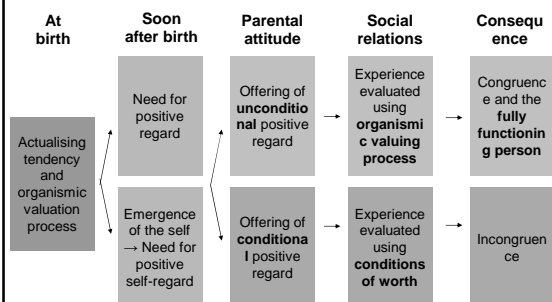
Organismic valuing process

The OV process may include any of the following principles:

- **Authenticity:** Getting away from defensive superficiality; being oneself.
- **Autonomy:** Moving away from what you 'should' to and 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 28

Process of actualisation

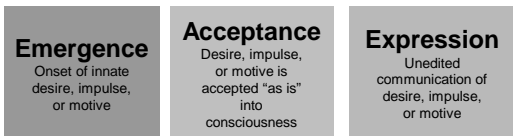


Rogerian model of the process of self-actualisation

Based on Reeve (2015, Figure 15.2, p. 442)

29

Fully functioning person



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

Based on Reeve (2015, Figure 15.3, p. 445)

30

Humanistic motivational phenomena

31

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 (2015, pp. 445-447) 32

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

Based on Reeve (2015, pp. 445-447) 33

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
- Defining the self

Based on Reeve (2015, pp. 448-450)

37

What is the source of “evil”?

Challenging questions:

- How much of human nature is inherently evil?
- Why do some people enjoy inflicting suffering on others?

Based on Reeve (2015, pp. 451-453)

38

Humanistic theorists' views

- Evil is not inherent in human nature. It only arises when experience injures and damages the person.
- Both benevolence and malevolence are inherent capacities in everyone.
- Human nature needs to internalise a benevolent value system in order to avoid evil.

Based on Reeve (2015, pp. 451-453)

39

Positive psychology & growth

40

Positive psychology & growth

Positive psychology

- Looks at people’s mental health and the quality of their lives to ask,
- “What could be?”
- Seeks to build people’s strengths and competencies

Based on Reeve (2015, pp. 453-460)

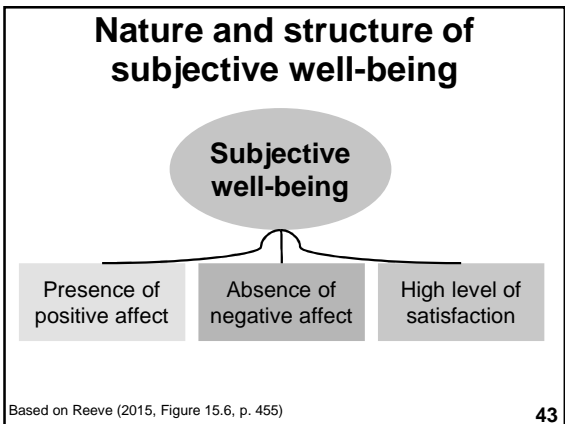
41

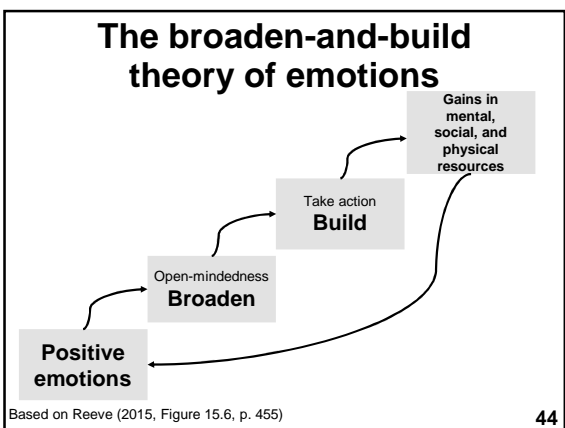
Positive psychology & growth

Building personal strengths	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Happiness * Enjoyment * Resilience * Capacity for Flow * Personal Control * Optimism * Optimistic Explanatory Style * Hope * Self-Efficacy * Goal-Setting * Meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The Passion to Know * Wisdom * Authenticity * Toughness * Self-Determination * Forgiveness * Compassion * Empathy * Altruism * Humor * Spirituality
	<p>Fostering personal growth and well-being</p> <p>Preventing human sickness from taking root within the personality</p>

Based on Reeve (2015, Table 15.3, Personal strengths investigated as the subject matter of positive psychology, p. 453)

42





Illustrative personal strengths: Optimism

- A positive attitude or a good mood associated with what one expects to unfold in his or her immediate and long-term future.
- Related to better psychological & physical health, more health-promoting behaviors, greater persistence, and more effective problem solving.

Based on Reeve (2015, pp. 457-458) **45**

Illustrative personal strengths: 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 (2015, pp. 458-459) **46**

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.
"Why do you **not** commit suicide?"

47

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



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fD1512_XJEw (4:22 mins)

48

**Illustrative personal strengths:
Eudaimonic well-being**

- Greek meaning “good spirit” or “human flourishing” (Aristotle)
- Self-realisation
- Relatedness satisfaction
- Pursuit of self-endorsed goals

Based on Reeve (2015, pp. 456-457) **49**

Criticisms

50

Criticisms

- **People possess potentials to harm themselves and others:** Humanistic view emphasises only one part of human nature.
- **Unscientific concepts:** Humanistic theorists use a number of vague and ill-defined constructs.
- **Unknown origins of inner guides:** How is one to know what is really wanted or what is really needed by the actualising tendency?

Based on Reeve (2015, pp. 462-463) **51**

Interventions

52

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 (2015, p. 461) **53**

Sensory awareness exercise

1. Brainstorm a list of your favourite sources of pleasure for each sense (sight, sound, touch, taste and smell).
2. Longer lists are associated with better well-being.
3. Give yourself at least one of your favourite sources of pleasure through each sense each day.

Based on Burns, G. (1998).
Nature-guided therapy: Brief integrative strategies for health and well-being. **54**

Next lecture



Summary and conclusion
(Ch 17)

55

References

- Maslow, A. H. (1971/1976). *Farther reaches of human nature*. New York: Penguin.
- Reeve, J. (2015). *Understanding motivation and emotion* (6th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

56
