

CLD1-1



The Power of Motivation

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Why do people do the things they do? Why are we driven to exert effort toward accomplishing one thing but not another? Motivation, as a concept, explains why people think and behave the way they do. We've all seen a motivated person surpass a less motivated person in performance and outcome, even with similar opportunities and abilities. So, how do we increase our own motivation to succeed? And is it possible to motivate someone else to do something we desire or see as better for them?


What is Motivation?

Being motivated means we are simply purposeful. We use attention, imagination, passion and processes to pursue our goals. We are motivated to action by both needs and desires that we hold inside of us. This type of motivation is called internal motivation. We feel desire or drive to do something and then behave in ways to accomplish or fulfill some current or future personal goal. If we are concerned about having enough money for retirement, we are motivated to action by the need for future security. Outside factors can be used as external motivators to stimulate internal motivation; for example, praise, rewards, bonuses, promotions, or recognition items. If future retirement security is an internal motivator, we may work harder in the hope of getting a salary raise or bonus for more savings. But for external motivators to be effective, they must stimulate your internal needs and desires. That's what ultimately motivates anyone to take action.

Internal motivation is distinguished from external motivation by the source of the reward. Internal rewards are personally controlled and come from inner satisfaction derived from completing the activity. Becoming a Garden Club member, for example, may fulfill a need for personal growth and pleasure derived from gardening. External motivators are controlled by others but can also provide incentive to take action toward attaining something we want; for instance, a second job to help pay the housing mortgage would insure shelter security, and a college scholarship would help secure a higher future standard of living.

Recognizing Our Motivating Needs and Desires

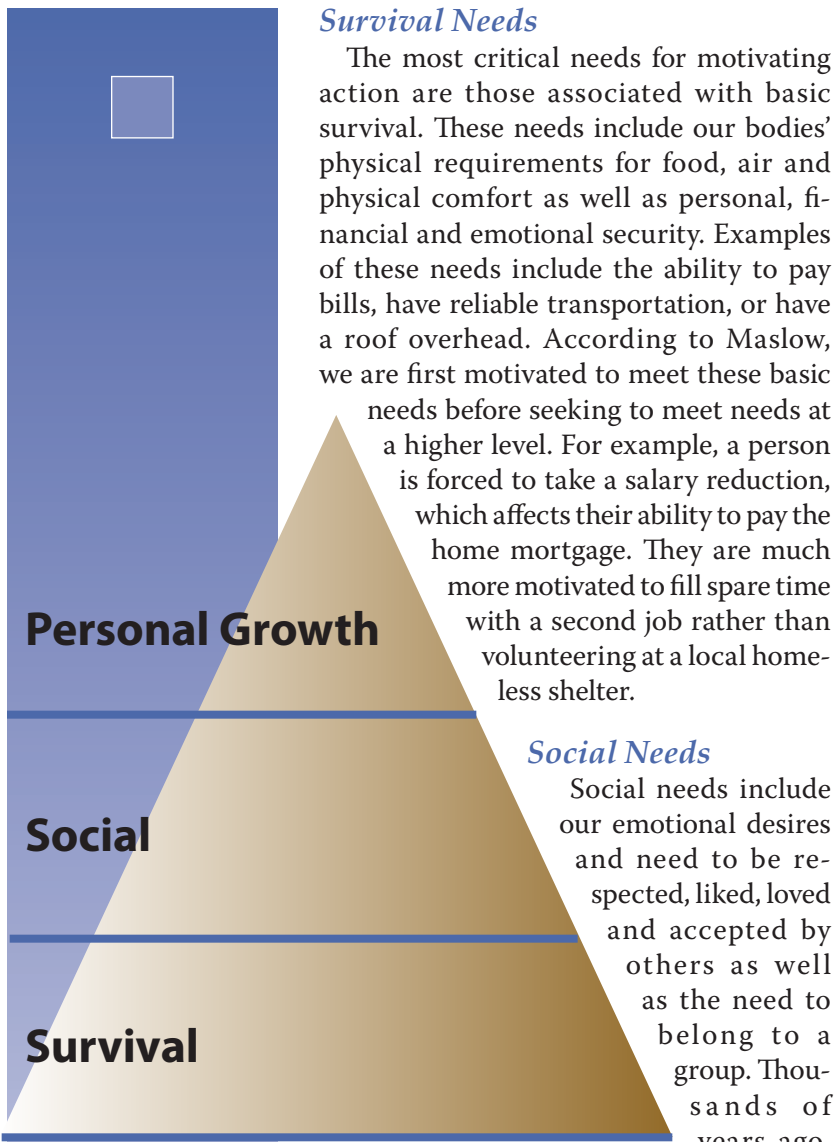
Our behavior is driven by different values and goals rooted in specific categories of needs. Psychologist Abraham Maslow, in his Hierarchy of Needs Theory, stated that humans pursue specific needs in order of importance until satisfied. We start at the most basic and lowest need levels and once they are secured, we move up to different needs. For instance, we need to meet physical needs (food, clothing, shelter) to survive, then satisfy safety and security (financial, emotional) needs before social, self-esteem and personal growth needs become important and of concern. Maslow's five hierarchical need levels can be grouped into three broad areas: survival, social and personal growth.



People who are unable to motivate themselves must be content with mediocrity—no matter how impressive their talents.

—Andrew Carnegie

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Survival Needs

The most critical needs for motivating action are those associated with basic survival. These needs include our bodies' physical requirements for food, air and physical comfort as well as personal, financial and emotional security. Examples of these needs include the ability to pay bills, have reliable transportation, or have a roof overhead. According to Maslow, we are first motivated to meet these basic needs before seeking to meet needs at a higher level. For example, a person is forced to take a salary reduction, which affects their ability to pay the home mortgage. They are much more motivated to fill spare time with a second job rather than volunteering at a local homeless shelter.

Social Needs

Social needs include our emotional desires and need to be respected, liked, loved and accepted by others as well as the need to belong to a group. Thousands of years ago, group behavior was necessary for physical survival, and even today we seek to be with others like us with similar interests. People moving to a new community often seek affiliation with civic organizations or churches to establish connections. Belonging also provides opportunity to compare values and attitudes with others. People with highest needs for affiliation have a high desire for approval and acceptance, yet fearing rejection, they may be unwilling to subject themselves to situations in which they possibly could experience failure to be accepted.

Personal Growth Needs

Forming a favorable self-image based on confidence, perception of achievement, performing well and receiving respect from others is one of the most powerful personal growth needs. Other personal growth needs include our aesthetic drives, a desire to influence our world, our desire to learn more about interesting things and desires that reduce feelings of guilt. Personal growth needs motivate us to try to fulfill our potential, "be all we can be" and grow in our abilities and knowledge. We may seek personal growth through educational workshops, participation in arts events, or community involvement.

Volunteer Motivation

Often we seek to participate or volunteer in groups that help fulfill personal needs that we cannot achieve alone. Harvard professors David McClelland and John Atkinson have classified volunteer motivators into three main types: achievement, affiliation and power. Everyone is moved to volunteer by aspects of all three motivators. But one type usually affects each of us more in most situations. Following is a short description of each volunteer motivator.

- **Achievement**—The achievement motivated person looks for situations requiring top performance in which they can excel with unique accomplishments. This person is a risk taker, innovative, and enjoys striving for lofty goals. They want to do the job better, figuring out ways to remove obstacles, with concrete feedback and a "hands-off" management style.
- **Affiliation**—The affiliation motivated person finds being around other people with social aspects very appealing. They want to build friendships and to be respected. They want to help others and care deeply about others' feelings; they may seek/need approval and often take criticism poorly. In contrast to achievement oriented persons, they may sacrifice their goals in favor of developing relationships.

Understanding personal needs and desires in any situation can better define internal motivations for action behavior.

- **Power**—The power motivated person wants to have impact, influencing others with their ideas. They are articulate, charismatic leaders who want to win arguments and get others to do things their way. They seek to influence through communication. Although power is often viewed negatively, a person who is motivated by power can also use personal power for the benefit of all.

As an example of how the motivators influence behavior, someone with a passion for a cause may feel a need to belong to a political group and affiliate with others who share the same beliefs. Just working together is the important thing. Others, motivated by achievement or power, may become more involved in a political campaign as they seek to win an office that can provide the leverage to change laws or regulations for helping the cause.

Motivating and Recognizing Volunteers

To recognize and continue to meet volunteer needs, try the following external motivators that tap individual motivation needs.

For Achievement Oriented People

- Challenging tasks that require efficiency with clear goals (\$\$\$, numbers)
- Tangible awards, plaques, pins, badges, newsletter media articles for display
- Commendation letters, compliments, smiles, publicity (supervisors, those in charge/team members)
- Opportunity to create innovative ideas and to request input for goal decisions
- Opportunity to advance, introductions to authority related to accomplishments

For Affiliation Oriented People

- Opportunities for socialization on the job, coffee breaks, family picnics
- Affection, humor, praise in front of family, gifts, letters from clients
- Time to talk, personal notes expressing thanks, personal events
- Commendations telling how work benefits people, respect sensibilities
- Inclusion in PR promotions, banquet recognition

For Power Oriented People

- Job assignments that offer increased responsibility and authority, visioning
- PR and media contacts, recognitions seen by people in authority and broad-based
- Opportunity to innovate, interact with highest authorities, question, debate decisions
- Opportunity to teach, persuade others and have one's name connected to books, articles
- Listen to ideas, introduce to people of influence, opportunities for advocacy

Summary

Understanding personal needs and desires in any situation can better define internal motivations for action behavior. A person will be driven to fulfill basic survival needs in all situations before taking action for personal growth. One cannot “motivate” others to action; yet external factors such as praise, promotions or raises could influence action if they produce connections to internal needs. As persons desire to grow themselves or help others, understanding their volunteer motivation type will help provide positive experiences that satisfy needs for all.



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